

Dinner address of Professor Raimo Väyrynen, President of the Academy of Finland, at the Foreign Ministry of Finland to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the CSCE summit, 31 July 2005.

Thirty years is not a long time for an international institution, but - in particular if international circumstances change in a major way - it may experience several phases of restructuring and adaptation. The development of the OSCE provides ample evidence on the pronounced consequences of such processes of adaptation.

Usually, the pressures for the OSCE to adapt to new conditions have been traced to the breakdown of the bipolar world order and the end of the cold war conflict. True, this deep transformation, with the concomitant rise of intra-state violence in and around Europe, redefined in the early 1990s the functions of the Organization.

Other important changes happened, however, as well. Among them was a certain shift from the heavy emphasis on national sovereignty to a more shared view on the norms and values on which European security and cooperation should rest. Of course, the issue of sovereignty never completely faded away from the political agenda. Moreover, it seems now that sovereignty is receiving new attention in eastern, but also western part of the continent.

During the cold war, a main function of the then CSCE was to promote political and military stability in the conditions of antagonist interests between major powers. No doubt political innovations, such as CSBMs and CFE Treaty, contributed to this positive aim. However, as these agreements left out the most pernicious weapons, WMDs, the results of the OSCE in the field of arms control remained limited.

The rise of political violence in the early 1990s called for new solutions by international actors. As a result, conflict prevention became a cottage industry both in politics and academia. The OSCE was in that field a pioneer and a pace setter through involvement of its special representatives and field missions. However, its role remained more limited in crisis management and peacekeeping in which the UN, NATO, the EU, and other regional organizations, especially the African Union on its own continent, have been more central players.

A key reason for the failure of the OSCE to become a serious organization in the field peacekeeping has been the difficulty to come to grips with the right and obligation of external intervention. As we know, the issue of intervention has been high on the international agenda, especially in the UN, as means to stop genocides and protect civilians.

Obviously the problem has by no means been resolved, but one can detect a certain movement towards a more permissive interpretation of intervention on humanitarian grounds. In the OSCE, there has been, on the other hand, some backtracking from the conclusion reached in the early 1990s that human rights

do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the states.

So far at least, the interventions by the OSCE have of the soft kind intended to secure by diplomatic means human rights and promote democracy and good governance. However, as the history of the OSCE shows, even such actions can become a source of controversy if the definitions of human rights and democracy by various key parties differ from each. The situation becomes even more complicated if human rights and democracy are used, instead of references to fundamental value commitments, as tools of politics.

A normative approach to international affairs can have political influence if the participants are prepared to institutionalize their differences and agree on the rules on how they should be settled in the case of a major disagreement. In this regard, the OSCE does not work very well today. To a certain degree, the OSCE has become a victim of short-sighted politics.

For a good reason, the Panel of Eminent Persons calls for the return back to the basics: "OSCE values and commitments are the bedrock on which the Organization stands. They constitute the principles and standards on the basis of which States participate in the OSCE".

It is often pointed out that the OSCE is now going through its third major transformation as a result of the fact that its original cold-war function has ceased to exist and the intra-national conflicts have been mostly frozen though not extinguished. The reason for the need of the third transformation is due, in the first place, to the rise of new transnational threats, such as terrorism and organized crime, in which non-state actors have assumed new importance as their sources.

Compared with the very state-centric origins of the OSCE, this trend creates entirely new institutional and political challenges to the Organization and its member states. The "founding fathers" of the OSCE/CSCE could hardly have imagined that high up on the Organization's agenda would be such issues as election monitoring, human trafficking, police training, and counter-terrorism.

The Eminent Persons rightly emphasize that the OSCE should stress actions in which it enjoys a comparative advantage and can add value compared with other institutions. The sad fact may be, however, that the OSCE can add only limited value to the international responses to transnational threats.

At a minimum, to be able to provide a more effective collective response, the Organization should be streamlined its decision-making and a new political consensus should be established among the member states. It is not enough to group all unpleasant events under the label of "terrorism".

Over the long term, the most robust solution to national and transnational instability is to promote dynamic and equitable working of the economic markets. In the Final Act, economic and environmental cooperation constituted a separate basket. This made some sense in the era when economic exchanges were often controlled by public authorities.

The situation is now quite different as the market principles and institutions have in the OSCE area spread, though not always rooted in practice. This tendency, together with its limited resources, has naturally reduced the relevance of the OSCE in managing economic and environmental cooperation.

The work of the OSCE would be greatly helped if the market civilization, combining economic competition with social safety nets, would become the guiding idea in the member states. The question is not only about economic growth and employment, but also about political stability, democracy, and human rights supported by economic success.

As the Eminent Persons stress, a growing challenge for the OSCE is to promote cross-dimensional linkages that would genuinely make the Organization an all-European vehicle for the promotion of comprehensive security. The cross-dimensional approach is also the only viable ways to address transnational threats. The main advantage of the OSCE is, indeed, its comprehensive character.

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