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**The CSCE Process –
Stabilisation of the Blocs through Cooperation?**

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1.

The CSCE process has not stabilized but rather perforated the two blocs facing each other in the East-West Conflict. That is especially true for the then so-called Eastern Bloc of Warsaw Pact nations which was diverted from its external aggressiveness and whose dictatorial authoritarian systems could be weakened internally. In a certain way this is also true for NATO which, in the CSCE process, became convinced of the usefulness of cooperative practices for overcoming conflicts.

2.

The success of the CSCE process rested on the utilization of multilateralist practices. They renounce using military power and maximizing their own gains. Multilateralism respects the opposing side and attempts through negotiations to relax respective positions and seek possible compromises. While the traditional strategies of deterrence and "balance of power" attempt to limit the opponent's military options, in multilateralism he is made aware of the possibilities of being able to assert his interests through negotiations. Therefore tendering the multilateral offer already implies the possibility of influencing and changing the other side's perception of a conflict.

3.

The success of the CSCE process can be traced back to the use of this regulative mechanism. It did not call into question the defence of the West, but augmented it through the offer of cooperation. It served at first as an instrument for modifying positions in conflicts before they could be employed to delineate the framework of stability for Eastern European development within the Warsaw Pact, but prospectively already for the time after that as well.

4.

After the not inconsiderable activities of the Federal Republic had made it possible to again modify the deterioration of the East-West climate which had set in from 1980 to 1983, the catalogue of cooperation expanded to the demand for détente, the agreements on armament control and the demand for civil and human rights. Here the follow-up Vienna Conference of 1986 to 1989 was especially successful. It drove the negotiations on conventional security in Europe as much forward as progress in the area of human rights and of the human dimension. The meeting prepared the dissolution of bloc confrontation which was ceremoniously documented at the 1990 Paris Conference. This dissolution of blocs was an immediate result of cooperation which had been institutionalized in the CSCE process.

5.

The CSE Treaty and the Vienna Document of 1994 mark the apex of success granted to the multilateralism of the CSCE process. As a result of these two agreements, the security dilemma in Europe was totally eliminated. Through a complex system of verification and reciprocal inspection, a degree of clarity and varying certainty was achieved in the field of European security which is unique in history. Above all, the military people were – and are – of the opinion that complete transparency rules on both sides with respect to the potential for violence and even with respect to their future planning. With that the traditionally greatest cause of war in Europe, the uncertainty about capacities and intentions on the other side, was eliminated. The security situation in Europe is better than policy is willing to recognize. Only this can explain why the Eastern expansion of NATO has come about.

6.

Instead, multilateralism should be understood and used as the best instrument for organizing European peace. Its capacity for hemming in and non-violently managing conflicts between nations has been proven during the East-West Conflict. It is demonstrably superior to traditional forms of conflict management between nations, such as parity, deterrence and limitation of options.

This insight should have the effect of making the OSCE much more highly valued than is now the case. Only a body in which all states can express their interests is capable of establishing systems which are lasting, because they are supported by all. This principle is the cornerstone of the concept of "governance" for whose practice the Euro-Atlantic system offers the best preconditions.

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort.