


Touro Institute  מכון טורו

In Conjunction with



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

**Training Course for the Organization for Security
and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)**

Module 1. Introduction to the OSCE

Introduction

Overview

Overview

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is a security organization whose 56 participating states span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. It is an important instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post conflict security building, as well as the promotion of democratic development and good governance, media freedom, human rights, and nondiscrimination throughout the region.

Origin

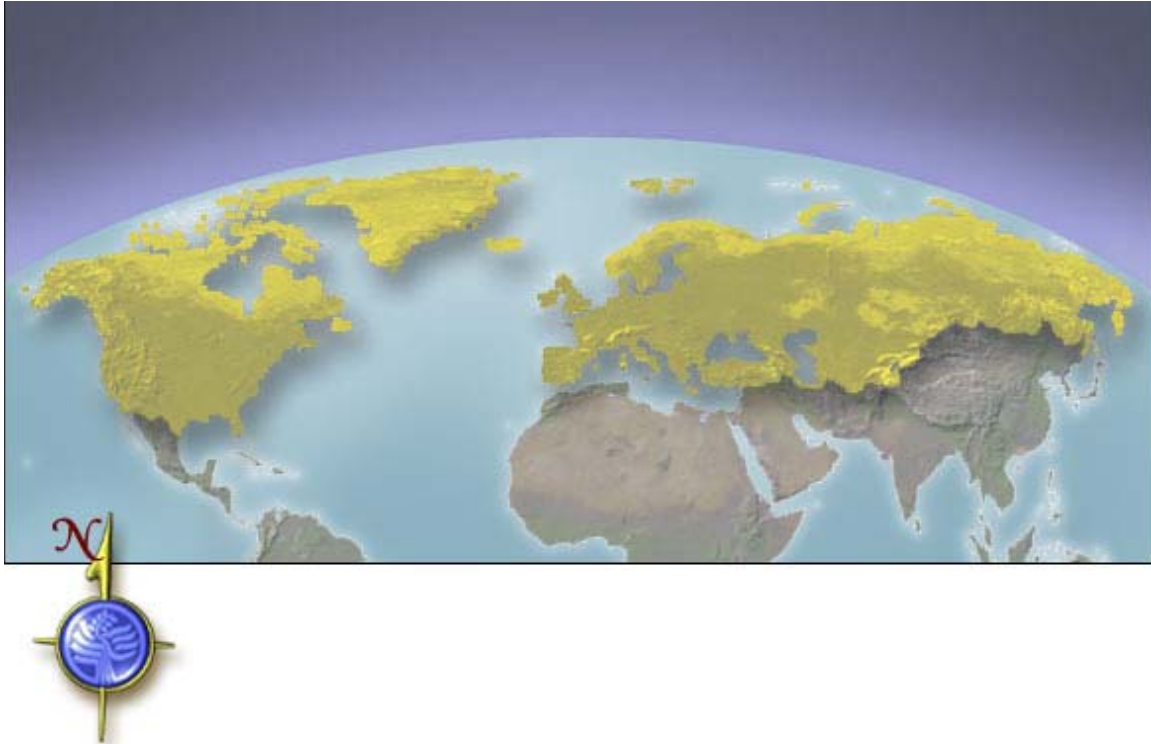
Today's OSCE is the successor to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) established in 1975. The CSCE was largely an arena for East-West debate until the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The changed environment in Europe in the 1990s made it possible for the Organization, renamed OSCE in 1995, to be used by participating states to deal with the conflicts and threats to regional security and stability resulting from the breakups of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, as well as other regional instability.

Size and budget

The OSCE employs about 450 persons in its primary institutions, as well as some 3,000 persons in its 19 field missions, including both direct hires and seconded personnel. Its 2007 budget is a relatively modest 168.2 million Euros (about \$218 million).

From Vancouver to Vladivostok

With 56 participating states the OSCE is the largest existing regional security organization. Its area includes continental Europe, Russian territory extending eastward to the Pacific coast, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the United States and Canada; and it cooperates with Mediterranean and Asian partners.



OSCE participating states

A comprehensive view of security

The OSCE definition of security has always been broad and comprehensive. The protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, along with economic and environmental cooperation, are considered to be just as important for the maintenance of peace and stability as politico-military issues, and as such are an integral component of OSCE activities.

A cooperative approach

The consensus of OSCE participating states is that all have a common stake in the security of Europe and should therefore cooperate to prevent crises from happening and/or to reduce the escalation of existing crises.

External Cooperation

The OSCE has also developed two sets of External Partners for Co-operation outside its own region. The Mediterranean partners are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia, and deal with issues affecting the region linking southern Europe with North Africa and the Middle East.

The Asian partners are Afghanistan, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, and Thailand. The Asian states have expressed special interest in OSCE practices that might be applicable to issues and problems facing the Asian region, especially in the field of confidence-building measures in East and Southeast Asia.

The OSCE, through its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, sent election support teams to Afghanistan to assist with the 2004 presidential election and the 2005 parliamentary elections, its first major monitoring activity outside its own region.

A unique status

OSCE decisions are politically, but not legally, binding. Nevertheless, the OSCE possesses most of the normal attributes of an international organization: standing decision-making bodies, permanent headquarters and institutions, permanent staff, regular financial resources, and field offices.

A flexible tool

Younger than other international organizations, the OSCE can be used flexibly by participating states in helping to prevent crises and responding to them if they occur. With a smaller bureaucracy and less of a history, there are opportunities to use the OSCE creatively and constantly reinvent the ways it deals with threats to peace and security.

Helsinki Process

Proposal for pan-European security conference

Overview

The present role of the OSCE has evolved over more than a quarter of a century, and the norms and values that the organization seeks to promote have also developed accordingly. Of special importance is the way in which the OSCE has evolved from a series of conferences and multilateral agreements into a regional, multilateral organization with a vital mandate in the field of conflict prevention, management and rehabilitation, as well as support for peaceful political transitions.

Soviet and U.S. Proposals

1950's

The Soviet Union sought to hold an all-European conference to put a political end to World War II by resolving the "German question," with the goal of ratifying the postwar status quo established in Eastern Europe. The United States and most of its NATO allies were opposed to a conference with such an agenda. The U.S. proposed holding a conference between NATO and the Warsaw Pact states dealing with "hard" arms control in Europe, especially reductions of conventional military forces.

The Way to Helsinki

1969

Neutral Finland offered to host a preparatory conference on European security in Helsinki. NATO responded to the Finnish proposal by suggesting that the agenda of a European security conference should also include prior notification of military maneuvers and freer movement of peoples and ideas across the Cold War divide. American objections to a mostly political conference on European security were alleviated when the Soviet Union agreed to link the opening of the Helsinki conference with the commencement of another negotiation on "hard" arms control--Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) in Europe.

Helsinki preparatory talks

Opening negotiations

1973

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) negotiations opened with 35 delegations present including: the United States, Canada, and all the states of Europe (including the USSR and Holy See), with the exception of Albania. These states tended to coalesce into three major groups, reflecting the existing political alignments at the time: •••

Warsaw Pact
NATO / European Community
Neutral / Nonaligned

The preparatory meeting resulted in a detailed outline of the practical organizational arrangements for the conference.

Working phase

Geneva

1973 to 1975

The working phase of negotiations amounted to the first multilateral East-West negotiation process. During this phase, issues were grouped together into three major substantive "baskets."

Basket I

Basket I issues concerned security, and they focused primarily on a set of principles to govern relations among states in the realm of security and on specific "confidence-building measures" (CBMs). Of greatest interest in the Geneva phase was the desire of the participating states to provide assurances that maneuvers could not be used as a cover for preparations to launch a surprise attack.

Basket II

Basket II issues concerned cooperation in the fields of economics, science and technology, and the environment, and called for increased interaction in a wide variety of functional areas across the Cold War dividing line through Central Europe.

Basket III

Basket III issues concerned human rights and cooperation in humanitarian areas, including: •••••

- human contacts
- travel and tourism
- information and cultural exchanges
- an end to the jamming of radio and TV broadcasts
- educational exchanges

It was this basket that addressed the freer movement of peoples, ideas, and information across national boundaries.

Final Act

Helsinki

1975

The original CSCE negotiations culminated in a summit conference of Heads of State or Government of all 35 countries in Helsinki, at which the Final Act was signed. The Helsinki Final Act, first and foremost, contains the "Decalogue," ten principles that should govern interstate relations.



Leonid Brezhnev, General-Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR, signing the Final Act, with Turkey's Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel to the left.

Follow-up conferences

Overview

The Helsinki Final Act called for a series of follow-up conferences to review progress in the implementation of the Final Act and to consider new provisions to strengthen security in Europe.

Belgrade

1977

The first CSCE follow-up conference was characterized largely by rhetorical attacks and counterattacks. Western governments criticized the human rights performance of the Communist Bloc countries, while the latter accused the Western states of interference in their internal affairs. At the same time, human rights activists in a number of communist states in Central and Eastern Europe formed "Helsinki Committees" to pressure their governments to live up to the principles that they had endorsed at Helsinki.

Madrid

1980 – 1983

The second follow-up meeting lasted for more than three years, particularly due to substantive disagreements over Soviet and Eastern Bloc implementation of the provisions of the Final Act. There was considerable debate on whether the CSCE should enlarge its commitments, especially in confidence-building and arms control, given the Eastern bloc's insufficient implementation of its original commitments, especially on human rights.

At the outset, it too was stalemated by the intensified debate over human rights and non-intervention in internal affairs. It was further lengthened by the suspension of the meeting, pressed by the U.S. and its allies, over the imposition of martial law (by the ruling communist authorities) in Poland. Eventually a balance was struck between the pursuit of more ambitious undertakings and the implementation of existing commitments, and the Madrid conference was able to discuss ideas for strengthening human rights and humanitarian commitments (Basket III), confidence-building in the area of military security (Basket I) and to establish machinery for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Despite growing East-West tensions and the controversy surrounding the Soviet deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe, the agreement on a substantive Final Document was a significant improvement over the Belgrade meeting and restored momentum to the CSCE process.

Vienna

1986 - 1989

By the start of the third follow-up conference in 1986, a noticeable shift in East-West relations was beginning to be felt, if only tentatively and barely recognizable at the time. During the Vienna conference, which lasted until January 1989, virtually all baskets of the Helsinki Final Act were strengthened, and additional conferences were planned to deal with security issues.

The most significant accomplishments of the Vienna Review Conference were in the area of human rights. The 1975 Helsinki Act had focused primarily in its substantive provisions upon enhancing human contacts across cold war lines rather than on individual political rights. At Vienna, the conference concluded that individual citizens have a right, "individually or in association with others," to advocate for and openly promote the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Perhaps even more important in terms of its historical significance was a provision noting that citizens had a right to live where they chose within their own country and to freely leave and re-enter their own country, a right that had previously been denied to citizens of all communist bloc countries (except for Yugoslavia). Just eight months after the adoption of the Vienna Document in January 1989, the government of Hungary cited this principle when it opened its borders with Austria, allowing many (including East Germans) to cross freely to the West. The flood of emigration that followed was a major factor in the East German

decision to open the Berlin Wall in November 1989. The Vienna Review Conference thus had profound historical implications that were barely recognized at the time.

Conference on Confidence and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe

Stockholm

1984 to 1986

President Reagan and new Soviet leader Gorbachev's influence in European security matters was reflected in the Negotiations on Confidence and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CSBMs), held in Stockholm, and taking place under CSCE auspices. Gorbachev agreed for the first time to accept a limited form of mandatory inspection of Soviet territory extending as far east as the Ural Mountains to verify compliance with this arms control agreement; this was a first step towards an increasingly extensive use of on-site inspections in later agreements. The Stockholm conference concluded with a substantial expansion of the confidence-building measures that had been initiated by the Helsinki Final Act.

Cooperative security regime

With the disintegration of the Soviet Bloc as symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, the CSCE began a rapid process of transformation to respond to the new post-Cold War security situation in Europe. The creation of a genuine Transatlantic system of "cooperative security" had become a real possibility.

This was underpinned by a further expansion of CSBMs, in tandem with a negotiation of hard arms control limits by the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE).

In other words, the immediate post-Cold War vision included the possibility of a CSCE no longer divided into three groups -- West, East, and Neutral and Nonaligned -- but instead united to maintain cooperative peace and security within the large region covered by the CSCE. The CSCE thus changed from a regime based on mutual confidence building and transparency between two competing blocs into a (potentially) cooperative security regime "from Vancouver to Vladivostok."

In the atmosphere that accompanied the end of the cold war, agreements were struck in a large number of areas that seemed to establish a new consensus about fundamental values that should prevail throughout the entire region. However, serious challenges lay ahead in implementing all of these principles in the actual practice of states throughout the region.

Impact of CSCE

Importance of the Decalogue

Overview

This section describes how the end of the Cold War enabled the CSCE to contribute to fostering security and cooperation in Europe and overcome what had been the ideological division of Europe.

Structure for OSCE

The ten principles of the Decalogue created the normative structure under which the CSCE and the OSCE have operated. Continuing elaboration of these principles created the normative core for an OSCE regional cooperative security regime.

Unification of Germany

The provision in the first principle allowing for the peaceful, negotiated change of borders, creating the possibility for a peaceful unification of Germany, was particularly important in the creation of today's Europe.

Emphasis on diplomacy

Other principles of the Decalogue emphasized the desirability of resorting to diplomatic means rather than the use of force to settle all disputes among participating states.

Impact of CSCE

Undermining communism

The CSCE had an impact on the security situation in Europe by undermining the legitimacy of the communist governments throughout Central and Eastern Europe, where governments signed agreements that created norms about human rights and openness, but where their actual behavior often fell far short of those principles.

Human rights

The CSCE certainly inspired and made possible the formation of a wide variety of human rights movements in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia and Solidarity in Poland, which lobbied their governments to observe their commitments undertaken when they signed the Helsinki Final Act.

Human rights, a long-standing taboo for the Soviet Bloc, became by virtue of the Final Act a legitimate subject of East-West dialogue. The CSCE was thus important in keeping

the spotlight on human rights and linking progress in that sphere with cooperation on other more traditional security questions.

Benefits of Helsinki process

The Helsinki process offered the participating states an additional channel of communication, a normative code of conduct (for inter-state and intra-state relations) as well as a long-term vision of cooperation. It thus promoted both stabilization and peaceful change in Europe. As a result, during the Cold War the CSCE maintained the promise of qualitative changes in East-West relations at a time when most contacts were characterized by alternating phases of tension and ambiguous detente.

Military security

The CSCE can be credited with reducing tensions through its implementation of confidence-building measures agreed upon by participating states, which enhanced military transparency through inspections of armed forces and military activities. This significantly reduced fears that war might start through the misinterpretation of routine military activities, which might have mistakenly been perceived as the initiation of offensive action.

Uniqueness of CSCE

Wide membership

In an era characterized by bloc-to-bloc confrontation, the CSCE had a wide membership and all states participating in the Conference did so as "sovereign and independent states and in conditions of full equality."

Comprehensive view

At a time when most negotiations and security organizations adopted a piecemeal approach to security, the CSCE endorsed a comprehensive view. The linkage between different elements of security would prove to be one of the CSCE's greatest assets.

Decisions by consensus

Decisions of the Conference were taken by consensus thus often making the decision-making process as important as the decisions themselves. This way, no state had to fear that a decision to which it strongly objected would be imposed upon it.

Flexible

CSCE decisions were politically rather than legally binding, giving the Conference considerable flexibility. This meant that its decisions did not risk getting tied up in the sort of lengthy debates that often occur during the ratification of legal instruments, which could delay implementation of CSCE decisions by years, when action was required in weeks, days, or even hours.

No institutional structures

Prior to 1990, the CSCE had no institutional structures; the result being that the very impetus needed to keep the process going was an end in itself. This also added to the capacity of the CSCE to adapt rapidly and effectively to the changing international environment in which it operated.

From the CSCE to the OSCE

Overview

Collapse of communism

With the disintegration of the Soviet Bloc following the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, the CSCE began a rapid process of transformation to respond to the new post-Cold War security situation. The creation of a genuine Transatlantic system of "cooperative security" appeared possible.

The CSCE took on new responsibilities and challenges in this period of transition characterized by institutionalization, strengthening of operational capabilities, development of field activities, and further elaboration of commitments and principles.

Human dimension of security

Copenhagen

1990

An experts meeting held on the human dimension of security enacted a code of democratic procedures to guide all participating states. Specifically it called for: ••••

- Free elections--open to outside observation
- Equality of all persons before the law
- Freedom to establish political parties
- Rights of the accused

Charter of Paris

Overview

Paris, 1990

The Charter of Paris signed by the Heads of State from all CSCE participating states represented the first high-level multilateral instrument to reflect the fall of the Soviet Bloc and the end of the Cold War. In its preamble, the Paris charter announced the opening of a new era for European security, based on a reaffirmation of the Helsinki Principles. After the Charter of Paris, the CSCE began to take on features of an established international organization, rather than consisting of a series of ad hoc meetings about security issues.

Structures

The Paris meeting established the following structures for the CSCE: ••••

Secretariat

Conflict Prevention Center

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Parliamentary Assembly

Meetings

The Charter of Paris also resulted in a new schedule of meetings: •••

Foreign Ministers (annually, except when Summits are held)

Heads of State or Government Summits (at irregular intervals, replacing the annual ministerial meeting when they take place)

Committee of Senior Officials (as needed)

Emergency mechanism

A meeting at Valetta, Malta in January 1991 established the Valetta Emergency Mechanism, which had the following provisions: ••••

In event of a serious violation of any of the ten principles of the Helsinki Decalogue or the occurrence of an event threatening the peace or the security of any participating state, the concerned state(s) could seek clarification with the parties involved.

A reply must be provided within 48 hours.

If this fails to resolve the dispute or if there is no reply, then the concerned state may request an emergency meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials (currently referred to as the “Reinforced Permanent Council”).

If this request is supported by at least twelve other participating states, the chair must call such a meeting within three days.

Moscow

human dimension conference

As a follow-up to the 1990 Copenhagen code of democratic procedures, a conference on the Human Dimension (as Basket III is often referred to) was held in Moscow in October 1991 to enlarge the field of cooperation on human dimension matters and especially to

broaden the mandate of the Office of Free Elections to provide it with a mechanism for field missions to assist and monitor elections and other aspects of human dimension activities.

A major innovation was that the participating states declared “categorically and irrevocably” in Moscow that “commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the CSCE were matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating states and did not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the state concerned.”

This explicit limitation of absolute sovereignty represented a major innovation introduced into contemporary international relations by the OSCE in 1991, effectively interpreting the provision in the Helsinki Decalogue to mean that the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of states no longer would apply regarding obligations freely taken by participating States.

Helsinki Follow-Up Meeting

Post Cold War violence

Helsinki, 1992

The Helsinki Follow-Up Meeting was preoccupied with the wave of violence sweeping across the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Participating states sought to engage the CSCE more actively both to prevent the future outbreak of such conflicts and to manage and resolve those that had already broken out.

New offices and institutions

The wave of violence following the breakup of these two large multinational states--one of them a nuclear power--led to efforts to strengthen the Conflict Prevention Center and to endow it with additional functions in the realm of conflict management.

The following additional new offices and institutions were created after the Helsinki Follow-Up Meeting: •••

High Commissioner on National Minorities

Court of Conciliation and Arbitration

Forum for Security Cooperation

Missions

Another major advance taken at Helsinki was the decision to establish missions in areas of tension to provide for "early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management, and peaceful settlement of disputes." The original intent of the heads of state assembled at Helsinki appeared to be largely to create temporary, more or less ad hoc missions to deal with conflicts as they arose.

However, especially due to the worsening of the situation in the former Yugoslavia, the Committee of Senior Officials subsequently created "Missions of Long Duration." The first of these Missions was sent to monitor the situation in three regions of the former Republic of Yugoslavia -- Kosovo, Sandjak, and Vojvodina.

Summits after Helsinki

CSCE becomes OSCE

Budapest, 1994

The Budapest Summit formally changed the name of the CSCE to OSCE (effective Jan. 1, 1995), in recognition of the institutionalization that had taken place. The Summit also adopted the Code of Conduct in Politico-Military Aspects of Security (which also included cooperation in combating the threat of terrorism.)

The Budapest Summit also decided to intensify the CSCE role in bringing an end to the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan. The Summit decided that the CSCE would play a greater role in the mediation effort previously handled by Russia, strengthened the Minsk Group effort to achieve a political settlement, and stated that the CSCE would be willing to provide its own peacekeeping force after an agreement on ending the armed conflict.

Security Model for 21st Century

Lisbon, 1996

The Lisbon Summit adopted the Lisbon Declaration on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century to strengthen security and stability throughout the OSCE region. This represented an effort to enhance the OSCE role in maintaining security in Europe, especially after the successful conclusion of the Dayton Accords bringing an end to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Charter for European Security, REACT

Istanbul, 1999

At the Istanbul Summit, OSCE Heads of State or Government signed the Charter for European Security in order to better define the role of the OSCE. The Charter aims at strengthening the organization's ability to prevent conflicts, to settle them, and to rehabilitate societies ravaged by war and destruction. The REACT program (Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams) also resulted from this summit. The REACT program provides for participating states to develop a capability to develop a pool of skilled individuals ready for speedy deployment with OSCE. While some participating states have implemented the REACT commitment by developing a roster with trained individuals available for speedy deployment, OSCE has not utilized this capability so far.

No OSCE summits have been held since 1999.

OSCE today

Overview

The OSCE today occupies a unique place in international organizations in general and Transatlantic security institutions in particular.

It has also been experiencing a “mid life crisis” in recent years that has raised some fundamental questions about itself, and requires a new set of adaptations if the organization is to continue to play a leading role in regional security and cooperation.

Basic priorities

The basic priorities of the OSCE at present are: • • •

Democracy: to consolidate the participating states' common values and help in building fully democratic civil societies based on the rule of law and principles of “good governance”

Peace: to prevent local conflicts, restore stability, seek to resolve “frozen conflicts,” and bring peace to war-torn areas

Security: to overcome real and perceived security deficits and to avoid the creation of new political, economic, or social divisions by promoting a cooperative system of security

OSCE institutional challenges

In recent years, the OSCE has lost some of the momentum that had build up after the end of the cold war, causing it to reassess its role in regional security. There are several major causes of this crisis: • • •

Russia has grown suspicious of the OSCE, which it sees as focusing too much on intervention in states “east of Vienna” while ignoring problems in states “west of Vienna;” it also asserts that focus has become “unbalanced” in favor of human dimension and democratization activities to the neglect of security, economic, and environmental functions contained in the first two baskets of the Helsinki Final Act.

The United States has shifted much of its foreign policy attention to Southwest Asia and the Middle East since 9/11 and has reduced its presence in the Balkans and other areas of concern to the OSCE, leading to a lowering of U.S. foreign policy attention in this region.

The European Union has enlarged and now includes over half the OSCE participating states, and has developed independent security institutions that, at least in part, compete with those of the OSCE.

Violent conflict has largely disappeared in the OSCE region since the end of the war in Kosovo in 1999. Although minor outbreaks of violence have occurred in Macedonia in

2001 and in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in 2005, the prevention of violent conflict no longer occupies the central role in the

minds of political leaders that it did in the previous decade. Although the “frozen conflicts” in the Transdnistria region of Moldova, the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia, and the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan have remained “frozen,” they have neither reverted to violence nor appeared to be “ripe” for resolution of the underlying conflicts.

Consequences

The crisis that has affected the OSCE has had several significant consequences for the operation of the OSCE: ••••

Consensus has been difficult to achieve, and every recent Ministerial Meeting, including Sofia in 2004, Ljubljana in 2005, and Brussels in 2006, has failed to adopt a consensus communiqué, even though several important decisions were taken at each of those meetings.

There has been a crisis over the budget, and it was well into the year in both 2005 and 2006 before budgets for those years were officially adopted.

Several key OSCE missions have been closed in locations such as Estonia, Latvia, and Chechnya, and the mandates for other missions have been watered down, especially in Belarus.

ODIHR (Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) has been placed under great pressure to make its election monitoring more “objective,” to expand its activities “West of Vienna,” and to avoid issuing reports that are likely to influence the outcome of domestic electoral processes in countries where it monitors, largely as a reaction to its perceived central role in the “Rose Revolution” in Georgia and the “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine that created substantial concern in Russia, Belarus, and several other former Soviet states.

OSCE responses

In 2005, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dmitrij Rupel, commissioned a report by “eminent persons” to evaluate the structure and function of the OSCE. This report was presented at the annual Ministerial meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in December 2005. Although some of its recommendations were adopted at the Brussels Ministerial held in December 2006, little has been done to carry out any of them. However, modest progress has been made in several specific areas: ••••

A new scale of contributions was adopted at Ljubljana in December 2005 that slightly reduced Russian contributions, while slightly increasing those of the U.S., thereby resolving the budgetary crisis for the short term.

Chairmen-in-Office, including Foreign Minister Passy of Bulgaria in 2004, Foreign Minister Rupel of Slovenia in 2005, and Foreign Minister De Gucht of Belgium

in 2006, have adopted the practice of presenting documents representing the consensus of “most delegations” at annual ministerial meetings, thereby avoiding objections from Russia and a few other participating States.

ODIHR has increased its election-monitoring activities in Western Europe and North America, while resisting efforts to place political restrictions on its freedom of action in carrying out its mandate wherever it observes or assists in the elections process.

Kazakhstan has campaigned for selection as OSCE Chairman-in-Office. This would mark the first time that a state from the Commonwealth of Independent States (composed of 12 former Soviet states) would assume this role, which has been dominated in recent years by member states of the European Union. However, the U.S. and the United Kingdom have opposed Kazakhstan’s candidacy due to its dubious record in fulfilling its OSCE commitments with regard to human dimension obligations.

Conferences

2003 Ministerial

At the Maastricht Ministerial, foreign ministers focused on: •••••

OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-first Century

Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Tolerance and Non-Discrimination

Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area

Anti-terrorism and politico-military affairs

Racism, xenophobia, & discrimination

In June, 2003 the OSCE organized a conference in Vienna of delegates from most participating states devoted to anti-Semitism, followed by a second conference in September 2003 on combating other forms of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination. Reinforcing its work against anti-Semitism, the OSCE held a major conference in Berlin in April 2004 to discuss new measures.

2004 ministerial

The Ministerial Meeting in Sofia failed to adopt a concluding statement, largely resulting from: •••

Russian criticism of the budgetary process (supported by Belarus and sometimes by several Central Asian states); the OSCE was forced to operate without a formally approved budget until May 2005;

objections to OSCE election monitoring

insistence that the stationing of Russian troops in Transdniestria and Georgia is a bilateral issue that should not be dealt with by the OSCE

Many states linked ratification of the adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) to the withdrawal of Russian troops from Transdniestria and Georgia, although Russia argued that there should be no linkage between the multilateral treaty and bilateral agreements to withdraw its troops. The majority of states have insisted that Russia had committed itself to meet these deadlines at the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit, where the adapted CFE Treaty was signed, and where they were recorded, along with other commitments from Russia and other CFE states in the CFE Final Act, which was issued concurrently with the adapted treaty's signature, so the issue involved more than bilateral commitments between the states directly involved.

The Chairman-in-Office (CiO), Bulgarian Foreign Minister Passy presented a document reflecting a broad consensus of "most delegations." The ministerial adopted:

- Decisions to elaborate an OSCE Border Security and Management Concept, and improve security at borders against the movement of terrorists, smuggling, and human trafficking
- An Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality in all participating states, and institutions and field activities of the OSCE.

2005 ministerial

The Ministerial meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia failed to adopt a final communiqué for the third consecutive year. The CiO, Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel of Slovenia, followed the practice of issuing a personal statement summarizing issues on which there was general, if not complete consensus. • • •

A new scale of contributions was adopted effective from 2005-07, calling for a slight reduction in the overall contribution of the Russian Federation.

Although progress was noted in Russian implementation of its commitment to withdraw its forces from Georgia, concern was expressed about the lack of progress on Russian withdrawal of equipment and troops from the Transdniestria region of Moldova, which continued to delay ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty.

The Ministerial received a report from a panel of "Eminent Persons" appointed by the CiO to re-evaluate the structure and function of the OSCE in the light of changes in the international environment and of criticisms directed at the organization from several of its largest participating states. No specific decisions were reached, however, regarding implementation of the Eminent Persons' report

Shift in priorities in security

Since 2001, there has been a gradual but perceptible shift in OSCE priorities. Although fighting continues in Chechnya, large-scale violence has diminished in the OSCE region.

Therefore, much of the OSCE's focus has shifted towards enhancing human security and supporting the struggle against international terrorism, where the threats derive more from political violence, lawlessness and criminality rather than from inter-ethnic conflict.

Specifically, these new efforts have included the following: ••••

The OSCE Forum on Security Cooperation adopted the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons to reduce the proliferation of such weapons.

The OSCE has increased training in democratic policing, helping participating states in law enforcement consistent with democratic principles and human rights.

The OSCE has stepped up its efforts to fight money laundering and trafficking in persons, drugs, and illegal goods.

The OSCE has increased its support for the monitoring of international borders and "good governance."

OSCE Negotiating and Decision Making Bodies

Overview

Graphic

The following graphic describes the negotiating and decision making bodies of the OSCE.



Overview

Summits are periodic meetings of Heads of State or Government of OSCE participating states that set priorities and provide orientation at the highest political level. The agendas for these formal meetings are carefully negotiated among participating states well in advance of the Summit. The last summit was held in 1999.

Summit agendas

The agenda for Summit meetings is established by the current Chairperson-in-Office (CiO) in consultation with the members of the Permanent Council. The CiO is the Foreign Minister of the country holding the annual rotating Chairmanship of the OSCE.

Summit meetings tend to be "scripted" by the professional diplomats who staff the OSCE offices. Occasionally important consultations take place on the margins of Summits and Ministerial Conferences that provide important breakthroughs on issues confronting the OSCE.



Heads of State or Government of OSCE participating States meet as a Summit to provide orientation at the highest political level to the Organization.

Consensus

Since Summit meetings operate by consensus, decisions and resolutions coming out of these meetings often reflect negotiations behind the scenes that generally go on for months or even years prior to the meeting and are generally conducted at lower political levels.

Review Conferences

Review conferences precede and prepare for summits.

At review meetings: ••••

- the entire range of activities within the OSCE is examined
- steps that might be required to strengthen the OSCE are discussed

Review conferences are also used to:

- monitor the implementation of previously adopted commitments
- finalize the negotiation of the documents, decisions, and statements that are then adopted at the summits

Ministerial Council

Overview

The Ministerial Council, made up of Foreign Ministers of the participating states, meets annually, usually in November/December, to take major decisions.



Purpose

The Ministerial Council meetings help to maintain a link between the political decisions taken at the summits and the day-to-day functioning of the Organization.



U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell at the Ninth Ministerial Council November, 2001

Meetings

The Council meets at least once a year, except when there is a summit, in order to: •••

- consider issues relevant to the OSCE
- review and assess the activities, accomplishments, and problems of the OSCE
- make appropriate decisions, including adoption of the annual operating budget

The Council makes all of its decisions by consensus, although occasionally the Chairman-in-Office may issue statements that reflect views widely shared by a vast majority of participating States, but not universally agreed.

Permanent Council

Permanent Council

The Permanent Council (PC) meets weekly throughout the year in Vienna to engage in the day-to-day direction of OSCE affairs. It is composed of representatives at the level of ambassadors from all participating States to the OSCE. Senior officials from capitals may reinforce the PC on special occasions, and then it is referred to as the Reinforced Permanent Council. Its activities include: ••••

- making decisions on the operation of the OSCE, its institutions and its field missions
- hearing reports from the High Commissioner on National Minorities, ODIHR, the Special Representative on Freedom of the Media, Heads of Mission, and other senior officials and invited guests on matters of concern to the OSCE
- developing responses to emergency and ongoing situations
- engaging in debate, dialogue, and discussion on issues before the OSCE

Berlin Mechanism

The Charter of Paris allowed the Senior Council, the forerunner of the Permanent Council, to meet in emergency situations. Under the so-called "Berlin Mechanism," the Senior Council met four times to discuss the Yugoslav conflict and the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. The need for special meetings, however, has not been seen necessary since 1992 due to the institutionalization of regular, weekly PC meetings at the Hofburg Palace's Conference Centre in Vienna.

Forum for Security Cooperation

Overview

The Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) negotiates and consults on measures aimed at strengthening security and stability throughout Europe. Its main objectives are: ••••

- negotiations on arms control, disarmament, and confidence and security building
- regular consultations and intensive cooperation on matters relating to security
- further reduction of the risks of conflicts
- implementation of agreed measures

In practice, the FSC has negotiated extensive CSBM agreements, known as the Vienna Document agreements, which have built on and superseded the Basket 1 CBMs included in the Helsinki Final Act and the subsequent 1986 Stockholm Document..

Under the auspices of the OSCE, three agreements were negotiated as part of the Dayton Peace Accords that ended the Bosnian war. These are an internal CSBM agreement for Bosnia (Article II agreement); a sub-regional arms control agreement involving Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia-Montenegro (Article IV); and an agreement enumerating voluntary CSBMs on a regional basis (Article V). Periodic reports on implementation of these agreements were provided to the FSC and PC. The first set of measures was terminated in 2004, as the central government of Bosnia-Herzegovina took on these responsibilities itself under the general guidance of relevant OSCE documents. However, the Arms Control section of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina provides support to the government to fulfill its OSCE obligations under the 1993 Document on Conventional Arms Transfers, the 2000 Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the 2003 OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, and the Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons.



Members

The Forum consists of representatives of the OSCE participating states--usually the same individuals who serve in the Permanent Council.

Module 1 40

Meetings

The Forum meets weekly at the Hofburg Palace's Congress Centre in Vienna.

Responsibilities

The Forum is responsible for: ••••

- discussing and clarifying information exchanged under CSBM agreements
- implementation of CSBMs
- annual implementation assessment meetings
- preparation of seminars on military doctrine

Joint Consultative Group

This is a special associated body responsible for verifying and implementing the: ••

- Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE)
- Treaty on Open Skies

As legally binding treaties, these two documents are not formally part of the OSCE and not all participating states are signatories; nonetheless, the JCG works closely with the OSCE to verify and implement these agreements.

Charter on European security

Another important product of the deliberations in the Forum for Security Cooperation was the negotiation of the Charter on European Security adopted in 1999 at the Istanbul OSCE Summit. This document enlarged OSCE responsibilities for conflict prevention and building democracy throughout the region, and strengthened cooperation with other international organizations with overlapping functions. The actual implementation of these provisions, however, has been lacking due to the absence of adequate political support, funding, and follow-up.

Since 2003

The FSC recommended comprehensive export controls for Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) to protect civil aviation from possible terrorist access to these weapons; established a framework to address dangers arising from conventional ammunition and explosives that constitute surplus or are awaiting destruction; and produced a handbook of Best Practices Guides on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Overall, there has been an effort to strengthen controls on the flow of conventional weapons smaller than the major weapons systems covered under the CFE Treaty. Once again, however, implementation has been hampered by the lack of adequate resources relative to this enormous and complex task.

Decision-making process

Consensus

The OSCE's decision-making and negotiating bodies arrive at their decisions by consensus. Consensus is understood to mean the absence of any objection expressed by a participating state to the taking of the decision in question.

This principle reflects the Organization's cooperative approach to security, and the fact that all states participating in OSCE activities formally have equal status. In practice, state power and influence frequently drive the deliberations and decisions of the Organization. Consensus, however, means that no decision can be made that is strongly opposed by any of the participating states, even the smallest.

Consensus vs. unanimity

Consensus should not be equated with unanimity, since formal votes are seldom taken. Within the OSCE, most states, especially smaller countries, are generally reluctant to break a consensus unless they feel very strongly about particular issues. There is also a cost to breaking consensus, particularly by a small state, bucking the efforts by more powerful states to have a decision taken. Therefore, once the Chairperson-in-Office believes that he or she has identified a general consensus, the Chairperson usually presents it to a meeting of the Permanent Council and asks if there are any dissenters. In the absence of an objection, the decision is taken.

In other words, consensus merely requires states to give their passive rather than active consent to decisions, and as a practical matter this generally produces a different outcome from what might occur if formal votes were taken requiring unanimous consent.

Politically binding

OSCE decisions are politically and not legally binding on the participating states. This results from the Organization itself being based on the political commitment of the participating states, rather than on an international treaty.

The European Union recently proposed giving the OSCE a status as a legal entity. The primary purpose of this effort would be to provide OSCE personnel the usual diplomatic privileges and protections while traveling and working internationally; this does not imply, however, that the decisions of the OSCE would be legally binding on participating states, just that its employees would be provided the protections normally afforded to personnel of an international organization such as the UN with legal standing. This

consideration notwithstanding, both Russia and the U.S. have generally opposed giving the OSCE any legal standing.

Decision-making levels

The decision-making process takes place at the following three levels:

Summits

Summit meetings represent the highest level of decision-making and political orientation for the Organization.

Ministerial Council

The central decision-making powers lie with the Ministerial Council, which takes the decisions necessary to ensure that the activities of the Organization correspond to its central political goals.

Permanent Council

The Permanent Council is the forum for regular consultation and decision-making regarding the Organization's day-to-day activities.

Note: Periodic, specialized meetings such as those of the Economic Forum, or review and implementation meetings supplement this three-tier structure.

Coordination

The decision-making process is coordinated by the Chairperson-in-Office (CiO), who is responsible for setting the agenda and organizing the work of the OSCE's negotiating and decision-making bodies. The CiO also organizes informal meetings of representatives of the participating states in order to facilitate the discussion and negotiation of decisions, statements, and documents that are then formally adopted by the appropriate decision-making body.

Consensus minus one

In very specific instances, decisions can be made without consensus. The Prague Ministerial Council in January 1992 decided that appropriate action could be taken without the consent of the state concerned in "cases of clear, gross, and uncorrected violation" of CSCE commitments. This is the so-called "consensus minus one" principle.

This option was first used in 1992, in regard to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, resulting in the suspension of that country from participation in the CSCE.

Consensus minus two

Another exception to the principle of consensus is the "consensus minus two" rule. Under this rule, the Ministerial Council can instruct two participating states that are in dispute to

seek conciliation, regardless of whether or not the participating states object to the decision.

So far, this option has not been used.

Caucuses

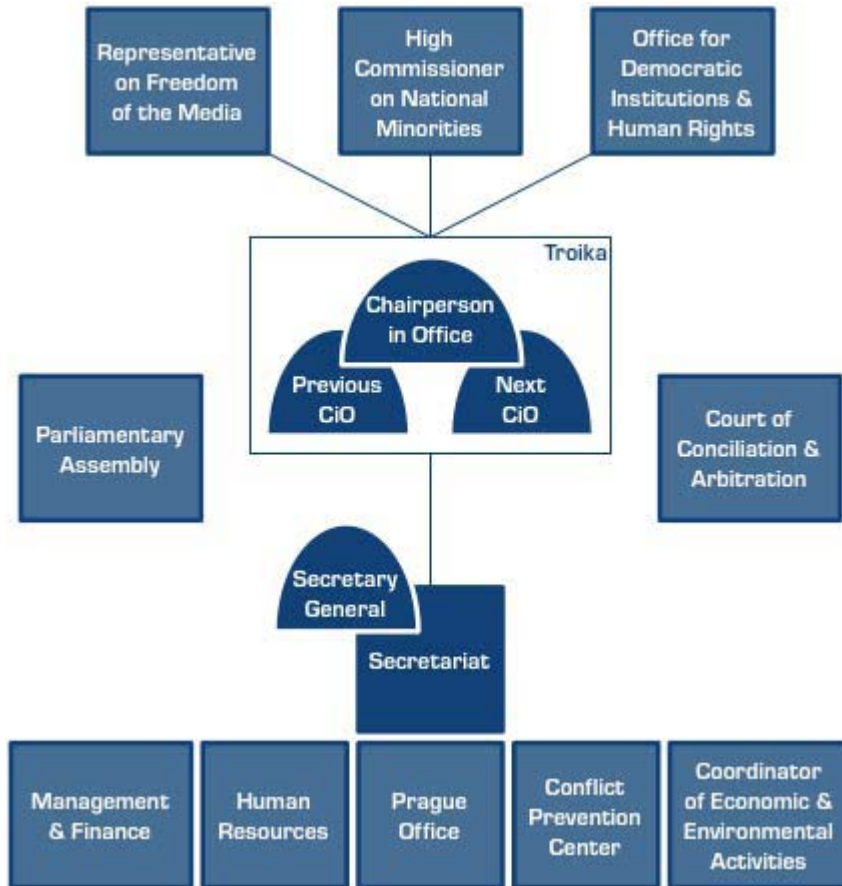
Even though the OSCE operates formally as an organization of 56 sovereign and independent states, in fact there are a number of caucuses that have formed within the organization, and certain states exert substantial influence within those coalitions. By far the most important has been the European Union, which meets prior to all OSCE meetings and develops common positions on all issues. Other notable coalitions include NATO and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Operational Structures and Institutions

Overview

Graphic

The following graphic describes the operational structures and institutions of the OSCE.



Chairperson-in-Office

CiO

The Chairperson-in-Office (CiO) is vested with overall responsibility for executive action and the coordination of OSCE activities. CiO duties include: ••••

- representing the Organization before other organizations and to participating states

- coordinating the work of OSCE institutions

supervising activities related to conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation

seeking consensus as the basis for regular decision-making



Miguel Angel Moratinos, the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, holds the post of OSCE Chairman-in-Office in 2007. (Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Troika

The CiO is assisted by the previous and succeeding Chairpersons; the three of them together constitute the Troika.



Term

The Chairpersonship rotates annually, and the post of CiO is held by the foreign minister of a participating state. The country that is elected must provide substantial personnel to carry out the many functions of the chairperson during the three-year term as a member of the Troika.

OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht (Centre), at a Troika meeting in Vienna 13 January 2006, with his counterparts from Slovenia, Dimitrij Rupel (Left), and Spain, Miguel Angel Moratinos. (OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev)

Selection

There was a general tendency during the first decade and a half of the chairpersonship to select "middle powers" to fulfill this role. The only real exception to this general rule was when a newly unified Germany served as the first CiO in 1991. Members of the EU have tended to hold the OSCE Chairmanship in recent years..

Staff

Foreign ministers have other responsibilities and are not always able to preside over the day-to-day operation of OSCE affairs. Members of the chair's delegation preside over committee meetings, and they also carry out many of the routine functions on behalf of the chair. The success or failure of the OSCE often depends on the skills of the staff of the country holding the chairpersonship at any given time.

Political representative

Another important function of the CiO is to serve as the political representative of the OSCE in dealing with participating states, other states outside the region, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations on matters concerning the OSCE. The Chairperson frequently visits participating states, and has often become involved in trying to stimulate negotiations between conflicting groups within participating states or to resolve disputes between states.

Secretary General and the Secretariat

Overview

The Secretary General acts as the representative of the Chairperson-in-Office and supports him/her in all activities aimed at attaining the goals of the OSCE. The Secretariat, under the direction of the Secretary General, provides operational support to the Organization.



Location

The Secretariat is based in Vienna, Austria, and also has an office in Prague, Czech Republic.

Duties

The duties of the Secretariat include: ••••••••

- managing OSCE structures and operations
- working closely with the CiO in the preparation and guidance of OSCE meetings
- ensuring implementation of the decisions of the OSCE
- publicizing OSCE policy and practices
- maintaining contacts with international organizations
- advising on financial implications of proposals
- ensuring conformity with rules and regulations of the Organization
- reporting to OSCE political bodies on the activities of the Secretariat and the missions

Note: The office is the principal administrative unit of the OSCE, but the Secretary General has only limited political authority. The standing Chairperson-in-Office is the key political authority of the Organization. However, the Eminent Person's report in 2005 recommended some strengthening of the leadership capacity of the Secretary General, in order to provide greater continuity over time in contrast with the CiO, who changes annually.

Office of the Secretary General

The Office of the Secretary General supports the tasks of the Secretary General as the OSCE chief manager and administrator.



Marc Perrin de Brichambaut of France took up his post as OSCE Secretary General on 21 June 2005. (NATO file photo)

Structures

The Secretariat includes the following: •

Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC)

- Gender mainstreaming
- Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU)
- External Co-operation
- Management and Finance
- Office of Internal Oversight
- Training Section
- Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
- Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU)
- Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit

Conflict Prevention Center

The Conflict Prevention Center (CPC) is responsible for overall support for the CiO in the implementation of OSCE tasks in the fields of: ••••

- early warning
- conflict prevention
- crisis management
- post-conflict rehabilitation

The CPC provides support for the CiO and other OSCE negotiating and decision-making bodies.

Operations Center

The CPC's Operations Center maintains a Situation Room that can operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Its primary functions include: ••••

- helping to identify crisis areas by maintaining close liaison with other international organizations and NGOs involved in conflict management activities
- serving as the planning unit for future OSCE missions and field operations
- acting as coordinator for deployment of new or enhanced field operations
- assisting mission members in emergencies, such as a medical evacuation

Gender Mainstreaming Unit

This unit seeks to instill gender equality into all aspects of the OSCE's work, including: ••••

- a specific focus on the role of women where identified as needed
- gender balance among staff and mission members
- gender awareness through staff training
- a professional working environment where women and men are treated equally and with respect

Strategic Police Matters Unit

The Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU) supports a network of police advisers and training activities in several missions or field operations.

The SPMU frequently responds to requests from participating states for specific expert advice on policing and police-related activities. Enhancing effective policing has proven to be an essential element of conflict prevention, especially by strengthening professional police forces that are able to avoid acting on the basis of sectarian interests and biases.

Good policing is essential to providing law and order, a necessary condition for building societies based on the rule of law. Furthermore, effective policing in the aftermath of social violence enhances confidence in new institutions and reduces fears of a re-ignition of conflict.

External Cooperation

The Section for External Co-operation is responsible for liaison with the OSCE's Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation. ••••

It acts in an advisory and support role to the OSCE Chairmanship and the respective Chairmanships of the Contact Groups with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners.

It is also responsible for the planning and organization of regular events with the Partners for Co-operation, including the annual Mediterranean Seminar and the annual joint Conference with an Asian Partner.

It assists in coordinating with other international institutions with which the OSCE frequently interacts such as the UN, EU, NATO, Council of Europe, and other regional and global institutions.

Management and Finance

The Department for Support Services and Budget is responsible for all administrative services including: •••••

- conference and language services
- documentation and protocol
- archives
- budgetary and financial issues
- information technology
- operation support functions for field missions

Internal Oversight

The OSCE's Office of Internal Oversight provides an independent appraisal function to examine and evaluate OSCE activities and to prevent and detect fraud, waste and mismanagement of resources.

Training

The Training Section in the Secretariat co-ordinates and supports staff training activities throughout the OSCE, including the induction of new mission members and staff. The section also supports participating states in their pre-mission training efforts.

Coordinator of economic and environmental activities

The coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities is entrusted with strengthening the OSCE's ability to address economic, social, and environmental issues with security implications for the OSCE region.

This unit is largely responsible for implementing the provisions that have followed from Basket II of the original Helsinki Final Act. It sponsors an annual Economic Forum in Prague, a high level meeting that each year brings together more than 450 representatives of participating states, the business community, academia and civil society. It serves as a platform for dialogue between civil society, the business sector and governments, and

addresses current issues and formulates recommendations for enhancing regional economic development.

Action against terrorism unit

The Action Against Terrorism Unit began operations in May 2002, and is currently staffed by nine professionals plus support staff and headed by Karl Wycoff from the U.S. Its purpose is to assist participating states in combating terrorism within their own countries and regions, especially by helping them implement international protocols adopted by the UN and other institutions to respond to the threat of terrorism. Specifically, it has focused on aiding participating states to pass domestic legislation to implement resolutions of the UN Security Council and to cooperate in preventing terrorist acts.

OSCE efforts have also been directed at improving capacity to control money laundering, strengthening border controls, combating counterfeiting of travel documents, and training national police in responding to the terrorist threat in ways that also protect fundamental human rights. In operational terms, it has placed special emphasis on measures to control the export and potential use of man-portable air defense systems against civilian aircraft, controlling flows of small arms that might fall into the hands of terrorist organizations, and improving security at seaports, especially regarding containers in which illicit materials can readily be shipped internationally.

Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit

This unit assists the Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in seeking to bring an end to the increasingly widespread activity of trafficking human beings.

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Overview

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) works to: ●●●●●●

- promote democratic elections
- monitor, assist in and sometimes supervise elections
- support the development of democratic institutions
- monitor human rights
- strengthen civil society and the rule of law
- contribute to early warning and conflict prevention
- report on Roma and Sinti issues



Location

ODIHR is located in Warsaw, Poland.



ODIHR Director Strohal introduced a Handbook for Monitoring Women's Participation in Elections at a meeting on electoral standards, Vienna, 15 July 2004. OSCE/Ayhan Evrensel

East & West monitoring

ODIHR's efforts in election monitoring have tended to focus on the former communist states in Eurasia and the Balkans, and this has led to some criticism that there is an implicit assumption that the only problems with democratic processes occur in the former communist states.

In part to respond to this criticism, ODIHR has monitored elections in the West as well, such as the French Presidential elections in 2002; the U.S. Congressional elections in 2002; elections in the UK involving devolution of authority to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, in 2003; and the 2004 U.S. presidential elections. Although ODIHR reported occasional problems in several of those elections, its reports generally concluded that the elections were held in these Western countries in the context of a long history of democratic practice. This finding, however, has led to criticism from Russia and several other countries that ODIHR is utilizing “subjective” criteria in its election monitoring, rather than focusing on concrete, material evaluations.

Anti-discrimination and Roma/Sinti

ODIHR has been given a major role by the Permanent Council in ••••

implementing the “Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area”

assisting participating states in developing anti-discrimination legislation and means to implement that legislation; assisting ombudsman offices, commissions for combating discrimination, and police forces

serving as the principal Contact Point for Roma and Sinti issues within the OSCE region; and

collecting data on discrimination and hate crimes and, on the basis of an analysis of those data, making recommendations about policies to alleviate discrimination against Roma and Sinti peoples.

The Strategic Police Matters Unit within the Secretariat cooperates with ODIHR to develop programs to compile and teach best practices with regard to police work within Roma and Sinti communities, especially to develop codes to avoid racial profiling and to improve interethnic relations.

ODIHR also works with the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities office to develop programs to provide targeted assistance to address Roma and Sinti social and economic needs, including improved access to health services, educational opportunities, and participation in the public and political life of the state.

Finally, ODIHR will develop specific programs to assist Roma and Sinti in times of crisis, especially in cooperation with UNHCR to assist refugees and internally displaced persons who are forced to leave their homes.

High Commissioner on National Minorities

Overview

The High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) functions as an instrument of preventive diplomacy. The HCNM aims to promote the early resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace, stability, or relations between OSCE participating states.

The role of the High Commissioner is not necessarily to act as an advocate on behalf of persons belonging to minority groups; rather his mandate is to promote dialogue between persons belonging to minority groups and governments or other institutions and organizations representing the national majority. The HCNM, acting as an impartial third party, negotiates at the highest political level.

The HCNM may decide when and where to travel to respond to any incident that falls under his mandate, i.e., that might produce greater violence or an escalation of attention if not dealt with urgently and quietly at an appropriate level. This flexibility makes the office of the HCNM a unique role pioneered by the OSCE and is often considered one of the most innovative steps it has taken to prevent violent conflict.



Location

The HCNM is located in The Hague, the Netherlands.

Limitations

The High Commissioner is subject to the following limitations.

Issues must involve: •••••

- persons belonging to national minorities
- the potential to affect inter-state relations or regional security
- countries where there is a potential for conflict emanating from minority issues

Issues must not involve:

- groups practicing terrorism
- locations where ethnic conflict has already produced violence

Actions

The High Commissioner may respond to incidents that fall within his mandate by traveling at his own initiative to the scene of the event and meeting immediately with the parties involved.

Based on his observations he may: •••••

- offer immediate advice to the parties
- engage in third party mediation
- prepare recommendations for the parties
- organize seminars or round tables at which parties may discuss their grievances, or such legal and political issues as the incorporation of rights for persons belonging to minorities within democratic societies
- make recommendations to the OSCE PC about creating, extending or enlarging missions and field activities

Field missions

In many cases OSCE missions and the office of the High Commissioner have collaborated closely in their effort to resolve underlying tensions involving the rights of persons belonging to minorities. A substantial number of missions have come into existence in part as a consequence of recommendations by the High Commissioner.



Rolf Ekeus of Sweden, High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Representative on Freedom of the Media

Overview

The task of the Representative on Freedom of the Media is to assist governments in the furthering of free, independent, and pluralistic media.



Location

The Office of the Representative is located in Vienna, Austria.

Authority

The Representative is authorized to observe media development in all participating states and advocate and promote full compliance with relevant OSCE principles and commitments.

Actions

The office has frequently conducted seminars to inform journalists, government officials, and nongovernmental organizations about international standards for protecting a free media.

The office has also been a watchdog, reporting on systematic violations of media freedom in participating states; and identifying and publicizing attacks on journalists, including “disappearances” and killing in an apparent effort to silence outspoken journalists.



Miklos Haraszti, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, at a news conference in Vienna, 22 April 2004. OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev.

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Overview

The OSCE parliamentary assembly gathers about 320 parliamentarians from the participating states, with the aim of promoting parliamentary involvement in the activities of the OSCE, and facilitating inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation. The PA is especially active in recruiting parliamentarians to serve as election monitors. It may also pass resolutions about any matters within the purview of the OSCE that are not binding, but that also do not require consensus to be adopted.



Location

The Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is based in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Secretary General since the inception of the office in 1992 has been R. Spencer Oliver of the U.S. It also has a rotating presidency, currently held by parliamentarian Göran Lennmarker of Sweden.



OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Mircea Geoana, Foreign Minister of Romania, addressing the 10th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Paris, July 6, 2001

Guantanamo Bay

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meeting in Rotterdam in July 2003 adopted a resolution criticizing the U.S. for its failure to fulfill OSCE and other international obligations by holding prisoners indefinitely without right to counsel or trial at its naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Court of Conciliation and Arbitration

Overview

The intention of the Court is to settle disputes through conciliation and, where appropriate, arbitration. The Court is a "legal" institution (that is based on a treaty that has not been signed by all participants in the OSCE, including the U.S.), which makes it different from other OSCE bodies. Currently 33 participating states have ratified the court's documents and are thus subject to its jurisdiction.



Members

Members of the Court are eminent personalities with wide experience in international affairs and international law. Parties to disputes may select arbitrators and conciliators from a register. The President of the Court since 1995 has been Robert Badinter, a distinguished French jurist.

Cases

The Court was created to hear cases brought before it by the common consent of two or more states that are parties to the Court's founding agreements.

Location

The Court is located in Geneva, Switzerland. To date, the services of the Court have not been used.

High Level Planning Group

Overview

The High-Level Planning Group (HLPG) was established at the Budapest Summit in 1994, in order to prepare for the possible deployment of an OSCE peacekeeping force in the event of a settlement of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh (a region of Azerbaijan heavily populated by ethnic Armenians) brokered by the OSCE's Minsk Group (see Module 2 for more details).

It replaced an earlier Initial Operation Planning Group (IOPG), which was established in May 1993 for the same purposes. At the time of its establishment, the CSCE hoped that there would be a rapid settlement of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, but also recognized that the settlement would necessarily include military guarantees to protect all parties from a renewal of violence. Thus the CSCE contemplated the establishment of its first and only peacekeeping force, a role otherwise performed mostly by the UN or NATO.

Since the settlement of this conflict has remained illusive, since 1993 the HLPG has functioned solely for the purposes of planning a hypothetical peacekeeping operation, with no concrete plans for the deployment of such a force ever having been adopted.

Tasks

The tasks of High Level Planning Group include: ••

making recommendations to the Chairman-in-Office on developing a plan for the possible establishment, force structure requirements and operation of a multinational OSCE peacekeeping force;

making recommendations on operational provisions for such a peacekeeping force, including the size and characteristics of the force, command and control, logistics, allocation of units and resources, rules of engagement and arrangements with contributing States.

Staffing

As of 2007, the HLPG is headed by Colonel Santiago Rodriguez Santafé of Spain, and also includes eight military staff, seconded by OSCE participating states, and one non-military staff from the OSCE Secretariat.

Other Relevant Multilateral Organizations

Introduction

Overview

There are several international and regional organizations working in the field of European security, many established during the Cold War to deal with the security and political realities and threats that existed at that time. Some overlap, at least in part, with the OSCE in membership and functions.

Division of labor with other organizations

NATO continues to be the preeminent defense organization in the Transatlantic area. NATO's intervention in Bosnia in 1995 and Kosovo in 1999 brought the wars in those areas to an end and enabled the OSCE and other organizations to play roles in reconstruction and conflict prevention. Ideally, each institution should assume specialized functions within an overall division of labor, so that all major functions required to maintain security in this region are being performed by one or another institution with a minimum of unnecessary overlap.

Therefore, it is important to understand what functions can best be performed by the OSCE and its missions, what can be accomplished only or more efficiently by others, and how the OSCE and other institutions may coordinate their work to achieve common objectives.

History of organizations

The end of the Cold War did not find the states of the Transatlantic region with a common vision on the best instruments for dealing with the new conflicts in the former Soviet Union and the Balkans. There were differences over whether and how the UN, NATO, the EU, CSCE or other organizations should respond to developments.

OSCE is unique

The OSCE has several points of “comparative advantage” relative to other organizations, largely because it is the only pan-European institution dealing with comprehensive security. This provides it with certain advantages as part of a European security "architecture."

No other institution has the: ••••

- universal participation of all of the states in the region
- linkages between human dimension and political-military foundations of security
- same kind of mandate to work in conflict management at the regional level

capacity to engage in these activities on a scope comparable to that of the OSCE

Other organizations

Other organizations in the European area that are most relevant in the security field are: •

••••

the United Nations

NATO

the European Union

the Council of Europe

the Commonwealth of Independent States

United Nations

Overview

The United Nations (UN) was founded in 1945 at the end of World War II as a universal international organization, open to membership for all states within the international system. Unlike the OSCE, the UN is a legally binding organization-- all states that sign its Charter are obligated to fulfill the commitments contained therein.



Members

The UN includes 55 of the 56 participating states in the OSCE except the Holy See (Vatican City)

Chapter VI

Chapter VI of the UN Charter deals with the "peaceful settlement of disputes," and calls upon all states to pursue peaceful means such as negotiation and conciliation to resolve any dispute that might endanger international peace and security.

Although the Charter gives primacy to the Security Council to deal with such disputes, it also acknowledges that under certain conditions conflicts may be submitted to the International Court of Justice or to the General Assembly for resolution.

Chapter VII

Chapter VII of the UN Charter on "action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression" deals with overt situations where violent conflict appears imminent or has already broken out. Responsibility for Chapter VII activities is lodged primarily with the Security Council, which may apply sanctions against violators or authorize the use of force by some or all members of the United Nations to enforce security collectively within the international system.

Chapter VIII

Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter explicitly recognizes the role of regional arrangements for dealing with peace and security. In Article 52 it specifically requires member states to "make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies before referring them to the Security Council." However, enforcement actions undertaken under regional arrangements generally require authorization from the Security Council.

Since 1995, the OSCE has been recognized as a regional security institution under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, and thereby it has also accepted an obligation to keep the Security Council informed of activities that it undertakes or even contemplates undertaking for the maintenance of international peace and security.

UN role in security

The UN role in the security field has also grown considerably beyond the level of activity contemplated in 1945 when the Charter was adopted. Perhaps most important has been the development of UN "peacekeeping" operations, falling between pacific settlement of disputes and actual engagement of military forces in a full-scale collective security mission.

Originally these operations consisted largely of the interposition of UN "blue berets" between combatants after a ceasefire had been agreed upon, intended largely to prevent a resumption of direct hostilities. Since the end of the Cold War, however, UN operations have also entered into "peace enforcement" in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, as well as providing military assistance for complex humanitarian emergencies.



A UNPREDEP Peacekeeper monitoring the Yugoslav Border (1998). (UN/DPI Photo)

Preventive diplomacy

Preventive diplomacy has been identified as a principal area of activity for the UN Secretary General and his staff of special emissaries, thereby giving the UN a special role in the same domain where the OSCE is also active.

This conflict prevention function has generally been performed by senior UN officials based in New York or Geneva rather than by missions permanently stationed in the field, as has generally been the case for OSCE activity on conflict prevention. Of course, a number of UN agencies such as the UN High Commission for Refugees and the UN Development Program maintain offices in many countries throughout the world and often play an indirect, and at times even a direct role in conflict prevention.

Other UN agencies

In addition to the Security Council, there are a number of other UN agencies and programs that work in the peace and security field, and some of these frequently overlap with the areas normally covered by the OSCE. •••••

- UN Secretary General's "Good Offices"
- International Court of Justice
- UN Commission on Human Rights
- Election Assistance Unit
- UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

OSCE overlap with UN

Many of the functions that have been created in the OSCE, especially since 1990, overlap and even duplicate functions of the United Nations. This naturally raises the question about when states will turn to the UN versus those occasions when they should utilize the OSCE to deal with particular threats to international peace and security.

One key determinant in states' consideration is their influence in the organization under consideration and the likelihood of using it to achieve their goals. There is also the view that efforts to deal with threats to the peace should originate at the regional level before coming to the UN, while efforts to take enforcement action should generally be launched with specific authorization by the UN Security Council.

In general the OSCE participating states have sought to obtain UN authorization for its major activities. At the same time, states have found that the OSCE can play a useful role by relieving an overburdened UN from having to assume too many responsibilities for peace maintenance in Europe, allowing it to concentrate more on other global regions.

Conclusion

Some mutual division of labor between global and regional organizations is inevitable. However, it is essential that these efforts be undertaken cooperatively so that neither, each strapped for cash and for available personnel, wastes valuable resources in a duplication of effort or, even worse, by competing to garner the limelight in any particular region experiencing tensions and conflict.

NATO

Overview

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded in 1949, in the early years of the Cold War, as a collective defense institution, as defined in Article 51 of the UN Charter. The essence of the NATO Treaty is found in Article 5, which declares that an attack against any member of the alliance shall be considered an attack against them all, and that they may then decide to take collective action, including the use of force, in their defense against the act of aggression.



Cold War strategy

NATO's strategy and tactics were geared to the assumption that a European conflict would involve a threat or actual military attack by the Soviet Bloc upon one or more members of the alliance.

Post Cold War changes

With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, NATO remained after 1991 the only significant multilateral military organization in Europe. Since then, NATO has reconfigured itself to meet the demands of the new security situation in Europe.

NATO's major transformation has been visible in the following areas: •••••

- Partnership-for-peace (PfP)

- Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)

- Peacekeeping

- Peace enforcement

- Expansion to 26 members, including former Warsaw Pact members

Current strengths

NATO has used PfP and the EAPC to assist transformations in the former communist states, and has included contingents from them alongside NATO forces in peacekeeping and enforcement roles in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Overlap with OSCE

NATO's 26 member States are all also participating states in the OSCE. Three other OSCE participating states are candidates for membership in NATO and participants in NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP) to prepare for full membership, which is tentatively planned to take place at the 2008 NATO Summit. These countries are Albania, Croatia, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Republic of Macedonia). Following the next enlargement round, over half of the OSCE participating States will also be NATO members. Moreover, 49 countries, all OSCE participating states, participate in NATO's North Atlantic Partnership Council, embracing a wide range of cooperative activities between NATO's full members and other states in the region.

NATO's major functions do not overlap with the OSCE's. NATO is a defensive organization with significant military capability. The OSCE has no military forces of its own except through those that can be made available by participating states, or military organizations in which they participate, such as NATO and to a far lesser degree, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

When matters go beyond preventive diplomacy, peaceful resolution of disputes, and cooperative security, it will be necessary to call for military forces with capability such as those provided by NATO. The fact, however, that NATO is both a military organization and one that excludes certain key states (such as Russia) from its central decision-making institutions means that many political functions in enhancing security and cooperation cannot be performed by NATO, at least not as easily as they can be performed by the OSCE. At the same time, Russia does have a special consultative relationship with NATO, defined in the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security. In 2002, in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S., this relationship was further institutionalized through creation of the NATO-Russia Council.

Bosnia

Missions like the recent one in Bosnia represent a model for institutional cooperation that may be emulated elsewhere. NATO took the lead in bringing the war to an end in 1995. The OSCE then assumed a lead role in virtually all political and arms control measures, while NATO held responsibility for peace enforcement.

NATO's military forces are best used for military missions, rather than to run elections, promote human rights, assure freedom of the media, assist in the repatriation of refugees, or engage in many of the other activities eventually undertaken by the OSCE Mission in Bosnia. The OSCE presence, therefore, served a useful division of labor and contributes

to improvement in the political conditions that necessitated IFOR (Intervention Force)/SFOR (Stabilization Force) deployment in the first place. At the same time, given the tensions and insecurity that existed in Bosnia after the war, it would have been impossible for unarmed OSCE mission officers to fulfill their mandate without the security provided by IFOR/SFOR troops.

The joint missions in Bosnia illustrate effectively the principle that peace and security can be built best when institutions each specialize in doing what they can do most effectively, dividing the labor among themselves, and cooperating to assure that all essential tasks are fulfilled with a minimum of overlap and duplication of effort.

NATO turned its peacekeeping mission in Bosnia over to the European Union's EUFOR in December 2004, leading to the withdrawal of virtually all U.S. troops stationed in Bosnia since 1995. NATO continues to maintain a presence in Bosnia through a Military Liaison and Advisory Mission (NATO HQ Sarajevo) to assist with defense reform.

European Union

Overview

Another contender for a role in European security is the European Union (EU). The major attraction of the EU is based on its significant success at promoting economic integration and prosperity in Europe.

The significance of the EU for the OSCE increased substantially in 2004 when ten new states, mostly from Central Europe, acceded to membership in the EU. This included the three Baltic states that were formerly republics within the Soviet Union (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), four Central European states that formerly belonged to the Warsaw Pact (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), and one state of the former Yugoslavia (Slovenia). At the beginning of 2007, two additional states entered the EU as full members, namely Bulgaria and Romania (formerly also members of the Warsaw Pact).

With 27 members, the EU includes almost half of the participating states of the OSCE. Three more states that also participate in the OSCE are listed as candidates for EU membership, namely Croatia, Montenegro and Turkey. Since the EU tends to vote together as a bloc in the OSCE, it has become a formidable factor in OSCE decision-making.



Common foreign and security policy

The European Union agreed on a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) with the 1991 Maastricht Treaty.

In the early 1990's, the CFSP tended to consist more of common rhetoric and procedural actions than substance. Its limitations were perhaps best shown by its ineffective response to the crises in the former Yugoslavia after 1991, especially in Bosnia. Cooperation tended to be limited mostly to the adoption of joint positions on international issues. Within the OSCE, the EU generally made joint statements and adopted common positions on issues addressed by the Permanent Council as well as Ministerial and Summit Conferences.

However, in 1999 the EU began to give substantive content to the CFSP and to the creation of what is referred to as the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI). In 2001 the Western European Union, created in 1948 by the Brussels Treaty, was formally incorporated into the EU as the primary defense policy arm of the Union.

Mr./Ms. CFSP

In 1999, the EU created a "High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy" to present itself more visibly and effectively on the world stage. Javier Solana, a former NATO Secretary General and Spanish Foreign Minister, currently holds the position.

Drawbacks

The EU has several major drawbacks that hinder its ability to take a leading role in providing security for Europe in the post-Cold War period. • • •

It remains primarily an economic organization, although its functions are clearly expanding into political and social issues including the realm of security.

Its political-military role outside of its geographic borders has remained limited.

In contrast to the OSCE, neither Russia nor the U.S. are members or are likely to become members in the foreseeable future.

Effective function

The EU is most effective when it focuses on its comparative advantage, namely that the dynamism of its economic integration serves as a magnet to all of the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

It is often essential for the OSCE to seek assistance from the EU, and other related financial institutions such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, when confronting conflict situations that require a substantial influx of development assistance in order to alleviate some of the economic and social conditions that provided the environment for violent conflict to develop in the first place.

The EU has often worked alongside the OSCE on such important activities as election monitoring and post-conflict reconstruction activities, such as those in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia.

Support for OSCE

OSCE missions may also call upon the support of the EU when dealing with candidate countries seeking EU membership, several of which have had OSCE missions stationed on their territory. For example, the Estonian and Latvian efforts to meet the criteria for being placed high in the priority list for EU expansion probably encouraged their governments to cooperate more actively than they might otherwise have with OSCE demands regarding the treatment of their large minority of ethnic Russians.

Monitoring and peacekeeping missions

In Macedonia, EC/EU Monitor Missions operated alongside NATO peacekeepers and OSCE missions on the ground (and alongside the UN force UNPREDEP during 1992-95) with related mandates. The EU police mission Proxima also operated in Macedonia from 2003 to 2005, and was followed by the EU Police Advisory Team (EUPAT). EUPAT was established with a six- month mandate, which was extended.

The EU 7,000 strong EUFOR replaced NATO's SFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina at the end of 2004.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina a somewhat complicated structure was established to implement the non-military provisions of the 1995 Dayton Agreement. •••••

The OSCE Mission, headed since 1995 by a U.S. diplomat, manages many of these functions. The current OSCE Chief of Mission is Douglas Davidson.

A parallel structure was established in the Office of the High Representative, a position consistently held by a EU representative, currently Christain Schwarz-Schilling of Germany, who also holds the title of EU Special Representative in Bosnia.

Due to ambiguities in the Dayton Accords regarding the division of labor between these two institutions, it took time before an effective level of cooperation developed between them, both of which operated alongside NATO's IFOR/SFOR and now EUFOR, which is charged with maintaining military security in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

EUFOR plans to reduce its forces in BiH to 2,500 by June 2007.

A EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) was established to assist Moldova and Ukraine in controlling their border in 2005. It currently has about 100 EU police personnel.

Conclusion

Conflicts between OSCE and EU mission members have occasionally occurred as well in other regions where both institutions have overlapping mandates. One of the most essential tasks, therefore, of mission members may be to work out arrangements on the ground, particularly when the division of responsibility has not been clarified formally.

Council of Europe

Overview

The Council of Europe (CoE) has also become an important actor regarding the human dimension of security. Established in 1949, the Council of Europe drafted the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950, and created the European Court of Human Rights in 1959 at Strasbourg. Its statutes require that its members "must accept the principles of the rule of law and of the enjoyment by all persons within its jurisdiction of human rights and fundamental freedoms."

It has also taken a leading role in promoting European cooperation in culture, education, environment, parliamentary democracy, and social policy. It has thus focused almost entirely on the human dimension as an essential component of security.



Members

The Council of Europe consists of 47 states, including 22 former communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe, all of which are also OSCE participating states. Furthermore, membership in the Council of Europe is effectively though not formally a prerequisite for candidacy for entry into the European Union. Neither the U.S. nor Canada is eligible for membership, largely because the Council has defined its geographic scope more narrowly than the OSCE, although both hold observer status. One other OSCE participating state, Belarus, has also applied for membership.

The Council operates primarily by setting up strict criteria for membership. In contrast, the OSCE requires states to affirm their intent to live up to a series of commitments contained in the cumulative set of OSCE documents and monitors their performance in fulfilling those commitments after they have become participants.

The Council of Europe requires its current members to certify that candidates meet the following criteria before than can be qualified for participation: •••••

- Their institutions and legal system must provide for the basic principles of democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights

- Their government must include a parliament chosen by free and fair elections with universal suffrage

- They must guarantee free expression including a free press

- They must have provisions for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities

- They must demonstrate a track record of observance of international law

Responsibilities

A Summit meeting of Council of Europe leaders in Vienna in 1993 added a new set of responsibilities, calling for its members to combat racism, intolerance, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism, while also promoting the adoption of confidence-building measures to avert ethnic conflict, mostly in the new member states to the East.

Influence

States that fail to fulfill the membership obligations may be suspended. For example, Russia's membership was suspended in 1995 due to the behavior of its armed forces in Chechnya. Other countries that continue to maintain a death penalty as part of their penal code have also been denied membership, since the Council of Europe considers the death penalty to represent a violation of fundamental human rights. However, as a general matter of practice, once accepted into membership there are no sanctions for violations of these CoE principles other than suspension.

Furthermore, unlike the OSCE, once a state is admitted into membership, there are no permanent missions stationed on its territory. Therefore, CoE monitoring of its members is quite minimal.

Techniques

The Council of Europe fulfills its role in conflict prevention and the promotion of democracy using techniques similar to those of the OSCE, but always by sending in experts from outside the country. As requested, staff from a relevant Council section in Strasbourg may be sent in to set up seminars, to offer expert advice, and to run training courses. It is these staff members who interact most frequently with OSCE mission members who are already in country.

Overlap with OSCE

By defining its primary mission as encouraging good governance as a long-term mechanism for conflict prevention, the Council of Europe has carved out for itself a role that overlaps with that of the OSCE in many important areas. Close coordination between OSCE and CoE missions is essential in those countries where the two operate side-by-side.

The OSCE differs from the CoE in having: ••••

- a broader mandate in conflict prevention and resolution
- a broader base defined by geography, not political system
- continuous, long-term presence through its missions
- decisions that are politically rather than legally binding

Central Asia

The OSCE also has a special role to play in the five countries of Central Asia that fall outside the geographical territory covered by CoE, while also falling short of the entry criteria in any case.

Conclusion

The potential for redundancy is perhaps greatest between the OSCE and the Council of Europe. This functional overlap requires close cooperation so that it does not become counterproductive in the mutual efforts to build democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe

Overview

The Stability Pact is an effort at international conflict prevention in Southeastern Europe that evolved out of the 1998-99 Kosovo crisis. In June 1999, at the EU's initiative, more than forty countries and organizations undertook to strengthen the countries of Southeastern Europe in order to achieve stability in the region.



Focus

The Stability Pact is a declaration of commitment and framework for international coordination. It is not a new international organization nor does it have any independent financial resources and implementing structures. Modeled on the CSCE process, the Pact relies on a Special Coordinator and a 30-member team. Its focus is on democratization and human rights, economic reconstruction and security issues.



The Stability Pact is currently headed by Special Coordinator Erhard Busek, a former Austrian Chancellor © Manca Juvan/Stability Pact

Broad Membership

The Stability Pact includes the EU; the countries of the region and their neighbors; the U.S., Canada, Japan, Russia, Norway and Switzerland; organizations such as the UN, OSCE, COE UNHCR, NATO and OECD; international financial institutions; and regional initiatives.

CIS

Overview

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was formed by Russia, Belarus and Ukraine in 1991 following dissolution of the Soviet Union. Its current membership includes 12 of the original 15 independent states that emerged following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, other than the three Baltic states that have joined NATO and the EU. The CIS was conceived as a successor to the USSR in coordinating foreign and economic policies of its member states. Its headquarters are located in Minsk, the capital city of Belarus, and the chair of its Executive Committee is Vladimir Rushaylo.

The receptivity of members to integration or even coordination with Russia has varied widely. The CIS formed a collective security treaty in Tashkent, signed in 1992. However, many former Soviet states -- including Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova -- have refused to join. The CIS also includes non-security groups, such as the Eurasian Economic Community.



Operations

Some CIS forces have supplemented Russian troops along the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Elsewhere in the region CIS peacekeeping operations have been composed almost exclusively of Russian forces.

Conclusion

Division of labor

The thick web of security organizations that has evolved since 1990 has not resulted in reliance on a single, dominant institution in Europe. What has emerged is a political process in which states decide on a division of labor among institutions, in which each

uses its comparative advantage, while relying on others to provide the necessary ingredients to build a more solid structure for security within the broad European/Transatlantic area.

Important functions

The interconnected areas of preventive diplomacy, conflict mediation, and post-conflict reconciliation constitute the important functions that the OSCE can handle effectively. All require efforts to redress grievances that have given rise to violence, as well as to alleviate the structural conditions that make it more likely that conflicts of interest will assume violent forms.

Vital role

Peace and security conditions cannot be fulfilled by the OSCE acting alone, in isolation from other international institutions and non-governmental organizations working on the scene. But the OSCE has a key role to play in these areas, and has the capability to do so.

Module 2. OSCE Mission Structures and Functions

Introduction

OSCE missions

Background

Since the first OSCE mission entered the field in 1992, there have been a total of 28 field missions and activities deployed, mostly throughout the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union. At the beginning of 2007, there were 19 missions and other field activities still deployed, with about 3,000 international and national staff.

The 1990s

The function and focus of OSCE field operations has changed over time. In the early 1990's the primary emphasis was on managing the many violent conflicts that broke out on former Soviet and Yugoslav space, including the initial prevention of conflict, mediation of cease-fires for ongoing conflicts, and post-conflict security-building, combined with continuing efforts to prevent these conflicts from re-igniting.

The early violence of the 1990's was largely stimulated by the breakup of the two multinational states that covered much of this region, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. As the units within these structures – the 15 union republics of the USSR and the 6 states that composed federal Yugoslavia – broke apart, formerly autonomous regions within these new states resisted integration with the central governments, typically because a majority of the people living in these regions did not share markers of identity with the nationality of the new state in which they found themselves. Thus a series of secessionist struggles broke out: in Chechnya within the Russian Federation, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, Transdniestria in Moldova, Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan, and Kosovo within Serbia. Violence also erupted in other new states with mixed ethnicities: particularly in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Other states tottered on the brink of collapse, torn by internal conflict, including Tajikistan and Albania. Many other situations also approached violence, but successful preventive action averted large-scale violence: such as in Crimea in Ukraine, Tatarstan in the Russian Federation, and Macedonia in the former Yugoslavia. These potential or actual conflicts were the primary focus of most OSCE field missions between 1992 and 1999.

Since 2000

Overt violence in these areas has declined substantially. The primary problems facing OSCE missions have more to do with implementing the human dimension of OSCE principles than with direct security measures. Of course, the OSCE comprehensive approach to security emphasizes the essential role of human dimension activities in the long-term prevention of violent conflict. The OSCE has operated on the assumption that good governance is not only a value in itself, but is a major contributing factor to peace between states and within states. Authoritarian rule, corrupt regimes, denial of freedom of the press, the rights of persons belonging to minorities, or basic human rights can all contribute to the outbreak of violence.

Current focus on good governance

The vast majority of OSCE missions now focus on good governance, including the promotion of democratic practices, free elections, and the rule of law. Missions must take into consideration that many OSCE participating states are only starting down the road toward democratic governance, as well as the reality that democracy cannot be imposed from outside on countries that have no prior history or experience with democratic practices. Therefore, the OSCE has often taken a gradual approach to socializing political elites and publics to the better practices of good governance.

OSCE missions know that security is a necessary condition for good governance; just as improved government performance enhances both the security of the state and its people. The newest threats to security, however, are not secessionist conflicts or wars between states. Rather, they stem from non-state actors participating in terrorist activities, smuggling drugs and human beings, money laundering, and other criminal activities that operate across state borders. Globalization has brought increases in world economic interaction and greater cultural contact, but it has also facilitated crime, corruption, and environmental degradation on a global scale. Thus another goal of OSCE missions has been to promote globalization in activities such as commerce and tourism, while providing protection against its undesirable “underside.” This does not mean that the threat of mass violence has been eliminated, but does underline that issues like illegal arms sales, especially the spread of small arms and light weapons – which kill more people every year than weapons of mass destruction – have become a high priority for OSCE field activities alongside traditional measures of confidence-building and conflict prevention.

Mission functions

The major functions of OSCE missions and field activities today include the following: •

••••••••••

- democratization and good governance
- election monitoring
- rule of law
- human rights
- rights of persons belonging to minorities
- freedom of the media
- economic and environmental affairs
- conflict resolution
- confidence building
- border monitoring
- police training

Mission sizes vary

Missions differ substantially in size and staffing. The smallest missions consist of only three or four international staff, and each individual must assume responsibility for multiple aspects of the mission's mandate. The largest mission operates under UN authority in Kosovo and has a staff of 310 international personnel and 990 national (local) personnel engaged in the promotion of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, election support and monitoring, and police training. The mission is currently structured to provide municipal monitoring of Kosovo's 33 municipalities. The OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina is slightly smaller and also performs a full range of functions, including overseeing disarmament in the aftermath of the Dayton Accords.

Mission coordination

Overall mission activity is supervised and coordinated by the Conflict Prevention Center, which is part of the OSCE Secretariat located in Vienna. Missions receive their mandates from the OSCE Permanent Council (PC) and report to the PC about their activities. The Conflict Prevention Center maintains an Operations Centre open 24 hours every day of the year to maintain continuous contact with field missions and to respond to any emergency situation that might arise.

Mission staff

A Head of Mission (HoM) serves as the chief officer of each mission, a position normally held by a senior diplomat seconded by a participating state. HoMs are appointed by the Chairperson-in-Office. Larger missions like Kosovo have a Deputy HoM as well as a Chief of Staff. Missions also have political, administrative and public affairs officers, as well as a staff of interpreters/translators. The specialized functional staff varies in size according to the mandate of each particular mission.



Werner Wnendt, OSCE Head of Mission in Kosovo. OSCE

Mission categories

In general, mission mandates may be grouped into three broad categories: •••

Conflict Prevention

Conflict Resolution (and avoidance of conflict re-ignition)

Post-conflict security-building

Each of these categories is described in detail later in this module, along with a brief description of the current missions (as well as some closed missions) that have sought to fulfill each of these functions. Detailed background to the situations in the regions where these missions are stationed may be found in the regional modules (Modules 4-7). Focus is exclusively on the role that the OSCE, often in conjunction with other multilateral institutions, played or plays in these regions.

Conflict Prevention

Principles

Overview

From its very beginning, the CSCE linked the human dimension of security with the effort to avert the outbreak of violent conflict. Both the original Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and the Copenhagen Document of 1990 set forth the major principles of the OSCE role in human dimension activities. Being fundamentally a security organization, however, the OSCE was not only interested in the human dimension for its intrinsic value, but also for its role in addressing many of the underlying issues that might give rise to violent conflicts.

Violence

In virtually all societies, conflicts of interest arise. However, in most cases, these conflicts do not lead directly to overt violence, especially mass violence. Violence may occur when individuals and groups believe that they are being unfairly deprived of their fundamental rights and share in the well being provided by society. Violence also arises when there are weak or no institutions, and no ways to resolve conflicts of interest, in a fair and open process, and by peaceful means. Groups may resort to violence when they fear that their identity -- perhaps national, ethnic, territorial, linguistic, or religious -- is threatened. Violence can also be the means chosen by individuals and groups that seek to attain their goals outside the rule of law. Criminality, corruption, lawlessness, and systematic discrimination threaten individuals and entire societies with violence, not primarily from warfare but through threats to the personal security of citizens.

Philosophy

The underlying philosophy behind the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and the Copenhagen Document of 1990 is that the best antidote to violence is: •••

- the creation of democratic societies governed by the rule of law
- respect for the rights of persons belonging to minority groups and for individual members of that society, and
- broad-based economic development and a healthy environment

The "democratic peace hypothesis" has been widely accepted by OSCE participating states, namely the belief that democratic states seldom or never engage in violent conflict with other democratic states. Consistent with this belief has been the assertion by leading OSCE states that the long-term foundations for peace may be best constructed by

encouraging the widespread development of democratic regimes throughout the OSCE region.

This view sees building democracy as a long-term process that cannot be imposed by outsiders but must be built from within. Therefore, the OSCE emphasizes not only free and fair elections, but the strengthening of institutions of civil society such as active and vibrant NGOs, and the incorporation of democratic values into all forms of training and education, including schools, universities, police academies, etc.

In addition to its focus on the long-term prevention of conflicts, missions have the added advantage of being on the ground and close to developments in the country where they are stationed, so that they may also enhance their capacity to engage in early warning and early action when conflicts appear to be escalating rapidly and may threaten to break out into violence.

Human dimension

Virtually all OSCE missions have a human dimension component. The mandates for all missions and field activities assign an important role to the promotion of democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Techniques

Overview

OSCE missions carry out their human dimension mandate in a wide variety of ways. This section describes the various techniques that the OSCE uses to address long-term conflict prevention.

Local contact

A key technique in long-term conflict prevention is the "open door" that OSCE field offices provide: ••••

- a place for individuals and groups to inform the OSCE staff of their grievances
- a place for regular contact with local NGOs

OSCE contact with individuals, human rights activists, and NGOs helps to:

- build up civil society, a necessary component of democratic society
- spread democratic values and information on human rights to governments and individuals

Government contact

OSCE missions also work with local governments in an effort to get them to improve their protection of human rights and human dimension activities. When problems are uncovered, the OSCE mission will alert the relevant governmental unit about the problem and seek immediate relief at that level.

While performing their human dimension role, mission members must be able to distinguish between: ••

- intentional violations of human rights perpetrated by governmental authorities
- frequent neglect or abuse of human rights due to bureaucratic ineptitude or indifference

While both may represent some degree of a human rights violation, the methods to solve the problems may be different, i.e., political dialogue for the former case or training for the latter case.

Reporting

The human dimension monitoring function is performed by continuous reporting through various OSCE mechanisms: ••••••••

- Missions
- Secretariat
- Permanent Council
- Chairperson-in-Office
- High Commissioner on National Minorities
- Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- Parliamentary Assembly
- Human Dimension Implementation meetings

This continuous reporting is important because it provides a clear signal to governments that their observance (or lack thereof) of the Helsinki principles is widely known in both governmental and public circles outside their own country.

Mission reporting is also important because it constitutes the lion's share of material used by the Secretariat, CiO, Parliamentary Assembly, and Permanent Council and provides an on-the-ground evaluation of the situation.

Information, education, and training

Another major activity of the OSCE mission is to provide information, education, and training to government officials and NGOs. This is often achieved in the form of seminars about: ••••••••

- human rights
- rule of law
- democratic process
- freedom of the media
- other aspects of international norms and codes about humanitarian issues
- police practices in a democratic society
- civilian control of the military

In most societies where OSCE missions are stationed, there is little or no historical experience with the democratic process among government officials or individual citizens. Therefore, there is an immense need in these societies for basic education about the fundamental principles of modern democratic processes and values. OSCE missions can be very effective in introducing such information at the local level.



Judy Thompson, interim Director of Elections at the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, holds a seminar on international standards for free and fair elections, January 2001. Lubomir Kotek/OSCE

Economic and environmental health

Many missions have economic and/or environmental officers assigned to their professional staff. Although these areas have not been the principal focus of the OSCE in the past, the OSCE has integrated them into current human dimension activities, and they are increasingly becoming a part of mission mandates. The OSCE can thus provide information about: ••••

- economic reform
- the legislative basis for regulation of economic and environmental activity
- threats to the physical environment
- good governance and anti-corruption activities

Poverty, desperation, and environmental degradation are often associated with violence, so efforts to deal with these social ills may reduce the propensity for violence in many of the societies where the OSCE works.

Due to its limited resources in these fields, however, the OSCE cannot tackle these problems alone. Its role has generally been to bring these problems to the attention of other organizations and governments in the hope that they will identify resources that can help alleviate them.

Elections

Whenever OSCE monitors an election, the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) creates an Election Observation Mission. An Election Observation Mission head is appointed by ODIHR and sent with a core team to prepare for the arrival of long term and short-term observers.

Election Observation Missions are entirely separate from OSCE field missions (if present in the country), but they cooperate as part of the OSCE family. Election Observation Missions report to ODIHR in Warsaw, whereas field missions report to the Conflict Prevention Center in the Vienna secretariat.



Voting in Kosovo's assembly election November 17, 2001. OSCE

Election observers

There are two types of election observers: Long term and short term.

Long-term observers monitor the: ••••••••

- run-up to elections

- use of media during campaigns

- access of candidates to the electorate

Short-term observers are generally sent in for the period immediately prior to and during an election to monitor:

- access to polling places

- integrity of ballots

- secrecy of the voting process

- tabulation process

- the methodology in which outcomes are determined and certified

Special cases

Kosovo and Bosnia are special cases where the ODIHR role was modified. These OSCE field missions had full time staff that supervised and conducted elections; they now play the more limited role of election monitoring.

Rule-of-law

ODIHR's section on the rule of law has also assisted states in developing legal principles to strengthen democratic processes; i.e., the rule of law ought to prevail over the will of individuals.

HCNM

Whenever a dispute breaks out involving persons belonging to national minorities, the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) may travel to an OSCE participating state to consult with the mission members as well as with the parties to the dispute. Typically, the HCNM works with the mission to develop both short-term solutions to the dispute and alleviate the underlying conditions that produced the dispute. Generally, the HCNM avoid media attention and tries to operate quietly in order to resolve problems early on rather than after they have expanded into full-blown crises.



Rolf Ekeus, Swedish diplomat, took up the post of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities on July 2, 2001. OSCE.

Delicate position

The OSCE mission must always be mindful of its position, situated between a host government, non-governmental sectors and civil society, and the governments of participating states represented in the Permanent Council. On the one hand, host governments often become irritated with the intrusion of OSCE missions into what they consider to be the internal affairs of their own country. On the other hand, often, human rights and other activist groups and NGOs perceive that the OSCE is not being sufficiently forceful in representing their grievances and pressing their demands. In the final analysis, OSCE officials and personnel, who must support OSCE norms to the fullest extent possible while respecting the sovereign rights of the host government, must carefully balance all of these demands.

Role of OSCE mission

The role of the OSCE mission is not to become an advocate either for participating states or for organizations engaged in advocacy on behalf of human and minority rights issues. Rather its role is to serve as an ombudsman, as a go-between, assisting these different groups to reconcile their differences peacefully. In performing this function, it must constantly remind governments of their responsibilities undertaken when they signed the various OSCE human dimension documents and, as appropriate, carrying out their own laws to protect human rights. At the same time, it must remind government critics of the necessity of pursuing their grievances through domestic legal channels, and seeking legislative changes when they appear to be necessary.

Early warning

When these long-term preventive measures are not sufficient, however, and events on the ground appear to be heating up, the OSCE mission may also serve as a source of early warning and even as a “first responder” when violent events appear to be imminent. The first requisite for effective preventive diplomacy is “early warning” to detect situations that might lead to violent conflict. Violent incidents involving governments or their opponents, or conflict between different domestic factions, could provide indications of future, more widespread violence.

There is often a very narrow window of opportunity during which a third party may intervene to prevent violence. The signals of a developing confrontation may be so unclear that the seriousness of the situation may not be recognized. Premature intervention may create a “self-fulfilling prophecy” by spurring some parties on the ground to escalate violence to bring about outside involvement. Waiting too long may allow the threshold of violence to be crossed. The timing of preventive diplomacy is critical, but often hard to gauge accurately.

Analysis

Identifying potential trouble spots is a first step, but effective analysis of early warning indicators is necessary to separate the real dangers from false alarms. States and multilateral organizations that “cry wolf” about violence that might, but does not actually occur, lose their effectiveness and ability to focus attention in a timely way. They also alienate parties if they try to intervene in situations that do not require a drastic response. And they can exhaust both international willpower and limited resources by trying to intervene in too many conflicts.

Mobilizing for action

Once early warning of violence has been provided, timely action is required to bring the parties into negotiation or for outside parties to intervene. Political will is necessary to craft an effective response to warnings of violence, but it is not always present. Once a commitment to act is made, however, there is still the need to agree on an appropriate intervention.

OSCE responses to impending violence can take the form of verbal protests, sanctions, creation of or a revised mandate for a mission of long duration, mediation to assist in finding a peaceful solution, deployment of a monitoring team, or activation of any other means at the disposal of the organization. But the primary function that the OSCE can perform better than most other organizations, due to its sustained presence on the ground in many societies living in conditions of unstable peace, is to see the early signs of potential violence and to recommend action before it is too late. As with all institutions, however, whether effective action is taken in a timely fashion or not remains in the hands of the officials who lead and manage the OSCE, together with the participating states in the primary institutions based in Vienna.

Tools

The Chairperson-in-Office may decide to call the OSCE into action or intervene directly (or through special representatives), often serving as a mediator between conflicting parties;

The High Commissioner on National Minorities may travel to areas of potential conflict involving minority issues, may offer advice to local government officials and to leaders of the minority communities, and also issue warnings to the Permanent Council and to the governments of the participating states; or

The Permanent Committee may authorize special mission activities, impose sanctions or call for the creation of a monitoring or even a peacekeeping force.

Conflict Prevention Missions: Case Studies

Overview

Overview

The vast majority of the 19 OSCE missions and their subordinate offices operating today focus primarily on the broad conflict prevention function, emphasizing human dimension activities.

Central Asia: OSCE Centres

Emerged from collapse of Soviet Union

The five Central Asian states emerging from the collapse of the Soviet Union have encountered serious difficulties in democratization. Strong national leaders, many with close connections to the Soviet past, remained in charge.

The OSCE established offices, initially in 1995 an OSCE liaison office in Tashkent covering the entire region, and subsequently in 2000 “centres” were established in the national capitals of all five of these countries to encourage movement in their domestic politics towards greater openness and eventually democratization. Special seminars were organized for local elites and civil society groups in which outside specialists in various human dimension issues are brought into the country to discuss the obstacles that must be overcome to construct a democratic state.

In the case of Tajikistan, a mission had been established in 1993 in response to the ongoing civil war within the country. This mission played a significant role in support of a Commission of National Reconciliation, created after talks among Tajik factions in Moscow in 1997, which brought an end to major violence that had torn the country apart since independence. In Tajikistan, unlike many other post-Soviet states, this conflict had not centered on ethno-national differences, but rather on a broad popular movement (including Islamist elements) and the entrenched, secular government and party officials held over from Soviet times. In late 2002, after five years of supporting the work of the Commission of National Reconciliation in Tajikistan and with the return of relative peace and stability to the country, the OSCE mission was reorganized as a centre along similar lines to the OSCE offices in the other four Central Asian states.

Central Asian push for economic dimension

Recently, the Central Asian states have pushed for more economic dimension activities. This reflects a desire to "balance" OSCE activities in the region and to do something to bolster their weak economies. Unfortunately, corruption and lack of good governance remain the primary obstacles to economic and business development. At the same time, several Central Asian countries --especially Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan -- are well endowed with natural resources, especially petroleum and gas, that promise to bring substantial wealth in the near future; the other three countries of the region, however, are not so well endowed.

In the wake of September 11, 2001, the Central Asian states renewed their calls (first made in 1999) for assistance in countering the terrorism threat (and related criminal activity) emanating from Afghanistan. The OSCE responded with tailor-made programs in the economic dimension and counter-terrorism.

The human dimension situation grew so serious in Turkmenistan in late 2002 that the OSCE invoked the "Moscow Mechanism" for the first time, when ten states requested information about serious and pervasive threats to human rights and appointed an OSCE Rapporteur, Emmanuel Decaux of France, to investigate. However, he was denied access to the country by its government and was forced to prepare his report with information available outside Turkmenistan.

Recent Issues in Central Asia

In 2003 Chairperson-in-Office de Hoop Scheffer emphasized OSCE attention to democratization in Central Asia by visits to four of the five countries of this region, and he emphasized not only regional security cooperation, but also good governance, the environment, media freedom, cooperation with NGOs, and strengthening human rights protections. He also appointed former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari as his special representative to Central Asia. Ahtisaari made several trips to the region as well and discussed with government leaders, political figures, and representatives of civil society and nongovernmental organizations ways to strengthen democratic institutions, the rule of law, and the observance of human rights. He also focused on the fight against terrorism and trafficking in drugs and other contraband into and through the region.

ODIHR became significantly involved in the 2005 parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan, which produced a disputed result similar to those in Georgia and Ukraine. Violence broke out in several parts of the country when President Akayev relinquished his post and fled the country. The CiO and Secretary General traveled to Bishkek to mediate the government crisis, along with senior officials from several major OSCE states. A new human rights center was opened in the Osh region, containing a significant population of ethnic Uzbeks, and the situation was eventually stabilized. Presidential elections were held in July 2005 with ODIHR monitors present, and they reported considerable progress in meeting OSCE standards. However, this crisis in the Central Asian state with the

greatest potential to democratize simply underscored the fragility of democratization throughout the entire region.

Controversy followed Kazakhstan's candidacy to serve as OSCE chair-in-office in 2009, which has received the support of the overwhelming majority of participating states with a few noteworthy exceptions (such as the U.S.). Given that ODIHR did not find that Kazakhstan's recent parliamentary and presidential elections met OSCE and other international standards, the question has arisen about whether it is appropriate to have a state serve as chair-in-office when it falls short of meeting so many commitments undertaken within the framework of OSCE principles and norms. This debate will be settled one way or another at the November 2007 OSCE Ministerial.

The Caucasus: OSCE Offices in Baku and Yerevan

Overview

The OSCE offices in Baku (capital of Azerbaijan) and Yerevan (capital of Armenia) are similar in structure and purpose to those in Central Asia. Their mission mandates focus almost exclusively on the promotion of the human dimension within both countries, although the conflict between them over the status of the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh (discussed below) implies that there is also an indirect mandate to avert violent conflict between these two neighbors and historic rivals.

Both offices opened early in 2000 and are staffed by six international personnel. Ambassador Maurizio Pavesi of Italy heads the office in Baku, and the Yerevan office is headed by Ambassador Vladimir Pryakhin of the Russian Federation. Their mandates include promoting the implementation of OSCE commitments, facilitating the sponsorship of events organized by the OSCE with educational institutions and NGOs, training of police and prison officials, encouraging increased freedom and responsibility on the part of the mass media, and dealing with gender and youth issues. Finally, both offices focus on border security and issues of illegal trafficking across borders of human beings, drugs, currency, and other contraband.

Republic of Yugoslavia

In 2001 a new mission was set up in the Republic of Yugoslavia, replacing the one terminated in 1993, to focus on democratization and human rights in the aftermath of the 2000 election that brought a democratically elected regime into power to replace the Milosevic government. This new mission's mandate stressed peaceful development through democratization and good governance. When Serbia and Montenegro separated in 2006, Montenegro became a participating state within the OSCE and separate missions were established in both, now independent countries.

Serbia

The mission in Serbia has as its primary mandate the promotion of democratization. It advises on legislation designed to institutionalize democratic practices, monitors the performance of the government in carrying out its functions, provides training for police and judicial officials, provides advice in the field of media freedom and responsibility, and works with the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees to support refugees from neighboring countries and internally displaced persons. It also coordinates much of the work on the ground of other international institutions that do not have such a field presence, as well as the work of international NGOs. It runs a multi-ethnic police training facility in southern Serbia. Headed by Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad of Norway, the mission has an international staff of 51 and 123 national staff.

OSCE Mission to Montenegro

Overview

The newly established OSCE mission in Montenegro replaced the OSCE mission to Serbia-Montenegro's previous field office in the capital city of Podgorica in June 2006. It also operates a police-training center in Damilovgrad. The mission's mandate is to assist Montenegro to fulfill all of its OSCE commitments in political-military, economic and environmental, and human aspects of security. The Head of Mission is Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu of Romania. The mission has 15 international staff and 30 national staff.

The OSCE Monitor Mission to Skopje

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The second OSCE mission, officially known as the "OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje," was established in September 1992. Its primary mandate was to monitor developments on the border with Serbia and other neighboring states that might "spill over" into the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

The original CSCE mission of eight persons also worked closely with a European Community Monitor Mission. The small CSCE and EC missions were complemented by the stationing of United Nations peacekeeping forces in the FYROM. Their major function was to deter Serbian intervention in Macedonia, or any potential spillover of conflict in the Kosovo region of Serbia across its common border with the FYROM.

Attention subsequently shifted to the internal scene where tensions appeared between the Albanian minority and the ethnic Macedonian majority. Here special efforts were made to respond to conflicts erupting in several cities in the northwest, especially Tetovo and Gostivar, where ethnic Albanians agitated in favor of the creation there of an Albanian-language university. After several incidents between Albanian crowds and Macedonian police, both the mission and the High Commissioner on National Minorities intervened frequently to prevent further escalation of these incidents. Due to these efforts, large-scale violence was averted, even following the 1999 war in Kosovo when many ethnic Albanians refugees poured over the borders to escape the fighting in Kosovo. However, tensions continued to rise between the increasingly militant and armed Albanian (and Muslim) community and increasingly nationalist Macedonian (and predominantly Christian) majority that held most major posts in the government.

OSCE response to violence in 2001

Albanian nationalist aspirations were fueled by a ready availability of weapons and fighters from neighboring Kosovo. Violence flared up in the spring of 2001 between Albanians near the border areas and the Macedonian armed forces. After a ceasefire and peace agreement (the Ohrid Framework Agreement) were negotiated in August 2001,

several units of NATO troops deployed in Macedonia to disarm the Albanian nationalists, following which the NATO forces withdrew.

Subsequently, the OSCE enlarged its mission in Macedonia to about 210 unarmed monitors, protected by some 1,000 NATO troops. While the OSCE mission's mandate remained basically unchanged, the necessity for intensive conflict prevention at the local level had been clearly shown by the outbreak of violence and the increased radicalization of the two communities involved in the violence. Recent events in Macedonia have presented what had been regarded as one of the more successful preventive diplomacy missions with new challenges.

Currently the mission's priority is to assist with the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and to build confidence between the ethnic Macedonian majority and the ethnic minorities in Macedonia.

Parliamentary elections were held in September 2002, which the ODIHR observers judged overall to be "conducted largely in accordance with OSCE commitments and international standards for democratic elections." As the political transition occurred without major incident, Macedonia appears headed back on the road towards democratic development, although the potential for violence still exists.

The OSCE mission staff currently consists of 92 international and over 200 national staff. It is headed by Ambassador Carlos Pais of Portugal. Its current focus is on assistance in the implementation of the Ohrid Accords, training police officers in a multi-ethnic force, and monitoring detect events that might signal new threats to peace and security.

Eastern Europe: OSCE Office in Minsk

Belarus

Belarus is one of the few post-Soviet countries that is relatively homogenous ethnically, with a population overwhelmingly made up of Slavs, including Belarusians, Russians, and Ukrainians. While there is thus no danger of ethnic conflict in Belarus, a divide did open up between liberal reformers and the supporters of a Soviet-style *ancien regime* mostly made up of former communist elites.

Under the government of President Alexander Lukashenko, who came to power in 1994, there was a substantial reversal of the regional trend towards democratic reform and economic liberalization that Belarus had also embarked on following independence. Belarus seemed to be turning the clock back. Indeed, Lukashenko extended his term of office and forced all political opposition out of the already weakened parliament.

The OSCE mission in Belarus became a point of contact for the political opposition and for the many non-governmental organizations that had been harassed and threatened by the Lukashenko government. It also engaged in organizing seminars on: •••

democratic process

free elections

the rule of law

Election monitoring

The OSCE actively sought to monitor both parliamentary and presidential elections in Belarus, but its efforts to do so have frequently been frustrated by the government of President Lukashenko. Throughout much of 2001-02, OSCE officials, including the Head of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus, were denied visas to enter the country by the government, forcing the Group to close its mission at the end of 2002.

At the start of 2003, a new OSCE Office in Minsk was opened with a changed mandate to assist the government in "institution-building, in further consolidating the rule of law and in developing relations with civil society, in accordance with OSCE principles and commitments." It is also supposed to assist the government in developing economic and environmental activities. It has done extensive work in trying to improve environmental conditions in those regions of Belarus affected by the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in nearby Ukraine, as well as assisting the country in complying with the Kyoto environmental protocol. In the economic area, it has emphasized assistance for small and medium-sized entrepreneurs

The head of the office is Ambassador Åke Peterson of Sweden, who is assisted by an international staff of four. The office devotes considerable attention to supporting the work of independent NGOs, monitoring trials of individuals suspected of arrest for political reasons, and providing an open office to hear individual grievances regarding alleged violations of basic human rights. The office has effectively been the only international opening for the protection and support of the fragile civil society that still survives under difficult conditions in Belarus.

ODIHR monitored parliamentary elections in Belarus in 2004 and stated that they fell significantly short of OSCE and international standards, and more recently noted that the 2006 presidential elections did not meet international election standards for free and fair elections.

OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine

Ukraine

The OSCE established its first mission in Ukraine in 1994, largely to respond to a developing crisis involving the status of the region of Crimea within the Ukrainian state. The Crimean peninsula was originally attached to the Russian Federation until 1954, when Soviet General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev transferred it to Ukraine. At the time, the transfer was largely meaningless in practical terms, but this changed with the independence of Ukraine in 1991. The region has a majority of Russian speakers and served as the headquarters of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, and thus it had strong traditional ties with Moscow. The election of a nationalist Russian as the first president of the Crimea region in 1994 touched off the crisis.

The initial OSCE response came from the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador (and former foreign minister) Max van der Stoep of the Netherlands. He made several trips to the region and organized a series of seminars with leaders of both the Ukrainian government and the Crimean government, along with international experts on regional autonomy and related constitutional issues. These seminars produced a series of recommendations about how to reconcile the constitutions of Ukraine and Crimea to grant the region substantial effective autonomy within the sovereign territory of Ukraine. This work was supported on a continuing basis by the OSCE office, based in Kyiv with a branch office in Simferopol, the capital of Crimea. By 1995 a new Ukrainian constitution was drafted, along with a parallel constitution for an autonomous region of Crimea that satisfied the major demands of both parties. Thus the OSCE played a vital role in preventing what could have been a very destructive conflict from breaking out on post-Soviet territory.

Mission terminated

The successful conclusion of the Crimea crisis enabled the situation in Ukraine to stabilize. Therefore, the OSCE Mission to Ukraine was terminated in June 1999, being replaced by a somewhat scaled-down OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. Currently the OSCE office has an international staff of only three persons, headed by Ambassador James Schumaker of the United States. The primary mandate of this office is to coordinate joint projects, including activities such as a review of human rights legislation, reform of the *propiska* (residency permit) system, support for the Office of the Ombudsman appointed by the parliament, assistance to the Supreme Court and the

Constitutional Court, combating trafficking in human beings, and promoting structural reform of the armed forces.

The office also provides a base for ODIHR and other OSCE institutions to operate short-term observer missions. Of special significance was the ODIHR monitoring of the 2004 presidential elections. Largely as a result of the preliminary ODIHR report on the second round of the presidential elections, the Ukrainian Constitutional Court invalidated those elections and called for a new round of elections. In what has become known as the “orange revolution,” this led to the ultimate victory of Viktor Yushchenko and the ensuing arrival in power of a more democratic government, facilitated in part by the international election observers coordinated by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator and by ODIHR.

Preventing Renewed Violence and Conflict Resolution

Techniques

Overview

One of the most difficult problems facing the OSCE for the past ten years has been the so-called “frozen conflicts.” Many of the conflicts that broke out on the territory of the former Soviet Union occurred during the years of transition from 1989-1992, before the CSCE had an effective conflict prevention mechanism in place. Therefore, it was impossible for the CSCE to exercise a conflict prevention role in these early conflicts. However, in most of these cases, cease-fires were brokered after the initial round of fighting, in one case – the conflict in the Russian republic of Chechnya – with the assistance of the OSCE. However, in four post-Soviet republics, secessionist regions have achieved varying degrees of *de facto* independence, although that independence has not been recognized by most other states in the international community. This situation pertains in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, two regions of Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia), the Transnistria region of Moldova, and in a sense in the Russian region of Chechnya. All of these regions, therefore, exist at present as international “black holes,” where no recognized government is completely in control; this permits vast amounts of illegal activity to take place in and across these regions, with outsiders unable to exert any influence.

OSCE missions have been set up in all four cases, although the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya was terminated in 2003. In all four cases, however, a primary responsibility of the OSCE missions has been to try to negotiate a resolution to these conflicts to create some kind of political settlement regarding the status of these regions within the sovereign territory of the country in which they are located. So far, none of these efforts have proven completely successful, and all of these conflicts remain to some degree “frozen” in place. However, a second aspect of the OSCE mandate has generally been more successful, again with the exception of the case of Chechnya – namely preventing the re-ignition of the violence that tore these countries apart in the early 1990s. This section thus focuses on these secessionist conflicts, on the efforts to resolve them, and on the process of averting renewed conflict while efforts to reach a negotiated solution are underway.

Seminars and shuttle diplomacy

The High Commissioner on National Minorities, for example, has organized seminars, often with the non-governmental Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations. He has also undertaken "shuttle diplomacy," traveling between disputing parties, listening to their grievances and suggestions, and then following up with specific recommendations directed to the parties involved.

Good offices and mediation

Another approach, utilized especially by the missions of long duration, has been to provide "good offices" and other forms of third party intervention to assist parties to a dispute in reaching agreement. The OSCE mission head often serves as a go-between or mediates during formal meetings between disputing parties.

For example, OSCE mission heads have served as mediators both between the government of Moldova and the breakaway region of Transdniestria and between the government of Georgia and the separatist regime in South Ossetia.

Similarly, the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya engaged in "shuttle diplomacy" and mediated a ceasefire in 1996 that brought the first war there to an end. After successfully organizing elections in Chechnya and assisting a new regional government as it took office, the OSCE was unable to take the steps necessary to prevent a second attack on Chechnya in 1999 by Russian soldiers and security forces, resulting in a renewed war in Chechnya. That fighting has now largely come to an end, though guerrilla attacks continue on Russian forces in the region and occasional terrorist attacks have been carried out by Chechen radicals elsewhere in Russia, including a dramatic seizure of a theater in Moscow and a school in Beisan in southern Russia.

Formal groups of states

A third approach at mediation has involved the establishment of formal groups of states operating under OSCE auspices to try to assist disputing parties to resolve their differences peacefully. These may take the form of: • • •

- contact groups

- "friends" of a particular country

- a formal group such as the "Minsk Group" which was established to prepare for an eventual peace conference to resolve the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh

Overseeing implementation of agreements

Where agreements have been reached, the OSCE may play a role in overseeing their implementation. For example, the OSCE set up special missions to assist in the implementation of bilateral agreements between Russia and Latvia concerning the

withdrawal of Russian troops stationed there during the Soviet period, decommissioning of a Russian radar station at Skrunda, and monitoring agreements between Russia and both Latvia and Estonia on the operation of a joint commission on military pensioners who decided to remain in these two countries after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Similarly, the OSCE mission in Moldova is charged with monitoring the 1994 treaty between Russia and Moldova on the withdrawal of the Russian 14th army and associated equipment and supplies stored on the left bank of the Dniester River. It has also overseen the removal of Russian troops from Georgia, in addition to monitoring the border in the high Caucasus between Georgia and the Russian republic of Chechnya.

Peacekeeping

In principle, but thus far not in reality, the OSCE may undertake a peacekeeping operation, perhaps with assistance from NATO, other military alliances, or individual participating states, to oversee political agreements between disputing parties.

The OSCE anticipated establishing a peacekeeping operation as part of a political settlement between the parties to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh at the 1992 Helsinki Summit. At the 1994 Budapest Summit it created a High Level Planning Group to prepare for such an operation. However, a political settlement has remained elusive there. More recently, the OSCE has envisaged a possible peacekeeping role for itself as part of a political settlement in Moldova.

The OSCE Mission to Moldova

Brief history

The history of the east bank of the Dniester River (also known in Romanian as the Nistru) makes it somewhat distinct from the rest of Moldova, since it had been part of the Russian Empire as long ago as the 18th century, while the rest of Moldova had been part of the Russian province of Bessarabia and later part of Romania. Furthermore, about sixty percent of the population of this region is made up of Russian and Ukrainian speaking peoples, and a good deal of industry was built there during Soviet times, so that even the ethnic Moldovans living there were generally more "Sovietized" than their compatriots living west of the Dniester River. Finally, the Soviet 14th Army was (and its Russian successor still is) stationed in this region.

Moldovan independence

During the Gorbachev period, Moldovan nationalists began calling for independence from the Soviet Union, and some even called for unification with Romania. The Moldovan language, which had been written in the Cyrillic alphabet in Soviet times, was renamed Romanian and written in the Roman alphabet. The residents east of the Dniester resisted these moves and responded to Moldovan calls for independence by declaring themselves to be the Transdniester Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic within the Soviet Union, and their leadership continued to proclaim its loyalty to the Soviet Union even after its collapse.

In the spring of 1992 the authorities in Chisinau, Moldova's capital, insisted on enforcing the primacy of Moldovan law throughout the country. Their attempts to implement this decision by force led to fighting between the Moldovan Army and the Transdniestrian Republican Guard, which was supported by elements of the Russian 14th Army.

Ceasefire

A ceasefire was reached in Moscow on July 6-7, 1992, after approximately 800 people had lost their lives, and a peacekeeping force of Russian, Moldovan, and Transdniestrian forces was established to police the ceasefire. In the aftermath of the Moscow ceasefire agreement, the CSCE mission in Moldova was created to monitor the performance of the peacekeeping forces, report on the human rights and security situation, and to assist the parties to achieve a permanent political settlement that would recognize some form of autonomy for the Transdniester region within the Moldovan state.

CSCE proposals

At the outset, the CSCE mission set out to create transparency and assure that the "peacekeeping" forces would prevent a resumption of fighting along the lengthy border, which mostly coincided with the Dniester River. Once the situation was stabilized, the OSCE entered as the primary third party mediator, later joined by Russia and Ukraine, and recently also joined by the United States and the European Union. Following the precepts of the Helsinki Decalogue, they sought to preserve the territorial integrity of Moldova, while allowing for substantial "self determination" for residents east of the Dniester River. This would provide a common economic and political space, while allowing all decisions that did not require central authority to be taken at the regional or local levels.

Three categories of jurisdiction

The CSCE missions also proposed three categories of jurisdictions: • • •

- those residing exclusively in the central authority
- those shared between the center and the region
- those falling exclusively within the regional jurisdiction

Finally, it noted that Transdniestria should be given a right to "external self-determination" if Moldova should ever decide to merge with Romania.

HCNM

The OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities became active in Moldova and Transdniestria in December 1994, concentrating on problems faced by ethnic minorities in both parts of the country. He focused on three Romanian-language schools in Transdniestria that claimed that Transdniester authorities had harassed their efforts to teach in the Latin alphabet.

The harassment of schools in Transdniestria offering instruction in the Latin script led to tensions again in 2004 with the beginning of the new school year, and the OSCE mission, supported by the CiO, made renewed efforts to reduce tensions over this issue. HCNM Rolf Ekeus declared in July 2004 that a forced closure of the Moldovan schools in Tiraspol teaching the "state language" in the Latin script "is nothing less than linguistic cleansing."

Tentative agreement

In early 1996 the OSCE achieved an agreement signed by the President of Moldova and leader of Transdniestria in which they agreed to settle their differences peacefully, without future resort to force. Thus, even though a political agreement remained elusive, the likelihood of a return to violence was nonetheless significantly reduced.

OSCE Mediation

Negotiations between Moldova and Transdniestria, mediated jointly by the OSCE, Russia, and Ukraine, have proceeded in cycles of apparent progress followed by stalemate or breakdown.

The OSCE has worked on several fronts to try to keep the negotiation process moving forward: •••

The OSCE focused on functional issues where common interests exist between the parties, including facilitation of trans-border economic activity, rebuilding of bridges across the Dniester destroyed during the fighting in 1992, and coordination of energy distribution across the line of division.

The OSCE brought the two sides together in seminars with outside experts in conflict resolution and power-sharing arrangements in multinational states to try to identify acceptable political arrangements.

The OSCE mission has overseen the withdrawal of armaments and troops of the Russian Army based in Transdniestria. The OSCE hopes that full withdrawal of these forces and military depots left over from the Cold War era will facilitate progress in negotiations. By the end of 2001, all military equipment covered by the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe - tanks, artillery, armored personnel carriers, combat aircraft and helicopters - had been either destroyed or removed from the region. Further withdrawals have continued, but the deadline to have all Russian armaments and troops withdrawn has not been met. At the OSCE Sofia Ministerial in December 2004, most participating states that are parties to the CFE Treaty announced that they would not ratify the adapted CFE Treaty until this withdrawal was complete. No progress has been made on this issue since that time.

Equipment removal



OSCE Mission to Moldova verifying the removal of Russian military equipment from Transdniestria
OSCE

Kiev Document

Meanwhile, OSCE-mediated negotiations in 2002 produced the "Kiev document" outlining proposed solutions to key issues in dispute. Under OSCE auspices a joint commission was formed to draft a new constitution for Moldova. The OSCE also offered to create a multinational force to monitor the border between Ukraine and Moldova, including the Transdnistria region, to ensure compliance with whatever agreement is reached. After this burst of progress in 2003, however, momentum towards a political settlement stalled.

In February 2004 the three mediators – the OSCE, Russia, and Ukraine – issued a set of recommendations for a political settlement in which Moldova would become a single federal state based on the democratic rule of law. Transdnistria would be a “subject of the Federal State,” with its own constitution and legislative capacity consistent with the Constitution of the Federal State. Specific competencies would fall exclusively under the jurisdiction of the Federal State (Moldova as a whole) and other competencies would fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal subject (i.e., Transdnistria). Confidence-building measures would take place during a transition period as the Federal State takes shape. During this transition the three mediating parties, would offer to provide military guarantees to the fair implementation of the terms of the agreement. None of these proposals have yet been accepted by either of the parties.

In October 2005, the United States and the European Union entered the negotiating process as observers.

Summary

The situation in Moldova illustrates many of the difficulties and frustrations faced by the OSCE in its role as a third party. These frustrations have resulted from the continuing failure of the parties to reach an agreement. Lack of progress in the withdrawal of Russian military equipment from Transdnistria remains an important obstacle. There are also doubts that the de facto Transdnistrian authorities are interested in any changes that might reduce their power. Nonetheless, patience by the OSCE in its third party role is necessary until the conflict is ripe for resolution. When such a moment occurs, the presence of the OSCE, and its extensive experience as a third party, may be able to help the parties reach a political settlement, and the OSCE will be available as a potential guarantor of any agreement that is reached.

OSCE Mission to Georgia

Georgia

After the Soviet Union broke up, Georgia was wracked by a civil war over control of the central government and by two wars of secession, one in Abkhazia and another in South Ossetia. The United Nations took primary responsibility for dealing with the former conflict, while the OSCE mission became the principal intermediary in the latter.

During the Soviet period, South Ossetia was an autonomous region (oblast) within Georgia and had close ties with its neighbor across the Caucasus in North Ossetia, itself an autonomous republic within the Russian Federation. Resisting South Ossetia's moves to leave an increasingly nationalistic Georgia, the latter's first post-Soviet president sent troops to the South Ossetian capital of Tskhinvali to establish Georgian authority throughout the region. This met with violent resistance from the Ossetian population. An agreement reached in June 1992 declared a ceasefire and created a peacekeeping force in South Ossetia of Russian, Georgian, and South Ossetian troops.

The OSCE mission entered Georgia after this ceasefire was signed. It was charged with preparing an international conference, in cooperation with the UN, aimed at resolving the conflict and settling the status of South Ossetia within the Georgian state. The mission organized roundtable discussions with all the parties to try to overcome their major differences. It was also charged with overseeing the peacekeeping force to ensure that its mission was carried out in conformity with OSCE principles.

Although this conflict has still not been resolved, progress has been made. Both parties to the conflict generally credit the OSCE with having, at a minimum, prevented a resumption of fighting. More significantly, it has contributed to a slow improvement in confidence between the sides that appears to have increased chances for a political settlement. A new proposal by Georgian President Saakashvili, not accepted by the South Ossetian leadership, seems to have accepted most of the principles urged on the parties by the OSCE.

In May 2005 the Russian Federation agreed to close down its bases and remove troops from Georgia -- which had been a bone of contention between the two states since 1991 although this appeared to have no positive effect on negotiations over the status of the two breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Indeed, several incidents of limited violence in late 2005 required rapid intervention by OSCE officials to calm growing tensions between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali.

Monitoring Georgian border

Another major OSCE role has been monitoring the border between Georgia and the Caucasus regions of the Russian Federation to prevent spillover of the fighting in Chechnya into northern Georgia. Starting in December 1999 along the Georgian border with the Chechen Republic, observation posts were established along the border at the highest ridges of the Caucasus Mountains staffed by unarmed OSCE monitors, reaching

144 in the summer and 111 in the winter months. The mission was expanded in 2002 to include the border between Georgia and the Ingush Republic of the Russian Federation, bordering Chechnya on the west, and in 2003 to include the border with Dagestan to the east of Chechnya. The OSCE observation mission along the Georgian border was terminated at the end of 2004 when the Russian Federation refused to support its extension. During 2005, the OSCE mission supported the training of Georgian officers to take on this monitoring role.

Ajaria

After tensions rose between President Saakashvili and Ajarian strongman Abashidze, OSCE CiO Passy met with the two and established a dialogue. This effort, however, failed to resolve their differences. The power struggle between Saakashvili and Abashidze soon led to Abashidze's departure from Ajaria. Subsequently, the OSCE assisted in easing tensions over the autonomous status of Ajaria, a region composed largely of nominally Muslim Georgians.

The OSCE Minsk Group

The Minsk Conference

Another OSCE mission whose primary function is to promote conflict resolution is the "Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference."

Nagorno-Karabakh, formerly an autonomous region within the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan (SSR), was originally populated by a mix of ethnic Armenians and Azeris. The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh began even before the breakup of the Soviet Union. In 1988 the Regional Council of Nagorno-Karabakh petitioned the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR and that of the Armenian SSR to transfer sovereignty over the region from the former to the latter. This was followed by sporadic violence between Armenians and Azeris both within Nagorno-Karabakh and along their common border.

When the Soviet Union collapsed and both republics became independent, the fighting became more intense as the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh drove virtually all ethnic Azeris out of the territory and began to fight in earnest to separate from Azerbaijan and to unite with the newly independent Armenian state.

When both Armenia and Azerbaijan joined the CSCE in January 1992, the organization immediately addressed the conflict. In March 1992 the CSCE created a group of eleven member states to prepare a peace conference in Minsk. (Since 1996 this group has been led by a "troika" of "co-chairmen," special envoys representing France, Russia, and the United States.) During the Helsinki Summit in July 1992, the CSCE considered undertaking the organization's first peacekeeping operation to enforce whatever agreement might emerge, perhaps calling on NATO, the WEU, and the CIS for support. A High-Level Planning Group (HLPG) was created for this purpose, and staffed with a dozen military officers from participating states.

Primary Nagorno-Karabakh issues

The situation on the Nagorno-Karabakh battlefield prevented serious negotiations from getting under way. By May 1994, when a ceasefire was agreed upon, the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh had not only gained complete control of the territory to which they lay claim but also of nearly 20% of Azerbaijani territory outside the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The military outcome encouraged ethnic Armenian leaders in both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh to dig in their heels. The Azeris have also been reluctant to negotiate from a position of military weakness.

The primary issues involve: ••••

- the formal, legal status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and its relationship to Azerbaijan and Armenia

- security guarantees demanded by the regime in Karabakh, as a condition for withdrawal from the occupied territories in Azerbaijan outside of the Karabakh region, especially control over the Lachin corridor which connects Karabakh with Armenia through what would once again become Azeri territory

provisions for the safe return of displaced persons, especially of Azeris displaced from their homes in the regions occupied by the Karabakh army
the extent and role of OSCE peacekeeping forces

At the 1996 Lisbon Summit, the OSCE declared its support for the principle of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, while calling for "self rule" for Nagorno-Karabakh within its original frontiers and security guarantees to protect Armenians against retribution and to assure safe passage along the Lachin corridor between Karabakh and Armenia.

In 1998 the Minsk Group introduced a new proposal calling for an Azerbaijan-Karabakh "common state." This proposal called for two coequal parties to form a common state, similar in structure to the Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina, which is divided into the Republika Srpska (primarily Serb) and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (primarily Croat and Bosniac). Furthermore, the Minsk Group advocated a return to a "package" approach for negotiations. The parties to the conflict have not so far accepted any of the proposals of the Minsk Group.

The conflict dealt with by the Minsk group currently remains frozen in place. An effort to move the conflict resolution process forward emerged in recent years, but did not, however, lead to any concrete results.

The OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya

OSCE role in Chechnya unique

Although the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya was closed in 2003, it is worth reviewing because it was the only case in which the OSCE played an active role to broker a ceasefire during an ongoing war. This was during the 1994-1996 war between Chechnya and the Russian Federation. It is certainly possible that OSCE missions might play a similar role in future violent conflicts.

The OSCE has been generally reluctant to intervene in ongoing conflicts that have taken place within the formal jurisdiction of a single participating state. Typically those states contend that secessionist conflicts are internal matters. In addition, the OSCE lacks the capability for coercion that other parties, such as the United States and Russia, have brought to bear to impose ceasefires and political settlements in places such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Moldova, and Abkhazia. It is precisely for these reasons that the OSCE has tended to intervene more often either before conflicts turn violent or after the violence has been brought to a halt.

Brief history of Chechnya

Chechnya is a predominantly Sunni Muslim region in the northern Caucasus, with a population consisting largely of mountain-dwellers that had resisted Russian occupation for centuries. Its population in 1989 consisted of about 65% ethnic Chechens and 25% Russians, the latter mostly living in the capital of Grozny and on the northern plains.

Following the Moscow coup attempt in August 1991, General Dzhokhar Dudayev seized power in Chechnya. Shortly thereafter, he declared Chechnya's independence from Russia and refused to sign Yeltsin's Federation treaty. After a long period of political skirmishing, on December 11, 1994, approximately 40,000 Russian troops entered Chechnya, resulting in a full-scale war, among the bloodiest of the post-Cold War conflicts in Eurasia.

Violations of CSCE Norms

The conduct of Russian Federation troops violated many CSCE norms and principles. The massive military activity in the region, which was undertaken without the presence of international observers, represented a formal violation of the many confidence-building agreements, most recently incorporated in the Vienna Document of 1994. Furthermore, the war began only days after the signing of the Code of Conduct on Political-Military Affairs at the CSCE Summit in Budapest, which established extensive norms for military engagement and especially respect for the rights of non-combatants.

OSCE Assistance Group

Once a consensus on intervention was achieved, an OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya was created by the Permanent Council on April 11, 1995. Its mandate was to "promote the peaceful resolution of the crisis and the stabilization of the situation in the Chechen Republic in conformity with the principle of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation and in accordance with OSCE principles."

In addition, the OSCE Assistance Group was assigned to monitor compliance with human dimension norms, including human rights, the unfettered return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes, and allowing for the operation of international humanitarian organizations in Chechnya. Finally, they were mandated to "promote dialogue and negotiations between the parties in order to achieve a ceasefire and eliminate sources of tensions," the first such mandate of this kind.

Cease-fire negotiations

At the outset, the OSCE Assistance Group found that there was little basis for productive negotiations between the parties. However, negotiations were opened at the OSCE offices in Grozny. An initial ceasefire agreement brokered by the OSCE Assistance Group in 1995 soon broke down. The Russian troops resumed military action against Chechen villages in the mountains, and Dudayev and his associates took advantage of the ceasefire to rearm their supporters in Grozny.

OSCE active mediation role

In January 1996, the HoM of the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya, Ambassador Tim Guldemann of Switzerland, took a much more activist role as a mediator between the parties to the conflict. Several ceasefire agreements were reached and soon broken. Finally, on August 31, the OSCE Assistance Group Head arranged for a formal meeting between the two parties. The resulting agreement called for a cease-fire and withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya, but it deferred a final settlement of Chechnya's future for five years (until the end of 2001) during which time the two sides would negotiate their relationship.

The OSCE monitored elections that brought a new government to power in Chechnya in 1997. However, the new government was unable to establish law and order throughout the country, and Chechnya increasingly fell under the influence of radical Islamists. Their actions led to Russia's breaking of the ceasefire agreement in 1999, when it sent troops into Chechnya again. The fighting and lawlessness in Chechnya had grown so serious that, out of concern for the safety of its personnel, the OSCE Assistance Group moved its office to Moscow.

The OSCE returned to Chechnya in 2001, when it set up a new office in the northern city of Znamenskaye. From this location, however, active monitoring of the ongoing violence could only be limited, and it focused on refugees and other human dimension activities.

Subsequently, the OSCE and Russian government failed to reach agreement on extending the mandate of the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya, following Russian proposals involving serious changes to the mandate of the mission. The mission was closed on March 21, 2003.

Post-conflict security-building

Overview

Promoting long-term peace and security

The OSCE has frequently promoted long-term peace and security in regions where conflicts have occurred and where a political settlement has been achieved, but where war and violence have left a legacy of hatred and bitterness, so that peace remains conditional. In a number of these cases, the OSCE mission entered after a long period of widespread violence, death, and destruction, and thus had to deal with the residue of distrust and outright hatred that still exists among different ethno-national groups within the population. Thus the most important of these missions have been the ones in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia that were created in the aftermath of the 1995 Dayton Accords bringing an end to those violent conflicts, as well as the OSCE mission under the UN Mission in Kosovo, which also entered following the war in the spring of 1999 in which Kosovo came under exclusive international administration. Finally, the OSCE has played a role in post-conflict security building in Albania, following a collapse of the government in 1997 that led to a brief period of anarchy in what essentially became a failed state.

Principles and tools

Creating a more stable peace may involve OSCE efforts to promote reconciliation that goes beyond a formal settlement of the dispute and moves the parties towards a deeper resolution of their differences.

It may also involve assistance with building democracy to establish non-violent means to resolve differences that were previously settled by violence or the threat of force.

Strengthening security can involve assisting in verifying disarmament agreements; or arranging and providing training for institutions required to maintain law and order, such as civilian police.

Support for the development of civil society, holding elections that meet international standards, assistance in the creation of new constitutions and power-sharing arrangements, promotion of the rule of law, and other human dimension activities constitute other possible OSCE interventions.

OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina

Bosnia-Herzegovina

The most dramatic illustration of the OSCE's role in post-conflict security building is in the implementation of the 1995 Dayton Accords. Bosnia-Herzegovina experienced the longest and most deadly of the wars in the former Yugoslavia. A country that was composed of about 44% Bosniacs (primarily Muslims), 31% Serbs (mostly Orthodox Christians), 17% Croats (mostly Catholic) plus another 8% from other ethnic groups, soon fell into violent conflict among the three primary ethno-national groups. As a result of the Dayton Accords, the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina was partitioned into two entities, the Republika Srpska (with 49% of the territory mostly inhabited by Serbs), and the Federation (composed of 51% of the territory and mostly inhabited by Bosniacs and Croats).

Under the terms of the Dayton Framework Agreement for Peace, signed at Paris in December 1995, the OSCE was given primary responsibility for implementing many of the provisions of the peace accords. The mission established its headquarters in Sarajevo, as well as four regional headquarters in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Mostar, and Banja Luka, plus 20 smaller field offices around the country. The mission has been headed by a series of senior U.S. diplomats, initially Robert Frowick, then Robert Barry, and currently Douglas Davidson. The mission currently has 101 international and 586 national staff.

The OSCE: ••••

- organized and monitored elections at all levels
- implemented the regional stabilization and arms control measures of the Dayton Accords
- organized negotiations on confidence and security-building measures
- worked with the international community regarding displaced persons (particularly on property rights)

While NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR) and after 2005 the EU's follow-on EUFOR provided a military presence and a secure environment, the OSCE played a lead role in the implementation of the political dimensions of the security-building process established by the Dayton Accords, in collaboration with the High Representative. Since 2006 the Office of the High Representative has been reducing its field presence, leaving field activities primarily to the OSCE, while focusing on activities at the central governmental level in Sarajevo.

OSCE activities

OSCE activities have focused on election supervision and monitoring, beginning at the local level and expanding to entity (Federation and Republika Sprska) and then to elections for the overall Federation, an activity that it turned over to local authorities in

2005. The OSCE has also implemented arms control and disarmament provisions of the Dayton Accords; supervised destruction of land mines and small arms left over from the period of fighting, restructuring of the military under civilian authority, training of civilian police, monitoring human rights, and assisting in the development of an impartial and independent judiciary to assure rule of law. The goal is gradually to return political authority to local officials, but in the early post-conflict years the OSCE Mission and the Office of the High Representative performed many functions of governance jointly.

Major functions

Presently activities of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina include four major functions: ••••

Education: The OSCE is assisting the country in implementing an education reform package that was adopted in 2002. The goal is to bring the educational system of the country up to EU standards in curriculum, teaching methods, funding, and management.

Democratization: The OSCE is assisting in the development of transparent democratic practices at all levels of government. It has provided assistance to strengthen the work of parliamentarians; reform of public administration, stressed transparency and accountability; and strengthened civil society, especially local NGOs, encouraging active participation especially by the young.

Human Rights: The OSCE works closely with domestic human rights associations. It is also assisting refugees to return to their original homes, in the settlement of property disputes; in judicial reform; and by encouraging and supporting the development of a network of ombudsmen that assist in the settlement of disputes between individuals and institutions.

Security Co-operation: The goal is to reduce military forces to the minimum size and capability required for national defense, while preventing them from being used ever again as an instrument to resolve internal conflicts. This includes assisting in the implementation of disarmament and confidence-building measures adopted as part of the Dayton Accords. They have finally provided assistance to the armed forces to enable them to fulfill their obligations under the OSCE's Code of Conduct for Political-Military Affairs adopted at the 1994 Budapest Summit, especially civilian control over the military.

The overall goal of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is to assist the country in recovering from the trauma of the four-year long war and to put in place structures, norms, and institutions that will make future violence unlikely. In the end, the goal is to enable Bosnia-Herzegovina to follow other former Yugoslav states to enter the European Union, as Slovenia has already done and Croatia and Macedonia are preparing to do.

OSCE Mission to Croatia

Croatia

The OSCE Mission in Croatia assists the government with settlement of many issues left over after the end of the 1991-1995 war. Fighting in Croatia had largely centered around enclaves of ethnic Serbs residing within the borders of the former Yugoslav republic of Croatia, especially in Eastern Slavonia (in eastern Croatia near the borders with Hungary and Serbia (Vojvodina) and in the region known as the Krajina (or borderlands) that lie in Croatia to the north and west of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Fearing persecution at the hands of the Croatian majority after independence, Serbs often took to arms, supported by remnants of the Yugoslav National Army, para-military bands, and newly released criminals, all of whom contributed to a bloodbath in these regions. As the fighting came to an end, hundreds of thousands of citizens were displaced from their homes, and many ethnic Serbs fled across the border to Serbia. Restoring order and assuring that the rights of all parties were respected in the aftermath of the violence was a sensitive and difficult task, largely undertaken by the OSCE with the participation of the office of the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) and UN peacekeepers. The OSCE cooperated with the UN Transitional Authority in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium, which was largely responsible for overseeing the political transition in this most war-scarred region of the country. The mission's mandate focuses on implementation of democratic processes and the rule of law.

OSCE assistance

The OSCE has assisted in the: •••••

- return and reintegration of displaced persons, and the restitution of private property

- promotion of human rights and the rights of persons belonging to minorities
- work of the International Tribunal for Yugoslavia in identifying war criminals in Croatia and has encouraged the government to locate and turn them over to the tribunal
- encouraged freedom of the media

- police training consistent with OSCE principles and has encouraged recruitment of ethnic minorities into the police academies; subsequently it has engaged in active monitoring of police

- support of NGOs and the development of civil society in Croatia
- implementation of elections at all levels of government

Report on Croatia's progress

The Mission's 2006 Report on Croatia's Progress in Meeting International Commitments noted a continuous improvement in the democratic atmosphere in Croatia since 1991. It pointed to greater media freedom and debate on mandate-related issues; responsiveness by many national and local government bodies and institutions to reform, including the fight against corruption; the development of transparency in government; increased acceptance of national minority groups; growing acceptance of the role of civil society; and improved relations between the police and the public. The Report also noted, however, that progress in the rights of minorities and human rights more generally was satisfactory in some areas but lagged behind in others. As a result, the Mission urged that institutions and legal frameworks had to be strengthened, and consistent application of existing laws and regulations had to be pressed even when politically difficult.

The OSCE Mission to Croatia has its headquarters in Zagreb, and six regional field offices in Karlovac, Sisak, Vukovar, Gospic, Split, and Knin. Due to the return of relative stability and the significant improvement of the situation in Croatia, the mission size has been gradually reduced in recent years. The current Head of Mission is Ambassador Jorge Fuentes Monzonis-Vilallonga of Spain. The mission had an authorized staff of 286 international personnel and about 500 national staff at its high point in 1999, but has now dropped to 27 internationals plus national staff. This mission is expected to close by the end of 2007.

Previous Kosovo Missions

The very first CSCE mission of long duration was stationed in three regions of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in August 1992, namely Kosovo (with a majority of ethnic Albanian Muslims), Sandjak (with a majority of Bosniac Muslims), and Vojvodina (with a plurality of ethnic Hungarians), all of whom feared for their safety at the hands of the Serb majority that assumed control after Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia broke away from Federal Yugoslavia one by one. This mission thus focused on issues of human rights in these regions. However, the FRY (also known as Serbia-Montenegro at the time) was suspended from participation by the CSCE in 1992, and in retaliation the government in Belgrade refused to renew the memorandum of understanding governing the operation of the mission, so it was withdrawn in June 1993. Therefore, the OSCE had no direct access to Kosovo for the following five years.

Following an escalation of hostilities throughout 1997 and 1998, especially frequent violent conflicts between Serb police and para-military units and an increasingly militant and well-armed Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke (the primary mediator of the 1995 Dayton Accords in Bosnia-Herzegovina) brokered an agreement in October 1998 calling for a cease-fire to be monitored by the OSCE. To fulfill this task, the OSCE created the Kosovo Verification Mission, which was intended to be a force of 2000 unarmed civilian ombudsmen to monitor the ceasefire and assist in the repatriation of many of the refugees from the violence. However, while this force was still being assembled and put into the field, violence continued to escalate in the region, so, after only 1400 of the planned observers had taken up their posts, the entire mission

was withdrawn in March 1999 preceding a NATO air campaign directed against Serb forces in the region. This military campaign lasted through June 1999, and hundreds of thousands of refugees fled their homes, many entering Albania and Macedonia.

Kosovo (since 1999)

Following the NATO military campaign in the spring of 1999 and the withdrawal from Kosovo of Serbian police and military units, a new government authority was established under UN auspices in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo, operating under the auspices of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), takes the lead role on democratization, human rights, rule of law, and elections; it opened operations in Kosovo in July 1999.

Mission headquarters is located in Pristina, and there are a total of eight field offices covering the 30 municipalities into which the region is divided politically. The mission is authorized up to 310 international staff, along with 990 national staff, making it the largest OSCE field mission at present. Ambassador Werner Wnendt of Germany heads the mission, and also holds the title of Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Institution-Building, reflecting the role of the OSCE mission as a component of the overall UN operation in Kosovo. The mission works closely with other UN agencies, especially the UN High Commissioner on Refugees and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Kosovo Stabilization Force (KFOR) provides military security, operating under UN Mandate and consisting of peacekeeping troops largely from NATO countries.

In 2007 determination of the political status of Kosovo will be brought before the United Nations Security Council. The OSCE plans to remain engaged in Kosovo even after this decision is made.

OSCE Presence in Albania

Overview

The OSCE played a major role in resolving the conflict that broke out in Albania in early 1997, and in the rebuilding of a political and social order after the fighting ended. This role was slightly different from the ones it played in the other regions of large-scale violence in the Balkans, since the chaos and violence largely resulted from the collapse of the Albanian state rather than from a civil war. Yet it represents one of the real “success stories” of the OSCE, where rapid action quickly restored political order and prevented larger violence from ensuing.

Origins of the crisis

Albania was one of the most repressive regimes in the communist world, as well as the poorest country in Europe. Prior to the collapse of communism, Albania experimented only once (in 1924) with parliamentary democracy. The communist regime in Albania under President Enver Hoxha was authoritarian internally and isolationist externally from 1944 through 1985, when Hoxha died. He was replaced by a moderate communist, Ramiz Alia, who began a modest reform process. Nonetheless, by 1991-92, anarchy had swept across Albania. Disputes between the Gheg clan in the north and the Tosks in the south largely divided the country along regional lines, destroying the dominant authority of the once powerful central government and the communist ruling elite based in the capital city of Tirana. Sali Berisha was elected president and tried to establish an effective government that would prevent chaos from spreading.

Collapse of Albanian government in 1997

Private banks in Albania had for several years been organizing "pyramid schemes" to attract funds, and these programs attracted major public investment. In January 1997 the entire scheme collapsed. The Albanian public vented its anger at the government. A spontaneous, chaotic, and unorganized uprising against the government followed. The police refused to enforce the law. Albania fell into anarchy, with criminal gangs and local clan leaders gaining control in many parts of the country. The central government collapsed. Arms warehouses were looted and as many as 700,000 or more light weapons, mostly Kalashnikov rifles, were stolen. (Many of these weapons later found their way to ethnic Albanians in both Kosovo and Macedonia.). Some 1800 people were killed by criminals, in local disputes, feuds, and by random gunfire as a consequence of the breakdown of law and order.

International response

The OSCE assumed a major political role in the Albanian crisis. The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Danish Foreign Minister Petersen, appointed former Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky as his Personal Representative in Albania. Vranitzky visited Albania in March and met with President Berisha and the opposition. The OSCE brokered an agreement that created a Government of National Reconciliation, including all major political groups. An amnesty was declared, all weapons were ordered turned over to an international authority, and new elections were scheduled for June 1997 under international supervision.

Despite the agreement, fighting continued and rebels captured Tirana and its airport, causing Berisha to flee. Italy was being swamped by refugees fleeing across the Adriatic Sea, and wanted to intervene militarily, preferably by taking a lead role in a military force composed of troops from "a coalition of the willing." On March 28, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1101 authorizing "Operation Alba," a multinational peacekeeping force headed by Italy, with a mandate to intervene in Albania on the basis of the UN Charter's Chapter VII.

The OSCE presence

Vranitzky's visits convinced him the OSCE should create a long-term mission in Albania, and the Permanent Council established an OSCE Presence in Albania on March 27, 1997. The "Presence" was mandated to assist in democratization, the development of free media and human rights, election preparation and monitoring, and monitoring the collection of weapons.

Vranitzky served as coordinator in his role as Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, and Ambassador Grubmayr of Austria was appointed his resident deputy in Tirana and *de facto* Head of Mission on the ground.

OSCE Presence in Albania



The Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for Albania, former Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Franz Vranitzky, speaks with journalists about the issues that are of concern for the OSCE in Albania, April 1997. (OSCE)

Election monitoring

The major focus of the new OSCE Presence was preparing for the elections to be held in June, as agreed by the Albanians. The OSCE coordinated international monitoring and did its best to see that the election process was open and fair. The OSCE role was extensive. ODIHR deployed 250 teams composed of over 500 short-term observers, including representatives from 32 OSCE participating states. An Operation Alba rapid-reaction force was also on stand-by to respond to any incidents that might threaten the safety of the international observers. After the election, ODIHR concluded that the election had been "acceptable" under the prevailing circumstances in Albania and especially in light of the recent governmental crisis.

The election results produced a significant victory for the opposition Socialists and a defeat for President Berisha. The new government requested that the OSCE coordinate the international efforts to support the reconstruction of Albania, and asked for technical assistance from ODIHR in drafting a new constitution. At the same time, Operation Alba, without whose security presence OSCE monitoring of the elections would have been impossible, withdrew.

Post-election security-building

The government initiated a program to have weapons turned in, although only a small fraction of the looted weapons were actually retrieved. The Western European Union set up police training to try to improve internal security, while NATO worked to assist the

rebuilding of the Albanian armed forces under an Individualized Partnership-for-Peace Program.

The economic crisis was also a major threat to the restoration of political stability, especially in the southern part of the country. The International Monetary Fund and the European Union agreed to provide economic assistance, and the OSCE agreed to coordinate international economic assistance for the reconstruction of the Albanian economy.

OSCE accomplishments and current activities in Albania

The OSCE Presence in Albania has been one of its most successful activities in post conflict security building. The ad hoc nature of the OSCE proved to be an asset, enabling it to respond promptly without significant bureaucratic or political delays. Its pragmatism and flexibility also enabled it to adjust rapidly as circumstances changed.

After the restoration of calm, the OSCE Presence in Albania has assumed a fairly typical long-term conflict prevention function through its emphasis on democratization, good governance, rule of law, human rights, and the rights of persons belonging to minorities. It has continued to assist in the preparation of elections and to monitor elections at all levels. It has assisted the parliament in capacity-building, and has promoted judicial reform and the reform of property laws inherited from the socialist era. Its efforts to enhance good governance have also included active support for the development and freedom of civil society to operate in the country. Finally, it has provided substantial technical advice to border police, especially to aid in the prevention of the large-scale trafficking of human beings and contraband that frequently transit Albania. Although the situation in the country has stabilized, much still needs to be done to promote good governance, and ODIHR has ruled as recently as February 2007 that local elections still fail to fully meet international and OSCE standards.

The OSCE Presence in Albania has its headquarters in the capital city of Tirana, with regional offices in four other cities, Gjirokastra, Kukes, Shkodra, and Vlora. The Presence is headed by Ambassador Pavel Vacek of the Czech Republic, and is currently staffed by 30 international personnel.