

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the presentation is to consider the possibilities for advancing the right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) within the work of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, the world's largest security-oriented intergovernmental organization which covers a vast area comprising 57 participating States spanning North America, Europe and post-Soviet/Central Asia which take very different approaches to FoRB

With this in mind, can it be said that there is a common understanding among OSCE participating States? If so, where can this be located? What are its implications for the work moving forward? What more can be done to reinforce this understanding? How can we start to overcome the tensions and dilemmas that exist for the construction of a common OSCE approach to FoRB? Can OSCE become a significant transnational player in FoRB promotion, with the potential to influence the FoRB agenda? These are some of the questions I would like to explore in this presentation

The OSCE is one of a number of governmental and intergovernmental initiatives working on FoRB issues. Given the excellent work done by others, it does not seek to duplicate these efforts. These bodies have different aims, which sometimes reflect different conceptions of FoRB and state-religion arrangements

Time does not permit a full and detailed examination of the geopolitical, historical and social background and context in which the OSCE carries out its work or an exploration of the various models of political and legal regulation of relations between states and religions that are operation in different parts of the OSCE region, particularly in Europe and North America. It is also not possible to enter into a full appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the framework within OSCE pursues its work or of the tools and strategies it deploys

I will attempt to address OSCE's conception of FoRB through the lens of one key word in the title of the organization, namely "security", the purpose and *raison d'être* of this body, and which has informed and shaped the development an extensive normative and practical, but relatively little known, *acquis* on FoRB

It may seem surprising that an organization called into being to address the military-political security concerns of a different age should even be interested in today's discourse on FoRB. Far from it. Religion is implicated in so many of the geopolitical dynamics affecting the societies of the OSCE region that it has become impossible for participating States to ignore the implications of the right to freedom of religion or belief for all for their societies as they seek to promote democracy, the rule of law, social cohesion, stability and security, and economic development – all the things that the OSCE stands for and was established to advance. Indeed, the new and pressing challenges to the free and full enjoyment of FoRB arising from a changing geopolitical reality require the OSCE to focus on learning about the most effective responses to a truly complicated human rights concern

In this presentation, I will use the term OSCE when referring to the totality of its participating States as well as to the various executive structures and institutions that carry out its work on a daily basis. When I am referring to a specific executive structure by name, then I will do so by name

A word about context

Of course, it is not possible to say nothing about context. This is an all-important consideration, because an accurate perception of the processes that are changing the religious landscape of the OSCE region is not only key to understanding the new tensions surrounding the right to FoRB, but also to the successful development of strategies and tools that can respond effectively to them

FoRB is a controversial human right and its challenging and sensitive nature requires that we take into account different national and regional contexts within the OSCE area

FoRB is given a different meaning in the Western and non-Western countries that make up the OSCE and this, in turn, depends on the different ways in which religion itself is conceived. In various parts of the region, religion is not only perceived as a belief and understood primarily in terms of conscience and individual choice, but it is also about culture and identity, something that precedes individual choice. This explains why in some quarters the FoRB discourse is perceived as a subtle attack on the local culture and traditional ways of living

Further, the different models of church/state relations in operation in the OSCE region each have important repercussions on the way FoRB is considered, both in domestic politics and in foreign policy terms. Needless to say, the OSCE does not push or promote a single secular state model though its participating States have agreed that pluralistic democracy based on the rule of law is the only system of government that can effectively guarantee human rights

The phenomenon of the loosely-phrased “the return of religion”, which can be clearly felt in varying degrees throughout the OSCE region, is having an impact on FoRB in a number of important ways:

- issues connected to such freedom are likely to emerge, and have indeed emerged, in increasingly different areas of social life (workplace, education, gender, security, citizenship, etc)
- they tend to take on new contents that were unknown in the past – the form taken by FoRB issues is much more diversified today than a few decades ago, eg how religious faith is manifested through symbols and behaviours

The sum of these two important processes – the growing visibility of religion in the public space and the increasing religious diversity of the population living in the same country – means that it is important to be aware that (a) that there are other ways to understand the scope and content of FoRB and (b) that these different conceptions tend to coexist in the same country. And these conceptions can be unusual for and sometimes unintelligible to the majority of citizens of a given country

In other words, the scope of FoRB issues in the OSCE region is much larger today than a few decades ago

As a consequence, FoRB issues should be placed in a much broader framework

As Malcolm Evans has eloquently argued, despite the various competing visions of FoRB that exist – including within the OSCE region – there already exists a tried and tested framework within which to address FoRB issues within the international community – this being the language of international

human rights. Realistically, there is no other way of making significant and sustainable progress in addressing the practical predicaments of believers, religious or otherwise, other than by developing the framework of international human rights in this sphere. Some may think that this hardly seems controversial, but it is. There is, however, more. Doing so is fast becoming a necessity in order to prevent the further erosion of core protections in the area of FoRB. This will not be a comfortable message for those who have serious problems with the manner in which human rights thinking has generated outcomes in some situations which they consider to be unwelcome or just plain wrong, (for example, those who are dissatisfied with the secular liberal approach) but these matters are not of an order which justifies diminishing the value which human rights thinking can bring to the promotion and protection of FoRB

Like it or not, human rights law now provides the frame of reference within which issues concerning the enjoyment of FoRB are being addressed internationally and this includes OSCE. We will return to this theme shortly

THE OSCE AND ADVANCING FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

Security and the conception of freedom of religion or belief

So what indeed does a security organization have to do with FoRB? What is OSCE's vision and understanding of security and how does FoRB relate to this?

OSCE was formed during the Cold War initially as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, with a security brief

But, OSCE is based on the insight that genuine security is not just a military-political question but consists of three elements: the "human dimension" as it is described in the OSCE meaning human rights and democracy; politico-military factors; and economic and environmental factors. This is OSCE's comprehensive concept of security

OSCE's formation was premised on the need for what is now called "human security". Arguably, it is as much a human rights organization as a security organization. The "human dimension" was in some ways at its heart at a time when it was peripheral in other international spheres

Commitments to implement the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief are among the original tenets of the OSCE. The 1975 Helsinki Final Act states that "The participating States will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion" and that "The participating States recognize the universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for which is an essential factor for the peace, justice and well-being necessary to ensure the development of friendly relations and co-operation among themselves as among all States."

Concern, then, for FoRB as a fundamental human dimension commitment was woven into the fabric of the organization from its inception, and since then has been elaborated and developed to become one of the most detailed and comprehensive set of standards pertaining to FoRB of any international

organization. These subsequent commitments have reiterated the importance of these foundational principles and their ongoing relevance to the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security. Human dimension commitments have also repeatedly stressed a common approach, the Kyiv Ministerial Decision of 2013 "reaffirming the commitments of participating States to respect, protect, and ensure the right of everyone to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, emphasizing the link between security and full respect for the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief"

This explicit structural link between respect for human rights and greater security is a unique feature of the OSCE. In the case of FoRB, this link actually heightens awareness of its strategic value given its integral connection to a number of positive indicators. In this regard, a growing body of quantitative research is finding strong positive correlations between FoRB and political stability, social cohesion, and economic development

Viewing FoRB through the lens of OSCE's comprehensive concept of security is about valuing and harnessing FoRB's potential to promote security and prosperity in their widest sense. In this perspective, then, FoRB is no longer seen as a nice-to-have human right but as an issue at the heart of serious policymaking. This is very much in line with international community's own growing new comprehensive approach in this area

Clearly then, FoRB is and will remain a priority in the work of the OSCE for very obvious reasons, not only recognized and promoted as a human right but also as an essential value in the work of creating secure and stable societies

OSCE commitments

It should be pointed out that OSCE commitments on FoRB are grounded in universal human rights norms and the rights advocated are not compartmentalized but comprise instead an interrelated basket of norms permeating all spheres of life. The need for a holistic international human rights approach and framework to FoRB – holistic, in this sense, is not the same as totalitarian, in which FoRB is conceptualized and implemented as a universal right, is one embedded in the founding documents of the OSCE. This approach thus situates FoRB within an human rights for all perspective, making its aim assisting implementation of the freedoms of religion or belief and other fundamental freedoms including those of expression, assembly, and the right to be free from torture

OSCE commitments are agreed unanimously among all participating States and are politically, not legally binding because the OSCE does not have legal personality. They are not seen as alternatives to fulfilling commitments in international law, or as being in conflict with such commitments

All participating States have publicly promised to implement these commitments, and they have also agreed that the implementation of commitments is a legitimate matter of concern for all participating States and civil society

What, then, is the conception of FoRB that emerges from a reading of these commitments?

OSCE commitments conceive of FoRB in dynamic terms, informed by universality, freedom and equality. These commitments recognize FoRB as a human right, with all the understandings that that brings with it – of being inherent and inalienable, non-negotiable, rooted in self-understanding, a birthright, without conditionalities attached from the State, and to be enjoyed without by all

without discrimination, including detainees, migrants, children and women. FoRB protects the politically weak as well as the dominant groups; the marginalized as well as the ascendant; religious communities or atheists

So, the OSCE conception of FoRB is very broad and thick, grounded in human rights and not just limited to conscience and worship, but how we live out our lives. It is not to be considered in an impoverished way, granted as concessions from authoritarian states, to fixed recognized communities, in exchange for obedience. The OSCE commitments recognize that FoRB has different facets and wide-ranging implications for all departments of life, individual and collective, private and public. But at the same time it is not an absolute right so a lot is left to be worked out within a human rights framework when competing rights are at stake and common sense, tolerance and mutual understanding are also needed to find the best way forward

While there may be a diversity of views and understandings among participating States of FoRB and in the way they value diversity of thought and belief, these commitments are a reference point and remain front and centre of all FoRB-related efforts

So, at one level, one could say that there is agreement on the principles of FoRB within the OSCE. No one denounces the human rights approach. There is an established *acquis* in that sense. But, of course, there is substantial variation in the way they are interpreted and applied from participating State to participating State

Therein lies the challenge. On the one hand, to avoid the ideologisation of FoRB and to work for the contextualisation of the application of the commitments. On the other, to ensure that any such context-sensitive efforts do not amount to non-implementation of commitments

Ensuring domestic implementation

Of course, OSCE participating States do not always live up to what they have committed to. Unfortunately, violations of FoRB continue unabated in the OSCE region. The implementation of commitments therefore remains a major challenge

Asking for implementation of commitments is to ask for something that the government concerned has already agreed to do, and it has also agreed that its progress in implementation – or lack of implementation – may be publicly monitored and questioned

Given the multi-dimensional nature of the issues posed for participating States to implement their commitments to ensure the right to FoRB, multiple approaches are necessary to meet the challenges of promoting and protecting FoRB in a region characterised by a growing plurality of religions, beliefs and cultures. Human rights are, as participating States have agreed, the essential framework to all approaches, most notably in the area of law. Other approaches, including those of an educational and interreligious nature, are also necessary to assist this

Before going to outline the specific activities that are taken forward within the OSCE region, I would like to say a few words about two approaches that are often set up as alternatives, rivals and competitors, namely the duty of states to respect, protect and promote FoRB versus the responsibility of faith communities to promote dialogue and tolerance. This is an unfortunate false

dichotomy and a misreading of OSCE commitments, which place the highest emphasis on the human rights approach

We have in the work of the OSCE sometimes seen a tendency to endorse and support the notions of tolerance, interfaith dialogue and cooperation while failing to protect FoRB, including those of smaller and less popular groups. Words about tolerance and interreligious dialogues and cooperation have sometimes been used to camouflage state violations of FoRB

While interreligious dialogue and cooperation are of great importance and whose contribution to the well-being of society needs to be more systematically and fully explored, they can never substitute for a clear focus on the state's duty to respect, protect and promote FoRB for all. In relation to FoRB, there is sometimes a tendency both at the international and national level to transfer the focus from the duties of the state to the responsibility of religious or belief communities to promote dialogue, cooperation, mutual respect and understanding. Indeed, it is within the scope of the states' duty to fulfil or facilitate freedom of religion or belief for all that can be found its responsibility to promote dialogue, mutual respect, tolerance and understanding

I think one has to publicly challenge the idea that one can promote tolerance and dialogue whilst directly attacking the rule of law and fundamental human rights such as FoRB. So reality not "spin" is what must be addressed

In the final analysis, there needs to be coherence among and between the different approaches to advance FoRB. These different approaches should be seen as complementing each other

ODIHR's programme to advance FoRB

The Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights is OSCE's principal institution working in the human dimension and has a clear mandate to focus on FoRB which it has done so since 1997

ODIHR exists "to provide support, assistance and expertise to participating States and civil society to promote democracy, human rights and tolerance and non-discrimination"; it has no involvement with matters of military security, disarmament or border issues

The watchword is domestic implementation as the ultimate goal is the implementation in full by participating States of international standards and OSCE commitments pertaining to FoRB for all. Informed by its comprehensive concept of security and conceptualisation of FoRB as a universal human right integral to its security aim, one can summarise the main characteristics of ODIHR's approach to assist participating States fulfil this objective as follows:

- ODIHR adopts a primary focus on *the duties of States* to respect, protect and promote FoRB
- *FoRB for all* – this freedom-for-all approach is, of course, firmly grounded in a human rights framework and in the context of wider analysis and action, and helps avoid the instrumentalization of FoRB for political ends and maximises the potential for effective action

- in furtherance of its goal, *all dimensions of FoRB* receive emphasis, prioritized according to the contexts concerned. The full and scope and breadth of FoRB is reflected in ODIHR's work
- the need for a long-term proactive approach coupled with a vigorous response to acute situations – promoting a sustainable social and legal culture of FoRB is a complex and long-term process. OSCE/ODIHR does not want to give FoRB attention only in moments of crisis. It is dedicated to learning about proactive initiatives to address violations before they emerge and escalate
- *a multi-actor approach* grounded in *engaging, building relationships and partnerships* with, enabling dialogue and cooperation among and between, and supporting *knowledge and capacity development* for, a wide range of actors, including local authorities, academic, civil society, and religious and belief communities. Experience from many quarters suggests that discrete approaches and quiet diplomacy have important roles to play in opening up space for constructive engagement and may in some cases be necessary to avoid increasing the risks faced by vulnerable groups
- this is complemented by the need to implement FoRB in *a learning and listening mode*, especially hear from civil society and religious and belief communities. Consultation and cooperation with civil society organizations and religious and belief communities is vital both as a basis for analysis of the situation in country and for developing and implementing strategies to promote FoRB. Such communities hold important knowledge and are likely to be key actors in promoting (or undermining) FoRB in society
- a focus on *knowledge development and learning/knowledge-based approaches* are key in light of the significant knowledge deficit in many quarters pertaining to issues surrounding FoRB. Effective action is dependent upon a thorough understanding of the context. A successful strategy should therefore prioritise the development of knowledge through, *inter alia*, providing education and training for relevant personnel, preparing guidelines and codes of good practice which clarify minimum international standards and illustrate good practice, etc. Knowledge and skill-based approaches are at the heart of ODIHR's capacity building work, which seeks to empower, encourage and assist various actors to advance FoRB in meaningful ways
- highlighting *gender dimensions of FoRB* and issues concerning vulnerable groups – women and men can be affected differently by violations of FoRB, and women may be particularly vulnerable to discrimination, intolerance and gender-based violence on the basis of FoRB. As a consequence, effective approaches should ensure that gender analysis and gender-sensitive approaches to promoting FoRB are integrated into both tools for analysis and resultant strategies, and groups consulted should include religious and secular women's organizations and female religious leaders

ODIHR then helps OSCE participating States make positive, active and sustained investments to make FoRB commitments a reality – environments in which FoRB can flourish. These investments include efforts in the following areas:

- state legislation, policies and practice – legislation assists in extending the right to FoRB to all without discrimination. But there is also a need for non-discriminatory legal codification of FoRB in a variety of domestic policies and practices. New laws need to be passed in line with new challenges and issues. This implies an active, ongoing engagement on the part of the state. For example, needs to embed FRB in laws that affect areas such as education, planning, migrants, women, etc. At the request of a participating State, ODIHR engages in the review and scrutiny of draft or emerging legislation with the aim of bringing national provisions in line with international instruments protecting FoRB as well as changing social circumstances. The law reviews can be effective in stopping bad legislation from being passed, but are obviously most useful when combined with other activities, since true change also requires a change of attitude on the part of the relevant officials
- effective implementation – legislation is not enough and states need to do things beyond passing laws. There also needs to be strong and independent oversight of state compliance with FRB so bodies need to be created and tasked with this mandate. In this regard, NHRIs have a role to play as do an independent civil society and religious and belief communities. An upshot of this is the need for the training of officials and civil society organisations and religious and belief communities in international standards pertaining to FRB. This includes public officials working in state/local administration, prisons, law enforcement, police and schools. Recognising that there are widespread deficits in this regard in a number of participating States and as already mentioned, ODIHR has been engaged in such awareness raising and capacity building efforts among such key actors in a number of participating States as part of the overall effort to ensure the safeguarding of FoRB in the domestic space
- advancing FoRB through interreligious platforms is a new area and ODIHR is dedicated to learning about this. ODIHR is now encouraging participating States to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue to promote FoRB for all and steps have been taken in a number of participating States but these need to be extended so that there are more numerous, more robust and more confident interfaith dialogues taking place across the OSCE region. In ODIHR's view, facilitating dialogue between public authorities and religious and belief communities, as well as the dialogue among religious and belief communities, is a very good way to promote and protect FoRB, but this must be undertaken in conjunction with efforts to implement human dimension commitments, especially pertaining to FoRB and freedom of opinion and expression, otherwise these dialogues run the risk of being nothing more than public relations exercises that paper over deeper issues within and across societies

In addition, ODIHR also monitors developments related to FoRB in OSCE participating States and trends in the OSCE region, particularly those social and legal developments that affect its enjoyment. In this regard, it has started work on developing methodologies to monitor and promote FoRB through early warning systems

It could be said that OSCE then works to advance FoRB by building capacity, refining conceptualization (finding better and broader ways of understanding what FoRB is and how it influences societies), and changing culture

The aforementioned activities, about which OSCE/ODIHR is still learning about, also points to a new role for the OSCE in terms of prevention. A role better suited to the age in which we now find

ourselves, where the focus should be on preventing violations of FoRB and not only on “naming and shaming”, reporting, documenting and remedying them

Strengths and limitations

Naturally, OSCE/ODIHR’s work is carried out with certain constraints – political, institutional, resources – which are a feature of any international organization established and sustained through an act of political will

OSCE is, of course, a political organization and operates on the basis of consensus and political will. The commitments entered into by its participating States are aspirational and not legally binding, though in the main they are reflective of and consistent with international obligations originating from other sources. Yet the commitments have a normative, soft law influence of their own

OSCE’s executive structures such as ODIHR are guided and indeed limited by the mandate given to them by OSCE participating States. As a consequence they are not fully autonomous executive structures, ie they can only respond to official requests of assistance from participating States and they have no tools to enforce commitments. They are also at the mercy and whim of the shifting political agendas of the day

When faced with such challenges, ODIHR must leverage the clear strengths and unique aspects of OSCE as a regional intergovernmental security organization as well as make use of different means to advance its work in relation to FoRB. These include:

- the already discussed role of FoRB in ensuring security
- on the ground engagement with civil society and building collaborative networks to focus on and advance FoRB for all, which is one of OSCE’s recognized strengths (despite its lack of a fully executive mandate, ODIHR can still work freely and independently with civil society). The need for participatory policies and the involvement of various actors in solving the complexities and challenges related to FoRB essentially flows directly from the OSCE concept of security. Indeed, the ability of civil society organizations, including religious and belief communities, to participate in the OSCE’s work is a unique feature and strength among intergovernmental organizations
- in this regard, one of OSCE’s strength is in its field missions – the presence is deep and meaningful and they have developed good links with civil society; FoRB needs to be integrated here, but this requires political support (ie to include in mandates)
- OSCE can also bring a welcome regional focus to bear on groups of participating States, where they can learn from each other and support and challenge each other. This regional comparative analysis to address FoRB issues is a particular strength of the OSCE
- this facilitation of information sharing and transfer of learning and good practice is another strength of the OSCE/ODIHR
- spaces such as the human dimension meetings also make it possible for the totality of participating States to take stock of developments, reflect on the lessons learned to implement relevant commitments, consider how these apply to changing circumstances and new challenges, and receive critical feedback from each other and civil society. Rather than engaging in a crass and generally unproductive “naming and shaming” exercise, by providing information on a state’s human rights obligations and how they can be and are held to

account for named violations can address pS' solemn international obligations. Providing information on a state's human rights obligations and how they can be and are held to account for named violations has the potential to spur states along the road of positive action and empower people in the sometimes lonely struggle against oppression, including barriers such as censorship, denials of contact with people elsewhere, and state media disinformation. This can bring practical benefits to the victims, even in closed states characterised by repressive state legislation, practices and policies

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES AHEAD – THE ONGOING RELEVANCE OF OSCE'S COMPREHENSIVE CONCEPT OF SECURITY

40 years on from Helsinki, the OSCE pursues its work of advancing FoRB in a very different geopolitical, social and cultural context from that which characterized and dominated the Cold War. The security agenda is very different. OSCE's mission is very different in many respects. At that time, the greatest hostility to FoRB came from secular autocracies or totalitarian regimes though we still have vestiges of these in operation in the OSCE region, of course

We have already noted the increasing complexity of protecting FoRB in an era of pluralisation and publicisation and, dare I say it, the politicisation of religion or belief in the OSCE region

Compounding this are a range of new challenges to FoRB in the vast expanse of territory stretching from the Atlantic to the China Sea:

- a rising tide of social hostilities directed against individuals and communities on grounds of religion or belief, particularly Anti-Semitism, intolerance against Christians (not just from outside but also within, eg hostility towards minority churches by traditional orthodox churches in some participating States) and Muslims
- the rise of new diaspora communities made up in the main of refugees from outside the OSCE region is contributing to the changing nature of international security and the protection FoRB is likely to become a significant issue in time given the religious makeup of these new diaspora populations
- the threat of violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism (VERLT)
- increased activity and assertiveness of dominant religious communities in certain participating States

The latter two developments are shifting policymakers in a number of OSCE participating States, particularly those whose governments are of a rather authoritarian nature, back toward viewing religion primarily through a security lens. The end result in certain quarters, however, is the systematic violation of commitments related to FoRB in the name of countering extremism and national security. Security in these situations becomes the excuse for oppression

One of the vexing challenges, then, facing the OSCE today is that of advancing FoRB in such highly- or over-securitized and controlling state environments. However, it also poses a welcome opportunity

to the OSCE to shift the terms of the debate, which usually sees religion or belief as either the cause or as the victim of violence perpetrated in its name rather than as a potential solution by exploring the critical role that FoRB can play in supporting democratic governance and in preventing VERLT by fostering the creation of a dynamic civic space, characterised by a diversity of thought and belief, to counter the poisonous ideologies that drive extremism. In this regard, OSCE institutions such as ODIHR should be ready to assist participating States to understand that creating environments in which FoRB and related human rights are fully safeguarded is the foundation of security and stability. This would be preventive, proactive work at its best

This invitation to focus on the critical religion or belief-human security nexus, that is the link between “religious” security challenges and human security issues, as part of a wider cross-dimensional approach to security plays to one of the OSCE’s fundamental strengths. And it will be successful to the extent that a detailed and systematic account is taken of the range of ways in FoRB can be mainstreamed in all efforts to promote security, including human security. This, I submit, will need to come to the fore within the work of the OSCE in the coming years

As we look to the future, we would do well to remember that the emergence of new issues and challenges is a normal phenomenon in ever changing societies. It should serve as a stimulus to clear thinking and analysis on the part of OSCE participating States with a view to adopting contextually relevant policies and practical strategies designed to further strengthen respect for FoRB. The promotion of FoRB by the OSCE must remain a long-term policy priority, conducted in consistent fashion over time

Ultimately, such measures need to be grounded in the solid basis of OSCE commitments and implemented within the framework defined by respect for human rights for all and the rule of law. This is nothing new, of course, but if the OSCE is to remain a significant transnational actor in the ongoing work to promote and protect FoRB for all then it will need to focus ever more urgently on substance and not politics, and craft products compatible with commitments. It may well take on a more preventive role, which would fit in well with its security agenda. This may not equate to a full reinvention or revolution in terms OSCE’s work or approach in this area but it does speak to the ongoing relevance and unique and added value of its comprehensive concept of security to the all-important work of advancing FoRB throughout a huge swathe of the northern hemisphere