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Guiding Spirit and Man of the First Hour. In Memoriam: Jonathan Dean

On 14 January 2014, five months short of his 90th birthday, Ambassador Jonathan Dean died in his home city of Mesa, Arizona. Dean, who had scaled the heights of the US diplomatic service, was one of the founding fathers of the OSCE Yearbook. Without his commitment, it would have been far harder to turn the Yearbook into the successful publication it is today. With his 1995 contribution on US policy towards the OSCE,¹ he was also represented as an author in the Yearbook's very first (German-only) issue. When English and Russian editions were launched in 1996, he became a member of the international editorial board. From then on, he provided the editors and board members with proposals of topics and authors, knowledgeable commentaries, and a wealth of expertise.

In the mid-1990s, the OSCE found itself in a complicated situation. High expectations of a post-confrontational security policy had still not been realized. In the Caucasus and the Balkans, it was the guns that were doing the talking. The role of the OSCE as a place to forge ideas for a new Europe was being viewed with increasing scepticism. Some initiatives fell at the first hurdle. A striking example is the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, on which Jonathan Dean wrote a penetrating analysis in the 1996 OSCE Yearbook. It remains a key text to this day.²

On the prehistory of this document he wrote: "In 1992, France, always desirous to consolidate post-cold war security arrangements and to prevent backsliding, proposed that CSCE security obligations be codified in treaty form. The United States was already nervous at that time about the post-cold war future of NATO and about potential competition to NATO from French actions to build up the WEU. It reacted sourly to the French proposal for a new treaty, believing that carrying out the French project could augment the status of OSCE and make it a more dangerous competitor to NATO. Once again caught between its two major allies, France and the USA, Germany proposed as a compromise the idea of a politically binding code of conduct for the armed forces of OSCE participating States. This proposal was ap-

1 Jonathan Dean, Die Vereinigten Staaten und die OSZE – Im Wechsel von Förderung und "wohlwollender Vernachlässigung" [The United States and the OSCE – Alternating between Support and "Benign Neglect"], in: Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg (ed.), *OSZE-Jahrbuch 1995*, Baden-Baden 1995, pp. 99-108.

2 Cf. Jonathan Dean, The OSCE "Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security": A Good Idea, Imperfectly Executed, Weakly Followed-up, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 1995/1996*, Baden-Baden 1997, pp. 291-298.

proved by the 1992 Helsinki Review Conference and referred for implementation to the Forum for Security Cooperation established by the same Review Conference. A text was negotiated between 1992 and 1994, and only barely completed in December 1994 in the last hours of the Budapest Review Conference.”³

There can be no doubt that, measured against the original intention, the adoption of merely a non-legally binding set of guidelines was disappointing. Dean brought a touch of sarcasm to his summary, in which he wrote that the Codex “joins other OSCE concepts and projects in waiting for the day when OSCE gains sufficient weight to put more energy and authority behind implementing its own decisions and principles”.⁴ This has not changed in the subsequent two decades. Only now we can more clearly see the price of this failure.

Jonathan Dean had his first contact with the world of warfare and the military as a 20-year-old, when he participated as an infantry officer in the Normandy Landings, later joining the US Army on its advance to the Elbe. Back home, he attended Harvard and Columbia universities, taking his PhD in Political Science at George Washington University. His diplomatic career began in 1950 in Bonn, where he served as liaison officer between the US High Commission and the West German government. He assisted in the creation of the new West German Federal Armed Forces (*Bundeswehr*) and the accession of the Federal Republic to NATO. From 1956 to 1960 he was the State Department Desk Officer responsible for East Germany. He later served as Political and Economic Officer at the US embassy in Prague (1961-62) and was Principal Officer at the consulate in Élisabethville, Katanga, now Lubumbashi, DRC, (1962-64) during the Tshombe secession and the UN peacekeeping operation in the Congo, and then Deputy Director of the US State Department Office of United Nations Political Affairs, where he worked on peacekeeping and economic sanctions.⁵

As a diplomat, academic, and author, Dean was unusual among his colleagues in the US foreign service. His two most prominent roles demonstrate clearly just how exceptional he was. From 1968, Dean was Political Counselor at the US embassy in Bonn, later serving as Ambassador Kenneth Rush’s deputy in the negotiations on the Berlin Agreement. Together with Egon Bahr and Valentin Falin, Rush formed a kind of behind-the-scenes steering committee in the quadripartite negotiations over Berlin. Jonathan Dean took charge of the day-to-day co-ordination of this informal three-way body, whose task was to compare notes on priority negotiating goals before

3 Ibid., p. 292.

4 Ibid., p. 298.

5 Biographical details, key texts, and photographs are collected in the outstanding volume by Hans Günter Brauch and Teri Grimwood (eds), *Jonathan Dean – Pioneer in Détente in Europe, Global Cooperative Security, Arms Control and Disarmament*, Cham 2014.

they landed on the conference table, to recognize incompatibilities, and to remove barriers to agreement in good time.⁶

If the resulting Berlin Agreement was perhaps the seminal accord of the détente era, it also illustrates how Jonathan Dean understood his work as a diplomat on the front-line of the Cold War. Security, the most urgent political concern on both sides of the East-West divide at the time, can be acquired by various means. One can take shelter behind ever greater stockpiles of weapons. Or one can attempt to defuse conflicts with a high potential for violence by balancing competing interests and achieving a compromise. The consensus reached by the four powers on Berlin on 3 September 1971 is an exemplary case of the latter, to which Dean regularly referred.

From 1978 to 1981, with the rank of full ambassador, he led the US delegation to the Vienna talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR). The aim of these was to reverse the grotesquely excessive build-up of arms on the European continent – gradually, in a controlled manner, verifiably and mutually. Had the talks succeeded, they, like the Berlin Agreement, would have brought security benefits to both sides. Yet a number of key powers had no interest in bringing the negotiations to a speedy conclusion and producing concrete results. Dean's dedication to this cause went unrewarded. Nonetheless, the unsuccessful MBFR talks fed into the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) process in 1989, which was broader in both scope and geographical extent.

Dean left his country's diplomatic service after Ronald Reagan's election as president. He pursued activities in a number of institutional frameworks, including the United Nations Association, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Council for a Livable World, and the Global Action to Prevent War project at Rutgers University School of Law. From 1984 until 2007 he acted as global security adviser to the Union of Concerned Scientists in Washington, DC, where he worked on analytical and conceptual aspects of the era of détente in Europe, nuclear and conventional disarmament, and the implications of co-operative security. Within a short time, he earned a reputation as one of the leading experts in the areas of conflict reduction, crisis prevention, and arms control. This was facilitated by the greater freedom he now enjoyed to publish on his own account. His key publications include the books *Watershed in Europe: Dismantling the East-West Military Confrontation* (1986), *Meeting Gorbachev's Challenge: How to Build Down the NATO-Warsaw Pact Confrontation* (1989), and *Ending Europe's Wars: The Continuing Search for Peace and Security* (1994).⁷

It is almost unnecessary to explain how easily the IFSH and Jonathan Dean fell into conversation: His questions and ours were so close as to be in-

6 For details, see the interview with Jonathan Dean from 8 July 1997 undertaken as part of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Project of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, at: <http://www.adst.org/OH/TOCs/Dean,Jonathan.toc.pdf>.

7 The compendium edited by Hans Günter Brauch and Teri Grimwood includes a bibliography, see Note 5, pp. 25-33.

distinguishable. During the 1980s and 1990s, his finely honed interventions enriched numerous workshops at the IFSH and international conferences held at Hamburg's town hall. Our common conviction was that Europe in transition needed new directions and different instruments to create peace more securely and security more peacefully.

Jonathan Dean will be remembered as an experienced and ever-helpful colleague. Far more than an occasional guest, he was a constant companion to us in our work down the years. His advice was regularly sought, despite or precisely because of his critical approach. Only he possessed such profound insights into the patterns of perception and cognitive styles specific to various national and international security apparatuses. A foreword by Dean in an IFSH publication was considered a particular seal of quality. And IFSH staff on their first visit to the USA often benefited from his expert introduction to life within the Beltway. This is to remember him, but also to encourage future generations to continue his work.