

Andrey Zagorskiy:
***Helsinki Process (Negotiations within the Conference
 on Security and Cooperation in Europe 1972–1991)***

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There are hundreds and thousands of different publications on various aspects of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and the actions of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) since 1975. But most authors express their understanding of this conference or organization from a Western point of view, often ignoring the prevailing Soviet or Russian views, and vice versa.

The most valuable characteristic of this book is its objective analysis of the CSCE's development and activities, which skilfully avoids any tendency to side with either camp. This is undoubtedly due to the author's career and experience in the political world. The biggest handicap of the book is that it is written and published in Russian, although one can expect an English version to be published – and the sooner the better.

The author, Andrey Vladimirovitch Zagorskiy, is well known within the CSCE/OSCE community, and his work has been highly regarded for decades. He has published more than 200 works on European security, post-Soviet studies, arms control and Soviet/Russian foreign policy. In comparison with Soviet and later Russian propagandists, Zagorskiy has always tried to see the world objectively, through academic eyes. This once more applies perfectly to this latest release. While living in Russia, Zagorskiy has always maintained close working contacts with his Western colleagues. This helps him to keep a rational approach in his writings, and allows him to go further under the surface of public declarations made by both sides in the cold war, and even beyond that time.

A. Y. Zagorskiy was engaged as Deputy Director of the Moscow Office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation from 2000 to 2005, and between 2002 and 2003 he also acted as Deputy Director of the Institute of International Studies in Moscow. In 2002, he was appointed visiting professor at the Geneva-based Centre for Security Policy, and between 2000 and 2001, he was senior Vice-President and Director of the East-West Security Studies Institute, Prague. From 1992 to 1999 he was Vice-Rector at the Moscow Institute of International Relations (MGIMO). During the 1980s and early 1990s, Zagorskiy participated in many CSCE sessions as an expert for the various Soviet delegations.

This latest book covers the first two decades of the CSCE's existence, including the preparatory phase that led to the Helsinki Summit in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The first chapter deals with the political and diplomatic preparations for the Conference, mainly in 1972 and 1973. The second chapter focuses on the formulation of the Helsinki Final Act between 1973 and 1975. It offers an evaluation of this historical document, which not

only prevailed in the West and the East at that time, but also as it appears today, under the light of the experience we have gained since.

The third chapter examines the formation of the CSCE's infrastructure as discussed at the Belgrade Follow-up Meeting, 1977–1978, and at several specialized expert meetings between 1978–1980 (e.g. the Meeting on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes in Montreux, the Meeting of Experts on the Mediterranean dimension in la Valetta, and the Scientific Forum that convened in Bonn and Hamburg). The Madrid Follow-up Meeting (1980–1983) is a particular focal point, and in spite of the overall success of these particular negotiations in Madrid and of the other meetings at expert level, the author closes this chapter by summarising this period of the CSCE's history as "The CSCE crisis".

The fourth chapter is called "The Way Out of a Blind Alley", and deals with the Stockholm conference on Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe, which convened between 1984 and 1986. It also covers the Vienna Follow-up Meeting between 1986 and 1989. The author examines the second part of the eighties as a whole, under the title "1989: The Period of Uncertainty".

The fifth chapter first describes and evaluates the time period entitled "From Process to Institutions", specifically depicting the CSCE's institutionalisation process and the formulation of the "Paris Charter for a New Europe", signed in 1990. The last part of this chapter calls 1991 "The Last Year of the 'Old' CSCE". As an appendix, there is a very useful quick reference guide giving the dates of all of the CSCE's official meetings and conferences between 1972 and 1991.

The book does not offer a general bibliography on the CSCE/OSCE, but following each of the 24 parts that form the five above-mentioned chapters, and after the preface and final conclusions, references to hundreds of documents, literature and explanatory texts are available. No significant author writing on the CSCE/OSCE goes without quote or mention in this book. Such references are testament to the author's extensive studies and use of a tremendous number of official and informal CSCE/OSCE documents, primarily deposited at the Prague Office of the OSCE Secretariat. He also refers to and quotes numerous Western, Soviet, and Russian publicists and other secondary sources.

It is a great pity that this book does not continue beyond the nineties. Of course, a book about the first two decades of the CSCE is undoubtedly interesting for a lot of OSCE/CSCE fans, in addition to enthusiastic historians. But those readers who would be disappointed to find nothing about the Organization's later developments will be grateful that the author has included many comments on what happened in CSCE/OSCE later, after 1991 and up until the first years of the 21st century, in the preface and final chapter. I would expect all readers of this book to be looking forward to Zagorskiy's detailed picture of the next chapters of CSCE/OSCE's history.

The language, or more accurately the verbal precision, used in this book differs significantly from that mostly used by the Western media. The author sticks to the official names of countries and institutions he refers to. For him, the Soviet Union is simply the Soviet Union and not an evil empire or a

Bolshevik state. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe are not called Communist, but are referred to as members of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, or as WTO countries. Of course, for the sake of style, shorter terms like Warsaw pact or Eastern block are used occasionally, but generally the author evades the offensive terms and propagandistic slogans used in some pamphlets. The author also faithfully reproduces all the official titles of all organs, such as the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the WTO, or the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, etc.

Not only those who consider the CSCE/OSCE an important part of the European security architecture but also those who would dissolve it because they consider it impotent, will be fascinated by the reasons the author reveals behind the astonishing reality of the CSCE's/OSCE's survival of the political earthquake in 1989/1990. An institution founded to establish rules of coexistence between two blocks not only failed to disappear, but on the contrary grew tremendously and took upon itself new tasks under totally different circumstances.

While following the analysis of the course of CSCE meetings and conferences, the reader encounters specific examples of proposals made by both Western and Eastern parties. The author reveals the merits of those proposals worthy of attention, be they made by the Western, Eastern or Neutral and Non-Aligned (N+N) countries. It should be mentioned that the author is right to pay tribute to certain neutral countries that played an extremely important role at all CSCE meetings during the cold war, especially Finland and Yugoslavia, in their efforts to reach consensus on the most controversial issues, difficult problems and/or formulations. In a number of specific examples the author also illustrates that the Warsaw Treaty countries were not as monolithic as is generally assumed. Romania, for example, almost always adopted its own position on all important issues. Though Western propaganda praised Ceaucescu as a hero on a majority of issues, he was more dogmatic than the Soviets, especially during the Gorbachov period.

Zagorskiy comprehensively examines every important CSCE meeting of the 1970s and 1980s, giving each its proper place in the rich history of the Helsinki process. He is full of praise for those contributing to the historic breakthrough of the CSCE Final Act in 1975, but also depicts the difficulties of overcoming the great differences between participants and of reaching agreements in the follow-up meetings that became real milestones along the road linking the divided continent. Zagorskiy pays special attention to the Belgrade Follow-up Meeting in 1977–1978 – often labelled as unfruitful. But he rightly considers it important, as it actually began “the formation of the infrastructure of the Helsinki process in the form of regular substantive meetings of representatives of participating states”.¹ The Belgrade meeting was also the beginning of the “balanced progress” concept, and of the “asymmetric deals between East and West” in which the East would compromise on the human dimension in return for Western concessions in the political, security and economic baskets.

Supporting his work with a great number of factual examples, the author describes how the Madrid Follow-up Meeting (1980–1983) played a very

special role in the development of the Helsinki process. This meeting was the first undoubtedly successful meeting since the Helsinki Summit, with a consensus reached on a set of balanced final documents. The biggest achievement of these negotiations was, of course, the formulation of the mandate for the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security-Building Measures.

The pages in which the author destroys myths and takes apart clichés and stereotypes about the CSCE/OSCE are highly interesting and essential. Zagorskiy reminds us that right after the signing ceremony of the Final Act, conservatives in Western Europe and especially in America accused Western leaders of betraying the East European nations by selling them off to Brezhnev. Later on, another one-sided assessment appeared, arguing that the Eastern concessions made in the human dimension were in fact the substance of the Helsinki process. Incidentally, the Helsinki Decalogue's seventh principle on human rights was not initiated by the Americans, but after its adoption the Carter administration and later American governments used it as an effective weapon in their foreign policy. Today it is generally accepted that the human rights instrument contributed to the downfall of Communism, but before 1989 there were many disputes among politicians and observers on both sides about the tangible results of Western pressure on human rights, and whether it helped liberalise any given regime or only hardened its repression.

Andrey Zagorskiy stresses that the two decades of the Helsinki process enhanced the practice of international relations by creating a unique mechanism for monitoring the implementation of decisions and obligations reached by consensus in all three OSCE dimensions. The CSCE/OSCE also broke new grounds and gave priceless experience in multilateral negotiations. The most effective method for reaching a balanced compromise was the strategy of linking different issues and preparing so-called package solutions. Among them, the best known is a key compromise worked into the Final Act on the "frontiers for human rights".

There is little to disagree with Zagorskiy on as far the pre-1991 period is concerned. The only small problem I have with some of his conclusions is his description of the present situation: "Today's OSCE has appeared on the periphery of basic political processes in Europe. Since the end of the nineties it has more often played the role of a mere subcontractor fulfilling tasks decided by other organisations, especially the UN."² In a world where the UN's leading role is often questioned in words and even in deeds, I see this as more an advantage than a disadvantage. I hasten to add, however, that immediately after these words, the author continued: "This does not mean that the present inheritor of the tradition of the Helsinki process has become a useless organisation."

The OSCE has not exhausted its potential yet did not become an organisation making key political decisions or determining the basic trends of European development. It is one of many European organisations, which has its strong and weak sides, its comparative advantages as well as shortcomings. Today's OSCE is not the old CSCE with a new name, but an absolutely different organisation fulfilling new tasks in circumstances which

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have changed radically. It is now set in tough competition with other European organisations in the security field. I would not myself use such strong words, but the fact is that in 1990 many European politicians (including Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Václav Havel and Jiří Dienstbier) foresaw a far greater role for the CSCE in the European security architecture. There are many reasons why this did not happen, but one is certainly the adoption of many of the CSCE's original tasks by NATO. Some critics of this development even say that NATO has become "an OSCE with teeth".

Zdeněk Matějka

ENDNOTES

¹ Andrey Zagorskiy (2005), *Helsinki Process*. Moscow, p. 140.

² *Ibid.*, p. 428.