

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2015/01/16/ukrainian-crisis-and-international-security-i.html>

Ukrainian Crisis and International Security (I)

Pyotr ISKENDEROV

1/16/2015

2015 will be no less memorable than the previous year. No doubt it will leave a trace in the contemporary history. The crisis in Ukraine testifies to the fact that the world lacks instruments for crisis management while international organizations have so far failed to counter the destabilizing activities of individual states – first of all the United States and its NATO allies. Ahead of Serbia assuming the chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on January 1, 2015 Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic said in December that the Ukrainian crisis would be an OSCE priority during Serbia's chairmanship, and more efforts would be applied to stop further violence and make both sides respect an agreed ceasefire. Serbia will be directly responsible for the management of crisis which has many similarities with the events in the Balkans that took place in the 1990s.

Will the OSCE headed by Serbia succeed as it tries to prevent the further escalation of Ukrainian conflict? It should be noted that this organization has come under less criticism in comparison to the United Nations and the European Union, not to mention NATO.

As a rule, the OSCE observers, unlike the officials from Brussels and Washington, have tried to be relatively impartial as they prepared their reports. The OSCE monitoring mission has mentioned gross violations of Minsk agreements by Ukrainian government, for instance, the shelling of Donbass by Ukrainian government forces. The OSCE greatly contributed to making Russian humanitarian convoys get to the Donbass. And, finally, the OSCE documents don't

include the «sanctions rhetoric» used to block the cooperation between Russia and the European Union.

Serbia knows the first thing about interethnic conflicts, civil wars, the contradiction between two basic principles of international law (the right of nations to self-determination and the respect for territorial integrity), the sanctions regimes and the theory and practice of «color revolutions». Besides, Serbia has no choice but look for balance between the two poles of power in the contemporary Europe (Russia and the European Union) trying to protect its own interests without «burning bridges» in its relationship with Russia or Brussels. It can be surmised that as an intermediary the new OSCE chair-country will stick to the policy implemented by «late Slobodan Milosevic» as he was trying to find a narrow path of balance between the West and the East.

Will it help Serbia and the OSCE use the previously acquired experience and come up with new ways to tackle the Ukrainian crisis? The Russian Foreign Ministry has already stated that it expects Serbia to adopt a balanced policy which would take into consideration the positions of all participants according to the OSCE chair-in-office responsibilities.

Moscow is sure that under the circumstances the Helsinki+40 process comes to the fore as far as the issues of European security are concerned and the efforts to find a solution to the Ukrainian crisis are intensified. On December 18, 2014 Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said in his interview with Rossiya Segodnya devoted to the upcoming visit to Russia by Ivica Dacic, «Our country is determined to maintain close and constructive cooperation with Belgrade on all issues of the OSCE agenda. The most important issues include identifying ways out of the European security crisis in accordance with the Helsinki+40 process, facilitating settlement of the conflict in Ukraine, creating proper conditions for harmonising integration processes and upholding traditional values in the OSCE space». He added, «We expect the Serbian chairmanship to pursue balanced policies that take into account the positions of all member states in accordance with the mandate of the OSCE chairmanship». OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier, a politician who has received great experience of crisis management in the Balkans, sounds optimistic about the OSCE role. He expects Serbia to be a constructive factor in tackling the Ukrainian crisis during its OSCE chairmanship. Serbia is a fair mediator and, as such, it will have broad support from OSCE members, Zannier said during a visit to Brussels. Ukraine is not the only challenge for the European security. The smouldering conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh (or Mountainous Karabakh) is teetering on the edge of armed escalation and the situation in Ukraine is closely intertwined with the events in the Trans-Dniester Region. Catalonia and the Basque Country, as well as other potential conflict participants, are closely watching the events unfold in the European crisis-hit spots. Greece with its permanent social and economic crisis has become a soft underbelly of Europe.

A lot depends on the ability of the OSCE to cope. It has been functioning since the mid-1970s. Actually the organization is the only real podium to bring together all European states plus the United States and Canada. There is little hope other international bodies will do the job. The European Union appears to understand what implications will follow in case the Ukrainian crisis escalates but keeps on dancing to the US tune. There are issues dividing Washington and Europe: the United States strives to block the Russian gas supplies to Europe and make Europeans buy

more expensive US-produced energy. For this purpose the United States wants to extract shale gas in the Donbass.

The United Nations and its UN Security Council may approve a decision previously agreed on, but they cannot work it out. The Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe are not taken seriously. It makes the OSCE the only body which knows how to monitor situations and act as an intermediary. It has accumulated experience of operating in hot spots, for instance the Trans-Dniester Region and Transcaucasia. The Minsk agreements are necessary but they are by far not the only thing needed to handle the problem. A solution presupposes a decision taken by all sides involved and signed by top leaders of conflict participants to be submitted to the United Nations for approval. It's something Belgrade and Brussels are well familiar with – the 1995 Dayton accords on Bosnia and Herzegovina led to permanent cease-fire and created the basis for the new state. For instance, it said «The Entities shall have the right to establish special parallel relationships with neighboring states consistent with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina». Later they tried to do away with the spirit of Dayton and change its basic provisions. No matter that, the Dayton accords have become, perhaps, the only example of finding a solution to a bloody conflict in the contemporary Europe. And this conflict has similarities with what's going on in Ukraine.