From Budapest to Lisbon

Erika B. Schlager¹

Now where did we leave off?
Two years ago, when the heads of state and government of the OSCE participating states met for their last summit, Russian President Boris Yeltsin shocked western capitals by warning that ‘Europe, having not yet freed itself from the heritage of the Cold War, is on the verge of plunging into a cold peace’. It was not so much his undiplomatic tone but the unexpected nature of his verbal assault that led the New York Times to juxtapose his picture to that of Leonid Krushev at the United Nations, under the large-print headline ‘Why Russia still bangs its shoe’.² Indeed, the summit included a number of sharp disappointments and embarrassing moments.

Perhaps the greatest illustration of the Budapest meeting’s shortcomings came during the final drafting the Budapest Declaration. When the Russian delegation nixed draft language (proposed by Bosnia-Herzegovina) that would have condemned the Serb attack on U.N.-designated ‘safe haven’ of Bihac, not a single delegation was prepared to pressure Russia to drop its opposition to language that was not only acceptable to all other delegations, but stood for hallowed Helsinki principles. In contrast, when the Bosnian delegation blocked a feckless substitute prepared by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (deeming it to be, in essence, a mealy-mouthed response to genocide), the Bosnians were portrayed by many as the spoilers. As a result, a pan-European gathering of more than 50 nations concluded a major security review without agreement on the continent’s worst military and humanitarian crisis since World War II.

To be sure, the meeting had its more positive moments. Many writers, for example, had particular praise for the achievement of an agreement on extending the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), a critical nuclear reduction agreement, reached in Budapest on the margins of the OSCE meeting; the adoption of provisions for the first OSCE multinational peacekeeping force, intended to be dispatched to Nagorny-Karabakh; and the conclusion of a code of conduct on politico-military aspects of security, which established standards for the conduct of military, paramilitary, police, and other security forces. And in many ways, much of what made the Budapest meeting successful was its near-miss qualities: a Russian effort to receive OSCE blessings of its military dalliances in the so-called ‘near-abroad’ did not materialize; nor did a Russian-sponsored effort to convert the OSCE into a pan-European security structure to which NATO would be subservient.

1. Erika B. Schlager is Counsel for International Law for the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the Helsinki Commission). The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Helsinki Commission or of the U.S. Government.
Other, sillier ideas also came and went. For example, a mandate to review the ill-conceived Court of Arbitration and Conciliation (originally billed by French legal expert Robert Badinter as the tool which would resolve Europe’s minority conflicts) was politely ignored by most delegations in Budapest.

Ultimately, however, the long-run success of the meeting would be evaluated by other factors. Speaking just days before the summit began, the Chairmen of the U.S. Helsinki Commission noted that ‘the new era of the CSCE will not be judged by what its participants adopt in Budapest, but by what they do in the Balkans and in other areas where CSCE principles are threatened’. This decidedly mixed record sets the stage for the upcoming Lisbon summit. Significantly, those who recall the Budapest summit document at all usually do so to note Russia’s continuing and egregious violations of it in Chechnya.

**Defining challenges and intervening events**

In the two years since Budapest Document was agreed, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (as the Conference was re-christened in 1994) has remained an institution largely driven by and reactive to conflicts and crises in the region. For example:

Almost immediately after the adoption of the Budapest Document, including the Code of Conduct, Russian forces began a military campaign against rebel forces in Chechnya. Often characterized by brutal attacks by Russians against civilian populations (and sometimes equally brutal retaliatory measures by the rebels) — violations of both international humanitarian law and the just-adopted OSCE Code of Conduct led the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Ambassador Audrey Glover, to liken assaults on Chechnya to the bombing of Dresden. This conflict continues unabated. An OSCE mission to the region was launched at the initiative of the Chair-in-Office in April 1995 and has remained in the field since then, sometimes at considerable personal risk. Although the mission has not been able to achieve a final resolution of this conflict, mission efforts appear to be at least partially responsible for temporary cessations of hostilities.

On a more positive Russian front, touchy issues surrounding the implementation of the Conventional Armed Forces (CFE) treaty have been finessed, with the achievement on 1 June 1996 of revisions to the 1992 treaty sought principally by Moscow. (The ink was barely dry on the CFE treaty in 1990

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