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European Security System: Scenarios of Development and  
Institutional Responses.  
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# European Security System: Scenarios of Development and Institutional Responses

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Nowadays we see three main variants of transformation of the European security system

1. The process of its evolution, on the one hand, would be relatively slow, but, on the other, the situation in the East evidently would worsen very quickly. Events in Yugoslavia demonstrated that insufficient activity and ineffectiveness of international institutions at the beginning of the crisis ruin any possibility to control the situation. Drift of Russia towards Yugoslavian scenario (sharpening of ethnic and territorial problems in Southern Russia and Tatar Region, escalation of conflicts in the region of the CIS, involvement of Russia in these conflicts) could be pulled up only on its initial stages. If the international community fails to establish working mechanisms for coping with the CIS problems, it would mean the collapse of the whole system of international crisis management, which turned out to be incapable to control the European situation.

Serious danger of growing inadequacy of European security structures is being connected not only with possible worsening of the situation in the East of Europe, but also with certain increase of instability in the West. Failures of European institutions in crisis management or trend towards self-isolation from Eastern conflicts on behalf of NATO and EC/WEU will force some Western countries (especially Germany and France) to look for their own instruments of crisis management and promotion of national interests. But this will mean a slackening of Western security institutions, and, after all, will stimulate the process of re-nationalisation of security policy. That's why Russia is deeply interested in maintaining

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and strengthening western institutions as stabilizing elements in the European security system, even though Russia itself in short-term perspective will hardly have any chance to enter those institutions.

2. Growing uncertainty in the East, especially in the region of the former USSR, would steadily push the West to concentrate efforts on providing security solely with the help of its own institutions. Apprehensions of Western countries to be involved in conflicts on the East could compel them to distance themselves from those conflicts, what would mean isolation de-facto of Russia and of other CIS states. Such development could also lead to resurgence of military-political confrontation in Europe. But, if postwar bloc-to-bloc system was more or less strategically balanced and therefore relatively stable, the new type of confrontation in conditions of instability in the East would be dangerously explosive. The already begun process of spreading of Western security guarantees on East European states would only strengthen the above mentioned negative trends, because it would leave Russia without allies and political partners, it will breach stability in the West. Thus, the combination of instability with a new split of Europe would repeat the situation of interwar years, which nowadays could threaten with qualitatively new level of atrocities.

3. The third variant suggests active work on establishing effective mechanisms for preventing and managing conflicts. Now many prominent figures in Russian political elite do understand that the only way to avoid isolation of Russia, to strengthen its own security and European security as well is to get rid of an old approach towards European institutions as to competing structures. The new idea of system of interlocking security institutions should be implemented.

Even in the case of the most optimistic scenario there would be certain limits for rapprochement between Russia and Western security institutions. That's why Russia is badly interested in advancement and strengthening of the CSCE structures, in forming on its bases of reliable mechanisms for crisis regulation.

Weakness of the CSCE will deprive Russia from participation in solving problems of European security and will hinder Moscow from occupying status of an influential political power.

Russia acting in the CSCE as a successor of the USSR, has a special interest in its development: the CSCE is one of the few international organisations, where Russian diplomacy really enjoys equal rights with other nations. Active participation in pan-European dialogue within the CSCE will allow Russia to solve the following problems regarding its foreign policy:

- providing the political and juridical basis for maintaining the inviolability of Russian borders; protection of human rights for Russian and other national minorities in all former Soviet republics; reforming of internal legislation with special stress on human rights and democratic development of state institutions;

- developing *institutionalised* multilateral interaction with countries of East-Central Europe: using the CSCE as an opportunity for promoting intensive political dialogue with all states of this region; settling of certain aspects of political relations between Russia and other CIS states;

-opening of the only channel of *institutionalised* interaction with the West on the whole agenda of European problems; the would-be cooperation between the CSCE and NATO-EC/WEU probably means for Russian diplomacy additional channel of interaction with Eastern institutions. It is especially urgent because Russia could make a serious contribution into elaboration of procedural rules, regulating cooperation between the CSCE and NATO-EC/WEU;

-negotiating within the framework of the CSCE of new approaches towards the problem of conventional disarmament, implementation of the CFE 1990 Treaty and further agreements, signed during "Helsinki-2";

-establishing and developing collective mechanisms within the CSCE, on the one hand, provide international support and legitimation of Russia's efforts in maintaining security in the zone of the former USSR, on the other, these mechanisms mean direct participation of Russia in discussing all items of the pan-European agenda.

The Prague session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (January 1992) granted the full membership in the CSCE of Kazakhstan, Caucasian and Central Asian states. Such "Eastern-oriented" enlargement of the CSCE was supported by Russia, because it saw in the Prague decision an attempt to legitimate international participation in preventing and regulating conflicts on the territory of the former USSR.

At the same time Russia shares the fears of other states that such quantitative growth of the CSCE could "bury" the whole process under the burden of new, organisational and procedural problems. The Prague decision has a philosophical aspect: the CSCE faces the situation, when its new members do not follow the fundamental values of the European idea of human rights. Already now the CSCE pays surprisingly little attention to massive violations of human rights in the Baltic states, on the Caucasus, in central Asia, even in Russia. It seems also, that many of CSCE membering states approached the process of adoption of new members in a very formal way. The West has little desire to be involved into the settlement of sharp ethnic and political problems of South-Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus. Under such circumstances the CSCE has poor chances to influence in real terms the situation in those regions<sup>1</sup>. Participation of the CIS states in the CSCE and in the North Atlantic Council for Cooperation seems to the West to be the maximum level of its own political involvement into the internal affairs of the former USSR, as well as the maximum level of economic involvement seems to be the membership of the CIS states in the IMF, the World Bank, EBRD and Western humanitarian and technical assistance.

Russia due to its role in preserving stability within the CIS is deeply interested in developing the CSCE mechanism for prevention and settlement of conflicts, which was established during the "Helsinki-2" follow-up conference. The Helsinki decision about possible peace-keeping operations under the CSCE "umbrella", which allows the CSCE to apply for assistance not only to NATO and EC/WEU, but also to the CIS peace-keeping mechanism, may be evaluated as a multilateral legitimation de-facto of Russia's role in the CIS region.

At the same time any attempts of Western states to compensate the drawbacks of the CSCE by spreading of their own security guarantees could only hamper the further progress of the CSCE. The above-mentioned situation may be avoided by using the potential of NATO and the WEU for establishing military and military-political pillars of the CSCE. Western institutions would find in the CSCE a firm political basis for their own activity in the conflict zones of the East. Legitimation of Western security institutions activity in the East not through direct spreading of their responsibility, but through formation of new international mechanisms with advanced framework of military instruments seems to be more preferable to the West. In this case Western countries, not limiting themselves with rigid commitments, will acquire a channel of effective control over the situation in the East.

Closer interaction between Western institutions and the CSCE will open for Russia good prospects for deepening cooperation with NATO and EC/WEU within the CSCE framework, so necessary for legitimation of Russia's role in crisis management in the CIS zone.

Here we suggest to discuss possibilities of establishing an independent mechanism for political consultations between Russia and leading Western countries, which could exist without any formal links with the CSCE or other European institutions. Its main task would be a discussing of general problems of conflict prevention and maintaining stability in the region of the former USSR. Formation of such a mechanism would mean political support of Russia and recognition of its role and responsibilities within the CIS. Moscow's efforts in conflicts settlement would receive additional political weight.

The first step necessary to provide real interaction between main element of European security system (the CSCE, NATO and EC/WEU) is the establishment of formal relations between those institutions. Any practical achievements in their cooperation would improve the degree of openness of Western institutions and limit isolationist tendencies (so vivid in the WEU's relationship with Russia) within them. Cooperation with the CSCE would accelerate the transformation of Western institutions into a pan-European structure.

Development of the CSCE structures is one of the most important conditions in the process of strengthening the European security system on the bases of interaction and interdependency of its institutionalised elements. On this way the CSCE should solve three main problems.

The first one embraces the disarmament dimension of the CSCE. Apart from the implementation of the CFE Treaty, ratification of Vienna CSCE Document, Treaty on Open Skies and the Final Act of "Vienna-2" negotiations it is necessary to realise the provision of the "Helsinki-2" Final Document on the establishment of the Forum for Cooperation in Security Sphere, to elaborate strict procedural rules for its Special and Consultative Committees, to give to its decisions a juridical nature.

The second problem is connected with formation of the military-political dimension of the CSCE. The military-political dimension should consist of mechanisms for extraordinary situations and for peaceful settlement of disputes, other procedures for

conflicts prevention and should enrich the CSCE with means of political, juridical and military influence on conflicts' participants. Only such dimension could provide mechanisms and give sense to any kind of cooperation with NATO and EC/WEU.

The third problem concerns the questions of procedure (decision-making mechanism, distribution of power and coordination between the CSCE structures, juridical nature of the CSCE decisions). Quantitative growth of the CSCE makes it very difficult to elaborate decisions, even when there are no serious political disagreements, just because of obstacles of technical and bureaucratic nature. Especially acute is the problem of how to reform the rule of consensus (or "consensus minus one"), while voting on crisis situations. The only way to strengthen the CSCE structures is to introduce voting by the qualified majority. Definitely, sphere of majority voting should be strictly limited, because this decision making procedure clearly undermines the principle of equal rights of all CSCE members in favour of great powers.

We should pay a certain attention to the prospects of regional cooperation, a new phenomenon in European politics closely connected with integration in the West and disintegration in the East, generally promoting good potential for mutual understanding and cooperation on a pan-European scale. Activity of different regional groupings (Hexagonalle, Visegrad Triangle, Black Sea free-trade zone, The Council of the Baltic Sea area) gives the CSCE membering states an additional opportunity to implement their specific interests on a regional level, what would be hardly possible within the broad, but still limited framework of the CSCE process. On the one hand, development of regional by freing it from cooperation means strengthening the CSCE, from a certain number of questions. On the other hand, absence of regional mechanisms for coordination of national interests would inevitably sharpen some regional problems, giving to the most acute of them a pan-European dimension.

It seems, therefore, that deepening interaction of the CSCE, NATO and EC/WEU, reforming and perfecting their structures, even in combination with activity of regional organisations won't eliminate internal limits of the European security institutions' system. This situation dictates the necessity to establish new institutes and mechanisms, which should also operate under the auspices of the CSCE, providing a pan-European scale for their efforts and decisions.

New institutions and mechanisms should complete security vacuum in the East of Europe. Armed conflicts on the territory of the former USSR, growing instability within the Russian Federation and on its borders present a main danger for the security of Russia and Europe as a whole. But still there are no real attempts to cope with this danger through collective measures from European countries. Failures of the CSCE observers' mission in Karabakh underline the fact, that elaboration of more serious steps occupies the top of the agenda. Such steps now have good chances to succeed due to a number of new factors.

1. A one-year period of uncertainty in Russian foreign policy in relation to the former Soviet republics *comes* to its end. In recent months Russia actively participated in settling crisis situations in the CIS region.

2. Combination of Russia's political efforts (mediation bargaining) with activity of the CIS peace-keeping forces (de-facto also Russian) allowed to extinguish in a short span of time conflicts in Osetia and Transdnistria, thus opening way for their political settlement. Russian policy could be interpreted here as first attempts in forming of the crisis management mechanism in the zone of the former USSR.

3. Settlement of two conflicts helped greatly to improve the prestige of Russia in the CIS and abroad. Now newly independent republics involved in different conflicts strive towards constructive interaction with Russia in the sphere of crisis management<sup>2</sup>.

4. Implementation of the idea of national independence and high costs of disintegration push certain members of the CIS towards more closer relations with Russia. Under current circumstances there is an opportunity for establishment of effective alliance between Russia, Belarus and Kasakhstan, forming in this way the necessary skeleton of the CIS and promoting activity aimed at prevention and containment of conflicts. At the same time it's difficult to describe CIS future, especially if Ukraine prolongs its membership in the Commonwealth.

Political weight of Russia in the former Soviet region makes real Moscow's hopes to meet increased political support of the West. Such support seems to be crucial, if not for juridical legitimation of Russia's role in crisis management within the CIS, then for its recognition de-facto.

Responsibility and leadership of Russia could be acknowledged not only through the CSCE institutions, but also with the help of unequivocal statement of leading Western powers. As it was mentioned above, this aim may also be reached through formation of a special institute for political consultations and interaction in the security sphere between Russia and the West. Such a step looks quite logical especially after the Munich Summit "seven plus one".

Many experts speak now even about prospects of direct Western participation in peace-keeping operations of Russia and the CIS. Though it's apparent that the West is not ready for direct and massive participation in peace-keeping efforts, it could assign its military observers to Russian peace-keeping forces. Observers could enjoy the status of representatives either of their own states, or of the Western institutions - NATO and EC/WEU. In the last case the CSCE could recommend assignment of military observers, thus giving a practical dimension to interaction between its structures and NATO-EC/WEU's. Apart from the items mentioned above the West may suggest financial support to Russia for procurement of its peace-keeping forces. Financial support would be very urgent economically and, above all politically.

Insufficient assistance to Russia on behalf of the West and leading European security institutions reduces Russian potential in settling conflicts and stabilizing the situation on the territory of the former USSR. Such trend could initiate a process of artificial "non-alignment" of Russia with European security system, while Russian specific interests in Asia would stimulate its drift from the West to the East. That would be a qualitatively new large-scale challenge to European security, combining "a threat from the South" with

instability in Russia (and probable restoration of totalitarian rule, especially dangerous because of the absence in the hands of Western leaders of any real means of influence and control over the situation).

In principle, it is possible to imagine two zones of responsibility for prevention and settlement of conflicts in the Euro-Asian region. On the territory of the former USSR it is necessary to recognise the responsibility of Russia/CIS. NATO and WEU could be responsible for stability in the rest of the Euro-Asian area. Such division does not exclude mutual participation in crisis management, in preparing and conducting peace-keeping operations, mutual financial procurement of peace-keeping forces (here we mean financial assistance from the more prosperous West).

The Idea of two zones of responsibility could be criticised. But its only alternative is unilateral activity lacking any legitimation in the eyes of the international community. Suggestions to involve the United Nations into maintaining national minorities' rights would face a lot of difficulties during implementation, because, compared with the CSCE, the UN have even broader political and juridical character.

#### Notes

1. It could be illustrated by the silence of foreign ministers in Helsinki (March 1992), reluctant to discuss the fact of war between two of CSCE members, Armenia and Azerbaijan, conflicts in Transdniestria, and Osetia. Involvement of the CSCE into the conflict in Karabakh has very formal character.
2. The plenipotentiary Representative of Azerbaijan in Moscow Mr. Khikmet Gadji-Zade, for example, characterised Russia's role in Karabakh in the following way: "In perspective it's impossible to imagine peaceful efforts without Russia's participation. Obviously nobody could influence the settlement of conflict so greatly, as Russia could". *Izvestija*, 199, 5.IX.1992.