

OSCE Focus Conference Proceedings
14-15 October 2016, Maison de la Paix, Geneva



OSCE Focus

**Strengthening the OSCE's Contribution
to European Security**

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Foreword

Switzerland remains committed to a strong OSCE. This means three things to us: First, an OSCE that possesses the convening power to gather all major actors for a dialogue on Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security issues. Second, an OSCE that has the necessary instruments to make a difference on the ground – be it in conflict situations or with regard to transnational threats and challenges. Third, an OSCE that is able to hold states accountable to its principles, which are both the bedrock of, and an added value to, the organization.

2016 was a challenging year for this vision: the principles continued to be violated, not only in conflict situations, but increasingly also with regard to the human dimension. Acceptance of the OSCE's field missions continued to wane, and no major improvements of the OSCE's toolbox achieved. The picture is somewhat brighter when it comes to dialogue: there has been more willingness than in the previous year to talk about conventional arms control and economic connectivity. This is a positive sign that we need to build upon.

The discussions at the Focus Conference 2016 reflected these developments. During the first two sessions, we discussed whether a dialogue on European security was feasible at all. Participants agreed that the current trend to challenge and even ignore some of the basic OSCE principles would continue. They also agreed that for dialogue to bear fruit, it should not be oriented towards immediate results, but be designed for the long haul. At the same time, some participants argued that paying less attention to principles would foster interstate cooperation and trust, whereas others stressed the importance of a structured dialogue on the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments.

Against the backdrop of the initiative by former German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier on relaunching conventional arms control in Europe, our exchanges on the feasibility of this proposal were particularly lively. Participants stressed both the necessity and the obstacles for moving

forward. In this context, it is encouraging that, under the leadership of the 2016 German chairmanship, the 57 participating states agreed in Hamburg to launch a structured dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area. Switzerland will be a committed contributor to this dialogue and will work towards advancing conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures in this framework.

Discussions on the OSCE's toolbox in the conflict cycle showed that the OSCE has to strengthen its early warning capacities, as well as the link between early warning and early action. In view of the political obstacles that continue to prevent the OSCE from enhancing its operational capacities it was argued that the CiO should pursue an active policy with regard to early warning.

The two last sessions focused on economic connectivity and migration as upcoming topics on the OSCE's agenda. The debate on connectivity identified the prospects, but also the potential obstacles to taking the issues of economic integration and economic connections in conflict regions on board the OSCE's agenda. Switzerland will stay committed to economic connectivity, as the topic has great potential for confidence-building. With regard to migration, the discussion identified as of yet untapped potential of the OSCE. We believe that the Ministerial Decision reached in Hamburg is a good basis to further develop the OSCE's migration-related profile.

As in previous years, OSCE Focus has helped us to raise awareness of the challenges and capitalize on the positive developments. This year's discussions were particularly focused, and featured a great number of high-level participants. As a new element, OSCE Focus was organized in cooperation with the incoming chairmanship, Austria. We thank Austria for its contribution, and we are looking forward to a continuation of this successful format.

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Food for Thought Papers

European Security I: Elements and Stepping Stones for a Europe at Peace

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Introduction

When we consider the concept of peace in Europe, the question naturally arises as to what Europe is. Is Europe a singular space? Is European identity best represented in terms of the European Union? Should we distinguish between Southern and Northern regions? To what extent are transcontinental states such as Turkey or Russia part of today's Europe?

In this paper, Europe is seen as a territory unified by the principles and ways by which state and non-state actors interact amongst each other and with external actors. The OSCE is a good example of an organization that prides itself on its cooperative structure that has been used from the time of the Cold War up until today. So it is the patrimony of cooperation of different agents in and outside Europe and its ability to reconcile divergent interests and promote dialogue that remain among Europe's major strengths. Cooperative engagement of states in preventing conflict and ensuring security proved to be more beneficial and efficient than individual, unilateral states' actions and interventions. Europe has witnessed a strong economic growth, but in recent years and due to new challenges, there is a need for stronger social cohesion not only on the continent but also within individual states.

This paper argues that the time has come to revisit the narrative of cooperation and mutual security in Europe by paying special attention to agency and dialogue as cornerstones of European identity. Policies and strategies are an expression of the polity and its agency which is constantly being constructed through the process of interaction between the state and the people. The leading question is: does the narrative of cooperation and dialogue in Europe live up to its ideals in the wake of the increased influx of

migrants and refugees? This narrative and its resulting agency will be explored in terms of how states improve when they learn and engage with each other in the context of an intergovernmental agency such as the OSCE, and how seriously they take dialogue as an investment in cooperative security and peace. The aim is to better understand the challenges to the pan-European narrative of mutual security and cooperation, so that the states that are actively participating in the European space can become aware of history in the making. Understanding this narrative provides insight into the behaviour of states as it is informed by their values and interests as well as learning from the past, awareness of the present realities and visioning the future.

Agency is the ability of state and non-state actors to find consensus and respond to a situation despite divergent interests and ideas (“response ability”). This paper specifically focuses on the OSCE as an intergovernmental supranational structure whose agency has been based on dialogue and cooperation from the early 1970s up to the present day. With its inclusive policies, it has been able to translate the past into the future by offering a fresh horizon for European security. The OSCE was the first security organization that conceived of, and adopted a concept of, comprehensive and cooperative security, which was confirmed throughout the organization’s history since the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. This unique approach to security has provided the OSCE with a policy toolbox, which is inclusive and flexible enough to deal with today’s challenges of peace and security in Europe. It is important to stress that its agency has resulted from keeping checks and balances and taking into account current trends and challenges. A peaceful and stable Europe requires revisiting the agency within the European narrative of integration, cooperation and security. When dialogue and consensus-building are challenged, there is a need for member states to become aware of their legacy and revisit their operating values.

Immigration as a Challenge to Peace and Security

One of the challenges to peace and security in Europe today is the increase in hostility towards migrants and the lack of consensus among member states on how to deal with migrant crises and the large influx of refugees from the Middle East, South- and Central Asia and Africa that started in 2015-16. The ongoing conflicts and refugee crises in several Asian and African countries increased the total number of forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2014 to almost 60 million, representing the highest

level since World War II. According to a Pew Research Center analysis of data from Eurostat,¹ around 1.3 million migrants applied for asylum in the 28 member states of the European Union, Norway and Switzerland in 2015 – nearly double the previous high mark of approximately 700,000 that was reached in 1992 after the end of the Cold War. While Eastern European countries like Kosovo and Albania also contribute to the overall flow of asylum seekers into the EU, Norway and Switzerland, about half of the refugees in 2015 came from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.²

According to the EU external border force Frontex, over 1,800,000 migrants have reached Europe in 2015.³ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that 328,225 migrants and refugees entered Europe by sea in 2016 through 23 October, arriving mostly in Greece and Italy.⁴ Most of them have been relocated in Germany, France and Spain, respectively. Considering very evident security concerns, Germany as one of the leading nations and the new chair of the OSCE, perceives migrants as an opportunity rather than just a challenge. Germany estimates its working age population will shrink by 6 million by 2030 as the number of deaths outstrips births, which will evidently affect the economy growth. The young immigrant population as part of the workforce could therefore provide a boost to the German economy. The most common jobs that immigrants hold are usually apprenticeships and jobs for which there are not enough applicants with the right qualifications. Such jobs usually do not appeal to the host population which prefers to look for better jobs. Many other European countries with a high percentage of older populations recognize this opportunity too.

However, some European states see immigrants as a burden, refuse to take part in joint programs related to immigration, build walls and pose other obstacles to accepting and/or helping immigrants. The divisions among European states are obvious as each country tries to protect its im-

¹ Phillip Connor, "Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015," Pew Research Center, August 2, 2016, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015>.

² Ibid.

³ See: "Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts," *BBC News*, 4 March 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>.

⁴ See: IOM, "Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals Reach 328,225; Deaths at Sea: 3,671," 25 October 2016, www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrant-arrivals-reach-328225-deaths-sea-3671.

mediate interests. However, responsibility cannot simply be ignored, and states cannot exist as islands, they are bound to dialogue and resolving pervasive problems together. The OSCE is well-positioned to fill the gap in terms of communication, consensus building and joint initiatives, and it can spearhead the narrative of cohesion based on the understanding that the state level initiatives alone cannot solve the many challenges posed by migration. The OSCE has been implementing its own initiatives with regards to migration, but the current crisis—which has weakened cohesion and dialogue among states—demands new and updated tools and strategies. Cooperation and dialogue among states are necessary and consensus building around a narrative of cohesion can contribute to joint action by member states. During times of divisions among member states, the OSCE has become an important agent for recreating dialogue, offering individual states not only its framework for mutual security, but also expertise in areas such as countering human trafficking, border management, and promotion of human rights and tolerance. Acting together and building regional and international coalitions to address large-scale problems such as migration could be a much needed step for finding sustainable solutions.

The OSCE, as an agent promoting cohesion, dialogue and mutual security, can also play a significant role in addressing the issue of divisive public discourses on migration in Europe by implementing programs that dispel rumours, collect factual information and promote tolerance. One of the biggest challenges to the integration of migrants is the danger of portraying them as a group whereby all of their complex individual identities are clustered into one single identity, which is then applied to the whole group. This is called *unitary trap*.⁵ Such classifications lead to misperceptions, faulty policies and divisions. If a whole group of people, in this case immigrants, is portrayed as dirty, criminal, and dangerous, it can hijack public discourse and lead it in a particular direction. For example, with the arrival of refugees from the Middle East, public discourse is full of warnings about immigrant youth portrayed not only as dangerous actors who may contribute to local crime, but also potential terrorists. While this is largely false, fears and negative perceptions of migrants have unfortunately been confirmed by several incidents. From the assaults on women during the 2015-2016 New Year celebration in Cologne to the most recent incident involving Jaber al-Bakr, a 22-year-old asylum seeker who investigators be-

⁵ Jolle Demmers, *Theories of Violent Conflict* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).

lieve may have links to the Islamic State and who had been planning to detonate a bomb in one of Berlin's airports. He was on the run for nearly two days until he was captured – by fellow Syrian refugees. The situation is not a black or white issue, and we need to be careful to avoid linking the failure to publicly address problems linked to immigration with racism and anti-immigration. The concerns of the population in host countries must be understood and taken very seriously as well.

Recently, there has been a lot of misinformation and the media has failed to explain to their citizens what is actually happening. Lack of communication has contributed to dividing European societies and leading to anti-immigrant sentiment, radicalization and xenophobia. Europeans have not been happy with how the EU has handled the influx of refugees. A spring 2016 Pew Research Center survey conducted across 10 EU member states shows that the majority of people disapproved of how the EU was dealing with the refugee issue.⁶ This was particularly evident in countries that accepted a large number of refugees and asylum seekers such as Greece and Sweden where approximately 90% of the population does not approve of their countries' decision to accept refugees. German citizens too showed major disapproval and so did French, British and Dutch citizens. The concerns of the host population were an increased likelihood of terrorists infiltrating among the incoming refugees as well as the economic burden that the newcomers may represent, taking away jobs and social benefits from the local population.

Another security challenge linked to the arrival of immigrants is the rise of radical nationalist right wing parties within EU member states. One characteristic of radicalized nationalists is organizing around anti-immigrant discourse and ideology, which consists of blaming refugees or immigrants for negative events occurring in a society. Refugees are placed outside the legal, moral and political order so that they can be excluded, objectified and eventually "kicked out." Such nationalist anti-immigrant movements and parties include Golden Dawn in Greece, the National Front in France, Movimiento Social Español in Spain and the British National Party in the UK. The Netherlands and Germany have also seen the rise of nationalist and right-wing movements directed against the so called "others" – immigrants, Muslims, the LGBTQ community, etc.

⁶ Bruce Stokes, Richard Wike, and Jacob Poushter, "Europeans Face the World Divided," Pew Research Center's Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, June 13, 2016, www.pewglobal.org/2016/06/13/europeans-face-the-world-divided/.

Such movements are feeding on economic instability and the scapegoating of the “others.” Radicalized narratives that are professed are aimed at destroying the public sphere, reducing the possibility of reflective judgments, spreading divisive language and, finally, the emergence of totalitarianism.⁷ Hate speech used by these movements is often based on falsehoods, misinformation and selection of information.

The Hoaxmap project, a successful initiative to track and deconstruct rumours and misinformation about refugees, has already been implemented in Germany.⁸ 358 rumours going back to 2013 have been collected, and these rumours provide some insight into the perceptions and fears of the host society toward immigrants. Almost two-thirds of rumours can be categorized around two types of crimes: some kind of theft or attempted theft, and some type of sexual assault or attempted sexual assault. While there were legitimate reports, the initiative has also shown that almost 76 reports concerning rape and sexual violence occurred in the two months following reports of the Cologne attacks. The rumours proliferated after the event confirm the fears of the host society.

The OSCE can play a vital role in supporting initiatives enabling open inquiry, transparency and verifiable data collection so that facts informing policy can be established. Having the right data and conducting an unbiased research will ensure the access to verifiable information, dispelling rumours and misinformation that feed the narrative about “dangerous immigrants.” Such initiatives could greatly contribute to a narrative of cohesion and dialogue, serving as a unifying platform through which OSCE member states could voice their concerns and be open to constructive solutions.

Misinformation, Housing and Education

The OSCE has been active in promoting various initiatives to facilitate the integration of migrants, to dispel misinformation and to fight hate crimes targeting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. According to the 1951 Convention related to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, individ-

⁷ Sara Cobb, *Innovations in International Negotiation: Implications for Narrative Landscapes*, International Seminar on Peace & Conflict Resolution, October 2013.

⁸ Alexios Mantzaris, “Hoaxmap is collecting debunked rumors about refugees,” *Poynter*, February 29, 2016, www.poynter.org/2016/hoaxmap-is-collecting-debunked-rumors-about-refugees/398137/.

uals that flee their homes to find sanctuary in another country have the right to be protected by the international community. The main provisions of the Convention are based on the principles of non-discrimination, non-penalization and non-refoulement, which forbid a country receiving asylum-seekers from returning them to a country where he or she faces serious threats to life or freedom, and cannot benefit from basic rights as the right to work, to education, housing, and freedom of movement within the territory.

In the Helsinki Final Act, the OSCE member states agreed “to facilitate freer movement and contacts ... and to contribute to the solution of humanitarian problems that arise.”⁹ The OSCE has since adopted a number of political declarations calling for joint action and urgent solutions such as the Resolution on the Situation in the Middle East and its Effect on the OSCE Area (2013); the Resolution on the Situation of Refugees in the OSCE Area (2014); and the Resolution Calling for Urgent Solutions to the Tragedy of Deaths in the Mediterranean (2015).¹⁰

Migration has increasingly been considered a security issue in terms of protecting human rights of incoming populations, their integration into host societies and a more humane approach to migration. The OSCE PA’s General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) have both been focusing on these issues. ODIHR has organized a fact-finding workshop in Warsaw on 11 December 2015 which focused on gaining insights into how different member states deal with challenges related to the migration and identifying good practices in this area. Such initiatives are imperative and their mainstreaming across Europe may be very beneficial for addressing the challenges related to migration.

One of the major challenges that OSCE member states face is the “integration” of immigrants into the host society while ensuring both the continuation of the host culture and the acceptance of immigrants into the new context. However, even as immigrants integrate into the host country, the “us” vs. “them” division still persists. The “othering process” is reflected in perceptions, discourses, attitudes, behaviours and interactions between

⁹ See: *Resolution on Calling for Urgent Solutions to the Tragedy of Deaths in the Mediterranean*, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Annual Session (Helsinki, 2015), www.oscepa.org/meetings/annual-sessions/2015-annual-session-helsinki/2015-helsinki-final-declaration/2292-17.

¹⁰ Ibid.

immigrants and the host society. Stereotyping, segregation and lack of intercommunal interactions highlight the divide which is particularly visible in the areas of education, housing and labour market. These are shared spaces in which host and immigrant communities both participate and often compete with each other. For example, a *Daily Mail* article stated that as much as half the social housing in England go to people born abroad.¹¹ After verifying the data, it was uncovered that only 9% of housing is occupied by immigrants while the remaining 91% is occupied by UK-born citizens.¹²

The research also helped debunk the idea that immigration leads to a rise in housing prices in the UK, showing that an increase of immigrants equal to 1% of the initial local population leads to a 1.7% reduction in house prices, based on immigration data from the Labor Force Survey.¹³ It is correct that the first generation of immigrants tends to live in fewer households, private renting and with extended families, but the longer they stay, the more they resemble indigenous households. Misinformation goes hand in hand with dismissive language in the public arena (“illegal,” “criminal,” “grabbing what’s ours”) feeding into the narrative of dangerous immigrants that need to be contained, excluded and kicked out.¹⁴ Transparency and verifiable data are necessary to dispel misinformation and to counteract anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Placing immigrants in separate housing areas also plays into the radical narrative of the dangerous “other” and reinforces divisions and tensions. In many countries, immigrants who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s have mostly been settled in specially designated suburbs. Segregation and radicalized narratives are intertwined – state sponsored segregation depends on stories about who the newcomers are, and why they must be separated (legally and physically). Such stories about immigrants are destructive as they are based on the process of othering. This process increases division between in-groups and out-groups by placing the “other” (immigrant) outside the political, moral and social order. A feeling of not

¹¹ Gerri Peev, “Revealed: How HALF of all social housing in parts of England goes to people born abroad,” *DailyMail*, April 15, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2130095/Calls-British-people-given-priority-social-housing-queue-revealed-foreigners-HALF-properties.html>.

¹² Filipa Sá, “Immigration and House Prices in the UK,” *The Economic Journal* 125, no. 587 (2015): 1393-1424.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Cobb, *Innovations in International Negotiation*.

belonging to the host society and of segregation, together with socio-economic disadvantage, has led to a series of riots taking place all over Europe.^{15,16}

For a long time, immigration has been considered a transient occurrence and immigrants were considered as people who came to work for a limited period of time and would eventually make their way back to their families and homelands. However, immigrants eventually have a family, buy property and claim the right to settle down in their host country. Immigrant children attend school and lack of integration of their parents becomes a significant challenge for the full integration of children and the adoption of the school curriculum. Residential segregation (immigrant suburbs) produces a significant challenge for the host society and this is also reflected in education where there is a disproportionate concentration of disadvantaged students in some schools.

Policy Recommendations

Education can represent a very important element for the integration not only of immigrant children but also of their parents and their communities. Special attention should be paid to underprivileged, overcrowded immigrant schools. Additional resources should be invested in the career incentives for qualified and motivated teachers and remedial courses for youth, etc. Some Western European countries, such as the UK and France, have invested in schools in order to overcome the educational gaps between immigrant and native students. It should be noted that ODIHR has been active in supporting civic orientation and language learning programs for migrant integration. It has also been instrumental in identifying anti-discrimination measures and combating intolerance and hate crimes.¹⁷

Paying attention to migrant education and housing is crucial for European peace and stability, especially now that Europe is faced with the largest refugee crisis since World War II and more than one million asylum-

¹⁵ "Riot erupts in French city centre," *BBC News*, 13 November 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4430540.stm>.

¹⁶ "Sweden Riots: Stockholm 'Back To Normal,' Say Police," *Agence France Presse*, 28 July 2013, www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/28/sweden-riots-stockholm-back-to-normal_n_3344543.html.

¹⁷ See: OSCE, "OSCE/ODIHR's regional expert workshop discusses good practices in migrant integration," 18 March 2016, <http://www.osce.org/odihr/228971>.

seekers have entered Europe in 2015-16. The work of ODIHR needs to be strengthened, especially the multilateral platform for dialogue among member states, which is an important step towards cohesion, consensus building and joint strategies.

Countering Extremism and Radicalization

The rise of extremism in Europe is often linked to the effects of large-scale immigration from North Africa and the Middle East over the past few decades and to problems related to their integration. The radicalization of Europe's diverse migrants, especially the second or third generation, has become a growing challenge for European security and peace. Radicalization manifests itself through widespread forms of protest as well as recruitment by extremist organizations. Some youth have been engaged in vandalism and riots, which further separated and identified immigrant suburbs as potentially dangerous, disorderly and outside of police control. Protests have been based on different kinds of grievances – from conservative Islamism that does not tolerate the depicting of Prophet Mohamed to economic reasons linked to the lack of opportunities and unemployment. For example, the 2005 urban unrest in France's immigrant suburbs were mostly motivated by a lack of opportunities for immigrant youth, combined with harsh policing, while the frequently violent street protests against Danish cartoons and Dutch films considered "anti-Islamic" were motivated by religious ideology. Immigrant riots and protests took place all over Europe – from Italy, Spain, and France to, more recently, Sweden.

Coercive responses and hard counterterrorism measures to suppress riots and vandalism may have temporarily contained extremism, but have not been able to address it properly. To address the problem, the root causes of extremist ideology and grievances must be analysed. The OSCE has developed an awareness-raising and capacity building program on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), which promotes a multi-dimensional approach to CVE and encourages multi-stakeholder collaboration. OSCE field operations have become engaged in communal initiatives and local programming of member states that can contribute to critical thinking, awareness-raising, respect for others, employment and vocational training, which may all contribute to creating a culture of peace and resistance to extremism. What communities are up against are economic marginalization and religious-turned-ideological dogmas that leave no space for critical thinking or debate. Indeed, totalitarian extremist ideologies can only be

challenged with critical thinking, problem-solving and dialogue as well as the creation of opportunities for disadvantaged immigrant youth.

OSCE member states have reaffirmed their commitment to exchanging ideas and best practices about their strategies and measures to counter violent extremism and radicalization that can lead to terrorism, with the aim to further enhance cooperation and joint activities.¹⁸ Some of the most important initiatives are focused on communities, youth, women, victims of terrorism, religious, cultural and education leaders, civil society, as well as the media that can play important roles in countering violent extremist narrative that incites terrorist acts. Building partnerships between educational institutions and the greater community, including business people, religious leaders and municipal authorities can help develop opportunities for young people to engage in activities in their communities, and create a sense of shared responsibility for their safety and development. Building effective partnerships is important for developing resilience to divisive strategies promoted by extremist groups. Within the primary and secondary school systems, building effective partnerships also means educating and supporting practitioners inside educational establishments by addressing issues such as faith, culture, and radical political thought. Religious and cultural community leaders, law enforcement officers, and topical experts have a vital role in providing the necessary support for the educational system whenever possible. The educational system, governmental and non-governmental organizations, businesses and religious institutions can all play an important role in facilitating community dialogue and strengthening the relationship between institutions and communities.

Policy Recommendations

The OSCE has put a particular focus on youth education and initiatives that include human rights, the environment, tolerance, and gender education as well as support for minorities in education. The implementation of programs for immigrants aimed at fostering inter-communal cooperation, countering extremism, conflict prevention, professional trainings and intellectual exchange needs to be strengthened and applied extensively. The

¹⁸ OSCE, *Ministerial Declaration on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that lead to Terrorism*, 4 December 2015, www.osce.org/cio/208216.

OSCE can be an important player in supporting and implementing such projects.

Such programs need to be inclusive of all community members including youth, parents, teachers, civil society and governmental representatives. Community members need to participate in curriculum development while paying attention to the interests and needs of youth. Safety in and outside schools as well as the set-up of an infrastructure for cooperation among students, families, and communities should be developed in a way that enables the transfer of lessons learned into the wider communal context. Initiatives and programs that support extracurricular activities such as sports, art, and theatre or community service can also contribute to countering extremism. Involving the broader community in activities such as vocational training, internships or town hall meetings requires the support of the private sector and the engagement of local authorities.

Proliferation of Criminalized Power Structures

Another key factor affecting peace and stability in Europe are criminalized power structures that have benefited and taken advantage of the influx of refugees and migrants in recent years. Criminalized power structures (CPS) are illicit networks that profit from illegal activities, black market transactions and corrupt state institutions while perpetuating a culture of impunity.¹⁹ With the refugee crisis that reached its peak in 2015-16, new criminal infrastructures have been built. Criminal organizations have made a profit of about \$6.75 billion a year on the misery and plight of refugees.²⁰ The smuggling of migrants by criminal structures has become a global issue, with many countries affected by it as origin, transit or destination points. Two of the main smuggling routes lead from East, North and West Africa to Europe; and from South America to North America. According to Europol, over 90 % of all migrants who enter the EU space use the migrant smuggling network throughout, or at least at some point during their journey. Migrant

¹⁹ Michael Dziedzic, ed., *Criminalized Power Structures: The Overlooked Enemies of Peace* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016).

²⁰ See: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Smuggling of migrants: the harsh search for a better life," accessed April 7, 2017, <https://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/migrant-smuggling.html>.

smuggling is a multi-national business, with suspects originating from more than 100 countries both inside and outside the EU.²¹

These criminal structures facilitate illegal crossings at land or sea borders, bypassing regulations, violating economic embargoes, manipulating exchange rates and making use of fraudulent travel and identity documents. Travelling conditions for immigrants are often dangerous and inhumane—they often travel in overcrowded trucks or boats—which leads to frequent fatal accidents. According to the IOM, around 3,700 migrants are estimated to have lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea between January and October 2016.²² At the beginning of 2016, Europol stated that at least 10,000 underage and unaccompanied refugees are missing in Europe with at least 5,000 children lost in Italy, 5,000 in Germany and 1,000 in Sweden.²³ It is believed that those children have likely become victims of human trafficking and child prostitution networks run by criminal structures.

In order to fight criminalized structures, it is important to understand the types of activities and strategies that they use. It is equally important to analyse how these structures function along the migration routes with more than 250 hotspots for migrant smuggling identified in and outside the EU. Since border controls have become stricter in many European countries, migrants tend to use people smugglers to get to Western Europe. Criminals working in such networks easily adapt to challenges and restrictions, and can easily change their routes and methods. Criminals are difficult to trace, as they are generally unknown to the people they smuggle; they also make use of rental vehicles and frequently change their identification documents and phone numbers.²⁴ The structures they use sustain themselves by economic transactions that violate either domestic or international law.

²¹ See: Interpol, “People smuggling,” accessed April 7, 2017, www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Trafficking-in-human-beings/People-smuggling.

²² IOM, “Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals Reach 328,225; Deaths at Sea: 3,671.”

²³ Emran Feroz, “Thousands of Refugee Children Have Gone Missing In Europe as Criminal Networks Exploit the Migration Crisis,” *AlterNet*, October 11, 2016, <http://www.alternet.org/grayzone-project/thousands-refugee-children-have-gone-missing-europe-criminal-networks-exploit>.

²⁴ Interpol, “People smuggling.”

Policy Recommendations

To uphold common values of mutual security, inclusiveness and cooperation of all European states, actors such as the OSCE must play a prominent role in supporting states to acquire capacity to fight criminalized structures. With an increased number of displaced and vulnerable migrants being smuggled and trafficked from conflict-stricken areas to Europe, the 2015 OSCE Annual Police Experts Meeting focused on best practices in the field of cooperation between law enforcement and judicial authorities as well as with other relevant structures.²⁵ In recent years, as a result of the conflicts that emerged in Africa and the Middle East, the OSCE area has seen millions of irregular migrants that have been systematically targeted by networks of smugglers and criminals.²⁶ Countering this type of criminal activity has become a priority for the OSCE. The organization has a clear mandate to address trafficking in human beings in a comprehensive way. This is clearly stated in the OSCE 2003 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, its 2013 Addendum, and in the 2012 OSCE Strategic Framework for Police-Related Activities.²⁷

There is a need to support OSCE member countries in border management and crisis response issues through training, providing new technologies and capacity-building. Access to verifiable data and measurements identifying the most serious deficiencies that law enforcement agencies face with regards to criminalized structures is necessary for developing an adequate plan of action. The OSCE can greatly contribute to strengthening cooperation between criminal justice systems of its member states and to developing strategies to counteract criminal structures.

Conclusion

Europe can expect more migrants coming from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq in the near future. Many of the migrants coming to Europe will be granted refugee status and stay in the host country. This will require swift and thoughtful action for creating more sustainable and healthier relationships

²⁵ “OSCE Annual Police Experts Meeting focuses on links between smuggling of migrants, human trafficking and organized crime,” Belgrade, 28 May 2015, <http://www.osce.org/cio/160546>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

between immigrants and host communities. It is important to revisit the concepts, policies and programs related to housing, education, and combating radicalization, criminalized structures and misinformation that will contribute to the pan-European narrative of mutual security and cooperation.

Today, tensions and conflicts between host and immigrant communities cannot be clearly understood and resolved unless the underlying political and economic factors are adequately addressed. Europe, the OSCE and individual states consistently try to adapt to the rapidly changing social setting. Awareness of our evolving reality, together with ability of various actors to respond are key for successful policy implementation. When dealing with the current refugee crisis, there has to be a commitment to legality and human rights as the basis for agency and policy implementation.

European states must work together and share the burden of distributing the large number of migrants according to their size, growth and implemented policies. This will allow for an easy integration of present and future migrants. The burden cannot solely be carried by just some nations while others restrict the access to their borders. OSCE leadership is important in facilitating dialogue among states able to contribute to a smoother integration and implementation of new policies on crisis management. Although there is no guarantee for success, we can expect that the continued large inflows of refugees and asylum seekers will overstretch the collective capacity of Europe to respond effectively. The change in the economic and political landscape as well as the security situation also play major roles in shaping the conditions for coping with the crisis.

In the wake of Brexit and polarization within Europe, the OSCE can yet again take a prominent role in contributing to a learning process and creating a more unified and coherent European narrative that can provide the blueprint for policy and action. Such a narrative should include lessons learned from the past and the recognition of current challenges in the spirit of the Old Continent's legacy of openness, cooperation and peace.

European Security II: How to Return to a Real Dialogue in the OSCE?

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“European security is in crisis.”¹ The opening sentence of the final report of the 2015 Panel of Eminent Persons is at least as accurate now as it was then. The crisis “in and around Ukraine”, as the established euphemism goes for something that for most of the time is nothing short of war, has alerted Europeans to an even bigger one. The stakes are high: the very sustainability of the security order that was painstakingly constructed and upheld over decades is at risk. During the past three years, much ink has been spilled about this state of affairs. Yet an honest appraisal reveals that not much progress has been made in improving it.

This short article focuses on the role of dialogue in improving European security. Dialogue alone does not get us out of the present impasse, but breaking this deadlock without dialogue is highly unlikely, too. The purpose of this article is to spark discussion about the nature of that dialogue. Ideally, it will encourage the reader to think creatively about the future of European security.

Simply reciting, reproducing and recycling agreed language in conventional OSCE talk would not be conducive to achieving that goal. Instead, this article consciously attempts to take an outside view. It proceeds by first deconstructing its own title and taking a critical look at the notions of “return,” “dialogue” and “OSCE,” before concluding with a couple of suggestions on how to achieve that goal.

¹ OSCE, *Back to Diplomacy*, Final Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project, 3 December 2015, www.osce.org/networks/205846.

The Return to a Real Dialogue?

In today's Europe one often hears nostalgic views of the *status quo ante*. When the continent is faced with an ongoing "poly-crisis" (a concept coined by Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission), the tendency to hark back to ostensibly simpler times is certainly understandable. In 2017, there seems to be disruption everywhere. In the midst of such uncertainty, "the way things used to be before" has a natural appeal to responsible policymakers, analytical experts, ruthless populists and concerned citizens alike.

Consciously or inadvertently, this often occurs in the OSCE context as well. I was commissioned to write a paper discussing the "return" to a real dialogue. The Panel of Eminent Persons in its final report calls for going "back" to diplomacy. But what exactly is the golden age of dialogue and diplomacy we would like to return to? Was there a particular moment in the existence of the OSCE during the two decades following the Cold War when dialogue was at its finest? Or are we rather talking about the two decades before that, the conference predecessor of the organisation in the 1970s and 1980s, as an example of a dialogue that functioned despite Cold War tensions?

In this regard, it is perhaps interesting to track the references to "dialogue" in the key CSCE documents. In the 1975 Helsinki Final Act the word "dialogue" itself appears in the document only one single time, referring to the dialogue of CSCE participants with non-participating Mediterranean states.² The 1990 Charter of Paris makes just two uses of the word. In the first instance, it is again directed outwards, in the context of a desire for Europe "to be a source of peace, open to dialogue and to co-operation with other countries." It is only in the second mention in the Paris document that we get to the concept of dialogue between participating states: "Our common efforts to consolidate respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, to strengthen peace and to promote unity in Europe require a new quality of political dialogue and co-operation and thus development of the structures of the CSCE."³

In practice, of course, no conference worth its name can function without dialogue, and the CSCE was no exception in this regard. It can also be argued that the better dialogue functions, the less there is a need to talk

² *Helsinki Final Act* (1975), <http://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act>.

³ *Charter of Paris for a New Europe* (1990), <http://www.osce.org/mc/39516>.

about it. But while dialogue was certainly embedded in the spirit of the CSCE, in the key documents of the original conference the main emphasis was elsewhere: in the commitment of all participating states to the principles they had all agreed to.

In terms of explicit references to dialogue, its value between the participating states themselves as something important in its own right was only discovered in the early 1990s. It was not until the Helsinki CSCE summit in 1992 that the heads of states finally placed dialogue in the forefront of the establishment of their conference which later transformed into an organisation: “The CSCE is a forum for dialogue, negotiation and co-operation, providing direction and giving impulse to the shaping of the new Europe.”⁴

Superficial as this brief historical excursion to the founding documents may seem, the point of the exercise is simply to show that the present understanding of the CSCE/OSCE as a platform for dialogue has evolved over time. What has remained unchanged, by contrast, is the role of the OSCE as the guardian of the principles of security and cooperation in Europe.

Against this backdrop, the formulation in the title of the 2016 German chairmanship programme, calling for “renewing” dialogue, may be useful in the longer term as well.⁵ Instead of only reconnecting with history and looking back, we might indeed need to improve existing mechanisms and innovate new ways in which dialogue could work in the new context of the OSCE space. There has been a lot of talk about avoiding “business as usual” in the context of blatant violations of core OSCE principles. Something that has been mentioned far less, is the likelihood that we may indeed have started a period of unusual business. Finding ways of maintaining dialogue without giving up on the core principles and commitments of the OSCE requires creativity and innovation. What is required is indeed “something new,” instead of just old and borrowed habits.

Dialogue?

Even in times of severe hostility among states, and perhaps particularly in those times, the inherent value of dialogue between all actors involved

⁴ *CSCE Helsinki Document* (1992), <http://www.osce.org/mc/39530?download=true>.

⁵ *Renewing Dialogue, Rebuilding Trust, Restoring Security*, The priorities of the German OSCE Chairmanship, 14 January 2016, www.osce.org/cio/215791.

should not be underestimated. Resisting the temptation of complete isolation of conflicting parties and simply keeping the channels of communication open is an important investment for the future, no matter how distant the resolution of a current conflict may seem. However, if one looks at the Oxford English Dictionary definition of the word, dialogue can also be understood as something with a much clearer objective: “a discussion between two or more people or groups, especially one directed towards exploration of a particular subject or resolution of a problem.”

In the OSCE context, understanding when and why “discussion”, “exploration” and “resolution” are used may seem confusing. In this regard, the priorities of the 2016 German chairmanship were a case in point. In the German programme, dialogue was used somewhat interchangeably between its various functions in at least four different ways. First, it is described as a general means to a general end, intended to regaining trust and restoring security. Second, dialogue is understood as something that the OSCE as a forum needs to safeguard, as a value in itself. Third, it is considered as a way to explore pan-European security issues, as initial steps towards more substantive discussions to be opened in due course. Finally, dialogue is also used to describe concrete negotiations aimed at managing and resolving the conflicts that are threatening the security order.

Depending on the nature of the dialogue pursued, the required approaches can vary significantly. The difficult delineation between openness and confidentiality is just one example. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. And the question of size really is important, since another key issue with dialogue has to do with its participants. How inclusive should the dialogue be? Who should be involved? Are we talking military to military, diplomat to diplomat, or politician to politician? What about the private sector, NGOs, civil society and individual citizens? Recent examples of referendums have not been very encouraging in that respect, but in an era of the often cited “empowerment of the individual” inclusiveness may, at least in some questions, need to begin to mean something else than just convening the official representatives of all participating states of the OSCE.

By definition, a dialogue requires the participation of at least two parties. Beyond that, there are probably circumstances and issues where 57 is not the optimal number. Sometimes, expanding the number of actors helps, sometimes reduction is called for. Starting with smaller groups can be conducive to solutions if the aim of the dialogue really is to resolve the major issues of contention within and outside the OSCE space. If the main objective is broader, that is to simply keep the discussion going, despite

conflicting views, including all of the participating states is arguably the best solution. And, as suggested in the original CSCE documents, there are numerous issues that call for the inclusion of actors outside the OSCE.

Regardless of the type and number of actors involved in the dialogue, one feature always remains: the more solution-oriented the dialogue aims to be, the more important the role of political will. Indeed, in the absence of a genuine political will from all sides, not much can be achieved at all. This was apparent in the work of the Panel of Eminent Persons, the mandate of which began with the objective described as follows: "(...) to prepare the basis for an inclusive and constructive security dialogue across the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions". Preparing the basis is one thing; achieving a constructive dialogue is quite another.

This also has important repercussions on the three pillars that are dialogue, trust and security as highlighted by the 2016 German chairmanship programme. It should not only be understood as a simple sequence where dialogue comes first, followed by trust and security. More often than not, some degree of trust and security is required for any meaningful dialogue. Progress needs to be achieved simultaneously in all these three interconnected fields.

The OSCE?

As is the case with most international institutions working on maintaining global order, the OSCE is a construct which would be close to impossible to create now if it did not already exist. In general terms, the highest priority of the OSCE is the maintenance of security through abiding by principles, commitments, norms and values. The system upholding this order is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end. In the European context, however, the security order and the organisation safeguarding the principles underpinning that order are inextricably linked. We would sorely miss the OSCE if it were not there.

Importantly, its ability to serve as a forum for political dialogue has been a major factor in ensuring the OSCE's survival and evolution into its fifth decade of existence. To this end alone, making sure that we still have an OSCE whenever the overall atmosphere again becomes more suitable for cooperative security, continuing the dialogue in the OSCE framework is worth all the energy put into it.

However, the exceptional role of the OSCE as a dialogue platform does not come without paradoxes. First, decision-making by consensus is

the very characteristic enabling dialogue about difficult issues in the first place, but it makes the organisation powerless whenever one of the participating states decides to block decisions. Second, the Russian annexation of Crimea and the persistent fighting in Eastern Ukraine has increased its relevance, but at the same time made real dialogue in Vienna even more complicated than before. Lastly, the preconditions for dialogue in the OSCE largely depend on events outside its remit – the devastating war in Syria being the most recent and extreme example.

Is the OSCE the right organisation for real dialogue on European security then? When it comes to actually solving many of the most difficult underlying problems, the answer would probably have to be negative. Since the OSCE can only do as much as its participating states allow it to, the big issues blocking the way forward have to be dealt with elsewhere, and in other forms. Without some sort of rapprochement between Russia and the West in general—something that at the very least requires clear advancement in a negotiated solution to the Syrian and Ukrainian conflicts alike—no breakthroughs in dialogue within the OSCE can be expected. Whether it be Russia or the United States, Turkey or Britain, the foreign-policy directions currently taken by major states in internal turmoil will need to be clarified more generally before they can be reasonably expected to deliver in the Hofburg.

That is not to say, however, that all dialogue in the OSCE should be put on hold in the meantime. Quite on the contrary, the OSCE, through its participating states, should continue to be persistent in seeking to engage each other in all the three functions of dialogue referred to above: discussion, exploration and resolution. If used in its full spectrum, ranging from low-key maintenance of communication, through openly addressing violations of principles, to more ambitious attempts at conflict resolution, the continuity of the dialogue conducted under the auspices of the OSCE is perhaps its most important asset. Without continuity of dialogue, the OSCE will in the long run prove incapable of fulfilling its objective: defending the principles and commitments on which the European security order is based. Something else might replace both the OSCE and the security order itself, but it would hardly be a change for the better.

How?

Based on the reflections above, this article concludes with a few thoughts on steps that might help pave the way for a real dialogue on European se-

curity in the OSCE. Instead of listing obvious big-picture prerequisites for, and hindrances standing in the way of such a dialogue, the four following suggestions seek to address issues that could be realistically attempted within the OSCE.

First, in terms of resolution of problems, the OSCE should not shy away from addressing protracted conflicts within its own borders. Despite the obvious complexities of these problems, succumbing to fatality would mean putting at risk the very credibility of the entire organisation. Instead of attempting to tackle all the conflicts with the same intensity, it might be useful for the OSCE to pick its battles. Whether it is the Minsk Group and Nagorno-Karabakh, the 5+2 talks and Transnistria or the Geneva International Discussions and Georgia, the OSCE should choose one where they think the prospects of success are highest. And then they should make a genuine, long-term push for a sustainable solution, with the necessary amount of political capital invested in the effort.

Second, in exploring subjects for future negotiations, the recent German initiative for a new start on arms control in Europe is an excellent example of the right level of audacity and ambition. In the midst of rapidly increasing insecurity in Europe, both real and perceived, a genuine dialogue requires bold suggestions rather than just minor, bottom-up approaches. The OSCE and its participating states need to be able to show their citizens that the issues that cause the most insecurity are taken seriously. For example, another potential topic for a big OSCE-wide exploration effort could be preventing violent extremism (PVE).

Third, the OSCE should think creatively about new dialogue methods aimed at defending and improving a cooperative security order in Europe, and doing so by including the broader public. Much important work is currently being carried out in the human dimension, but have we really exhausted all options that modern technology of the 2010s offers? Despite the risks associated with information warfare and distortion of reality, would it be possible to engage a significantly larger number of people living in the OSCE space into a genuine online dialogue about European security? Rather than a one-off campaign, this would need to be something more sustainable, a permanent virtual platform composed of citizens and with the purpose of defending national minorities, democratic institutions, human rights, and media freedom alike.

Finally, in setting the current crisis in its long-term context, the OSCE could facilitate a broad expert dialogue on the wildly divergent national history narratives. The differences in the narratives concerning the

past 25 years are particularly dramatic, and they have a direct impact on the current tensions and conflicts. Instead of unrealistically aiming at a consensus narrative, the objective of such a dialogue would be an increased understanding of each other's perceptions and interpretations, whether sincere or manipulated. Indirectly, taking a look back would also help take a look forward. European security is likely to be in crisis for quite some time to come. Historical awareness is a helpful means in developing the patience required for dialogue in such circumstances.

Revitalizing Conventional Arms Control in Europe

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A New Political Momentum towards Reinvigorating Conventional Arms Control in Europe

The need to restore conventional arms control in Europe has regained highest political attention. At the end of August 2016, the German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier proposed to re-launch a structured dialogue leading to new negotiations on revitalizing conventional arms control in Europe. To that end, he proposed five areas for new agreements:

- 1) Regional ceilings, minimum geographical distances and transparency measures, especially in militarily-sensitive areas such as the Baltic region
- 2) Taking into account new military capabilities (such as transport) and strategies
- 3) Integrating new weapon systems (e.g. drones)
- 4) Effective verification which is rapidly deployable, flexible and workable in crisis
- 5) Applicability in disputed territories.

The minister also stated that the OSCE was a pertinent forum for such dialogue (though not the only one).¹

On this conceptual basis, a “Group of likeminded states” that supports this proposal and chaired by Germany has been established. Having met three times, the group issued its first formal statement on 25 Novem-

¹ Frank-Walter Steinmeier, “Mit Rüstungskontrolle Vertrauen schaffen,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26 August 2016, p. 8.

ber 2016 calling for initiating a structured dialogue leading to new negotiations on conventional arms control. It was signed by 14 European states.² In consequence, revitalizing conventional arms control in Europe also figured high on the agenda of the OSCE Ministerial Conference, which took place under German chairmanship on 8-9 December 2016 in Hamburg.

Despite controversial views, the OSCE reached consensus on a carefully crafted declaration that renewed the commitment of participating states to the importance of conventional arms control and confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs) for advancing comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security in the OSCE area. States recognized that full implementation and further development of arms control agreements was essential for enhancing military and political stability within the OSCE area and welcomed the launching of a structured dialogue that could serve as a common basis for a way forward.³

A Stability Gap: The Need to Restore Conventional Arms Control in Europe

The new discussion on how to revive conventional arms control has started during the worst security crisis in Europe since the end of the Cold War. The development of diverging narratives about its causes as well as contradicting perceptions of the political intent behind changing force postures and military activities of the Russian Federation and NATO countries have poisoned the political atmosphere and led to a sense of confrontation. Increased military activities, large military manoeuvres and snap exercises without prior notification in border areas as well as reconnaissance flights and show of force in international sea and air space have fuelled new threat

² “Erklärung der Außenminister der Gruppe der Gleichgesinnten zur Unterstützung des Neubeginns auf dem Gebiet der konventionellen Rüstungskontrolle in Europa,” *Auswärtiges Amt Pressemitteilung*, 25 November 2016.

³ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Council, *From Lisbon to Hamburg: Declaration on the Twentieth Anniversary of the OSCE Framework for Arms Control* (MC.DOC/4/16), Hamburg, 9 December 2016 (MC(23) Journal no. 2, Agenda item 7).

perceptions. They also harbour the risk of misjudgement and escalation resulting from brinkmanship and unintended hazardous incidents.⁴

In this tense situation the lack of cooperative security measures is painfully felt. At the same time, any attempt to modernize cooperative instruments is closely linked to the development of the overall security situation in Europe. A structured dialogue on the wider politico-military context, the causes of tensions, the courses of political and military action and possible measures to overcome new threat perceptions must therefore precede concrete negotiations on new instruments. In this context, one should recognize that the pillars of the European security order as agreed in the 1990s—principles and instruments of strategic restraint and security cooperation—have been eroding for more than a decade before the Ukraine conflict started.

Today, such cooperative security instruments are either missing or not suited to stabilize the situation, deescalate tensions and fence off conflicts. This is particularly true for conventional arms control. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)⁵—labelled the “*cornerstone of European security*”—has become inadequate to stabilize a changing security landscape in Europe, which was caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and the Warsaw Pact, the following territorial conflicts between successor states and non-state entities and the ensuing enlargement of NATO. Attempts to adapt the CFE Treaty in 1999 or restart conventional arms control from scratch (2010/11) failed.

After 2002, NATO’s continued enlargement towards Eastern Europe and the Caucasus ceased to be embedded in cooperative arms control concepts while the OSCE objective to create a security space without dividing

⁴ Cf. Ian Kearns, Lukasz Kulesa, and Thomas Frear, *Russia – West Dangerous Brinkmanship continues*, European Leadership Network, March 2015. www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/russia-west-deangerous-brinkmanship-continues_2529.html.

⁵ Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, www.osce.org/library/14087, signed on 19 November 1990 and entered into force on 9 November 1992 with 29 states parties. The split of the Czech and Slovak Republics brought the number of states parties to 30 (Prague Agreement, 12 January 1993).

lines and geopolitical competition fell into oblivion. When the Baltic states joined NATO in 2004, for the first time in history after the Cold War NATO defence commitments covered a territory directly bordering Russia, which was not subject to legally binding arms limitations and allowed for potentially unrestricted force deployments. After the “CFE Eastern Group” countries’ Romania and Bulgaria acceded to NATO, the US established “joint military facilities” there in 2006, and the CFE flank rules became irrelevant in the Black Sea region. According to CFE treaty rules, the new NATO countries should have coordinated their keeping of a military balance against “Western Group” NATO countries within “Eastern Group” states including Russia.

The U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty (2001) and the build-up of strategic missile defence, allied interventions without or beyond approval by the UN Security Council (1999, 2003, 2011), the recognition of the independence of Kosovo from Serbia (2008) and the Georgian offensive operation against South Ossetia and Russian peacekeepers in 2008 added to Moscow’s suspicion that the U.S. had launched another geopolitical zero-sum game at the detriment of Russian security interest. Having ratified the CFE Adaptation Agreement⁶ (ACFE) in 2004 Russia suspended the “old” CFE Treaty in December 2007 while NATO continued linking ratification to Russia’s prior fulfilment of “all Istanbul Commitments.”

Such prioritization was a deliberate policy rather than a mutually agreed sequence of action enshrined in the CFE Final Act.⁷ On the contrary,

⁶ *Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe*, in *OSCE Istanbul Summit 1999 (Istanbul Document)*. (PCOEW389), ed. OSCE (Istanbul OSCE, January 2000), pp. 118-234. The agreement was signed by all (30) CFE States Parties on 19 November 1999 but ratified only by Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

⁷ The ACFE was complemented by a Final Act, which contained a number of political commitments of States Parties and the OSCE beyond the legally binding provisions of the CFE Adaptation Agreement. They referred to restraint of NATO and the Russian Federation as to stationing additional combat troops, lowering the territorial ceilings of new NATO Member States and conditioned withdrawal of Russian stationed forces from Abkhazia and Trans-Dniester. Final Act of the Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in

early ratification of the ACFE was in itself a main commitment, which was only recognised by NATO member states in summer 2007 when Russia had threatened to suspend the CFE Treaty. Furthermore, the exact meaning of Russia's Istanbul commitments was contested even within the alliance. Some Western European states held that Russian peacekeepers operating under a CIS mandate which was recognised by the OSCE and the UN did not fall under the Russian commitment to withdraw stationed armed forces from Georgia and Moldova. In consequence, the CFE Adaptation Agreement—a treaty of strategic significance—failed over a dispute on the presence of 200 Russian peacekeepers in the Abkhaz town of Gudauta and a half-emptied ammunition depot in the Trans-Dniester region (Kolbasna) with a few hundred lightly armed guards.

On the other hand, Russia's support for separatist movements in break-away regions of post-Soviet states, the military intervention in Georgia and the recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2008 fuelled fears of Eastern European neighbours which were deeply rooted in history. Subsequently, they requested visible defence commitments by NATO member states. The Ukraine crisis rekindled such security concerns and seems to confirm long-standing distrust against Russia's policies which are regarded as revisionist and a direct threat to neighbouring countries, given that Moscow had annexed territory of Ukraine and justified military intervention by invoking "responsibility to protect" Russian minorities.

During the Wales Summit in September 2014, NATO therefore decided to reassure allies by improving its crisis response capabilities and stationing small elements of combat and air defence units. NATO's Warsaw Summit in July 2016 added decisions to enhance the "forward" presence of allied forces at NATO's eastern flank and, to that end, station four reinforced battalion-sized battle groups, i.e. one each in the Baltic States and

Europe. See: OSCE, ed., *OSCE Istanbul Summit 1999 (Istanbul Document)*. (PCOEW389) OSCE Istanbul, January 2000, pp. 235-251, in particular p. 236 (with reference to paragraph 19 of the OSCE Summit Declaration), Annex 13 (p. 250) and Annex 14 (p. 251).

Poland, on a rotational basis.⁸ The stationing of a further multinational brigade in Romania and Bulgaria is envisaged.

In NATO's interpretation, these decisions did not contradict the NATO-Russia Founding Act (1997) where NATO committed not to permanently station additional substantial combat troops.⁹ This commitment was undertaken in context of the envisaged CFE Adaptation Agreement that aimed at territorial ceilings for every state party. However, on a bilateral basis, the U.S. has deployed material stockpiles in Eastern European NATO member states worth of another combat brigade, including 250 armoured combat vehicles, and envisages to pre-deploy equipment for one additional combat brigade in Central Europe. Such stockpiles would be activated through regular exercises for most of the year.

In turn, Russia is currently enhancing the presence of forces along the Russian-Ukrainian border. Moreover, both sides have significantly increased the number and size of military exercises including Russian large-scale snap exercises that cannot be verified by CFE or ACFE mechanisms and also to a large extent, escape the transparency rules of the Vienna Document. Consequently, in the most sensitive areas of renewed tensions, stabilizing limitations as well as the intrusive (A)CFE information and verification regime are missing given that NATO member states have not ratified the ACFE, Russia has suspended the CFE Treaty and the Baltic States have not acceded to either ACFE or CFE. This development should not be ignored when concentrating only on the improvement ("*modernization*") of the Vienna Document in order to fill the transparency gap that was caused by the failure to secure and enhance conventional arms control.

It is in this context of growing tensions and mutual threat perceptions that arms control is most needed and at the same time most difficult

⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization: *Warsaw Summit Communiqué, issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016*. In Press Release (2016) 100 Issued on 9 July 2016; updated 03 August 2016.

⁹ NATO/Russian Federation: *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation*. Paris, 27 May 1997, www.nato.int/cps/en/natolife/official_texts_25468.htm.

to achieve. Against this backdrop, it might be helpful to recall that arms control was initiated during the Cold War confrontation in Europe, i.e., in an even less promising environment. Nevertheless, conventional arms control—together with the Charter of Paris¹⁰—developed into one of the pillars of a new cooperative security order that replaced Europe’s political divisions and military confrontation. This was possible because both sides had the political will to cooperate and agree on a limitation, information and verification regime that responded to the politico-military needs of the time.

To reflect such needs, the CFE Treaty had a clear purpose, namely, to ensure reciprocal strategic restraint with the objective of eliminating conventional disparities and offensive capabilities in the context of alliance operations that dominated the European security situation at the time. The treaty provided for an equality of numbers of important weapon categories (Treaty Limited Equipment, or TLE¹¹) in the area of application between the Atlantic and the Urals, further limited such numbers in defined geographical sub-zones, and maintained a geographical distance between NATO and Russia. Its successful implementation significantly enhanced stability and security in Europe: it led to the reduction of more than 60,000 TLE on both sides, with Russia and Germany carrying most of the disarmament burden. The improved security landscape allowed for reform of military forces in Europe entailing further voluntary reductions with an estimated amount of an additional 40,000 TLE.

It might also be useful to recall why the CFE Treaty unravelled and what lessons should be learned to avoid another failure. After the turn of

¹⁰ “*Charta von Paris für ein Neues Europa vom 21.11.1990*,” in Auswärtiges Amt (Hrsg.): *Von der KSZE zur OSZE. Grundlagen, Dokumente, Texte zum deutschen Beitrag 1993-1997*, pp. 103-133. With the Charter of Paris CSCE participating States committed to security cooperation based on international law, the principles enshrined in the CSCE Final Act of 1975 (“Helsinki Principles”), common norms and standards as to the development of democracy and rule of law and strategic restraint assured by arms control and CSBM.

¹¹ Treaty Limited Equipment: battle tanks; armoured combat vehicles; artillery systems; combat aircraft; attack helicopters (cf. CFE Treaty, Article II, Definitions).

the new millennium, the CFE Treaty lost its purpose and did not keep pace with the evolving security environment. The more NATO's enlargement in Central and Eastern Europe advanced, the less the CFE limitation regime, with its obsolete bloc-to-bloc approach was in line with actual security needs, even if "*maximum national levels of holdings*" agreed within the two groups of states parties and intrusive information and verification rules still retained residual value in ensuring accountability for military holdings and predictability of defence capabilities.

The case of the CFE regional limitation regime might illustrate the growing gap between CFE concepts and the evolving reality: From 1999 onwards only NATO member states have been represented in the CFE Central Region; however, according to treaty rules they still belong to both the "Western" and "Eastern" Group of States Parties which are to maintain a military balance with each other while directly bordering the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad which belongs to another CFE sub-region.¹² That is why all CFE States Parties signed the CFE Adaptation Agreement in 1999 (ACFE). It was intended to replace obsolete bloc limitations by national and territorial ceilings for every state party and open the agreement for accession by all OSCE participating states with territory or stationed forces in the area of application.

However, for some states, arms control had become less urgent and was deemed an element of political bargaining rather than a pillar of common security. So, ratification procedures were made subject to achieving further political ends. In consequence, the ACFE failed and the bloc limitation regime of the "old" CFE Treaty became progressively irrelevant the more NATO extended eastwards. As a result, in the current crisis over Ukraine and with a new sense of direct NATO-Russia confrontation in the Baltic and Black Sea region, a meaningful measure of military restraint that is so urgently needed is missing.

¹² CFE Treaty, Article IV, No. 4.

A Transparency Gap: The Need to Modernize the Vienna Document

Against this backdrop, the lack of transparency hitherto provided by the CFE Treaty has been widely deplored. However, although the alliance has confirmed its commitment to conventional arms control in principle, it could not reach consensus so far to re-launch another process to revitalize it. Instead, in its Warsaw summit in July 2016, the alliance embraced OSCE efforts to *modernize* the Vienna Document in order to fill the transparency gap left by a flawed policy on conventional arms control.¹³

Given the important differences between the Vienna Document and the CFE Treaty there are good reasons to caution against replacing conventional arms control by an enhanced Vienna Document:

- The legally binding CFE Treaty aims at a bipolar balance of forces among 30 NATO and post-Soviet countries (in their political and military structures of 1990-92) within an area of application between the Atlantics and the Urals. Its core building blocks consist of overall and sub-regional group limitations as well as intrusive information obligations and verification rights together with a wide scope of armaments and equipment that are limited by, or subject to, the treaty.
- In the case of the politically binding Vienna Document, all 57 OSCE participating states enjoy political ownership within an area of application that also includes Central Asia while in both cases North America, Russia beyond the Urals, the south-eastern part of Turkey and Mongolia are all excluded. Most importantly, the Vienna Doc-

¹³ Cf. NATO, *Active engagement, modern defence. Strategic concept for the defence and security of members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization adopted by the heads of state and government in Lisbon*. No. 4, pp. 16ff., 26, 33, 34. Lisbon, 2010, www.nato.int/cps/natolive/official_texts_68580.htm; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Warsaw Summit Communiqué. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016*, No. 69, Press Release (2016) 100, 9 July 2016; updated 03 August 2016.

ument does not provide for limitations and, compared to the CFE, entails less intrusive transparency rules with a limited scope only.

Like the CFE Treaty in 1990, the Vienna Document¹⁴ also responded to the security needs of the time by envisaging major alliance operations and addressing the need to prevent large-scale exercises from being turned into offensive cross-border operations. In this context, threshold values were agreed for notification and observation of unusual military activities. However, given today's operational needs in a fragmented security landscape with smaller forces and new territorial conflicts, such threshold values are too high and the scope of forces covered too limited.¹⁵ For instance, head-quarter, communication and logistical units, internal security and armed police forces, ministries of interior backed by militias or by non-state actors and even non-active combat forces which could be mobilized in times of tension are not covered by the document.¹⁶

Furthermore, only troops exercising under one single command in pursuance of a common operational purpose are subject to notification and observation requirements once they exceed the thresholds within the area of application. Snap exercises above such thresholds are only subject to notification if they exceed a duration of 72 hours. They are not subject to the usual advance notifications (42 days) if troops involved are not to be informed prior to the alert.¹⁷ Consequently, snap exercises need to be notified only once troops involved commence their activities. It is not the for-

¹⁴ *Vienna Document on Confidence and Security Building Measures 2011.* www.osce.org/fsc/86597.

¹⁵ According to Chapter V of the Vienna Document, military activities have to be notified if they involve at least 9,000 personnel or 250 battle tanks (BT), 500 armored combat vehicles (ACV), 250 artillery systems (Art) or 200 aircraft sorties; or 3,000 personnel for amphibious or heliborne landing or parachute assault operations. According to Chapter VI, threshold values for observation are 13,000 personnel or 300 BT, 500 ACV, 250 Art or 3,500 personnel in case of amphibious or heliborne landing or parachute assault operation.

¹⁶ Vienna Document 2011, Chapter I on scope of information obligations.

¹⁷ Vienna Document 2011, Chapter V, VI, no. (40), (44.1), (47.1).

mal breach of agreed rules but its rigid interpretation by Russia that causes concerns with neighbouring countries, particularly in times of crisis. In other words, sequential or parallel exercises in different locations cannot be verified even if all troops involved at certain phases (not just notifiable combat and combat support forces in active service) sum up to figures above thresholds.

While the CFE Treaty allows inspecting 15 % of all verification objects per annum (ACFE: 20 %), the Vienna Document's low number of quota for regular inspections and evaluation visits constitutes another shortcoming. It provides only for one evaluation visit per 60 units subject to transparency rules and only three passive quotas for inspections per annum for each participating state regardless of its size.¹⁸ However, one might note that these shortfalls were only becoming a matter of concern when the CFE Treaty had deteriorated and the Vienna Document remained the main instrument for generating transparency during increasing tensions and crises.

From this short analysis, one might draw the conclusion that the Vienna Document needs the following adaptation ("*modernization*"):

- the scope of forces subject to transparency rules should be widened;
- thresholds for prior notification and observation of unusual military activities need to be lowered;
- exceptions for "snap exercises" in times of crisis should be restricted, particularly in border areas;
- regular quota for inspections and evaluation visits should be increased; and
- the sizes of inspection and observation teams be enlarged.

The Vienna Document's crisis response mechanisms also leave room for improvement.¹⁹ It might be advisable to allow the OSCE Chairman in Office (CiO) or the Secretary General to dispatch expert fact-finding mis-

¹⁸ Vienna Document 2011, Chapter IX.

¹⁹ Vienna Document 2011, Chapter III.

sions to countries of concern without lengthy consensus-building processes in the Permanent Council as soon as concrete indications are available that a crisis is looming. Certainly, such flexibility finds its limits in the host nation consent requirement.

However, the use of Chapter III observation measures in *internal wars* is misguided if there is no consent by *all* parties to a conflict. Multinational inspections must not be abused for carrying out military reconnaissance in favour of recognized governments when facing rebels. Such use of Vienna Document provisions would put at risk the safety and security of inspectors which host countries are obliged to ensure. Chapter III measures are foreseen for cases in which a state perceives military activities of another state as a potential threat. In such situations, the state under suspicion might invite observers in order to dispel security concerns.²⁰

In order to enhance Vienna Document notification, observation and verification provisions, a number of valuable proposals have been made in the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) in Vienna. However, such proposals have been facing linkages and blockades with positions stated by certain stakeholders doing a 180 degree turn compared to positions held earlier: proposals made by the Russian Federation up to 2011 to enhance the Vienna Document were blocked by the United States and some allies that expressed concerns that Russia might want to legitimize its suspension of the CFE Treaty. Since the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, it is the West that wants to “modernize” the Vienna Document while it is now Russia which blocks western proposals, even those that are similar to earlier Russian suggestions. Russia seems to be worried that such proposals were motivated by an anti-Russian sentiment aiming at justifying western threat perceptions and undermining the need to return to strategic restraint, revitalize conventional arms control and improve the political atmosphere towards equal, undivided and cooperative security in the OSCE area.

²⁰ Vienna Document, Chapter III, No. 18.

Returning to Strategic Restraint – what Conventional Arms Control Regime for Europe?

a. Purpose and objectives

Transparency alone is not suited to halt the danger of another arms race and sub-regional military instability which could result from an increased desire to station more robust forces on both sides of the new perceived “frontlines” between NATO countries and Russia, and to respond to each other’s military action perceived as a direct threat. Furthermore, a policy aiming only at enhancing transparency of Russian forces without launching another conventional arms control initiative seems unrealistic as Russia insists on a *quid pro quo* and requests improving the security atmosphere as a precondition. Also, a number of NATO member states have voiced strong interest in revitalizing limitations of holdings, particularly in sub-regions of concern. Thus, a parallel approach on modernizing the Vienna Document and revitalizing conventional arms control is advisable. Its central objective should be securing mutual strategic restraint based on reciprocal restrictions of offensive military capabilities, particularly in border areas, and predictability of military developments and activities.

Growing mistrust and threat perceptions should not be seen as an obstacle but rather as a realistic starting point for conceptual work to rebuild trust. In view of global security risks, which challenge East and West alike, the need for cooperation seems evident. That is also true for ending and solving protracted and new territorial conflicts in Europe and restoring good neighbourly relations free of fear, threat and use of force. While solutions will not be achieved overnight, further escalation, at least, must be avoided and an imminent spiral of military confrontation must be stopped.

To that end, a new arms control regime should provide for verifiable regional limitations curtailing and inhibiting offensive cross-border operations in order to restore and maintain military stability in Europe. At the same time, it should take into account long-range precise strike options that are stationed outside of such sensitive zones but could influence operations within. It should also promote early warning and effective crisis response, have the potential to ensure legitimate defence purposes while

maintaining stability and predictability, and restore trust. For a new concept to be recognized as potentially relevant to improve the security situation, it must reflect the politico-military realities in Europe, respond to growing risk perceptions, and have a clear objective of military utility.

Although there is a growing sense of confrontation between NATO and Russia, new arms control should not serve to drive another wedge into the European security landscape. Rather than perpetuating the political divide of Europe, a new concept should have the potential to promote the OSCE objective of creating a common security area without dividing lines and geopolitical zero-sum games. A new bloc-to-bloc approach would not serve this purpose but rather deepen the split. That is why a new arms control process should look beyond the NATO-Russia context. In consequence, a new arms control process should not be limited to the NATO-Russia framework or CFE States Parties only, but take into account the security interest of all states that have territory or station forces in the area of application between the Atlantic and the Urals.

b. Political framework and process

Starting a new conventional arms control process in Europe in times of crisis requires states to agree on such common purpose and, ideally, renew their political commitment to cooperative security as enshrined in basic OSCE documents. While a significant number of European NATO and neutral EU member states have supported the German initiative to re-launch conventional arms control some states, including the United States and the Baltic Republics, have voiced concern that starting negotiations now would send an unwelcome signal of returning to security cooperation (*“business as usual”*) and might undermine NATO’s Warsaw Summit decision to strengthen the forward presence of NATO forces at its eastern borders through the stationing of robust combat forces and the enhancement of rapid reinforcement capabilities.

The United States are of the opinion that a structured dialogue should firstly address principles and security concerns regarding the European security order in all three OSCE dimensions and before tackling threat perceptions, military doctrines and unusual military activities. So far, the

State Department has preferred to focus on modernizing the Vienna Document.²¹ However, at this point in time it seems difficult to predict the position of the future U.S. administration under President Donald Trump.

In any case, one might argue that securing military restraint through conventional arms control belongs to the agreed *acquis* and fundamental pillars of the OSCE security order. In times of crisis, it is an urgently needed stability measure and “confrontation management” rather than “business as usual.” Furthermore, such a position is not consistent with NATO’s commitment to conventional arms control and its stated objective to modernize the Vienna Document that aims at security cooperation and underlines the importance of interlocking CSBMs and conventional arms control instruments.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs commented on the German initiative with some reservation but not unfriendly. It stated to be open for a dialogue that leads to overcoming the current confrontational atmosphere. However, it did not intend to take the initiative to that end but wanted to wait until a reaction from those partners that had caused the erosion of conventional arms control in Europe.²² Obviously, Russia stays focused on the United States.

Against this background, it came as a surprise that OSCE participating states at the OSCE Ministerial Conference in Hamburg on 8-9 December 2016 committed by consensus to exploring how the negative de-

²¹ Bruce I. Turner, “Revitalizing Military Confidence-Building, Risk Reduction and Arms Control in Europe,” Remarks at the OSCE Security Days, 3 October 2016, <http://www.state.gov/t/avc/ris/262657.htm>.

²² Cf. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Comment by the Information and Press Department on the article by German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on August 26, 2016. 5 September 2016, No. 1533-05-09-2016. www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkIE02Bw/conent/id/2422300. See also: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation: Remarks by Mikhail Ulyanov, Director of the Foreign Ministry Department for Non-Proliferation and Arms Control and Representative of the Russian Federation at the First Committee of the 71st Session of the UNGA, within the General Debate, New York, 4 October 2016, No. 1818-05-10-2016.

velopments concerning the conventional arms control and CSBM architecture in Europe can be reversed and an environment created that is conducive to reinvigorating both. They also recognized the interrelation between CSBMs and conventional arms control and the wider political context. They welcomed the “launching of a structured dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area to foster a greater understanding on these issues that could serve as a common solid basis for a way forward.”²³

This cautiously crafted compromise document takes into account contradictory positions of major stakeholders without pursuing the ambition to start negotiations soon. It rather aims at creating a conceptual basis on political and military issues from where one could proceed towards negotiations once common views have been established regarding the political framework and principles as well as the objectives and areas for possible regulation. To that end, many questions need to be answered as soon as possible should the initiative not lose its momentum. Therefore, it seems advisable to launch an informal dialogue in the OSCE under the Austrian chairmanship in 2017.

At the same time, keeping the process of the like-minded group on track seems crucial to sustain the political pressure and feed in conceptual ideas on the possible substance of new negotiations on conventional arms control in Europe. Only a core group of states that have a vested and genuine interest in a new pan-European arms control regime are able to carry and steer the process and promote ways out of stalemates that might be caused by individual linkages to further political objectives.

c. Linkages to, and applicability of, arms control in disputed territories
Unresolved territorial conflicts, as in the past, have the potential to derail the process. Consensus seems attainable only if the principles of international law are not compromised. In particular, implementing the Minsk

²³ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Council, *From Lisbon to Hamburg: Declaration on the Twentieth Anniversary of the OSCE Framework for Arms Control* (MC.DOC/4/16), Hamburg, 9 December 2016 (MC(23) Journal no. 2, Agenda item7).

Agreement seems to be a *conditio sine qua non* for improving the security situation in Europe. At the same time, it should be clarified that conventional arms control itself cannot solve territorial conflicts. However, it can provide for a secure and transparent environment, which is indispensable for negotiating peaceful solutions and preventing the parties involved from resorting to violence. To that end, a new approach should refrain from prejudging eventual political solutions and creating respective political linkages but leave such undertaking to established fora tasked with conflict resolution.

Political psychology plays an important, perhaps even a decisive role. An agreement can only be reached if various national interests are duly taken into account. Since those interests are often contradictory, creating a win-win-situation will be difficult and needs to be put in perspective. The political will to strike compromises—even painful ones—is needed. However, a positive pan-European security environment is better suited to solving territorial conflicts than insisting on confrontational, irreconcilable arguments and producing another stalemate. Establishing an area of cooperative, undivided and equal security free of geopolitical zero-sum games and zones of preferential influence might be conducive to reaching solutions to territorial conflicts since no party has to fear geopolitical losses if agreeing on local compromises.

In disputed territories under the control of entities which are not internationally recognized as states the use of inter-state agreements is generally not accepted by internationally recognized central governments, since such undertaking would lend status to non-state actors and allow their assumption of state functions. Thus, such agreements can be applied only in the unlikely case that consensus exists between all parties to the conflict. In most cases, however, special sub-regional arrangements will be necessary to stabilize the situation. They should aim at increasing transparency and

predictability of all military and paramilitary forces present in the region, however, in a “status-neutral” way.²⁴

d. Military significance

The CFE experience suggests that arms control arrangements lose relevance if they do not respond to changing security needs. There are four major factors that changed the security landscape in Europe as opposed to the assumptions made in the concept of the CFE Treaty:

1) NATO has significantly enlarged its membership and the territories for which positive security guarantees apply, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. In consequence, the bipolar CFE block limitation concept has become obsolete in geographical, numerical and political terms. It still provides for a bipolar pan-European force balance with a focus on Central Europe where only NATO member states are located. In contrast, it does not unfold any stabilizing effect where it is actually needed, i.e. in the sub-regions where new military confrontation is looming, e.g. the Baltic and Black Sea region. According to the CFE Treaty, States defined as belonging to the “Eastern” or “Western” Group of CFE State Parties have to keep a bipolar balance of equal numbers of Treaty Limited Equipment with the opposing group and coordinate accordingly. In today’s reality, the CFE Central Limitation Region consists of NATO States only. For example, its four NATO member states belonging to the “Eastern Group” are obliged to maintain a force balance with other NATO allies belonging to the “Western Group” of CFE States in the same region while the adjacent Russian exclave of Kaliningrad is subject to another CFE region; in parts of the CFE “flank region” in Southeast Europe two NATO member states belonging to the “Eastern Group of CFE States Parties” are to coordinate with Russia to keep a balance against NATO allies,²⁵ while six NATO Member States are not sub-

²⁴ Cf. Sergi Kapanadze, Uli Kühn, Wolfgang Richter, and Wolfgang Zellner, “Status-neutral Arms Control: Promises and Pitfalls,” *OSCE Security Community* 3 (2016), <http://www.osce.org/node/285606>.

²⁵ CFE Treaty, Article VII, in particular No. 1, 2, 6. No. 7 stipulates that changes of the Maximum National Levels of Holdings (MNLH) have to be consulted within

ject to the CFE Treaty at all, *inter alia*, the three Baltic States directly bordering Russia.

2) In contrast to forming a political unity, territorial conflicts have erupted among and within States Parties belonging to the CFE “Eastern Group,” – a case for which the CFE Treaty does not provide stabilizing measures except for residual information and verification obligations and maximum levels of national holdings (MLNH) which were agreed in 1990-91 within this group. However, the exceeding of such MLNH by two CFE States Parties and the existence of significant holdings within break-away entities which are not counted under the holdings of CFE States Parties (UTLE) have undermined sub-regional stability.

3) During the past twenty years, most of CFE States Parties have reduced their Treaty Limited Equipment (TLE) far below CFE ceilings – with the exception of those parts of the “CFE flank area” which extends from Southeast Europe to the Caucasus. In all other regions, it is less the overall numbers of TLE that cause concerns but rather their locations, activities and deployment capabilities, particularly, with respect to potential cross-border operations.

4) At the same time, new qualities of modern forces such as strategic mobility and long-range precise strike options have generated additional operational capabilities.

Against this background, new conventional arms control approaches will have to consider which types of limitations are useful and feasible in future. A new bloc-to-bloc approach, striving for an equal balance of military hardware, was politically and militarily unrealistic. What seems more appropriate are stability measures for every States Party (similar to ACFE), which prevent a destabilizing accumulation of forces for offensive purposes

the groups of CFE States Parties to ensure they are in compliance with group ceilings.

in Europe with a focus on sub-regions of concern. That should be construed on the basis of equality and reciprocity, i.e. without inhibiting legitimate defence requirements. Consequently, limitations could be considered for military capabilities that have a bearing on short-term offensive options such as:

- Tactically mobile combat and combat support forces stationed in geographical locations or sub-regions from where they could conduct combined arms operations across international borders after little preparation;
- Forces which are located outside sensitive border areas but have a potential to rapidly reinforce operations within such areas or open new frontlines in other regions by use of operational and strategic mobility;
- Long-range weapon systems that could be used from distant bases and are deemed to have a significant effect in modern warfare, provided they are stationed in or transited to the area of application of new conventional arms control arrangements.

Regional Limitations

Limitations on permanent “forward” stationing of additional substantial combat forces in sensitive areas could form a basis for stabilizing arms control measures. Thereby, the NATO-Russia Founding Act (1997) which provides for appropriate (however undefined) measures of mutual restraint should be taken into account: rather than negotiating new ceilings from scratch, one might take current numbers as a baseline against which additional forces could be counted. Such thresholds could take ACFE territorial ceilings as an example. They need however to focus on those areas in which accumulations of forces could have destabilizing effects, such as zones of potential large-scale operations adjacent to international borders.

Beyond such zones, static positioning of ground TLE in garrisons is less relevant than their activities outside garrisons and, in particular, in the said sensitive geographical areas. Whenever accumulation of forces in such

areas, e.g. through the deployment of rapid reaction forces or large-scale exercises exceeds a threshold subject to definition, particular transparency obligations should be triggered and mandatory multinational verification implemented.²⁶ One could also consider an upper threshold that may not be exceeded.

Operational Capabilities and New Weapons Systems

Occasionally, it is suggested that modern military capabilities, e.g. net-centric operations, cyber war and advanced weapons systems, e.g. combat drones (UCAV), make “traditional” military hardware such as the TLE defined in the CFE Treaty irrelevant. Analysis of current conflicts and defence planning does not support such a view. TLE are still used as the central elements of combined arms warfare which are able to seize and hold terrain, delay enemy advances, secure wide areas or carry out stabilizing operations in low-intensity conflicts.

So far, combat drones were used in asymmetric and low-intensity warfare scenarios in which no strong air defence hampered their operations. In high intensity warfare, however, which is the assumed scenario necessitating conventional arms control regulations, combat drones would not have such freedom of operation. Instead, they would have to be integrated in combined arms operations including suppression of enemy air defence in order to have a notable military effect. For such cases, the inclusion of combat drones in conventional arms control instruments might be technically feasible as long as they fit in the CFE definition of combat aircraft though being unmanned and remotely piloted. However, long-range hyper-sonic combat drones used for global strategic purposes might not be reasonably dealt with in European regional scenarios only but rather belong to the category of strategic arms control.

As electronic warfare did in the past, cyber operations too might hamper command and control systems to some extent. However, they are subject to technical counter-measures and by no means do they replace

²⁶ The ACFE, adapted POI Section IX has provided the relevant precedent.

force movement and firepower on the ground, in the air or at sea. Furthermore, such multi-purpose and genuinely dual-use technologies with widespread and predominantly civil application escape negotiable and verifiable military restrictions. Therefore, conventional arms control is not suited to curtail cyber operations and respective counter-measures. Instead, specific instruments such as agreements on general rules or codes of conduct for activities in the internet might be required.

Modern net-centric warfare capabilities do not rely on a significantly higher firepower of small units as such; they rather enable smaller forces compared to Cold War postures to carry out their missions with the fire or air support of long-range and precise strike potentials located far outside the combat zone. Such capabilities evolve from satellite-based reconnaissance, positioning and communications, advanced sensors and modern computer software, rather than new hardware, and tend to elude meaningful and acceptable transparency and verification. Thus, qualitative arms control will have to be considered, but obviously needs to be subject to compromises.

At a minimum, quick deployment capabilities, which allow rapid concentration of forces in sub-regions of concern, e.g. by air transport, as well as precise, long-range strike capabilities of modern weapon systems, which are deployed far outside such regions, should be taken into account when conceptualizing new conventional arms control provisions in Europe. Therefore, air mobility and transport as well as far-reaching strike systems in Europe—no matter what sub-regions they are stationed in—should become subject to information obligations and on-base verification rights. They should be fielded in line with the principle of sufficiency to meet defence requirements only.

Transparency and Verification

Transparency and verification are indispensable elements of any regime that is meant to promote military predictability. However, they are not an end in itself. To ensure military stability they should pursue the objective of monitoring whether agreed military restrictions are observed. Comprehen-

sive information on military structures, holdings of weapon systems subject to an agreement, defence planning and military activities as well as intrusive verification are essential to rebuilding trust and restore security.

Verification rules should be robust and flexible enough to permit gaining reliable information on the military situation also in times of crisis in order to enable early warning and contribute to de-escalation. To that end, future verification rules should provide for obligatory multinational observation once and as long as agreed thresholds for permanent stationing in defined sub-regions subject to special limitations are temporarily exceeded.

e. Incident Prevention

The sharply increased number of military exercises, involving border areas and High Seas, and the desire to show force or reconnoitre military action of the opponents have led to misperceptions and close encounters which could spin out of control. In order to avoid escalation, short-term Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs) are urgently needed. To that end, it is suggested that bilateral Agreements on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities and Incidents at Sea Agreements be activated and regional measures in accordance with chapter X of the Vienna Document implemented. The latter aims at voluntary bilateral or multilateral stability measures, particularly in border areas, with the aim to lower tensions and increase regional security. Such CSBMs can be agreed upon by parties willing to engage without requiring lengthy negotiation processes to achieve consensus in the OSCE on the modification of the Vienna Document.

Beyond Donbas: What Role for the OSCE in Conflict Management?

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Crisis Management Today

Crisis management today is a comprehensive, multi-faceted and multidimensional process. Its effectiveness depends, inter alia, on how closely it is interconnected with other aspects of a conflict cycle. Those are early warning and early action, prevention of conflicts, management of escalation, actual crisis management and resolution, negotiation of a solution (e.g. ceasefire or peace agreement), peacekeeping and peace enforcement, resolution of conflict drivers, post-conflict peace building, reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction. The OSCE has so far been involved in quite a few of the above mentioned aspects of the conflict cycle – both at the conceptual (political) and operational levels.

The problem here is that so far, this involvement has been taking place on a reactive basis and without a comprehensive concept on how to deal with a given crisis throughout its different stages, and thus without a clear idea which specific crisis management instruments to use and at what stage. The net outcome of this situation has always been the same: different conflict prevention and crisis management activities were in most cases disconnected from each other and not undertaken exactly when and where needed, but rather when the concerned states would agree to undertake them.

Such an agreement, based on political consensus on *de facto* operational issues, reflected a mix of particular interests and views of individual states, related to a given crisis, but never a neutral assessment of real needs and requirements of a specific stage of crisis management. Such an

assessment can be done—and in reality is being done—by the Secretariat/Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), but it is subjected to a political debate and consensus decision. The outcome of the process is political compromise on crisis management activities, rather than substantial decision-taking on specific operational steps or measures.

The best example in this context is a disconnection between early warning and early action. Every emerging crisis is political in nature, and thus some participating states are always concerned about possible international (OSCE) engagement. Therefore, the OSCE would quite often collect more than enough early warning indicators, and still not be allowed to take necessary early action, much like the “catch 22” dilemma: everybody knows there are sufficient early warning indicators and there is a real crisis, it is absolutely clear that unfolding developments require urgent action, and still the OSCE can do nothing since it needs a formal consensus decision to act, which must include the state(s) affected by a given crisis, and the state in question refuses to acknowledge officially and formally something is going wrong. As a result, the OSCE ends up existing in two parallel worlds – the real one (not recognized through formal decision-taking process), and an artificial one (a matrix of Permanent Council debates and decisions, which the first world would find at best as being at odds with reality). Something creative must be done in order to overcome this political and bureaucratic trap.

This disconnection between different stages of conflict prevention/crisis management, and the type of instruments for action employed by the OSCE leads one to suggest two possible ways to remedy this situation. Both can also help deal with other problems in crisis management, which I will discuss later.

The first is to ask the Chairmanship-in-Office (CiO) to offer a political cover and take responsibility for linking those different stages – most importantly, early warning and early action, by-passing formal decision-taking routines. The second is to strengthen the role of the Secretary General, giving him enough flexibility—under the guidance of the CiO—to initiate different operational measures, first and foremost early action (for example fact-finding missions).

Despite all the changes in the security environment, international organizations still remain the most important tools for crisis management. What has changed, however, is the exact role of those organizations and the way they function today. In short, during the period of Cold War confrontation, institutions were stronger than international structures, since their members or participating states were united by either common threats, or common interests to avoid total war and to maintain stability. Today, it is much more difficult to find consensus in multilateral institutions because the particular interests of their members play a more important role and are very difficult to reconcile. This makes the crisis management efforts of those institutions more complex and complicated. This was also the reason for undertaking some crisis management or conflict resolution operations through “coalitions of the willing,” outside of formal institutional frameworks. However, less rigid and less stable structures can also make institutions more flexible, which is highly relevant for crisis management.

Contemporary crisis management is also based on the recognition of the importance of civil society, the democratization of society and the promotion of universally recognized values. On the one hand it makes crisis management more complex, while on the other it carries a promise of long-lasting solutions.

Many experts believe that current crisis management needs to be complemented by conflict transformation efforts. Such efforts are conducive in rebuilding trust through cooperation. According to some researchers, conflict transformation can help facilitate identities, since antagonistic identities constitute the main obstacle for achieving sustainable peace. In other words, instead of interest-based negotiation (aimed directly at conflict resolution) one should first focus on conflict transformation by looking at new ways of problem-solving, dialogue, transformation of identities, collective memories and narratives of the past. Such an approach is also aimed at rooting conflict management efforts in local social structures. Altogether, it is a modern way of expressing an old truth: you cannot manage crises and resolve conflicts without addressing their root causes.

Let me illustrate this with an example. For years the CPC—in cooperation with other units in the Secretariat—had been working on different projects in the South Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh) to facilitate contacts and exchanges among civil society, including media representatives. De facto, it was a modest effort to transform the conflict and change collective memories. Unfortunately, it proved to be unsuccessful. It is yet another proof that the knowledge of what should be done is there, but what is missing is the political will of parties involved in the conflict.

In the case of South Caucasus, I can personally testify to the urgent need to influence the narratives of the past. When visiting the region during my tenure as the CPC Director between 2011 and 2015, I kept hearing from people there—not just politicians—the same stories about the origins of the conflict which were being told 20 years ago. This is the main obstacle for any progress in conflict resolution there.

Based on recent research, the most important lesson for future OSCE crisis management endeavours is that in order to be effective, not only politicians, military, diplomats and monitors are required, but also negotiators, promoters of values, facilitators, social workers and mediators. Mediation is a good case in point in that context. Following the 2011 Vilnius Ministerial Council decision on conflict cycle, the Secretariat acted as requested. With strong support and generous assistance from some participating states (including Switzerland, Finland and Germany) some mediation capacity was established. However, to use the words of the senior, experienced and sharp-minded Swiss diplomat, “capacity is not a capability.” Accordingly, the OSCE is still talking about the need to mediate, but is not undertaking any mediation efforts because of the absence of the political will of states concerned, the lack of adequate resources, etc. Similarly, it is still talking about the role of women in conflict resolution, recognized by the UN. The need and potential benefits of involving women in that process are incontestable. It would be wise to ensure that more women are appointed as Chairmanship Special Representatives for protracted conflicts.

It is obvious that the OSCE should remain flexible in its crisis management activities. At the same time, it should continue to develop real ca-

pabilities—not just capacity—to address some specific aspects of conflict cycle (e.g. early warning, monitoring missions, reconciliation, and conflict transformation).

OSCE Activities to Date – Main Difficulties

Since the focus of this paper is the future, not the past, there is no point in going into the details of previous OSCE conflict prevention and crisis management activities.

As a rule, thus far the OSCE has been successful in operational crisis management of different types (monitoring the Georgian-Russian border and the contact line in Nagorno-Karabakh).

It was not, however, in the context of negotiating conflict resolution (Transnistria, Minsk Group), that it offered negotiating formats for its participating states. At best, these negotiations have had a kind of containment effect only in conflicts in question, resulting mostly in their “freezing.” It is certainly not a negative effect, but it is only something like a half-step, albeit obviously in the right direction. While preventing the crisis from going back to the “hot stage” (full-scale fighting), it does not bring a comprehensive solution for the conflict. The problem here was and still is the lack of political will on the part of states concerned, rather than institutional drawbacks on the part of the OSCE as such.

The OSCE in its crisis management efforts has always been flexible, adaptable to the circumstances and specific requirements of a given crisis, and capable of putting together anything from small fact-finding missions to large-scale operations. It can develop at a relatively short notice some fundamental crisis management instruments. However, for bigger and more sophisticated crisis management activities it has always been dependent on the political readiness of participating states to provide relevant capabilities. One aspect should be made absolutely clear in that regard. The relevant structures in the OSCE (Secretariat, CPC) are relatively modest, but well developed and good enough to receive argumentation for whatever specific crisis management activity, as well as make the best possible use of capabilities provided by states for specific tasks or missions.

What has changed recently is that even with still very limited organizational and planning capabilities, the OSCE staff (mostly the CPC) and its institutions have been able to plan and deploy the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine (a truly large-scale effort) on their own and at a very short notice. This was not the case in the late 90s, when the Kosovo Verification Mission was deployed under the OSCE flag, previously planned and prepared by the experts from participating states, but only supported by OSCE staff. It just proves that over time, the OSCE, and first of all the CPC, evolved.

So far, OSCE crisis management activities have had a positive effect only when based on a clear consensus and political mandate. These activities also need a sound political guidance, which can be offered by the Chairmanship-in-Office alone or in cooperation with other states (like the “Normandy format” in the case of SMM).

In order to ease political difficulties faced by OSCE crisis management operations, it would be helpful to develop a concept of a “Contact Group” to assist the Chair/Secretary General to run the operation. Informally, this is already something that happens quite often. Alternatively, it would be conducive for successful crisis management to establish a more formal political consultation mechanism for some on-going operations.

The biggest challenges for the OSCE operational crisis management have always been the same: (1) lack of unequivocal political guidance from participating states resulting in different expectations vis-à-vis OSCE missions and operations; (2) lack of necessary financial/budgetary funds; (3) absence of specific capabilities necessary to manage a given operation (in principle, the OSCE Secretariat has relevant capacities, but not sufficiently to make them available as real capabilities); (4) a tendency by most participating states to micro-manage the daily conduct of OSCE crisis management operations; and (5) lack of a legal status of the OSCE and its implications for the staff deployed for crisis management operations.

This last point deserves a few more comments. Discussions around this issue have been going on for over 20 years. However, in the meantime the security environment and by extension the OSCE *modus operandi* has fundamentally changed. Initially, the legal status was seen as almost a *sine*

qua non condition for the OSCE to become a serious, if not the most important security organization in Europe. Today, it is almost a *sine qua non* condition for the OSCE to conduct effective and efficient conflict prevention and crisis management activities in the field. Still, in that discussion participating states are mixing formal and political arguments with operational and organizational aspects. There may be two possible ways out of this current deadlock. The first could be for individual participating states to recognize the OSCE through their national procedures as an entity (including its employees) having at least a *de facto* legal status. The second, somewhat extraordinary, might be to arrange for a legal status of the OSCE crisis management operations only (through the Chairmanship or the CPC), but not for the entire organization as such, as so far this has proved to be a mission impossible.

Nature and Context of Conflicts to Prevent and Crises to Manage

Crisis management neither takes place in a political vacuum, nor is it isolated from overall strategic aspects of a given security environment.

For years after the Cold War, the main conflicts in the OSCE area (first called “frozen”, later “protracted” conflicts) were linked to the process of forming new states after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. This led to disputed territories, unclear borders of newly emerging states, the contested status of different regions and territorial enclaves. They are still there to be managed in time of crisis, and to be solved as conflicts between and within states. The political challenges for the future in this case are twofold. Firstly, the current Russian policy aiming at re-establishing clear spheres of influence makes it particularly difficult to reach political compromises for protracted conflicts in areas considered by Russia as being part of its “neighbourhood.” Secondly, EU membership has served as a main leverage and incentive for peaceful conflict resolution for years, and not only in the Balkans. It is at best unclear whether this will still be the case in the future.

With the rise of terrorism and transnational threats, new security challenges emerged, including in so-called weak and failed states. These new security threats have proved to be very difficult to deal with using “classical” crisis management and conflict prevention/resolution tools. However, in the future the OSCE will have to pay more political attention to

these threats, most probably through the promotion of values and building a strong civil society. One may call this type of efforts “creative” conflict prevention and crisis management activities.

There is yet another type of crisis to manage – a real armed conflict between two OSCE states, namely the Russian Federation and Ukraine, which emerged following the annexation of Crimea and Russian political and military support to separatists in the Donbas. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission is very much a learning process for the Organization, setting trends and standards for future crisis management operations. This applies to all its aspects: political setting, new monitoring technologies (drones), links with conflict resolution negotiation (Trilateral Group, “Normandy format”), *modus operandi*, ways of reporting, etc. Ongoing, informal discussions about possible OSCE police missions and border monitoring present yet another argument to revive the consideration of eventual even broader OSCE operations such as peacekeeping. Given the current political and strategic rift between the East and the West, the OSCE may well be the only institution politically capable (and politically acceptable to the participating states concerned) of undertaking such operations in the future.

Today, the strategic environment is characterized by confrontation, deep-rooted political rivalry, violations of internationally recognized norms and standards, use of force in inter-state relations and generally a highly unstable, unpredictable and very dynamic security environment, and makes future crisis management both desirable and extremely complicated. Although at some point the implementation of the Minsk Agreements by all sides concerned, including Russia, would create conditions allowing to contemplate measures to restore trust and rebuild a stable European security regime, it would be a long and difficult process. At the outset it will have to tackle two fundamental issues: the status of Crimea and the militarization of European security policies (including the actual use of armed forces, hybrid wars etc.), aggravated by the non-existence of European arms control.

Therefore, future crisis management efforts by the OSCE will have to be carried out, at least in the short- to medium-term, in a highly unstable security environment and under conditions of strategic and political confrontation. Thus, future crisis management efforts require clear political mandates on the one hand, and actual “crisis managers” (OSCE Secretariat, Secretary General, CPC) must have the ability to implement those mandates in the most efficient, unobstructed manner, on the other.

The obvious lack of political trust and military confidence, as well as both political and military predictability add to the complexity of crisis

management activities. Instead of serving as a platform for coordinated efforts with a view to preventing and/or solving conflicts, they offer yet another platform for political competition, which in turn deepens already existing rifts and mistrust.

There must be a way to separate operational crisis management as much as possible from political tensions complicating the actual running of operations and from participating states' inclination to micromanage crisis management activities. There are at least three options in this regard that can be mentioned, including one that is somewhat controversial.

The first two are rather obvious, and are frequently discussed in the OSCE, not only in Vienna. Both are mentioned in this paper: (1) To encourage the Chairmanship to take a clearer political and operational lead in crisis management efforts, acting—wherever necessary—on the basis of assumed, but informal, consensus; and (2) To strengthen the role of the Secretary General, giving him or her much more authority and flexibility on all operational aspects of crisis management. There is of course strong opposition from some participating states towards both options, because they fear losing political and operational control over crisis management operations, and thus insist on consensus for all aspects of operations. As I used to say during my tenure at the CPC, it is quite difficult to navigate a ship, and specifically through stormy waters, when there are 58 captains on board, instead of just one. Not only is it stressful for the crew being told to go in different directions at the same time, it is also counterproductive.

The third option, considered controversial by some (but not for me) would be to change the status of the CPC, a primary OSCE conflict prevention and crisis management structure, and transform it into an independent OSCE institution, much like ODIHR or HCNM. With this new status, the CPC would be bound by its mandate and accountable to its participating states, while at the same time having all necessary authority and flexibility to act rapidly and in a coherent manner. Critics of this idea fear that such a move may have negative consequences for the overall coherence of OSCE action. It would certainly be interesting though to have a more focused and detailed discussion on this issue.

Politically confrontational crisis management, antagonizing even further already conflicting parties also through the weekly PC discussions (as it is the case with the SMM), should be considered a political price for otherwise absolutely necessary crisis management efforts. Although it may be worth trying to limit such confrontational discussions, they are to be

seen as part of a political process aimed at conflict resolution, as difficult and challenging as they may be.

Institutional Evolution of the OSCE in the Context of Future Crisis Management

In times of deep strategic rifts, political confrontation and a highly unstable security environment, the OSCE is and will remain the most adequate institution to carry out crisis management efforts. It is a flexible organization, with robust norms and values. It has well-developed conflict prevention instruments and crisis management tools and is based on the principle of consensus. However, its participating states may have different reasons for accepting the OSCE as a “crisis manager”: for some it may be the only option; for others the best one. Some even believe it is an institution they think they can control to serve their own interests. This is yet another reason to continue insisting on political mandates for crisis management that are as clear as possible and on the necessity to avoid the tendency of some participating states to micro-manage the conduct of operations.

The OSCE has always put a variety of conflict prevention and crisis management instruments at the disposal of participating states. However, it has always been up to these states to decide how, when and where to use them. In recent years, the OSCE has developed a number of tools which can be used throughout the entire conflict cycle – from early warning mechanisms up to mediation and dialogue facilitation. It goes without saying that there is a constant need to modernize these tools according to the evolving security situation.

There are two specific paths for this modernization or further development of the OSCE crisis management toolbox. One is to consider different instruments to deal on the one hand with inter-state and on the other with intra-state conflicts. Given the nature of modern crises and new security challenges, it may prove to be quite a useful exercise. However, given the current reluctance of a large number of OSCE participating states to accept what they perceive as an external intrusion into their internal affairs, it may well be an unsuccessful endeavour.

The second path would be to have a thorough consideration of *sine qua non* conditions which would allow the OSCE to support peacekeeping, or "semi" peacekeeping operations. In that case, whatever the outcome of such deliberations, it would be conducive to further the Organization's crisis management efforts, because it would either show that such peacekeeping is only "wishful thinking," or give indications as to what must be done in order to enable OSCE peacekeeping.

What I mean here is not the establishment of another High Level Planning Group, which has been engaged for roughly 20 years in operational planning for peacekeeping in Nagorno-Karabakh. It may be time to establish a kind of OSCE Crisis Management Board, consisting of all OSCE participating states, the Secretary General and the Director of the CPC, with the aim to develop and modernize—under the leadership of the Chairmanship—crisis management instruments, including the two ideas described above. Such a board may emerge based on already existing informal working group on conflict cycle.

Of course the OSCE Secretariat, and first of all its primary conflict prevention and crisis management structure, the CPC, are heavily under-budgeted and understaffed. One possible way to address financial problems could be to create a Crisis Management budget line in the OSCE budget, to be used at the discretion of the Secretary General or the Director of the CPC. Some minor arrangements in that regard have already been discussed, and were of course criticized by participating states, which prefer to be firmly in control of all operational activities of the Organization. The idea here is to give executive structures some flexibility and to enable them to act swiftly in the event of an emerging crisis.

The most serious problem is the absence of full-scale operational planning capability. This could be remedied with more generous budgeting. However, even within its current constraints, the CPC is, and will continue to be able to do its job, if supported by participating states through financial resources and relevant experts in time of crisis. As mentioned earlier, the OSCE executive structures are solid enough to receive argumentation at any time and whenever necessary. On the other hand, participating states should be ready to offer such argumentation when it is really needed,

meaning at a very short notice. Participating states must be prepared for that and be able to provide where and when necessary operational planners or financial experts, rather than “general experts.”

In order to be a credible “crisis manager,” the OSCE will also have to look at ways to deal with crises other than inter-state conflicts, or “creative crisis management tools” to address terrorism threats, migrants, Islamic fundamentalism, etc. These are challenges, which can hardly be solved through operations. Such challenges require constant, grass-root level attention, creative promotion of values, norms and principles. In structural terms, this could be the main task of the Transnational Threats Department of the OSCE Secretariat.

Crisis management efforts can only benefit from long-term strategic guidance, political continuity and clear operational direction. As a rule, these efforts last longer than the duration of the OSCE Chairmanship. It would therefore be advisable to find a mechanism capable of ensuring that political expectations towards ongoing crisis management operations do not change (even slightly) every year. An internal, cooperative “OSCE troika” arrangement, including appointing a special OSCE Chair representative for a given crisis for three years rather than just one, would be very useful.

The OSCE Secretariat, including the CPC, can hardly cope alone with the entire spectrum of conflict prevention and crisis management challenges. In a broad understanding of these challenges, other OSCE institutions—ODIHR, HCNM, Freedom of the Media Representative—contribute to addressing these challenges. Therefore, it would be conducive to the coherence of OSCE efforts if one asked these institutions to report to the Chair about their possible contribution to the OSCE crisis management efforts in the future, with full respect to confidentiality provided for in their respective mandates.

The notion of using modern technologies for crisis management has already been mentioned in the context of SMM activities in Ukraine. It is probably true that drones, satellite imagery and other remote monitoring technologies—not to mention modern communication means—can contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of crisis management operations

and should be considered for future endeavours in that area as such. However, one has to be aware that modern technologies are rather costly. It was possible to mobilize financial resources to use drones in the activities of SMM for two reasons: (1) the initiative came from the highest political level (German Chancellor), and (2) the case of Ukraine was so unexpected, demanding, and attracted so much political attention that at least at the beginning of SMM operations, most of the OSCE participating states were unusually generous when it came to budgeting. It remains to be seen whether this will be the case for future crisis management efforts, given that the use of modern technologies would be a valuable asset for supporting these efforts.

Finally, let me come back to the issue of the disconnect between the different stages of crisis management, and specifically to what seems to be an inability by the OSCE to move swiftly from early warning signals to early action. Much has been said about the reasons for this inability, and the reluctance of participating states to discuss such early warning signals relating to them (and immediate readiness to discuss such signals relating to others). One more factor complicating the situation is the current trend to either close OSCE missions (field operations), or to change their mandates in such a way that early warning no longer features in them, as is the case with overall political reporting/monitoring.

For years, hosting OSCE field presence was seen by the states hosting them as “stigma,” which they wished to get rid of as soon as possible. These states felt they would need to somehow substantiate that desire by showing that they have met certain standards and do not need international assistance in that regard anymore.

Today, this approach has disappeared. We seem to be back to the times before the Helsinki Final Act, which was based on one fundamental idea: the acceptance of the right of all OSCE participating states to be concerned with how others respect internationally recognized norms, standards and values. Today, there are at least some OSCE participating states which insist on “non-interference in their internal affairs,” which used to be the main motto for one “bloc” during the Cold War. And this change of mind and attitude constitutes the main difficulty for future OSCE conflict

prevention and crisis management efforts. Back in the 90s, when the OSCE was deploying its first field operations as conflict prevention and crisis management tools, the states hosting them would always accept, albeit quite often reluctantly, a form of international interference in their internal affairs. In some cases, the crises were so deep and the conflicts so dramatic that exposing one's internal problems to the judgment of the outside world and possible assistance in solving them was the only option. However, during that period, "the Helsinki mood" was still very much alive. Moreover, the OSCE states were concerned about their image, reputation and implementation record as far as their international commitments, norms, and standards were concerned. One may argue that this was a sign of their weakness, or in some cases even an inferiority complex. Still, the adherence to universally recognized values and the readiness to open internal and individual policies to international scrutiny were one of the drivers of consensus, which is such a rare phenomenon today.

The future of OSCE crisis management, as well as conflict prevention, will of course be very different from past experiences. Modern crises are different, even if deeply rooted in the past. The instruments and tools at the disposal of the Organization are much more sophisticated and technologically advanced than ever before. Nevertheless, a bit of "Helsinki mood" today and tomorrow would be quite helpful.

Geoeconomics and the Erosion of Economic Connectivity: Problems and Solutions

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Economic connectivity can be taken to refer to the range of economic, political and social forces that link the economies of the world together. These include cross-border trade and financial flows, permanent and temporary migratory flows, as well as international institutions that regulate economic relationships between countries.

The various variables that constitute economic connectivity are, however, amenable to manipulation by political forces. States have the power to impose barriers to trade and capital flows, and to the movement of people. They are also able to revise domestic and international institutions that govern economic activity both within and between countries.

The increasing practice of geoeconomics by states as an instrument of foreign policy is one such threat to economic connectivity, especially in relation to Russia, which is both an object and source of geoeconomics. By geoeconomics I refer to the “use of economic instruments to promote and defend national interests, and to produce beneficial geopolitical results; and the effects of other nations’ economic actions on a country’s geopolitical goals.”¹

Over the past two years, the use of geoeconomic instruments by Russia has intensified. This paper explores the nature and impact of one subset of geoeconomic instruments used by Russia since 2014: the securitization of economic policy. This refers to the increasingly frequent deployment of security concerns to justify changes in economic policy that are altering both the nature of domestic political economy and the nature of

¹ Robert D. Blackwell and Jennifer M. Harris, *War by Other Means. Geoeconomics and Statecraft* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), p.20.

Russia's integration with the wider global economy. If the securitization of economic policy in Russia persists, it has the potential to reduce economic connectivity between Russia and other parts of the global economy, especially in the United States and Europe.

Increasing Connectivity

In economic terms, Russia is often described as a relatively “backward” country that is in need of modernisation. When compared to high-income countries like the USA or the richer member states of the EU, Russia exhibits a lower level of per capita income and produces a more limited array of goods with significantly lower levels of value-added. Russia is considered as too reliant on the extraction and export of raw materials, especially oil, with its weaknesses encapsulated by statements that suggest Russia is nothing more than a “petrostate.”

At \$1.3 trillion, the Russian economy was the 13th largest in the world in dollar terms in 2015, accounting for just 1.8 % of global gross domestic product (GDP). Expressed in current US dollars (USD), Russia's per capita income was around \$9,000, just 16 % of US per capita income, and 28 % of the EU average.

However, measured at purchasing power parity (PPP)—i.e. adjusted for differences in the cost of living—Russian GDP in 2015 was \$3.4 trillion, accounting for around 3.5 % of global GDP. According to this measure, Russia was the 6th largest economy in the world, and the second largest in Europe. Measured at PPP, per capita income was nearly \$25,000, 44 % of the US level and 65 % of the EU average.

However, the picture of a backward economic power that has failed to keep up with “modern” high-income economies is unfair in some respects, and misses many of the positive developments that have taken place over the last 20 years in Russia. With this in mind, this section provides a snapshot of the Russian economy in order to identify those areas where the Russian economy has become much more closely integrated with the wider global economy.

In the sense that the majority of decisions on the allocation of economic resources are not made by the state, but instead by individuals, households, and corporations, Russia can now be considered a market economy. While the 1990s was a period of tumultuous change for Russia, painful reforms helped put the foundations for a market economy in place. According to data from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Devel-

opment, the private sector accounts for over half of GDP. Given that, little over 20 years ago, Russia was the core component of the world's most powerful socialist economy in which nearly all significant decisions about the allocation of resources were undertaken centrally, this is a transformation of profound importance.

Russia has become more closely integrated with the wider global economy over the past two and a half decades. This means that Russia is sensitive to developments well beyond its borders and over which it has little control.

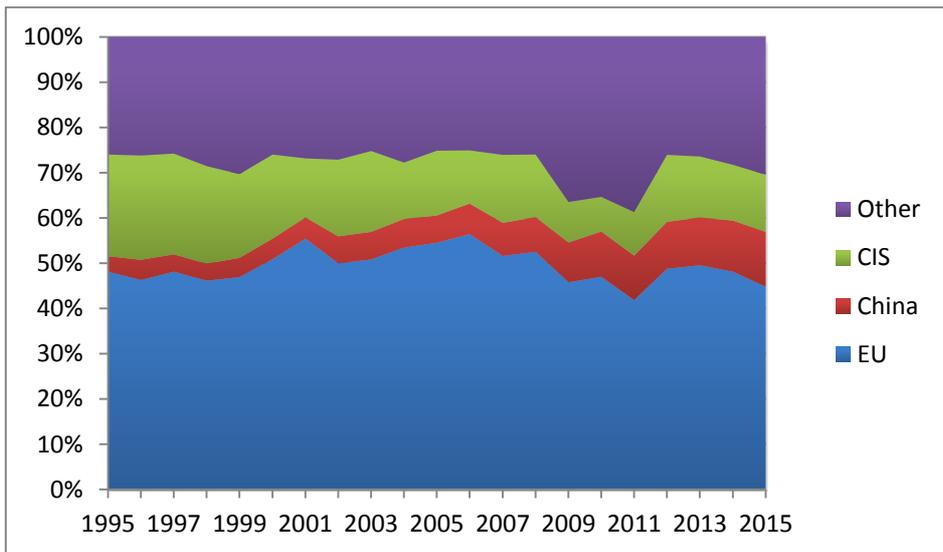
The role of trade in the Russian economy is comparatively high: the sum of imports and exports as a proportion of GDP (a common measure of trade openness) was 51 per cent in 2015. This is comparable to other large, open economies such as China (41 per cent), France (61 per cent), Turkey (61 per cent), and India (42 per cent). Russia is, therefore, an open economy for a country of its size. Compared to some advanced economies, Russia is less open than the EU member states taken together (79 per cent, but which comprises a number of small countries), but more open than the USA (28 per cent) and Japan (36 per cent).²

Russia's trade structure has been quite stable for some time. In terms of exports, around 80 per cent of its merchandise exports are primary and resource-based products, such as hydrocarbons, metals and minerals, with a very limited share of medium- and high-technology goods in Russia's export profile.³ As one of the world's largest energy producers, this should not be a surprise. Russia tends to import processed goods, especially capital and consumer goods.

Integration with the global economy has also seen a significant shift in the direction of Russia's trade. EU countries continue to form the largest share of Russia's trade, accounting for 45 per cent of Russia's trade – a level comparable to that observed for most of the past two decades. The role of former Soviet countries in Russian trade has declined dramatically in recent years. In 1995, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries accounted for 22 per cent of Russia's trade; by 2015, this had declined to 13 per cent. In place of the CIS, trade with fast-growing emerging economies

² All data on trade openness are taken from the World Bank Development Indicators database.

³ United Nations Statistics Division, UN Comtrade 2016, United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database, <https://comtrade.un.org>.



Source: IMF (2012) *Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS) Database* (New York: IMF).

Figure 1: Russia's principal trading partners, 1995-2016 (percent of total merchandise trade).

like China, India, and Turkey has grown rapidly. China is now Russia's single most important trade partner, accounting for 12 per cent of trade compared to just 3 per cent in 1995.

This turn to Asia has, however, not been replicated in the sphere of capital flows. According to BIS data, over the past decade, a mere 9 per cent of all international bank loans to Russia came from Asian sources, and of this the vast majority came from Japan. The proportion of loans from the wider APEC region is, at 24 per cent, considerably larger, although US banks make most of the additional loans. The overwhelming source of loans remains Europe, with France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom all accounting for a larger proportion of international bank loans to Russia than all of East Asia combined (75 per cent of all international bank loans to Russia).

Foreign direct investment between Russia and East Asia is also modest in size, despite a number of high profile energy and infrastructure deals. According to data from the Central Bank of Russia, FDI in Russia from East Asian countries is small when compared to Europe, the United States,

and well-known “offshore” locations that are widely believed to recycle capital that originates primarily from Russia (known as “round tripping”).

In 2015, the stock of FDI from China, Japan and South Korea together accounted for less than 1 per cent of all FDI in Russia, with China ranking 13th in the list of sources of FDI. Similarly, APEC, which includes the United States, is the source of just 5 per cent of all FDI in Russia. The same picture is evident when looking at the role of Russian FDI into East Asian economies. Russian outward foreign direct investment (OFDI) into the three large North East Asian economies accounts for just 0.6 per cent of total Russian OFDI.

Overall, it is clear that as far as capital flows are concerned, Russia remains very much oriented towards Europe and, to a lesser extent, the United States. The role played by APEC and North East Asian economies is extremely small.

The Securitisation of Economic Policy in Russia

So, by historical standards, the Russian economy is more open and closely integrated with the global economy than ever before. But this means that the potential for at least the partial reversal of both domestic liberalization and external integration is much greater than it has ever been before. What is more, not only will economic securitisation imply a deviation from Russia’s pattern of integration with the global economy, but it might also portend a break from its own recent approach to domestic economic policy, with the move towards securitisation acting as tacit acknowledgement that the tools used to achieve economic modernization in the past were insufficient to achieve the state’s objectives.

To date, official plans for economic securitisation in the form of public statements and government documents and decrees are inchoate and lacking in cohesion. There is no clear agreement on desired objectives or on the precise means that might be deployed to achieve those objectives. And a powerful array of constituencies remains opposed to the rolling back of many of the market reforms undertaken since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Yet the growing sense of insecurity felt by those in the Kremlin may be leading to an increase in the relative power of those groups in and around the state apparatus that would like to see Russia adopt a new agenda for economic development. If, as this paper suggests, economic policy is increasingly defined by security concerns—i.e., if the process of

economic securitisation is already under way—then the ramifications of this policy change will be profound.

Economic securitisation has the potential to change important aspects of Russia's political economy. These include, but are not limited to: the primary objectives of national economic activity as defined by the state (security vs. economic freedom and/or consumer welfare); the means used to meet state objectives (e.g., the use and nature of strategic planning); the means of resource allocation (e.g., state vs. market; large enterprises vs. small enterprises); the priority accorded to different types of economic activity (e.g., consumption vs. investment; agriculture vs. other consumer industries); the depth of Russia's integration with the global economy (i.e., the degree to which Russia interacts with the global economy); and the scope of Russia's external economic ties (i.e., with whom and in which areas Russia interacts).

What Is Securitization?

Edwin Bacon, Bettina Renz and Julian Cooper in their 2006 book *Securitising Russia* introduced securitisation as a concept that can be applied to the domestic politics of a country a decade ago. They argued that securitisation is what happens “when normal politics is pushed into the security realm,” and that the “securitisation of an issue in a policy sector occurs when a political actor by the use of the rhetoric of existential threat...succeeds in justifying the adoption of measures outside the formal norms and procedures of politics.”

The first stage of securitization—the “securitising move”—occurs when policy makers deploy the rhetoric of securitisation to move away from the “normal” politics of the given policy area. The second stage—successful securitization—occurs after the securitisation of a policy area has been accepted as legitimate by specific key audiences, such as the government, a specific ministry, or a political constituency (e.g., a nationalist party). “Success,” of course, is a relative term. It does not mean that proponents of a securitisation discourse will always be successful in advancing their policy agenda; rather, it means that attempts at invoking national security concerns to shape other policy arenas will succeed more frequently.

It is also worth noting what securitisation is *not*.

First, it is not necessarily synonymous with militarization, even if it is plausible that both may occur simultaneously. Successful securitisation is likely to result in a broader array of policy areas being defined as issues of national security, well beyond those related to military affairs. Thus, ostensibly “technical” issues such as the size of a country’s foreign exchange reserves, the nature of its trade relations with a particular country or set of countries, or the scale of import dependency in certain sectors of the economy, all have the potential to become matters of national security.

Second, securitisation also does not necessarily imply the blanket securitisation of all policy areas, or even sub-sets of policy area. It is true that the Soviet Union was a system in which securitisation affected nearly all dimensions of economic policy. To use Julian Cooper’s words, concerns about security in relation to the Soviet economy were “institutionalized.” But this fact alone does not necessarily mean that any future securitisation of the Russian economy will result in the resurrection of the Soviet planned economy.

Third, securitisation need not, at least in principle, be synonymous with centralization, state ownership or the rejection of foreign capital. For example, efforts to ensure greater domestic production of specific products in Russia on the grounds that this will enhance national security could in theory occur through “localization” in which foreign organisations play a vital role and where competition between firms—Russian and foreign—is intense, and in which decisions on resource allocation are decentralised.

A distinct advantage of using this analytical construct is that it permits a focus on which sectors are or are becoming securitised, and which are not. For example, a move towards reducing import dependency in a given product area (such as oil extraction equipment or pharmaceutical products) may see policy makers adopt measures outside the norms of economic policy as usual in discrete pockets of the economy. But this leaves many other sectors of the economy relatively untouched by securitisation concerns. Similarly, any reassessment of trade relations with Western countries does not necessarily imply a move towards autarky.

The implicit emphasis on identifying instances of “sectoral securitization” thus tells us more about what is changing in Russia’s political economy, but also what is staying the same (e.g., relative economic freedom in other areas of the economy unaffected by the securitisation discourse). This enables a clearer and more nuanced understanding of what Russian policy makers consider as the priorities of economic policy, and also of the real nature of economic development in Russia.

Thus, rather than engage in sterile debate over whether Russia is resurrecting central planning or tearing up the rulebook of globalization, the use of the securitisation paradigm enable the analyst to focus on the evolution of the securitisation agenda across both the Russian economy and the economic policy-making community. In doing so, it is also possible to shed light on the changing nature and extent of contestation of securitisation, the obstacles to the implementation of the securitisation agenda, and ultimately the identity and relative political power of countervailing forces.

It is for these reasons that the securitisation approach to economic development in Russia is useful. It moves beyond the binary and overly simplistic notion that if Russia is not making steady and even progress towards a market economy then it is regressing to an authoritarian form of state capitalism at best, and a centrally planned economy at worst. Instead, the focus is on the nature of the qualitatively *new* system of political economy that is being created in the country today, and how will this affect the country's longer-term economic performance.

Evidence for the Securitisation of the Economy

In order to discern any moves towards securitisation of the economy, it is first necessary to establish what constituted “normal” economic policy before the war in Ukraine. Because the 1990s was a period of systemic change, it is useful to pinpoint the key features of Russian economic policy since Putin's ascendancy to the Presidency in 2000. They are:

- *Macroeconomic orthodoxy.* In matters of both fiscal and monetary policy, the macroeconomic framework of Russian economic policy, built largely under the supervision of Alexei Kudrin, was orthodox. Monetary policy and fiscal policy were conservative in nature, and largely set by the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance respectively, much to the chagrin of the lobbyists;
- *An inconsistent commitment to microeconomic reform* that was undermined by the selective application of the law coupled with, and at least partially caused by, weak state administrative capacity. This meant that the property rights were conditional and the business environment was generally poor;

- A tendency towards *state intervention in “strategic” sectors* of the economy. There was significant evidence of dirigisme, in the natural resources, finance and defence sectors. State control was not absolute; private firms—both Russian and foreign—were present, although their property rights were insecure and subject to revision;
- Relative *freedom to allocate resources in sectors outside strategic sectors*, with many sectors of the economy, especially those in retail, business services and IT, subjected to lower levels of state interference;
- A *commitment to capital account openness*. Although Russia’s financial sector is dominated by state-owned or state-influenced banks, the banks, firms and households have been free to move capital around with minimal restrictions;
- A commitment to *integration with the global economy*, especially with Western economies, which acted as a source of vital capital and know-how;
- A *formal commitment to multilateralism*. While the implementation of international rules has not always run smoothly, Russia was persistent in seeking membership of international organisations, such as the WTO and OECD. While success was patchy, it is notable that Russia demonstrated a desire to approximate international norms and standards to a historically unprecedented level.

The broad outcome of this set of policies was a balance between the Economic Bloc (i.e., the economic “liberals”) and the combined forces of the power ministries and the industrial lobbies (the “lobbies”). Security concerns played a marginal role in this liberal-lobby equilibrium and the spectre of an existential threat was rarely deployed in economic policy debates. Even the shift towards reequipping the armed forces in 2010 (the GPV-2020) was as much as a means to economic modernization as it was towards national security concerns (with Putin repeatedly emphasising the defence industry’s potential for innovation).

It is worthwhile recalling the language used between 2007 and 2012. This was the period where “modernisation” was the buzzword of economic policy. Debate was focused less on the need to reassess the fundamentals of economic activity (i.e., the balance between state and market), but rather on the technical question of how best to harness the market and allocate resources effectively to promote economic development. Both the pre-crisis and post-crisis iterations of Strategy 2020 reflected this approach to economic policy, as did the numerous other strategies of an economic nature advanced during this period.

In short, economic policy was not securitized. However, if economic policy was largely a struggle between lobbies and liberals during the vast majority of the Putin period, then the war in Ukraine represents a turning point. After the annexation of Crimea and the subsequent imposition of sanctions, the invocation of an existential threat to activate security concerns beyond the confines of military policy became much easier. As this securitisation agenda became—and continues to become—more entrenched, the equilibrium between them was disturbed.

It is in this context that Russia’s reaction to Western economic statecraft can be more clearly understood: in a world that appears increasingly menacing from Moscow’s perspective, many officials see economic security as an important component in ensuring Russia’s wider national security. From the Russian perspective, the West, with its preponderance of economic resources, has proven capable of using wider means than just military to conduct a form of “hybrid” warfare that encompasses economic statecraft as well as resort to funding of NGOs, support for “colour revolutions,” etc. Against this backdrop, centralisation of resource allocation and the management of Russia’s external relations are, for many in the Russian elite, a logical response.

The importance of a strong, technologically advanced and resilient economy is stressed repeatedly in the NSS 2015.⁴ The document states that economic growth is essential for the realization of socio-economic objectives.⁵ To be sure, this is not new: previous national security strategies all stressed the importance of economic growth in shaping Russia’s national security.

⁴ NSS 2015.

⁵ NSS 2015, III. 50.

But in previous iterations this integration of the economy into thinking about national security was rather simple: economic growth was considered desirable, but the means to achieve this growth were not discussed in any significant detail.⁶ What has changed is that the 2015 strategy now states that Russia's ability to enjoy the fruits of economic development is threatened by a range of factors, including "economic measures employed by foreign powers."⁷ Indeed, the threat posed by instruments of economic statecraft deployed by other powers is highlighted several times.⁸ This has resulted in references to "economic security" (*ekonomicheskaya bezopasnost'*) moving beyond a simple awareness of the importance of economic growth to national power. Instead, as stated after a meeting by the Interdepartmental Commission of the Security Council, there now is a clear need to protect Russia's "economy from the political and economic decisions of other states that aim to prevent the effective dynamic development of the Russian economy." As a result, economic policies that might maintain Russia's sovereignty (*suverennost'*) and independence (*nezavisimost'*) are an important instrument in enhancing Russia's room for manoeuvre as a foreign policy actor.

As the securitisation agenda has encroached on economic matters, discernible changes are evident in the spheres of industrial policy, financial sector policy, and agricultural policy. In addition, the role of defence spending, and rearmament in particular, has also risen, with defence spending now accounting for the largest share of government spending and GDP in the post-Soviet period. This subject is, however, beyond the purview of this short paper.⁹

Industrial Policy

A desire to reduce imports of technology-intensive products has been evident in Russian official documents for some time. The NSS 2009 bemoaned

⁶ Security Council of the Russian Federation, *Strategiya natsional'noy bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii do 2020 goda* [National security strategy of the Russian Federation up to 2020], 2009, www.scrf.gov.u/documents/99.html. Sections 49-51.

⁷ NSS 2015, III. 51 and IV.57.

⁸ See NSS 2015 II. 9 and II.12.

⁹ See Cooper (2016), Bradshaw and Connolly (2016) and Connolly and Senstad (forthcoming).

the existence of a “raw materials export model of economic development” and “the worsening of the condition of the industrial ... base.”¹⁰ It also stated the desirability of “developing high-technology economic sectors.”¹¹ However, the emphasis in 2009 was on the need to build new sectors, rather than reduce the role of imports. Import substitution (*importozamashcheniye*) is only mentioned twice in the entire document, and even then referring to food security on one of those occasions. The reluctance to engage in wide-ranging import substitution was articulated by Vladimir Putin who, then in his role as Prime Minister, stated in May 2009 that “if we talk about the economy in general, it makes no sense to opt for import substitution if you can buy [imports] cheap.”¹²

In contrast, the NSS 2015 explicitly states the objective of undertaking import substitution across a range of technology-intensive product areas to help boost Russia’s “technological security.”¹³ Dependency on foreign technology is highlighted as one of the key threats to economic growth (and thus national security).¹⁴ As a result, the document states that a key objective is “the implementation of a rational import substitution [programme], [and the] reduction [of] the critical dependence on foreign technology and industrial production.”¹⁵ Several priority areas are identified, including military production, pharmaceutical products, agro-industrial production, and production in the energy industry.

This evolution in official thinking has been accompanied by the initiation of a large-scale import substitution programme.¹⁶ In April 2015, Denis Manturov, the Minister for Industry and Trade, presented a plan for import substitution that envisioned the implementation of 2,059 projects

¹⁰ NSS 2009, iv.55.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, iv.61.

¹² I am grateful to Elizabeth Teague for this reference: “Russia’s Putin warns against becoming obsessed with import substitution,” *Interfax*, 27 May 2009.

¹³ NSS 2015, v.69.

¹⁴ NSS 2015, iv.56.

¹⁵ NSS, v.62.

¹⁶ As official policy, import substitution was initiated with three presidential instructions (*porucheniya*) on 14 May 2014, <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/assignments/orders/23900>.

across 19 branches of the economy between 2016 and 2020.¹⁷ The total cost was estimated to reach over RUB 1.5 trillion.¹⁸ To support the import substitution programme, the government has assigned significant financial and institutional resources that demonstrate a firm commitment to the goal of reducing Russia's dependency on imports in key sectors of the economy.

Financial support for import substitution is provided in the form of tax breaks, state-subsidised cheap credit via Vneshekonombank (VEB) and the establishment of a fund for the development of industry (the *Fond Razvitiya Promyshlennosti*, or FRP). The FRP reportedly allocated RUB 20 billion (c.\$250 million) to 59 import-substitution projects in 2015, although their total value was cited as RUB 162 billion (c. \$2 billion). The terms of the FRP loans are favourable to borrowers and are significantly lower than the double-digit rate of inflation in the year they were offered.¹⁹ Additional funding is also available from the Ministry for Economic Development and the CBR.²⁰

The import substitution programme is supervised by a Government Commission on Import Substitution. Chaired by Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev, the commission is responsible for the identification of strategic objectives, the regulation of state procurement of equipment, and the procurement of large private companies receiving state support, with a view to restricting their use of imported machinery to items for which no locally-made (i.e. produced in Russia or the Eurasian Economic Union) analogue is available.²¹

¹⁷ T. Yedovina and A. Shapovalov, "Gossovet sobral plody importozameshcheniya" [The State Council has collected the fruits of import substitution], *Kommersant*, 26 November 2015, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2862090>.

¹⁸ N. Dzis'-Voynarovskii, "ZAO «Rossiya»" ("JSC Russia"), *Novoe Vremya*, no.12, 13 April 2015, <http://www.newtimes.ru/articles/detail/97063/>.

¹⁹ For more on the details of the FRP, see Y. Kryuchkova, "Promyshlenniye stavki sdelayu" ["The industrial wagers have been made"], *Kommersant*, 1 December 2015.

²⁰ V. Ardayev, "Perspektivnyye proyekty i 'deshevyye' den'gi" [Future projects and 'cheap' money], March 14, 2016, *RIA*, <http://ria.ru/analytics/20160314/1389707645.html>.

²¹ D. Medvedev, "First meeting of the Government Commission on Import Substitution," 11 August 2016, <http://www.government.ru/en/news/19246>.

Overall, the import substitution campaign represents a core component of a wider state-directed effort to enhance Russia's sovereignty and economic security. This point was reiterated recently by Medvedev, when he stated that import substitution is "our strategic priority for the coming years."²² As support for the programme grows, influential lobbies—both inside and outside government structures—are calling for further state support. The Minister for Economic Development, Alexey Ulyukayev, requested that state financial support to industry be increased to a level 2.5 times its current volume.²³ The government is also expanding the range of items that will be prohibited from being purchased as part of state procurement.²⁴

Financial Sector Policy

The Russian financial sector is one of the "commanding heights" of the economy, with a large proportion of the country's assets and deposits in the hands of state-controlled or state-influenced entities. This makes the financial sector a crucial component of Russia's national system of political economy, which explains why heightened security concerns are leading policy makers to develop new measures intended to insulate Russia from possible external threats by enhancing state control of the financial sector.

This rising awareness of the threat posed by vulnerabilities connected to the financial sector is explicitly articulated in the NSS 2015.²⁵ One of the main threats to economic growth identified is the "vulnerability of the national financial system to actions of non-residents."²⁶ This was not identified in the previous version of the document. Economic sanctions, including those targeting the financial sector, are also cited as a threat to economic development.²⁷ To deal with these threats, the strategy intro-

²² D. Medvedev, "Meeting on sectoral import substitution programmes," 3 April 2015, <http://government.ru/en/news/17521/>.

²³ Ardayev, "Perspektivnyye proyekty i 'deshevyye' den'gi."

²⁴ Malysheva, Y., "Minpromtorg tayno prodvigayet novyye ogranicheniya na zakupki medizdeliy" [Ministry for Industry and Trade secretly promoting new restrictions on purchases of medicine], *Gazeta.ru*, 24 March 2015, <http://www.gazeta.ru/business/2016/03/24/8140649.shtml>.

²⁵ NSS 2015, discussed in section on economic growth (V).

²⁶ NSS 2015, iv.56.

²⁷ NSS 2015, iv.57.

duces two tasks connected to the financial system that were also absent from previous security strategies. First, measures to enhance “the security of the financial system to ensure its stable functioning and development” are called for.²⁸ Second, the document stresses the need to “strengthen [the] financial system” and to secure Russian financial “sovereignty.”²⁹

This shift in official thinking has been accompanied by concrete policy measures to reduce what the Russian leadership perceives to be Russia’s vulnerability in the financial sector. These measures include the construction of a new national electronic payment system by the CBR that replicates the existing SWIFT payments system, the creation of domestic credit ratings agencies that are intended to supplant Western companies that were previously dominant in providing credit rating assessments in Russia, and the development of a new domestic payment card system that can perform the functions previously performed by Visa and MasterCard. All these measures emerged in response to the Western financial sanctions imposed in the aftermath of Russia’s annexation of Crimea. The prospect of Russia being excluded from the SWIFT payments system in any future escalation of the Western sanctions regime led Andrey Kostin, the Chief Executive of VTB, the country’s second largest bank, to declare that such a measure was so serious as to be tantamount to a “declaration of war.”³⁰

These measures may not be taken seriously by those outside Russia, and may not prove to be economically efficient (i.e. they may raise costs for economic activity in Russia rather than reduce them). For instance, the new payment system, now available for use by companies, was reported to be cheaper than SWIFT, but less efficient.³¹ The new Mir payment card, on the other hand, was reported to cost banks 50% more than international cards.³² Visa and MasterCard continue to dominate the Russian

²⁸ NSS 2015, iv.58.

²⁹ NSS 2015, iv.62.

³⁰ “Glava VTB: Otklyucheniye Rossii ot mezhdunarodnoy platezhnoy sistemy SWIFT – eto vojna” [Head of VTB: Exclusion of Russia from the SWIFT international payments system would be war], *Mk.ru*, 4 December 2014, <http://www.mk.ru/economics/2014/12/04/glava-vtb-otklyuchenie-rossii-ot-mezhdunarodnoy-platezhnoy-sistemy-swift-eto-vojna.html>

³¹ O. Shestopal, “TsB zaimetsya bol’shim biznesom” [“The CBR will engage in big business”], *Kommersant*, 20 July 2015.

³² O. Shestopal, “‘Mir’ udarit bankam po karmanam” [“‘Mir’ will hit banks in the pocket”], *Kommersant*, 17 November 2015.

market but have been obliged to shift to using the CBR's settlement system, raising their costs of doing business in Russia.³³ The purpose of these measures, however, is not to enhance economic efficiency, but to make the Russian financial system more durable and less vulnerable to pressure from foreign powers. Clearly, the authorities have identified a threat, and measures to deal with that threat have been put in place. Should international tensions rise further, it is reasonable to expect that further similar measures may be developed.

Agricultural Policy

The Russian leadership also considers the agricultural sector to be essential to Russia's economic security. The desire for self-sufficiency in agriculture is longstanding, with food security identified as a key component of national security since 2009.³⁴ This was followed by the formulation of the *Food Security Doctrine* in 2010, which laid out a series of steps—including increased investment, widened access to finance, and other forms of financial and institutional support—that were intended to reduce the share of imports in Russian food consumption.³⁵

The desire for food security in Russian strategic thinking has grown, and the NSS 2015 stressed both the need for “independence in food production” and the necessity of “improving the effectiveness of state support” to achieve this objective.³⁶ The use of a food embargo on Western countries in response to the imposition of sanctions in July 2014 has focused popular attention on the importance of self-sufficiency in food production.

But it is worth examining what official statements mean when they refer to food security because there is an important distinction between Western and Russian understandings of what food security means. In many

³³ Bank of Finland, *BOFIT Weekly*, 8 January 2016.

³⁴ NSS 2009.

³⁵ Security Council of the Russian Federation, *Doktrina prodovol'stvennoy bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii* [Doctrine for the food security of the Russian Federation], 2010, <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/15/108.html>. The desire for self-sufficiency in food production goes back to the early 2000s. See Stephen K. Wegren, “The Russian food embargo and food security: can household production fill the void?” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 55, no. 5 (2014): 491-514.

³⁶ NSS 2015, iii.54.

Western countries, food security broadly refers to security of access for the population. This is usually, although not exclusively, related to whether the population has sufficient income to purchase food products. In Russia, however, the emphasis is less on whether individual consumers have access to food, and more on how the collective, national interest is served by the country producing a wide range of foodstuffs. The Russian definition therefore envisages food security primarily as a national security issue rather than one to do with economic welfare (although consumer welfare is listed among the secondary objectives of the doctrine). The link between food security and national security is explicitly stated in the National Security Strategy 2009 (NSS 2009), where it is asserted that dependence on foreign food should be reduced and domestic production increased so that economic independence can be promoted.³⁷

The ultimate objective of the Food Doctrine is defined as “sustainable development of domestic food production and raw materials [,] sufficient to ensure [the] food independence [*nezavisimost'*] of the country.”³⁸ The fact that independence is mentioned further supports the view that for the Russian authorities access to food is a potential arena of contest between states. The degree of desired food independence is, however, not absolute: the success indicators listed in the Food Doctrine imply that differing degrees of import dependence are acceptable, with, for example, domestic production of grain envisaged to be at least 95% of total consumption, while domestically-produced fish products are expected to account for at least 80% of total consumption.³⁹

It is for this reason that Russia’s use of the food embargo weapon in 2014 was quite predictable. Prior to 2014, a series of policy measures had been undertaken to enhance Russia’s food security along the lines articulated in the Food Doctrine. Counter sanctions have therefore served as a useful instrument in supporting domestic producers’ efforts to achieve these objectives. Indeed, Vladimir Putin has described this as a “window of opportunity” that should be seized by Russian producers.⁴⁰

³⁷ NSS 2009, iii. 49-51.

³⁸ Food Doctrine, i.3.

³⁹ Food Doctrine, i.8.

⁴⁰ V. Putin, “Poslaniye Prezidenta Federal’nomu Sobraniyu” [Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly], 3 December 2015, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50864>; and “Putin ob’yasn timer’ importozameshcheniya v

In addition to this support, the NSS 2015 contains a significantly more elaborate description of the objectives associated with food security, going further not just than the NSS 2009, which contained only vaguely defined objectives, but also beyond the 2010 Food Doctrine. For instance, it is stated that food security can be achieved by “accelerating the modernization” of the agro-industrial and fishery complexes, and by further developing the “infrastructure of the domestic market.”⁴¹ Indeed, the development of the wider supporting infrastructure for agriculture is further emphasized when the document states the importance of “training scientists and highly qualified professionals in the field of agriculture.”⁴² This reveals an evolution in official thinking on the issue of food security, with greater attention now being paid to improving the wider socio-economic environment in which agriculture takes place.

The additional attention devoted to food security in the NSS 2015 suggests that the issue is becoming ever more important component of wider national security. Given that the agricultural industry accounts for some 5% of valued-added in Russia (compared with an EU average of around 2%), this represents an important element in the increasing securitization of economic policy.

Implications for Economic Connectivity and Possible Solutions

Official thinking about economic policy in Russia is evolving significantly and is becoming increasingly shaped by national security concerns. These concerns are part of a wider effort to mobilize the state’s resources in response to what Moscow sees as an increasingly unstable and threatening international environment. While some of these tendencies were previously evident, the trend has visibly accelerated during the last five years. Reducing Russia’s dependence on imported products and services is now considered a key component of Russia’s national security.

If Russian attempts to enhance its economic security are only partially successful, several consequences are likely. First, by reducing Russia’s vulnerability to external economic pressure, the scope for Russia’s adversaries to employ instruments of economic statecraft (such as sanctions) will

Rossii” [Putin explains import substitution in Russia], *Rosbalt.ru*, 29 June 2015, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/business/2015/06/19/1410425.html>.

⁴¹ NSS 2015, iv.54.

⁴² *Ibid.*

be reduced. Because many in Russia view modern conflict in multidimensional terms, this can only make Russia a more capable geopolitical force in the future. Second, economic securitization is likely to reduce the influence of those forces in Russia that support greater integration with Western political and economic structures. Third, as a more securitized economy is built, an increasingly influential economic elite tied to financial, agricultural and industrial security may emerge. It should be expected that such a group would have a stake in preserving and augmenting the existing political order in Russia. In this respect, economic securitization may not only enhance Russia's geopolitical power, but it may also serve as an instrument for the revitalization of the wider Russian social order.

All of this has important implications for economic connectivity. The degree to which Russia is integrated with Western trade, financial and institutional structures could well decline if securitized economic policy becomes the norm rather than the exception. This is likely to cause damage to the economies of Russia and the West. But the political consequences may be even more severe. If, for example, connectivity is reduced too much—whether as a result of damaging episodes of economic statecraft or through efforts to restructure domestic systems of political economy to reduce vulnerability to future economic statecraft—it is possible that the barriers to military conflict may be lowered.

Annex I. OSCE Focus Programme 2016

Strengthening the OSCE's contribution to European security

14-15 October 2016, Maison de la paix, Geneva

Time	Friday, 14 October 2016
09:00 – 09:15	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>Daniel Warner, Assistant Director for International Relations, DCAF</p> <p>Nicolas Brühl, Ambassador and Assistant State Secretary for Europe, Central Asia, Council of Europe and OSCE, FDFA</p> <p>Thomas Guerber, Ambassador, Director DCAF</p>
09:15 – 10:30	<p>Session 1: European Security I: Elements and Stepping Stones for a Europe at Peace</p> <p>Chair: Daniel Warner, Assistant Director for International Relations, DCAF</p> <p>Speaker: Borislava Manojlovic, Director of Research and Adjunct Professor, School of Diplomacy and International Relations, Seton Hall University</p> <p>Discussant: Samuel Charap, Senior Fellow for Russia and Eurasia, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)</p>
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 – 12:00	<p>Session 2: European Security II: How to Return to a Real Dialogue in the OSCE?</p> <p>Chair: Florian Raunig, Ambassador, Austrian MFA, Head of Task Force OSCE Chairmanship 2017</p> <p>Speaker: Petri Hakkarainen, Senior Diplomatic Advisor, GCSP</p>

	<p>Discussant: Istvan Gyarmati, Ambassador, President, International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT)</p>
12:00 – 14:00	Lunch: Maison de la Paix – Le Restaurant – 8 th Floor
14:00 – 15:15	<p>Session 3: Modernization of Arms Control / CSBM in the OSCE Region</p> <p>Chair: Benno Laggner, Minister, Deputy Head of Delegation for Security Policy Issues, Swiss Mission to the OSCE</p> <p>Speaker: Wolfgang Richter, Senior Associate, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)</p> <p>Discussant: Christian Nuenlist, Senior Researcher, CSS, ETH Zurich</p>
15:15 – 15:30	Coffee Break
15:30 – 16:45	<p>Session 4: Beyond Donbas: What role for the OSCE in conflict management?</p> <p>Chair: Heidi Grau, Ambassador, Head of the Human Security Division in the Directorate of Political Affairs, FDFA</p> <p>Speaker: Adam Kobieracki, Former ambassador of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC)</p> <p>Discussant : Marcel Pesko, Ambassador, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat</p>
19:00	Dinner at La Perle du Lac, keynote address by Ambassador Zan- nier , Secretary General, OSCE

Time	Saturday, 15 October 2016
09:00 – 10:15	<p>Session 5: Economic Connectivity: Defining a Role for the OSCE</p> <p>Chair: Hannes Swoboda, Former Member of European Parliament</p> <p>Speaker: Richard Connolly, Co-Director, Centre for Russian, European and Eurasian Studies University of Birmingham</p> <p>Discussant: Andreas Stadler, Minister Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of Austria to the OSCE</p>
10:15 – 10:30	Coffee Break
10:30-11:45	<p>Session 6: Managing Migration: Ways forward for the OSCE</p> <p>Chair: Andrei Zagorski, Head of Department, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Moscow</p> <p>Speaker: Alina Narusova, Regional Policy and Liaison Officer, IOM</p> <p>Discussant: Claude Wild, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the OSCE</p>
11:45 – 12:15	<p>Conclusions</p> <p>Chair: Daniel Warner, Assistant Director for International Relations, DCAF</p> <p>Speakers: Antje Leendertse, Ambassador, Head of the Taskforce for the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship Lamberto Zannier, Ambassador, Secretary General, OSCE</p>
12:15 - 13:30	Lunch – WMO
14:00	Departure of participants

Annex II. List of Participants

- Lydia Amberg**, Assistant to Daniel Warner
- Daniel Baer**, Ambassador, United States of America, OSCE
- Thierry Béchet**, Ambassador, European Union, OSCE
- Paul Bekkers**, Ambassador, Director of the Office of the Secretary General, OSCE
- Nicolas Brühl**, Ambassador, Head of the Europe, Central Asia, CoE, OSCE Division in the Directorate of Political Affairs, FDFA
- Samuel Charap**, Senior Fellow for Russia and Eurasia, IISS
- Richard Connolly**, Co-Director, Centre for Russian, European and Eurasian Studies
- Stefan Füle**, Special Envoy for the OSCE, MFA, Czech Republic
- Fabian Grass**, Deputy Coordinator OSCE, Directorate of Political Affairs, FDFA
- Jonas Grätz**, Policy Advisor, FDFA
- Heidi Grau**, Ambassador, Head of the Human Security Division in the Directorate of Political Affairs, FDFA
- Thomas Guerber**, Ambassador, Director DCAF
- Istvan Gyarmati**, Ambassador, President, International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT), Hungary
- Claudio Habicht**, Team Europe and OSCE, Human Security Division in the Directorate of Political Affairs, FDFA
- Petri Hakkarainen**, Senior Diplomatic Advisor, GCSP
- Adam Kobieracki**, former Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC)
- Benno Laggner**, Minister, Deputy Head of Delegation for Security Policy Issues, Swiss Mission to the OSCE
- Antje Leendertse**, Ambassador, Head of the Taskforce for the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship
- Borislava Manojlovic**, Director of Research and Adjunct Professor, School of Diplomacy and International Relations, Seton Hall University
- Alina Narusova**, Regional Policy and Liaison Officer, IOM
- Christian Nuenlist**, Senior Researcher, CSS, ETH Zurich
- Rasa Ostrauskaite**, Deputy Director, Conflict Prevention Center, OSCE
- Katja Pehrman**, Ambassador, Finland, OSCE
- Marcel Pesko**, Ambassador, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat

- Ihor Prokopchuk**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Ukraine, OSCE
- Florian Raunig**, Ambassador, Austrian Foreign Ministry, Head of Task Force OSCE Chairmanship 2017
- Wolfgang Richter**, Senior Associate, SWP
- Silvia Maria Santangelo**, Deputy Head of Mission, Italy, OSCE
- Andreas Stadler**, Minister Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of Austria to the OSCE
- Hannes Swoboda**, Former Member of European Parliament; former President of the S&D Group
- Fred Tanner**, Ambassador, Senior Advisor to the OSCE Secretary General
- Alexandra Tokareva**, Senior Programme Officer, GCSP
- Riccarda Torriani**, Regional Coordinator in the Europe, Central Asia, CoE, OSCE Division in the Directorate of Political Affairs, Swiss FDFA
- Daniel Warner**, Assistant Director for International Relations, DCAF
- Claude Wild**, Ambassador, Switzerland, OSCE
- Andrei Zagorski**, Head of Department, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Moscow
- Lamberto Zannier**, Secretary General, OSCE
- Wolfgang Zellner**, Deputy Director IFSH, Head of Centre for OSCE Research (CORE)
- Vladimir Zheglov**, Deputy Permanent Representative, Russian Federation, OSCE
- Vuk Zugic**, Ambassador, Serbia, OSCE

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