

CONFIDENCE BUILDING MATTERS

**The CSCE and the Process of
Confidence Building**

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OF CONFIDENCE BUILDING**

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Introduction

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) made an important contribution towards lessening tension in Europe during the Cold War. It helped to bring about a rapprochement between major ideological rivals and military blocs, and was at the forefront of the process that brought the Cold War to an end. The CSCE, whilst proud of its achievements, cannot however be complacent.

The Budapest Review Conference provides the CSCE with an excellent opportunity to chart the course to be followed in future years; a course that needs to take into account the new realities in Europe with all their potentials and pitfalls.

The post-Cold War European order has already developed its own problems and dynamics. Conflict in Europe, between and within states is more widespread than it has been since the second world war. For the most part the European states have been helpless to act to stop conflict once it has started. This has been a weakness of the CSCE, as much as of the other European institutions.

This failure has cast doubts about the usefulness of these institutions in the present period. Some claim that the CSCE has achieved its aims, which were rooted in rivalry between military blocs and super-power tension of the fifties and sixties, and should now be wound up.

From the Paris Summit in 1990, the CSCE has moved to adjust to the new European situation resulting from the end of the Cold War. The initiatives in the field of preventive diplomacy, conflict management and human rights have given a new lease of life to the CSCE in the last four years.

These initiatives were further developed following the 1992 Helsinki Summit as a result of which its capacity to contribute to conflict prevention and peacekeeping in Europe was greatly enhanced. The establishment of missions and the appointment of a High Commissioner on National Minorities has enabled the CSCE to play an active role in preventive diplomacy.

A new role for the CSCE

There are certainly lessons to be learnt from the experience of the CSCE in the last two decades that may be of relevance to present day circumstances. There is however no doubt that the CSCE has to expand and develop its role if it is to respond to the hopes put in it by the member states and their citizens.

This can be done whilst at the same time retaining the essential characteristics of the CSCE – a forum that has succeeded because it has operated with the mutual consent of all its members. The principle of consensus is a part and parcel of the CSCE identity and as such should be tampered with sparingly, if at all. Another important characteristic is the nature of the CSCE as an association of states that, whilst respecting the inviolability of each others borders and sovereignty, have recognised the importance of the human dimension in their relationship with each other as well as for the development of a security structure for Europe. Thus the CSCE could in the past help build bridges across

an ideologically divided Europe. In the new situation the divide is more complex: in some cases it is ethnic, in others religious, in others social or economic. It is a divide within sovereign states, as well as between them.

The most plausible future threat to Europe no longer comes from a potential nuclear holocaust. It does come however from the failure or absence of civil society, from extremism, from mistrust based on blind nationalism and from the failure of economies to respond to the aspirations of communities.

These are the new problems that the CSCE needs to tackle in future years, with equal importance extended to the Co-operation aspect, as much as to the Security aspect and a greater realisation that the two go hand in hand.

A new approach within the same structure

In this respect the structures of the CSCE have to develop to provide the new flexibility and machinery that are necessary to deal with the new situation.

The basic CSCE structure for the future can very well be similar to the present – a rotating presidency, slim bureaucracy and deriving its strength from the willingness of its members to compromise to build a consensus rather than from fear of being outvoted or sanctioned.

Some are critical of this structure and argue that it has been the CSCE's major weakness. Yet a comparison with other comparable international institutions, such as the United Nations, the Arab League or the Organisation of American States shows that the CSCE has not been any less effective because of its structure and that in fact these structures have been its source of strength.

At the same time the member states have to understand that if they want an effective institution they cannot starve it of the necessary financial resources that it needs to conduct its work properly. Running the CSCE on a shoestring may have been possible in the past, but is unlikely to succeed in the future.

There is also the need to strengthen the role of the Secretary General, not only by adding political clout to the office but also by ensuring that he has the proper resources at his disposal. The success of the recent visit of the Secretary General to the Central Asian Republics, a sensitive area to which the CSCE should dedicate more attention in the future, is a good example of the role this office can play in the future.

Within this general framework however a fresh approach needs to be adopted; an approach that has to be reflected in the staff of the CSCE, in its offices and its missions, and the way they tackle problems and deal with issues. In this regard the CSCE has to show greater flexibility in its working methods than it has done so far. Past experience here may not necessarily be useful. Negotiating complicated treaties at inter-state level may not necessarily be the best background to contributing to the resolution of community problems at intra-state level.

Striking the right balance between past experience and new methodology is particularly useful in the field of preventive diplomacy and confidence building. This may be

achieved by having a better mix of personnel serving on secondment with the CSCE at any given moment through widening the catchment area beyond the Foreign Ministries or the Military of the member states to others of different background – both inside and outside government structures. This variety of backgrounds, and hopefully ideas, should also be complimented by a harmonisation of standards. In this regard the period of secondment should be lengthened, standardised, and preceded by an orientation period during which personnel will be given a better understanding of the concept and role of the CSCE and what is required of them, before they are deployed either at the Secretariat or in the field.

Confidence building between states and within states

The CSCE provided an ideal forum for the development of confidence building measures between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in the final stages of the Cold War. Some of the structures for confidence building that were designed for the Cold War period have also been useful in the post-Cold War period. The CFE Treaty, the Open Skies Agreement and similar initiatives have helped to diffuse tensions between states in post-Cold War circumstances. The confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs) established during the 1980s and further developed in the 1992 Vienna Document remain very important for European security, and there is scope for developing those further. Since regions within the CSCE area have different characteristics and concerns, some further CSBMs may be developed specifically in certain sub regions. There is also much to be done to facilitate and manage the process by which conflicts end. The relationship between disarmament and political peace-building processes is a subtle one in which CSBMs could be very important. The CSCE could usefully co-operate with the UN in learning lessons from previous and present experiences (for example in Cambodia, El Salvador and Mozambique) and in developing guidelines for the future.

Its rich past experience with CSBMs puts the CSCE in a unique position to assist in the development of confidence building measures in two further fields: it can help in developing the concept of confidence building to intra-state level, particularly in situations where tension exists but violence has not actually broken out. It can also share its experience at both inter-state and intra-state level with other countries and regional organisations outside the European continent.

At the intra-state level the task of the CSCE is delicate and challenging. Confidence building in the village square requires different skills, aptitudes and approaches from confidence building at super-power summits. Yet the concept is the same and the results sometimes just as fruitful. The CSCE has however in this context to define its role clearly and this should be mainly a FACILITATING ROLE.

A spectrum of FACILITIES may be developed — in some cases through already existing structures — ranging from high level diplomacy, for example making available the good offices of the General Secretary, or the High Commissioner for National Minorities, to low key dialogues between different communities at different levels, to the training of personnel, and helping the development of various strata of civil society.

It is clear that to achieve these goals the CSCE cannot and should not rely only on the strengths and experiences of its own staff or of the diplomats attached to the foreign ministries of its member states. This has to be a much wider exercise involving expertise in all the member states, not only at governmental level, but also within civil society.

The CSCE also needs to do much more to improve the training and learning processes that are vital to effective conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building. Training programmes for officials involved in CSCE missions need substantial development to prepare them to achieve their goals effectively and at least not to make the same mistakes as their predecessors, or to have to reinvent the wheel! It is also important to improve the institutional learning processes, so that valuable knowledge is not lost and that appropriate lessons can be learned. This can partly be achieved by effective debriefing procedures, the development of operational manuals and by extending the period of secondment of national officials to the CSCE. The Conflict Prevention Centre and the Office of the Secretary General could also play an important role in this area.

In the second field, that of sharing experience with other countries and regions, the unique experience of the CSCE can also be put to good use. It has been accepted right from the first meetings of the CSCE that European Security cannot be seen in isolation. Events in the farthest corners of the globe have involved European countries in wars even as the process of the CSCE was evolving. The CSCE has therefore both in the interest of its members, as well as for the benefit of humanity, the duty to share its experience at building trust and confidence to avoid conflict, with other countries and regions. This notwithstanding, the cultivation of other fields of co-operation with the non-participating states should continue. This could also be achieved through closer ties with non-European security related organisations, particularly the United Nations, to gain from the mutual exchange of security building and preventive diplomacy. The CSCE could also contribute to the development of global co-operative confidence and security building measures. For example, CSCE states' experience with military transparency arrangements and the CFE Treaty has already contributed to the development of the UN Register of Conventional Arms. The CSCE should encourage all member states to participate in the Register and promote the expansion of the Register to cover military holdings and procurement by including such information in the background information they send to the UN Centre for Disarmament Affairs in New York.

The Verification Technology Information Centre (VERTIC) is actively engaged in promoting and supporting both these tasks.

VERTIC has in the past examined and promoted confidence building measures between the military structures in Europe. We are at the forefront in helping to share the experience of the CSCE with other countries and regions outside the CSCE area. VERTIC is currently developing a project aiming to promote links between senior military officers from South Asian countries and those at specific CFE and CSCE verification agencies. These visits will constitute a tour, exposing South Asian participants to both the practical and policy making aspects of European CSBMs. At the same time the European hosts will gain from the South Asian perspective of the CSBMs.

In the field of developing the concept of confidence building VERTIC's research project on Conflict and Confidence Building is at the moment in full swing, with extensive field

work being conducted in Romania, Georgia and Egypt. We hope our findings in these and other countries and our work on confidence building measures in general will contribute towards the work of the CSCE in this field.

The CSCE and peacekeeping

The issue of peacekeeping has tormented the CSCE in recent years, and no doubt the demand for CSCE peacekeeping missions will in future remain high. With the resources of many of the states traditionally supplying peacekeeping forces already stretched to the limit, CSCE resources in this field are going to be restricted.

However, this does not mean that the CSCE should not have both the capability and the political will to deploy peacekeeping missions in circumstances where the deployment of these missions is obviously crucial. This means that the CSCE should have, if not a standing peacekeeping force, at least a standing military staff that can plan and prepare for contingencies.

On the other hand, the CSCE has recently been faced with the dilemma of how to react to third party peacekeeping in circumstances where it lacks either the political will or the resources, or both, to intervene itself. In these circumstances it is not an option for the CSCE to wash its hands from these problems, and in the circumstances in which third party peacekeeping is going on, the CSCE should independently of the peacekeepers deploy monitoring missions to ascertain the nature and process of the peacekeeping operation in question.

In this, as in other fields, a close collaboration with the UN and relevant UN peacekeeping operations is essential.

The role of non-governmental organisations in the CSCE process

In the new tasks ahead, the CSCE cannot succeed unless it taps the huge wealth of experience and intellectual resources of European civil society. The opening up of the CSCE process to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) was an important step that made the deliberations of the Conference more accessible to the public, and that has introduced an interaction between the governments of the member states and their citizens.

This initiative, whilst laudable, should be developed much more extensively and the scope of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights should be widened to take into account other aspects of civil society, and to allow it to provide a more effective and visible support to the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Whilst the ODIHR should not become a bureaucracy, it can develop its capacity for acting as a clearing house and facilitator for different European initiatives, particularly helping to promote links between governmental and non-governmental activity. Such initiatives should be disseminated in a format that can be easily accessible, avoiding the

tendency to follow in the path of some institutions who have taken to heart the "mysteries" and jargon of the huge bureaucracies with whom they have to deal, but rather making them available to communities at national, regional, town and village level. The CSCE needs to become user-friendly — an institution that can relate to others outside the bureaucracies of the Foreign Ministries and an institution that can be accessed by non-governmental bodies.

To be more effective, the ODIHR may have to have its own independent budget, based on contributions from the member states, with which it could help interaction amongst European NGOs and projects and initiatives aimed at strengthening civil society within different countries. This budget could be administered by a joint governments — NGO committee: the governments chosen by rotation from amongst the member states and the NGOs through a democratic process that will reflect scope, national and other characteristics.

The CSCE has to be careful not to fall into the trap of treating NGOs as it treats journalists. NGOs are in many circumstances actors in national and international scenarios and interaction with them has to be conducted with this in mind.

On the other hand the media may be the CSCE's best ally and worst enemy. In many circumstances the media may be the best medium through which the CSCE can promote its own ideals. A strategy towards the media needs therefore to be developed and it should go far beyond facilitating the coverage of summits or the promotion of CSCE activity.

Conclusion – Openness is strength

The CSCE has proven its worth and contributed towards peace in Europe. Its strength will remain in preventing violent conflict from starting or escalating, rather than its ability to stop it once it has started. One of the main areas of work for the CSCE in the future will therefore necessarily be that of confidence building between states and within states. This the CSCE will need to do through the use of conventional diplomacy as well as through developing new concepts of confidence building using the resources of European civil society. This can only come about if the CSCE structures are strengthened and opened up, and if the governments of the member states extend to it their political and logistical support. The process of strengthening and opening up is complementary, for there is a direct correlation between public relations and the political will. Opening up the CSCE to make it more user-friendly will improve public awareness of its work. Provided the CSCE remains an effective organisation, heightened awareness will create favourable public opinion which will in turn create the political will to strengthen the CSCE. Presently the CSCE shyly hides itself in secrecy, reinforcing its image of either being ineffectual or merely a diplomat's club. If this is not the case, an effort should be made to educate the public to the CSCE's work. After all it has been for a long time a part of the CSCE philosophy that openness is strength.

About VERTIC

What is verification?

The success of any agreement depends on building an atmosphere of trust. These agreements can be international treaties on arms control, or on the environment, or agreements between different communities within a state. Trust can best be built and maintained when all sides are aware that "cheating" is likely to be detected. The process is known as verification.

What is VERTIC?

VERTIC, the Verification Technology Information Centre, was established in 1986 as an independent, non-profit making organisation of scientists in response to the needs of policy-makers, journalists, legislators, the academic community and others for reliable information on verification.

How does VERTIC operate?

Research: VERTIC carries out research in verification technologies and methodologies within the framework of political reality. VERTIC takes a professional, non-partisan and scientific approach to research, and is frequently called upon to provide expert comment on verification.

Publish: Our staff and international network of consultants publish widely: in the general and specialist press, in contributions to books, and in our own publications.

Broadcast media: VERTIC is the first port of call for many TV and radio journalists. We are approached for our knowledge of international and national agreements and for our technical expertise.

Seminars, conferences and workshops: VERTIC holds a number of meetings on all our subjects throughout the year. VERTIC personnel are frequently invited to present papers at international gatherings throughout the world.

Personnel: VERTIC permanent staff operate from offices in central London, and are supported by a worldwide team of consultants, project study groups, and an Oversight and Advisory Board.

How is VERTIC funded?

VERTIC receives a large part of its funding from Charitable Trusts including the W. Alton Jones Foundation, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Ploughshares Fund, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller Foundation, Polden-Puckham Trust, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the John Merck Fund. We also have project funding from the British Ministry of Defence, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the European Union. VERTIC also accepts commissions for research.

Areas of Work

Arms Control and Disarmament: including nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear testing, remote sensing technologies, conventional forces and open skies, chemical and biological weapons and South Asian security.

The Environment: including climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development.

Conflicts and Confidence-building: see over.

The CSCE and the Process of Confidence Building

Conflicts and Confidence-Building

The third main area of VERTIC's work focuses on conflicts between states and within states, particularly conflicts with an ethnic dimension and looks at what confidence-building measures can be applied to the situations. VERTIC follows closely the work of the CSCE in the field of conflict prevention, arms control agreements, CSBMs and national minorities

General approach The conflicts and confidence-building projects breaks new ground, particularly in the field of civilian confidence-building measures. The role of verification and confidence-building in preventing and resolving sub-national conflicts has been paid very little attention until now. In the first place, VERTIC is studying a selection of actual and potentially violent situations, taking into account the concerns and aspirations of all sides.

We are looking at how laws and constitutions can be used as confidence-building measures and how existing international measures between states impact on conflicts within states. We are particularly interested in the role of cultural symbols and in the role of the media.

We are establishing procedures for "action-research" within the case-study countries. From the research, we are developing proposals on how to verify agreements between different communities within a state and on how to involve both governmental and non-governmental organisations in this process of confidence-building.

Case studies In the first phase (1994) the project looks at three case studies:

- The conflict between the Romanian and Hungarian communities in Romania;
- Conflict and state building in Georgia;
- Religious conflict and national cohesion in Egypt.

Our work in Romania, Georgia and Egypt will continue throughout 1995, with further case studies from Southern Africa, the South Balkans, Latin America, South Asia and the Pacific added in due course.

Audience In this project VERTIC is collaborating closely with governments and communities. The audience for this research is primarily the communities themselves, mediators and negotiators, non-governmental organisations, international governmental organisations (for example the United Nations, the European Union, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, etc.), and the media.

Other relevant VERTIC publications

The Verification yearbook series

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| J. B. Poole & R. Guthrie (eds), Verification 1994: Arms Control, Peacekeeping and the Environment , VERTIC/Brassey's, 1994 | ISBN 1 85753 110 8
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Research reports

Patricia M. Lewis and Owen Greene, *The CSCE, European Security and Verification: Considerations for Helsinki 1992*, (to be re-issued as: Confidence Building Matters No 1), VERTIC, London 1992.