

**PART 3:**

**THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL FACTORS**

# Lessons of the Balkan Wars: Insights of CSCE/OSCE negotiators, 1993, 1997, 1999, and 2004

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## Introduction

The origins of this article, and the book from which it derives,<sup>53</sup> lie in the largely unanticipated end of the Cold War in 1989-90, when I had the good fortune to be a William C. Foster Fellow at the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA). This fellowship included serving as a member of the U.S. Delegation to the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs) within the context of the (then) Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), based in Vienna, Austria. The CSCE, now the OSCE, is the world's pre-eminent *regional* peace and security organization comprising former enemies of the Cold War (NATO and Warsaw Pact) and the neutral and nonaligned of Europe.

The end of the Cold War provided opportunities and challenges for reshaping international peace and security into a "New World Order" in which the former Cold War foes could collaborate on global problem-solving to the benefit of all. Having become aware of the CSCE's contribution to ending the Cold War (see Leatherman, 2003) as part of the experience of serving as a diplomat on the U.S. Delegation to the CSBMs Negotiations, I was intrigued by the possibility that the CSCE could play a useful role in realizing this goal of a "New World Order."

Regrettably, the end of the Cold War also provided opportunities for parts of Europe, particularly the Balkans, to descend into brutal genocidal warfare.

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<sup>53</sup> Dennis J.D. Sandole, *Peace and Security in the Postmodern World: The OSCE and Conflict Resolution* (Routledge, forthcoming).

Accordingly, when, as a NATO Research Fellow, I returned to Vienna in summer 1993, two years after the onset of those wars, I conducted the first round of what eventually become four rounds of interviews over an 11-year period. I interviewed primarily heads of delegation to elicit their wisdom on, among other issues, what the causes were of the genocidal unraveling of Yugoslavia; what lessons they had learned from those wars and the international interventions into them; and, if given the chance, how they would design peace and security in post-Cold War Europe to either prevent or deal with such violent conflict in the future.

I returned to Vienna in summer 1997 as a Fulbright OSCE Regional Research Fellow to conduct the second round of interviews with primarily heads of delegation to the “reinvented” Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). This survey took place two years after NATO and the Dayton Peace Process had stopped the warfare in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995.

As soon become clear, the CSCE/OSCE project started to “serendipitously” take on a *quasi-experimental*, “before-after” character:

- The 1993 survey occurred two years *after* the onset of warfare in former Yugoslavia and two years *before* NATO and the Dayton Peace Process stopped the warfare in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995.
- The 1997 survey occurred two years *after* NATO and the Dayton Peace Process stopped the warfare in Bosnia-Herzegovina and two years *before* NATO’s intervention to stop Serb ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo in 1999.

Consequently, I returned to Vienna in summer 1999 as an OSCE “Researcher in Residence,” immediately following the cessation of NATO’s air war against Serbia over the ethnic cleansing of Albanians from Kosovo, to conduct a third round of interviews. Because I had asked basically the same kinds of questions across the three surveys, I was able to explore the likely impact of the two NATO interventions (in Bosnia and Kosovo) on respondents’ answers, just as if I had intentionally conducted a “before-after” field or laboratory experiment.

The events of 11 September 2001 tragically provided me with another “before-after” opportunity to explore the impact of an unanticipated real-world event on OSCE negotiators’ views of peace and security in post-Cold War Europe. In this case, a Fulbright teaching award at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna enabled me to return to Vienna for a fourth round of interviews during the spring and summer of 2004.

Whereas the 1993, 1997, and 1999 surveys all occurred *before 9/11*, the 2004 survey clearly occurred *after 9/11*. In addition to exploring the impact of 9/11 on OSCE negotiators’ responses to basically the same questions that were asked on previous surveys, I was able to explore responses to the issue of terrorism itself and its possible conceptual and/or operational linkage to the kinds of ethnic conflicts that had torn former Yugoslavia apart.

The objectives of the CSCE/OSCE project evolved over time to include:

- Initially conducting, through surveys of appropriate literature, an *academic/theoretical* study of how the international community could either prevent or otherwise nip in the bud future Yugoslav-type conflicts. And
- Interviewing senior negotiators of the world’s primary regional peace and security organization, based less than one hour flying time from the killing fields of former Yugoslavia, to elicit their wisdom on (a) the causes of the Balkan wars of the 1990s; (b) the lessons learned from, and interventions into, those wars; and (c) how, if given the chance, negotiators would design peace and security architecture for post-Cold War Europe that could more effectively prevent or otherwise deal with such conflicts.

In other words, the CSCE/OSCE project approaches the *research problem* of how to prevent “future Yugoslavias” by combining two discourses: the *academic/theoretical* and the *diplomatic/practitioner*. In the process, the study explores the “goodness-of-fit” between the two discourses against the background of what developments in peace and security have actually taken place in and through, among others, NATO, European Union, and Council of Europe, to bring former Cold War enemies together into a “New World Order.”

Finally, the project examines the implications of the findings for theory, research, and policy, including prospects for “exporting” the OSCE to other regions (e.g., East Asia, the Middle East) as one “tested” approach for dealing with violent ethnic conflicts and related acts of terrorism worldwide.

## 1. Research Methodology

The primary subjects with whom interviews were conducted in Vienna were heads of CSCE/OSCE delegations:

- For the 1993 CSCE Survey: 32 interviewees from 29 participating States;
- For the 1997 OSCE Survey: 47 interviewees from 46 participating States;
- For the 1999 OSCE Survey: 47 interviewees from 47 participating States; and finally
- For the 2004 OSCE Survey: 19 interviewees from 18 participating States.

In all four surveys, interviews comprised both *closed-ended* and *open-ended* questions with *schedule-structured* format (see Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). Closed-ended questions are basically statements to which subjects are asked to respond in terms of “fixed categories,” such as: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Mixed Feelings (MF), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree, with, in this case, 5 representing SA and 1 SD, along a 1-5 continuum.

Open-ended questions are, in fact, “questions” to which subjects are asked to respond as fully as they desire.

The “schedule-structured” format means that the same questions with the same wording were put to all respondents in the same order, indicating that comparisons could be made between the main groupings of CSCE/OSCE membership on any particular question: (a) NATO; (b) NNA (neutral and nonaligned); (c) FYug (former Yugoslavia); (d) NSWP (non-Soviet Warsaw Pact = Central and Eastern European

members of the former Warsaw Pact); and (3) FSU (former Soviet Union) (see *ibid.*).

Interviews took between 45 minutes and 3 hours, and were conducted in English, usually at delegation offices, but sometimes elsewhere (in cafés or restaurants), with Ambassadors/Heads or Deputy Heads of Delegation. Notes of all sessions were manually (and not electronically) recorded (for further details on research design, and on questions and findings, see Sandole, forthcoming, Chapters 4-5, 7 and 9, and Appendices A-B).

## **2. Findings on closed-ended questions for 1993, 1997, and 1999**

For CSCE/OSCE negotiators' responses to closed-ended questions dealing with select security issues for the first three surveys (1993, 1997, and 1999), covering the *pre-9/11* period, our analysis indicated the following:

- there seemed to have been an increasing “meeting of minds” on *Idealpolitik* as well as *Realpolitik* issues; e.g., a need to deal with the factors underlying violent expressions of conflict, but that if these were not dealt with, this would not necessarily undermine whatever “resolution” potential inheres in forceful (e.g., NATO) intervention alone;
- CSCE/OSCE negotiators seemed to have a “love-hate” relationship with NATO and its various derivatives (NACC, PfP, EAPC), with the Bosnia intervention (1995) being framed in a more positive and the Kosovo intervention (1999) in a less positive light; nevertheless
- there seemed to have been an increasing convergence on the issue of NATO autonomy to do what no other actor wants to or can do: forcefully stop genocidal conflict in post-Cold War Europe;
- there was a mixed picture on the locus of future threats to peace and security in Europe, whether it was Yugoslav-type conflicts (ethnic, genocidal), East-West or North-South depending on

whether CSCE/OSCE negotiators felt positive or not so positive about NATO;

- consensus and NATO-FSU togetherness co-existed with dissensus and NATO-FSU polarity across the three *pre-9/11* time periods, but overall trends were clearly in the direction of consensus and NATO-FSU togetherness, although these dipped a bit after NATO's intervention in Kosovo.

We were able to conclude, therefore, that a *complex community of values* seemed to have been developing in the CSCE/OSCE for 1993, 1997, and 1999, *at least in the minds of some of its practitioners*, with conflict (*Realpolitik = negative peace*) and cooperation (*Idealpolitik = positive peace*) co-existing in complex ways on various issues (or positions on issues) within a basically cooperative system – all of which were compatible with a model that I had developed for future peace and security in post-Cold War Europe: the *new European peace and security system* (NEPSS) (see Sandole, 2002, 2003, 2004; Sandole, forthcoming, Chapters 2-3).

From this, we inferred the emergence of an *issue paradigm* (see Mansbach and Vasquez, 1981) in which NATO, NNA, FYug, NSWP, and FSU respondents agreed or disagreed on select issues in different ways, suggesting a *complexity* that was not neatly captured by either a *Realpolitik*-only or *Idealpolitik*-only paradigm.

### **3. Findings on closed-ended questions for 2004**

By 2004, for the *post-9/11* survey, the primary findings emerging from analyses of responses to the closed-ended questions, were:

- Terrorism had eclipsed ethnic conflicts as the dominant threat to international peace and security, with no *direct* linkage perceived to exist between ethnic conflicts and terrorism.
- Kosovo remained of significant concern, while Bosnia-Herzegovina seemed to be moving toward “*negative peace*” stability (see Galtung, 1969, 1996).

- A *culture of conflict resolution*, with implications for “*positive peace*” (see *ibid.*), appeared to become further institutionalized among OSCE negotiators by 2004.
- The Cold War was, indeed, over and further NATO enlargement would not threaten the new East-West relationship.
- There was, however, a sense that, with the end of the Cold War, the North-South overlay had replaced the East-West relational system as the dominant axis of international conflict, part of which may have reflected Samuel Huntington’s (1993, 1996) contentious “clash of civilizations” thesis.
- Overall findings on the closed-ended questions for the *post-9/11* period reinforced the observation made earlier that an *issue paradigm* had, over time, come to characterize the perceptions and thinking of OSCE negotiators, in which the five main groupings (NATO, NNA, FYug, NSWP, and FSU) were distributed across particular issues in complex ways.

#### **4. Validation of findings on closed-ended questions**

To what extent can we say that the CSCE/OSCE negotiators participating in the 1993, 1997, 1999, and 2004 surveys were *not* merely repeating official “party lines,” and instead were sharing their true impressions? Also, to what extent can we say that these impressions correspond to “objective” developments in the “real world”?

On the first issue, I had always informed respondents of my earlier service as a diplomat with the U.S. Delegation to the CSBMs Negotiations under Ambassador Jack Maresca (1985) in Spring/Summer 1990, indicating that, although I was an “academic,” I had once served among them or their predecessors. Indeed, on some occasions, I was even informed that subjects decided to meet with me precisely because of my earlier CSCE experience. In addition, subjects often asked if I wanted the official “party line” or their own views (I indicated both), so that I was able to be sensitive to that distinction in subsequent analysis.



On the second issue, I compared subjects' responses to statistical data on trends in armed conflict, genocides, and the like collected during the same period of the CSCE/OSCE project, to explore to what extent there was overlap. Monty Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr (2005) provided one significant opportunity for such a veracity-check, by reporting in the most recent of their biennial surveys, that ethnonational wars for independence, autocratic regimes, repression and political discrimination, and the global magnitude of armed conflict had continued to *decline*. Further, that these gains were:

- the result of persistent and *coordinated* efforts at *peace-building* by *civil society* organizations, *national leaders*, *non-governmental organizations*, and *international bodies* (emphasis added) (ibid., p. 1).
- These findings were compatible with those generated by the recently published *The Human Security Report* (2005) (which also includes Marshall and Gurr's data):

By 2003, there were 40 % fewer conflicts than in 1992. The deadliest conflicts – those with 1,000 or more battle-deaths – fell by some 80 %. The number of genocides and other mass slaughters of civilians also dropped by 80 %, while core human rights abuses have declined in five out of six regions of the developing world since the mid-1990s. International terrorism is the only type of political violence that has increased. Although the death toll has jumped sharply over the past three years, terrorists kill only a fraction of those who die in wars.

What accounts for the extraordinary and counterintuitive improvement in global security over the past dozen years? The end of the Cold War, which had driven at least a third of all conflicts since World War II, appears to have been the single most critical factor.

In the late 1980s, Washington and Moscow stopped fueling “proxy wars” in the developing world, and the United Nations was liberated to play the global security role its founders intended. Freed from the paralyzing stasis of Cold War

geopolitics, the Security Council initiated an unprecedented, though sometimes inchoate, explosion of international activism designed to stop ongoing wars and prevent new ones.

Other international agencies [*including, for example, the OSCE*], donor governments and nongovernmental organizations also played a critical role, but it was the United Nations that took the lead, pushing a range of conflict-prevention and peace-building initiatives on a scale never before attempted. U.N. peacekeeping operations and missions to prevent and stop wars have increased by more than 400 percent since the end of the Cold War. As this upsurge of international activism grew in scope and intensity through the 1990s, the number of crises, wars, and genocides declined (Mack, 2005, 2006).

In other words, according to the perceptions of its senior diplomats, as the CSCE/OSCE moved closer to a complex operating paradigm, with *Idealpolitik* as well as *Realpolitik* elements, inclusive of a *culture of conflict resolution*, the world seemed to be developing in a less violent, more peaceful way.

## **5. Lessons of the Balkan wars, 1993, 1997, and 1999**

Only one of the open-ended questions explored in the CSCE/OSCE project will be addressed here, that dealing with negotiators' perceptions of "lessons learned" from the Balkan wars of the 1990s – clearly, an appropriate selection on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dayton (see Sandole, forthcoming, Chapters 6, 8-9 for findings on other questions).

Trends in the top-3 "lessons learned" for the CSCE/OSCE groupings from 1993 to 1999 (*before Kosovo*) included the persistent, near unanimous 1<sup>st</sup> place ranking of the need for preventive diplomacy and quick response to ethnic conflicts/ethnic cleansing. This was followed by the emergent 2<sup>nd</sup> place ranking of the need to coordinate such missions, plus a mix of force and "soft power" within a regional framework to deal with the complexity of such situations. These trends were all very much in keeping with the development of a NEPSS-type system.

Trends also included the disappearance, as a major issue, of the fear of the Balkan wars generating “*multiplier-effect systemic contagion*” elsewhere (e.g., in the FSU) (see Sandole, forthcoming, Ch. 1) and the brief appearance and then disappearance of the need for the U.S. to lead international interventions into complex conflict situations.

Whatever linear development in consensus on “lessons learned” had occurred from 1993 to 1999 (*before Kosovo*) was disrupted because of NATO’s intervention in the Kosovo crisis. This applies as well to the trends in NATO-FSU togetherness/polarity. After (and because of) Kosovo, NATO-FSU consensus on the top-3 rankings was completely reversed regarding the use of force (“hard power”) and “soft power” (see *ibid.*, Ch. 7 [Table 7.6d]).

## **6. Lessons of the Balkan Wars, 2004**

Overall findings on the open-ended questions reinforced the hypothesized emergence of an *issue paradigm* where military force (*Realpolitik*) and “soft power” (*Idealpolitik*) were conceptually integrated in coordinated international interventions to prevent and otherwise deal with complex ethnic and other conflicts involving multiple issues (although, remarkably, terrorism was barely mentioned as one of those, even though the 2004 survey occurred shortly after the Madrid bombings in March).

Across the four surveys, the OSCE remained consistently in 1<sup>st</sup> place, while NATO tended to eclipse the EU by one or two rankings, as components of an *ideal* peace and security system for postmodern Europe capable of dealing (more) effectively with complex *identity*-based conflicts such as those that had torn former Yugoslavia apart and which were also manifesting themselves in the form of the “new” terrorism.

## 7. Validation of “Lessons Learned”

To what extent do these trends in “lessons learned” correspond with the views of others, especially those who worked directly on bringing at least “negative peace” to the Balkans?

At a 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference in Washington, DC, on “Beyond Dayton: The Balkans and Euro-Atlantic Integration,” former German Ambassador to the U.S. Wolfgang Ischinger (2005), who was involved in the Dayton Peace Process, shared with the audience “10 very simple lessons” from Bosnia:

- 1) We need to focus more on prevention. (Bosnia and even Kosovo could have been prevented. The Europeans should have prevented them, but they did not.)
- 2) We need to be able to apply military force if necessary to prevent [violent] conflict.
- 3) We need to insist on regional approaches to conflict and conflict resolution. (In retrospect, it was a mistake not to include Kosovo in Dayton. The unresolved Kosovo issue came back to haunt us three years later.)
- 4) We need time. (Often there is too much pressure to achieve too much in a very short time. We need time, patience, and long-term sustainability.)
- 5) We need strong leaders (e.g., Richard Holbrooke, Warren Christopher) who are tough on principles (e.g., Bonn Powers).
- 6) We need elections, but alone they are not enough, and too easily can freeze wartime gains. Also we need rule of law, justice.
- 7) We need to ensure that civilian response capabilities are as highly effective as military responses.
- 8) The Europeans and U.S. need to act together. Euro-Atlantic Partnership [consultation] works! We should act together and remain united. (Germany now has 10,000 troops in Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Kosovo.)
- 9) We need to be modest in our ambitions. (There is a need for local ownership, local responsibility, local legitimacy: Only if they [the “locals”] do it themselves will they be prepared for EU membership.) And

10) There is a need in the Euro-Atlantic relationship for something like the Dayton process. (Dayton was a great bonding, transformative moment!)

If we compare Ambassador Ischinger’s “lessons” to those generated by the CSCE/OSCE project, we find some interesting comparabilities:

	CSCE/OSCE Project	Ischinger
1.	Preventive Diplomacy/Quick Response	Prevention
2.	Coordination	Force (“Hard Power”)
3.	Force (“Hard Power”)	Regional Approach
4.	“Soft Power”	“Soft Power”
5.	Regional Framework	Coordination

While the implicit rankings may not converge, it is clear that at least five of our “lessons” correspond exactly to five of Ambassador Ischinger’s. Combining them we can say that, according to senior CSCE/OSCE diplomatic practitioners and others, there is a need to prevent violent ethnic conflicts through the use of a mix of “hard” and “soft power,” coordinated within a regional framework. These lessons are also compatible with both an issue paradigm and NEPSS.

### 8. Implications of findings

Mansbach and Vasquez (1981) tell us that an *issue paradigm* encourages:

scholars to give greater weight to the cognitive processes of elites within actors than has traditionally been the case under the assumptions of *realism*. Rejecting the assumptions that these processes are fixed or that interests are “self-evident”, the new [*issue*] paradigm encourages research into the *prospects for restructuring cognitive maps* and the possibility that such restructuring will *intrude upon existing patterns of relations*. Failure and success of existing cognitive maps, for instance, disturb or reinforce the elements of those maps, though in ways

that have not been specified by political scientists. Cognitive maps provide actors with *prescriptions* concerning what they should do under different conditions. What processes are initiated if the maps in fact lead to unexpected destinations [e.g., counterintuitive results of policies in the Balkans or Iraq]? Under what conditions are existing maps altered or reinforced? (emphasis added) (ibid., p. 79).

The research undertaken as part of the CSCE/OSCE project has been an attempt not only to explore with CSCE/OSCE negotiators their “cognitive maps”, but to encourage them to rethink them as well, perhaps offering them opportunities to reframe their maps and make them more relevant to “capturing the complexity of conflict” in the post-Cold War world (see Sandole, 1999). Gratifyingly, as indicated by the findings reported here, such reframing appears to be actually taking place.

The “trick” now is for all of us interested in preventing the violent expression of conflict as “future Yugoslavias” or “future Madrids and Londons,” to help translate the developing OSCE *community of values* into a corresponding *community of institutions* – something like NEPSS – beyond the otherwise impressive developments that have already taken place. In the event, we would be turning Jean-Jacques Rousseau on his head where, “genocidal ethnic wars and acts of catastrophic terrorism *do not* occur – or at least not so frequently – because there *are* mechanisms for preventing or otherwise dealing with them!”

Adopting the *issue paradigm* within an *Idealpolitik* “meta-frame” for analysis as well as practice would be one step in that direction. Then, speaking a “common language”, it would be easier for international relations and conflict theorists and researchers to work together with OSCE and other practitioners in bridging the cultural and communications gap between the *academic/theorist* and *diplomatic/practitioner*.

One way to facilitate movement in this laudable direction would be to continue interviewing OSCE (and other) diplomatic practitioners as a

potentially effective way to tap into “insider” wisdom as a source of early warning of, and early response to problems with, or within, their organizations as well as, more importantly, problems developing within their region that have the potential for being expressed as Yugoslav-type conflicts or Madrid or London-style acts of terrorism.

Another way would be to ensure *re-energized* U.S. involvement in bringing “positive peace” to the Balkans. As a former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs said at the July 2005 briefing for new U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE Ms. Julie Finley, “When [in his experience] the U.S. cared and got engaged, things happened!”

By far, one of the most compelling articulations of the potential U.S. role in moving further in this direction was crafted by Michael Lund in the final chapter of his now classic *Preventing Violent Conflicts: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy* (1996):

If the idea of a multilateral, stratified regime of preventive diplomacy is to become a reality, it must be championed by an actor or actors of global stature, able both to advocate the adoption of such a plan and to actively support it at the local, regional, and global levels. For several reasons, the United States is not necessarily the only, but clearly one of the best candidates to undertake this role. In the first place, the United States has the world’s most extensive foreign policy bureaucracy and information-gathering apparatus, thus affording it unparalleled opportunities to become involved in or supportive of preventive diplomacy at each [level]. Second, the United States is the only country that is effectively a “member” of all regions – in some cases by virtue of formal membership (in NATO, OSCE, OAS, APEC, NAFTA, and so forth), in others by dint of joint interests (OAU [now the AU], ASEAN, the Middle East multilateral peace process). Third, while it is true that few international issues can be resolved by the United States alone, it is also true that many international issues cannot be resolved without U.S. leadership. Thus, while the United States should welcome, encourage, and seek to enhance the international roles of other

states and entities, both bilaterally and through the United Nations and other multilateral bodies, it remains the one actor on the world stage that can marshal the political will to provide leadership and resources on the widest range of issues.

When it chooses to play this role, it is the hub around which many key international institutions and relationships revolve at each level of the prevention hierarchy. Although U.S. leadership regarding the Bosnian conflict was not forceful until military conditions on the ground changed in August 1995, at that point the United States did help to galvanize international action and sponsored the best hope so far of ending the conflict [Dayton] (Lund, 1996, pp. 195-196).

## **Conclusion**

Accordingly, for these and other reasons (e.g., continuing to deal with the deep-rooted causes of global terrorism), we must ensure that U.S. involvement in the Balkans continues unabated, despite present American pre-occupation with developments elsewhere (e.g., Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Afghanistan). Such renewed involvement, perhaps inclusive of U.S. Ambassador Finley's push for enhancing the OSCE, could "spill over" to other regions worldwide currently exploring the suitability of the OSCE as a model for *common security* in, among others, East Asia (see *Applicability of OSCE CSBMs in Northeast Asia Revisited*, 2003 and "2005 OSCE-Korea Conference on New Security Threats and a New Security Paradigm"). In the event, the concept of effective "global governance" could become more rather than less likely. Now that is a real challenge!

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