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Human Security and the role of OSCE

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In his infamous line, Clausewitz argued that "War is a mere continuation of politics by other means." As notorious as it sounds, 19th century Prussian General made an invaluable observation. It has been more than two decades since the fell of the BerlinWall, the mortar-and-brick symbol of the Cold War divisions. Ever since this historic event, number of inter-state wars has declined. However, intra-state violence increased considerably. Today, we may remove "war" from Clausewitz's line, and replace it with "violence." In reality, terror of violence by many other means added to horror of wars that terrorized humanity for centuries. In today's world, we can no longer focus only on wars for global safety. More is going on. What happens in state-borders cause no less horror to humanity. Nor does intra-state violence pose less danger for world peace and stability. We now face other bitter enemies which actually may be the root causes of wars themselves: Corruption, injustice, inequality and discrimination present threat to global security.

Human-to-human violence remains as the main issue to be solved. However, it is no longer the sole threat to security. Economic, social and environmental dimensions are increasingly becoming as important threat to humanity as a whole. Moreover, the old approach that deals with security from interstate paradigm and national security have been enriched by increasing attention to individual dimension of security-human security.

We should start to discuss new threats to security more open heartedly, especially taking the issue of human security into consideration. Let's take international terrorism as an example. Throughout the Cold War era, terrorists might have enjoyed ideological and material support from opposing blocks. Yet, as the horror of 9-11 attacks showed, asymmetrical threat that terror poses with no discrimination targets civilians. State responds to it, but what we deal here no longer is a state versus state war. Partly matter of national security, partly matter of human security, fight against terrorism pushes the borders of conventional wisdom. Over the past decade, we witness an international organization, namely NATO, has been fighting against terrorists. This is a very new concept to be understood.

OSCE has a unique role to face these new threats to security. Recently, International Relations Scholars, especially those who follow the constructivist stream, argue that logic of appropriateness plays a major role in world politics. This, however, begs practical definitions for what constitutes norm following behavior. OSCE is a major actor to assume such difficult job of defining norms. Moreover, as the differences between domestic and international politics blur in continuous cycle of two-level games, state sovereignty has been challenged by protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is especially true for those well governed societies of OSCE member states. Therefore, we should more focus on measures of good governance, the rule of law and fight against corruption, as it was mentioned in OSCE Istanbul Charter of 1999 (especially paragraphs 31-33).