OSCE CHRONICLE

The OSCE and the Bosnian peace arrangement

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1. The OSCE and the peace arrangement in Bosnia-Herzegovina

The OSCE is in an ‘explosive’ mood: as a result of the Dayton agreements, which hopefully will bring permanent peace to war-torn former Yugoslavia, the OSCE is embarking upon a new phase in its existence. The Organization will be deeply involved in the reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in particular, with a role to play in the field of human rights, the organization of elections, and in questions of disarmament and arms control. ‘Physically’ this is reflected in an explosion of the number of (temporary) OSCE staff members and in a very considerable increase of the budget.

1.1. Elections and human rights

Elections must be held in Bosnia within 6 to 9 months of the signing of the Dayton agreement. These are to be organized by the OSCE. This is an enormous task and it is certain that the mid-June date will be impossible. There are problems in registering voters (who include the many refugees, displaced persons), compounded by the destruction of official records etc. The plan is to organize elections for a house of representatives for the Moslem-Croat Federation, and a Bosnian Serb national assembly and presidency. The composition of the Bosnia-Herzegovina parliament will be based on a two-to-one ratio, of Federation and Serb representatives. This ratio, however, is criticized by Serb leaders who also oppose this formula for the security dimension (disarmament issues).

The OSCE has also been assigned substantive tasks in the field of monitoring human rights. In addition, the OSCE was invited to appoint a Human Rights Ombudsman which should also get the assistance of the newly established OSCE mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

1.2. Confidence-building measures

In addition to tasks in the field of elections and human rights, the OSCE has been assigned a role in the area of confidence-building measures and arms control. The OSCE should assist the parties in their negotiations on these issues and in the implementation and verification of resulting agreements. The OSCE
has an impressive reputation in this domain, reflected in various extensive documents on so-called CSBMs (confidence- and security-building measures) which aim at greater military transparency between the OSCE states. The complicated negotiations on CBMs between the parties in the Bosnian conflict were successfully concluded on 26 January when all parties signed a document in Vienna. This was the last date before which an agreement should be reached according to the Dayton agreements. The document signed in Vienna provides for a great number of agreements, such as a temporary prohibition of all military manoeuvres and mutual inspection of military installations. The Bosnian Federation and the Bosnian-Serb sides will also open liaison offices to improve mutual communication. If implemented in practice, this will lead to remarkable developments, such as Bosnian-Serbian military inspection trips to Moslem military installations and vice versa. All these measures aim to create an atmosphere of some confidence and trust among the formerly warring parties.

1.3. Relations with other organizations

Since the Dayton agreements a great number of international organizations have become involved in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The military part of the agreement is entrusted to NATO which has organized IFOR (Implementation Force) as a multinational military force to supervise the peace agreements. IFOR has far-reaching powers to use force in cases of non-implementation of the agreements. IFOR succeeded the much criticized United Nations peacekeeping force UNPROFOR. It involves approximately 60,000 troops, one third of whom come from the United States. It became operational at the end of December. The first indications of its functioning are quite positive.

A more gloomy picture is offered, however, when looking at the civilian part of the peace agreements. ‘Dayton’ provides for a High Representative who should be responsible for the proper coordination of the activities of the many organizations which are to be involved in the reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina (such as the European Union (EU), the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the IMF, and the World Bank). The competition between the various international organizations started before the ink of the Dayton agreements was dry. Serious frictions also arose between ‘Europe’ and the United States (US): some European states could hardly bear the American success in achieving the peace agreements and demanded a ‘proper’ role for Europe. This was reflected in disagreements about questions such as who should head missions in the field and who should become the High Representative. The latter function was granted to Carl Bildt, former Swedish Prime Minister, and EU representative. This assignment is quite logical, as the EU will be one of the main ‘pay-masters’ in the reconstruction of the devastated Bosnia. However, serious criticism can already be heard about the way Bildt is exercising his duties, which may partly be explained by the fact that the High Representative