

## The United States and the CSCE/OSCE<sup>1</sup>

### *The United States and the CSCE During the Cold War*

The United States government has generally taken a rather cautious approach to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and its successor, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).<sup>2</sup> Indeed, from the very beginning U.S. officials were often sceptical about the entire exercise. As John Maresca notes: "The United States, deeply involved in bilateral negotiations with the USSR, relegated the CSCE to the second rank."<sup>3</sup>

This initial scepticism on the part of U.S. officials can be attributed to several factors. First, in the early 1970s, American policy-makers generally perceived that the proposal for a conference on European security was first and foremost a project of the "socialist bloc". The CSCE originated out of Soviet proposals going back to the mid-1950s for a European security conference that would resolve the "German question" once and for all and effectively ratify the post-war *status quo* in Europe. This idea had gained currency as well among many of Europe's neutral and non-aligned states, and it was Finland which first proposed in 1969 holding a preparatory conference in Helsinki on European security.

Following the adoption by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) of the Harmel Report in 1967, the United States urged its NATO allies to promote the objectives of improved European defence through conventional disarmament in the form of a conference dealing with "hard" arms control measures rather than "soft" political measures advocated by the socialist bloc and the neutral and non-aligned. At the same time, NATO began to express interest in a conference that would deal with issues such as advance notification of military movements, freer movement of peoples across national borders, and non-interference in the internal affairs of states, the latter respond-

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1 This article was prepared for and first published in: Helsinki Monitor 2/2000, pp. 20-36, titled "The US and the CSCE/OSCE". It is based upon extensive interviews undertaken by the author at numerous periods since 1974, when he was based at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Geneva during the negotiation of the Helsinki Final Act. Subsequently, he conducted extensive interviews in Vienna and Helsinki in 1992 and again in Vienna in 1997-98, when he was based at the Austrian Institute for International Affairs. In 1998, he was a Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C.

2 In this article I shall refer to the OSCE when I write about the Organization generically and also when writing about specific activities since 1995 when it adopted its new name; for specific activities before 1995, I shall use the previous title of CSCE.

3 John J. Maresca, *To Helsinki: The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1973-75*, Durham 1985, p. 64. The author was Deputy Chief of the US Delegation to the CSCE negotiations during the period covered in this book.

ing to Warsaw Pact actions in Czechoslovakia in 1968.<sup>4</sup> Finally, in 1972, Henry Kissinger was able to persuade the Soviet Union to agree to an arms control conference, eventually referred to as the negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR),<sup>5</sup> in exchange for which the U.S. and its NATO allies would agree to participate in the political conference favoured by the Warsaw Pact states. He justified this compromise on the grounds that the Soviets had also agreed to Western proposals to discuss issues of human rights and freer exchanges of persons between East and West within the CSCE, thereby going beyond the political resolution of issues left hanging at the end of World War II.

Nevertheless, after the CSCE opened with a foreign ministers meeting in Helsinki in July 1973, there was little doubt that Kissinger and his colleagues expected nothing much to come of it. Even the preferred Western alternative of the MBFR negotiations was viewed in Washington as an effort to forestall initiatives coming from the U.S. Congress to force the withdrawal of American troops from Western Europe rather than as a serious effort at arms control, since most U.S. policy-makers were sceptical about the willingness of the Warsaw Pact to abandon their numerical superiority of conventional forces in Central Europe. The CSCE, by contrast, was viewed primarily as potentially placating Western European pressure built up under the *ostpolitik* policy of the West German government of Chancellor Willy Brandt, which sought to ameliorate political relations across the Central European divide. Officials in the Nixon administration generally regarded that policy as somewhat naive, but they saw little direct harm in it and participated reluctantly in the CSCE largely to humour their Western European allies and the neutral and non-aligned states. According to John Maresca, Deputy Chief of the U.S. Mission to the CSCE negotiations from 1973-75:

"Since it (the CSCE) was a Soviet proposal it was seen primarily as a concession that the United States could give to the Soviets in exchange for something more concrete. President Nixon and Secretary Kissinger did not believe the CSCE would add anything to the bilateral treaties that had already accepted postwar frontiers (...) Nor did they believe it would be possible to change the situation in the USSR and Eastern Europe through such a public multilateral conference."<sup>6</sup>

However, many members of the U.S. delegation at the Geneva phase of negotiations took the CSCE process much more seriously than their superiors in Washington. For the most part, the United States maintained a low profile in Geneva, acting largely to veto emerging proposals that might rouse suspi-

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4 Cf. Jonathan Dean, *Watershed in Europe: Dismantling the East-West Military Confrontation*, Lexington 1987, pp. 110-111.

5 Cf. Maresca, cited above (Note 3), p. 219. In a restructured format, these negotiations eventually produced the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) in 1990.

6 Maresca, cited above (Note 3), pp. 213-214.

cions back in Washington, before they could be incorporated into a draft agreement.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, many of these officials recognized the potential of the CSCE, especially of the confidence-building measures (CBMs) being negotiated in "basket one" at Helsinki, to open up the Warsaw Pact region to observation by outsiders. They were also somewhat pleasantly surprised that the Warsaw Pact accepted a number of key Western positions in Geneva, including incorporating major human rights provisions into the Helsinki Decalogue, the ten fundamental principles undergirding the CSCE; the right of states to change borders by peaceful means and through negotiations (thereby keeping open the theoretical possibility of a peaceful reunification of Germany); and extensive provisions calling for freer interchange of people and ideas across the "iron curtain".

These provisions of the CSCE Final Act largely came as a surprise to Secretary of State Kissinger and his colleagues in Washington, but they continued to doubt that the communist states would ever live up to any of the provisions contained in this "politically binding" document. Kissinger warned President Gerald Ford that he would be heavily attacked, especially by hard-liners in the Congress, for attending the Helsinki Summit on 31 July-1 August 1975, at which the Final Act was to be signed. Opposition was especially strong from communities of immigrants from the Baltic states, who insisted that the Final Act ratified the incorporation of those states into the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> *The Wall Street Journal* editorialized, for example, that the Helsinki Final Act was "purely symbolic, and the symbol is one of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe (....)". In their view, it constituted "a formal version of Yalta, without Yalta's redeeming features".<sup>9</sup> If Ford became too closely identified with this document which the communist signatories would likely flout in the years ahead, Kissinger feared that this would open Ford to charges of naiveté about his Cold War adversaries.

U.S. interest in CSCE sprung, however, from an unexpected source, namely from Capitol Hill. Congresswoman Millicent Fenwick pushed through a law that would require the administration to monitor the record of signatory states in fulfilling their obligations under the Final Act. This law also created a bicameral, bipartisan commission, known as the Helsinki Commission, with eighteen members from the House of Representatives and the Senate and three from the executive branch, which remains attentive to all aspects of OSCE affairs to the present day. Reluctantly signed into law by President Ford in June 1976, the Helsinki Commission was chaired by Congressman Dante Fascell, who pushed the administration to take a strong stance against

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7 Cf. P. Terrence Hopmann, *Asymmetrical Bargaining in the CSCE*, in: *International Organization* 1/1978, pp. 172 and 176.

8 Cf. Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, New York 1999, p. 645.

9 "Jerry, Don't Go", *Wall Street Journal* editorial, 21 July 1975, cited in: Kissinger, cited above (Note 8), p. 643.

violations of the Helsinki accords by the Soviet Union and other communist governments in Eastern Europe.<sup>10</sup>

In the next few years, however, the United States government remained fairly cool in its attitude towards the CSCE. As Maresca observes:

"Washington attitudes towards the Helsinki Final Act evolved with the overall deterioration of detente. Immediately after the Helsinki Summit, no one was interested in the CSCE. Administration policy officials thought of it as an event that had provoked a hostile domestic reaction and was best forgotten. This attitude infected the whole bureaucracy, though a thorough working-level effort was made to monitor compliance with the Helsinki commitments."<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, this duality between low to non-existent interest in CSCE/OSCE affairs at the highest levels of the U.S. government, complemented by much greater interest at the working levels of the foreign policy bureaucracy, has become characteristic of the U.S. position regarding CSCE and OSCE ever since the period after the 1975 Helsinki Summit. There have, however, been a few occasions when presidents and high level cabinet officials have given some attention to this European security organization. With the arrival of the Carter administration in Washington, the U.S. government embarked upon a major campaign on behalf of human rights, and it seized on the human dimension provisions of the Helsinki Final Act to reinforce its own harsh rhetoric about serious human rights violations within the communist states. Carter appointed former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg as Head of the U.S. delegation to the first CSCE follow-up meeting in Belgrade to advocate this human rights agenda forcefully. Subsequently, he appointed Max Kampelman as Ambassador to the Madrid Follow-up Meeting to stress the position that "the words and promises of the Helsinki Final Act should be taken seriously by all of the thirty-five countries that signed it".<sup>12</sup> Kampelman was reappointed in January 1981 by President Reagan, with instructions to follow through on this central mandate.

The U.S. thus made the Helsinki process a major focus for its anti-communist, pro-human rights rhetoric, through which official spokespersons pointed out the glaring discrepancy between the principles that communist governments had endorsed in Helsinki and their actual behaviour towards their own populations. As groups such as Charter '77 in Czechoslovakia and the Solidarity movement in Poland drew inspiration from the Helsinki Final Act, supporting their efforts to agitate on behalf of a greater commitment by their own governments to live up to the principles to which they had subscribed

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10 Cf. Maresca, cited above (Note 3), p. 207.

11 Ibid.

12 Max M. Kampelman, Forward, in: Samuel F. Wells Jr. (Ed.), *The Helsinki Process and the Future of Europe*, Washington, D.C., 1990, p. xii.

voluntarily at Helsinki, the U.S. government discovered new value in the CSCE process to promote some of its central foreign policy goals. While much of this may have been a largely instrumental and perhaps even cynical manipulation of the Helsinki Final Act to serve the foreign policy goals of the Carter and Reagan administrations, it did at least cause both administrations to focus greater attention on the CSCE in its entirety.

Furthermore, the modest but tangible success of the CBMs contained in the Helsinki Final Act, especially the ability of Western military officials to observe large-scale manoeuvres taking place on the territory of the Warsaw Pact countries, gained for the CSCE a new and unexpected supporter, namely the Pentagon. CBMs were no longer regarded by U.S. defence officials as a "throw away" provision, but their ability to provide potential warning of preparations for a surprise attack and other forms of "soft" intelligence that was otherwise difficult to obtain in the closed societies of the East was increasingly recognized as a valuable by-product of the Helsinki Final Act. Efforts to negotiate deeper, broader, and more intrusive confidence-building measures became a major focus of U.S. arms control policy towards Europe from that time forward. However, the U.S. opposed at Madrid any broadening of the CSCE "basket one" commitments on CBMs until the human rights record of the socialist countries improved, their military intervention in Afghanistan begun in 1979 was brought to a halt, and the martial law declared in Poland in 1981 was terminated. Under pressure from some of its European allies in NATO, nonetheless, the U.S. agreed to further negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) as part of the Conference on Disarmament in Europe which opened under CSCE auspices in Stockholm in 1984.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of these advances, the CSCE largely remained outside of the range of attention of senior U.S. policy-makers during the Reagan administration. Within Europe, the U.S. focused largely on its efforts to deploy intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) to offset alleged Soviet superiority in that category of weapons. At the strategic level, the U.S. first pursued a unilateral military build-up and then began to advocate reductions of strategic arms from its newfound "position of strength". The extension of CBMs at the Stockholm Conference on Disarmament in Europe in 1986, under CSCE auspices, though actively supported by U.S. diplomats at the working level in the State Department and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), was largely ignored by senior officials in the White House and elsewhere in the U.S. government. Thus, while the Vienna Follow-up Meeting produced some important advances in the CSCE normative base in the second half of the 1980s, this largely took place without much leadership from the United States. As has often been the case, the U.S. delegation and working level

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13 Cf. Dean, cited above (Note 4), pp. 188-190. The Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (referred to as the CDE), was held from 17 January 1984 until 22 September 1986 in Stockholm.

State Department officials continued to play an active role in Vienna, but they did so with little or no support or leadership from above. To a large degree during the waning years of the Cold War, the CSCE was regarded by the most senior foreign policy makers as dealing mostly with continental European issues that had little direct impact on U.S. security, so that they gave only marginal attention to the issues in which the CSCE was engaged. During the Reagan years, hostility towards the policies of the détente era grew, and much of that was reflected in opposition to the CSCE. Some residue of those attitudes and their impact on U.S. policy can still be detected today.

#### *Changing U.S. Attitudes After the End of the Cold War*

The United States government remained sceptical about the potential of the CSCE as the Cold War came to an end in 1989, even though, ironically, the U.S. subsequently became one of the Organization's most active participants and its largest financial supporter. There was, of course, a burst of interest in the CSCE in 1990, reflected in its role in the Copenhagen Conference on the Human Dimension and preparation of the Charter of Paris. American officials, like many Europeans, saw in these documents an opportunity to enshrine classic liberal values of democracy and a market economy, extending the basic human rights agenda of the Helsinki Final Act into a much broader set of liberal principles, while encouraging the former communist countries, in their burst of enthusiasm for attaching themselves more closely to the West, to subscribe to a set of commitments which many leaders had barely read, much less understood or internalized. A great deal of attention was also diverted to the rejuvenated negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), which had replaced the moribund MBFR negotiations and successfully concluded a treaty on conventional force reductions, which had been a higher U.S. priority for European security than the CSCE since at least the late 1960s. But these too were complemented by the expanded CSBMs of the Vienna Document 1990 adopted in Paris and the creation of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) as a permanent CSCE institution located in Vienna, intended at the time largely to collect data and co-ordinate verification of the various arms control measures adopted in Paris.

In spite of these significant advances leading up to Paris, President Bush had to insist that the Paris Summit be scheduled in late November, immediately prior to the U.S. Thanksgiving Holiday, so that he could stop briefly in Paris en route to celebrating the holiday with U.S. troops attached to Operation Desert Shield in the Persian Gulf region. The few brief stories and television reports in the U.S. about the Paris Summit were thus quickly eclipsed by numerous photos of Bush eating turkey with U.S. soldiers in Saudi Arabia. This is all too typical of the deplorable lack of attention afforded to the OSCE and its institutions by virtually all American news media, including elite publica-

tions such as the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* which seldom even refer to the Organization by its full name. The vast majority of Americans, including most members of the intellectual elite, were left almost totally unaware that anything significant happened at the Paris Summit in November 1990.

A second burst of U.S. activity in CSCE appeared around the time of the Helsinki Follow-up Meeting and Summit of 1992. The CSCE was preoccupied at that time with the wave of violence that was sweeping across the former Soviet Union and the disintegrating Yugoslavia. The Conflict Prevention Centre, with its limited mandate and extremely modest resources, had proven totally unprepared to deal with the conflict that broke out in Croatia and that threatened to explode in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The U.S. stood by and watched while responsibility for dealing with this situation was passed on to the European Union in the summer of 1991, which promised to demonstrate that its new Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was capable of achieving concrete results in its immediate neighbourhood. At that time, most policy-makers in Washington perceived violence in the Balkans as a "European problem", and that it was largely Europe's responsibility to resolve the conflict. For its part, U.S. policy-makers believed that the leadership role they had assumed in the Persian Gulf largely exempted them from responding to security problems on the European continent where direct U.S. interests were not threatened.

By spring of 1992, it had become obvious to U.S. policy-makers that the CFSP was at that time a mirage. As Timothy Garton Ash graphically put it, Europe "fiddled in Maastricht while Sarajevo burned".<sup>14</sup> The United States thus began casting around for alternative institutional arrangements to respond to the deteriorating situation in the Balkans. The U.S. delegation to the Helsinki Follow-up Meeting thus took the lead in advocating a substantial expansion of the functions of the Conflict Prevention Centre in response to the new security challenges of post-Cold War Europe. Among the U.S. proposals, advocated forcefully by Ambassador John Kornblum, was the creation by the CSCE of missions of long duration which would be sent into the field in regions where violence threatened or had already surfaced on a large scale. Since these missions were conceived as consisting of professional staff seconded by CSCE participating States, this would substantially increase the intrusive role that the Organization would play in regions of conflict.

At the same time, the United States opposed in Helsinki efforts by France and Germany to place the CSCE on a firmer "legal" footing, as well as their joint proposal to create a CSCE Court of Conciliation and Arbitration. Although the latter was adopted at Helsinki, participation was voluntary, and the United States has refused to sign or to support the Court, based in Geneva, which has so far not heard a single case. The United States did enthusiastically

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14 Timothy Garton Ash, *Europe's Endangered Liberal Order*, in: *Foreign Affairs* 2/1998, p. 66.

cally support the proposal advanced by the Netherlands to create the office of a High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM). However, the greatest U.S. effort at Helsinki was focused on the creation of CSCE missions of long duration, where Kornblum and his staff believed that the U.S. could exert the greatest influence on the Organization. Some European participating States, not totally without justification, criticized this initiative as a U.S. attempt to reinforce its hegemony in Euro-Atlantic security affairs, since it was the participating State with the largest resources of both money and personnel to supply leadership positions in these missions.<sup>15</sup>

The Helsinki Summit, the culmination of the Helsinki Follow-up Meeting, adopted a somewhat watered-down version of the U.S. proposals concerning conflict prevention missions. The Helsinki Decisions of 10 July 1992 included a section on early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management (including fact-finding, rapporteur missions, and CSCE peacekeeping), and the peaceful settlement of disputes. While agreeing in vague language to strengthen the structures responsible for fulfilling these functions, the intention at the time was largely to create *ad hoc* missions that could be sent into the field on a more or less temporary basis. However, one month after the conclusion of the Helsinki Summit, at the urging of the United States, the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) adopted a general "Decision on Missions of Long Duration" and established the first CSCE mission to provide a continuous presence on the territory of a participating State in three regions of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Kosovo, Sandjak, and Vojvodina).<sup>16</sup> The United States has provided extensive support for these missions of long duration ever since. The Heads of Mission for the two largest such missions - the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Dayton Accords and the Kosovo Verification Mission after the October 1998 accords - have been retired U.S. diplomats: Robert Frowick and Robert Barry in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and William Walker in the case of Kosovo. U.S. diplomats have also served as Heads of Mission in Skopje (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Ukraine, Moldova, and a disproportionate number of mission members across all missions have been seconded by the United States.

Indeed, U.S. interest in the OSCE expanded considerably with the Dayton Accords on Bosnia and Herzegovina in November 1995. U.S. policy-makers led by Ambassador Richard Holbrooke realized that there were many aspects of the Dayton Agreement that could not be administered by NATO and the military units from other countries associated with NATO under the Partnership for Peace. The entire range of democracy-building activities such as pre-

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15 These conclusions are based on anonymous background interviews that the author conducted with senior officials from all major CSCE delegations in Vienna and Helsinki from February till July 1992.

16 Cf. Allan Rosas/Timo Lahelma, OSCE Long-Term Missions, in: Michael Bothe/Natalino Ronzitti/Allan Rosas (Eds.), *The OSCE in the Maintenance of Peace and Security*, The Hague 1997, p. 169.

paring and overseeing elections and implementing the return of refugees was clearly outside the purview of NATO. Even the enforcement of the disarmament provisions of the Dayton Accords seemed beyond the capacity of a NATO infrastructure that was still in the early stages of its transition from a Cold War defensive alliance into a post-Cold War peacekeeping institution. Furthermore, U.S. officials at Dayton were sceptical about the effectiveness and appropriateness of the European Union and the Council of Europe in performing these functions. These doubts stemmed foremost from the fact that the United States was not a member of either organization, and it wanted to play a more central role in the implementation of the accords which its government had brokered. But this also reflected a profound disillusionment at that time on the part of U.S. officials about the capability of multilateral European political and economic institutions to play a serious role in the security affairs of the continent. U.S. attitudes had evolved by late 1995 from an earlier belief that fighting in the Balkans constituted a European problem that should be dealt with exclusively by the Europeans to a view that an active leadership role on the part of the United States was still a necessity in order to maintain peace and stability in South-eastern Europe. In particular, the U.S. had become disenchanted with the European Union, which many American policy-makers held partly responsible for the disastrous way in which the collapse of Yugoslavia had been mismanaged in the early post-Cold War years.

Therefore, responsibility for the implementation of virtually all non-coercive aspects of the Dayton Accords fell to the OSCE largely by default. John Kornblum, Holbrooke's top aide and former U.S. Ambassador to the CSCE, urged that the principal role for implementation of the non-military aspects of the Dayton Accords be given to the OSCE.<sup>17</sup> The OSCE was the only existing security institution with an established mandate and experience in democracy-building and conflict prevention to which the United States belonged, and where it had begun to exercise increasing influence. Short of creating an entirely new institutional structure virtually overnight, a costly and totally implausible possibility, the OSCE became the responsible institution for implementing a wide-ranging set of provisions of the Dayton Accords, especially elections. Interestingly, OSCE officials played no role at the Dayton negotiations, and several later reported substantial surprise at the large number of responsibilities that were assigned by the Dayton Accords to the OSCE, largely without consultation with its Secretariat and its principal political officials. While many were thrilled to see such an important and visible set of tasks assigned to the OSCE, and viewed this as an indicator of the increasing respect that the OSCE had garnered in the eyes of U.S. officials, others feared that the Organization might be swamped by its new responsibilities and the new activist role within the OSCE being assumed by the United States.

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17 Cf. Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War*, New York 1998, p. 290.

This responsibility, therefore, marked a significant change in the nature of the OSCE's long-term missions and in the U.S. role in the Organization. Prior to this time, OSCE field missions had consisted almost exclusively of small international staffs, comprising in most cases only five to ten professional staff members. The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has had an international staff of over 200, plus hundreds of locally recruited employees. Furthermore, the mandate of the Bosnia Mission required the OSCE to play a much more proactive role than any previous mission; prior to Bosnia, virtually all missions emphasized assistance in democratization, monitoring situations in order to provide "early warning", and quiet efforts to promote confidence and resolve conflicts between parties to disputes. The mandate of the Bosnia Mission, upon the urging of the United States, was broad: election preparation, supervision, and monitoring (including general elections, municipal elections, parliamentary elections); responsibility for promoting civil society, freedom of the media, and human rights; and monitoring measures for regional stabilization and arms reductions under Articles II and IV of the Dayton Accords. Although both Ambassadors Frowick and Barry are highly respected diplomats, U.S. leadership of the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has been criticized by Europeans who are concerned that this OSCE mission in particular has largely become an extension of U.S. policy in the Balkans, in which European views are too often short changed.

The creation of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina established a precedent for what have come to be called "large" missions of long duration. The Bosnia Mission was soon followed by the creation in spring 1996 of the OSCE Mission to Croatia, mandated to include up to 250 international personnel, to monitor and assist in the implementation of agreements entered into by the government of Croatia regarding the two-way return of refugees and the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. Again in October 1998, Richard Holbrooke on behalf of the United States brokered a cease-fire between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians which included provisions for a Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) consisting of up to 2,000 unarmed monitors seconded by OSCE participating States to verify compliance with the agreement. Although the OSCE Chairman-in-Office at that time, Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek of Poland, was present on the margins of those negotiations, once again the U.S. mediators assigned an important and sensitive international task to the OSCE with only minimal prior consultation with other Secretariat and senior political officials.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the U.S. officials insisted, over the objection of many Western European OSCE participating States, that the Head of the KVM also be an American diplomat, Ambassador William Walker. And Walker became something of a lightning rod for clashes between European and American views about how to deal with the complex issues in the Balkans region, fuelling increased

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18 Cf. Jerzy Nowak, Introduction, OSCE 1998: The Polish Chairmanship, Warsaw 1999, pp. 15-17.

European criticism of U.S. domination of missions established by an organization which ironically the U.S. had previously not taken very seriously. Although the KVM had to be withdrawn in March 1999 prior to the commencement of the NATO bombardment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the June 1999 agreements ending that military campaign also included responsibilities for a new OSCE Mission in Kosovo to oversee provisions supporting democratization and other aspects of the human dimension. At the same time, the United Nations, not the OSCE, was given primary responsibility for the overall political and administrative management of Kosovo.

One of the dramatic lessons learned by the United States and other OSCE participating States from the KVM was the difficulty of raising a trained civilian force to verify compliance with a cease-fire in an emergency situation. Although the KVM had an authorized strength of 2,000 personnel, by the time it was withdrawn fewer than 1,400 persons had arrived in Kosovo, and many came with little or no training in civilian peace operations and with little knowledge of the problems faced by the region where they were sent. Thus the United States was an active proponent of the creation under the Charter for European Security signed at the OSCE Istanbul Summit on 19 November 1999 of Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams (REACT). The OSCE would thus maintain a registry of individuals from participating States who would be trained in advance for deployment when civilian peace monitoring and police expertise were needed in conflict situations. The REACT units would provide a capability for the OSCE to respond quickly to problems before they became full-scale crises by deploying a civilian peace monitoring unit trained and equipped to deal with the kind of ethno-national conflict with which the OSCE has frequently had to cope in recent years.<sup>19</sup>

In short, by the mid-1990s the United States began giving greater attention to the OSCE as a vital institution for the development of European security. By this time the new conflict management activities adopted at Helsinki in 1992 - especially the missions of long duration and the office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities - had begun to demonstrate their capacity to make a difference in regions such as Ukraine (Crimea), Moldova (Trans-Dniestria), Chechnya, Georgia (South Ossetia), and the Baltic states (Estonia and Latvia). These concrete accomplishments, however modest, did not go unnoticed in Washington, but they would have been unlikely to lead to a radical expansion of U.S. interest in the OSCE had it not been for the central role that the United States played in brokering an end to the fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina at Dayton in 1995, and the consequent realization by U.S. officials that the OSCE was the only European security institution available with the experience, mandate, and breadth of membership to be able to perform the peace-building functions outlined at Dayton to complement the peacekeeping functions to be performed by the NATO-led military coalition

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19 Cf. OSCE Newsletter 11-12/1999, p. 2.

deployed to the region. This lesson was further applied to the situation in Croatia and in Kosovo following negotiated cease-fires in those regions.

Therefore, U.S. policy-makers came to realize by the middle of the 1990s that OSCE missions could serve the interests of U.S. foreign policy in South-eastern Europe by preventing the outbreak of violence or its reappearance in areas of prior violence. In particular, they realized that U.S. troops would have to be deployed as part of a peacekeeping or peace-enforcement mission until a more stable political environment is created in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. In the face of considerable domestic pressure from U.S. public opinion to limit the deployment of U.S. troops abroad in regions of conflict, U.S. policy-makers recognized that significant progress would have to be made in the political domain as well as in providing military security. While NATO could contribute to the second goal, it was wholly unprepared to cope with the first. Therefore, support of the OSCE missions and other field activities has become one of the highest priorities of the United States within the OSCE, at least on a par with its emphasis on democratization and strengthening the rule of law throughout the OSCE region. The U.S. has, of course, contributed personnel to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) as well as to the office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and provides the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, but no other aspect of the work of the OSCE receives support from the United States that is comparable to its contribution to the missions and other field activities.

Another aspect of the U.S. contribution to the OSCE that also goes almost unnoticed by all except participants in the Organization is the role played by the large and active permanent U.S. Mission in Vienna, consisting of about 50 professional staff. The United States Mission to the OSCE is undoubtedly the largest deployed by any participating State, with the possible exception of a temporary enlargement in the staff of the country serving its one-year term as Chairman-in-Office. The U.S. Mission in Vienna assigns at least one person, many of whom have significant expertise, to deal with virtually all of the functional issues of concern to the OSCE: human rights monitoring, election supervision, freedom of the media, civil society and NGOs, peacekeeping, arms control and CSBMs, economic reform and development, and the environment, to name the most important. Its large staff also includes persons focusing on the most sensitive regions with which OSCE missions must deal: Central Asia, the Caucasus, Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic states, and South-eastern Europe. Therefore, the OSCE Secretariat staff and Heads of Mission have often relied on the expertise that can be found in the U.S. Mission in Vienna for advice about the many issues with which they have to cope, but where they lack sufficient resources to undertake these tasks independently. Heads of Mission in the course of their regular reporting visits to Vienna frequently find their way out to the offices of the U.S. OSCE delegation in Obersteinergasse in Vienna's 14th district for a mutual exchange of informa-

tion and ideas. The United States also frequently employs its large staff in Vienna to engage in bilateral or sub-regional consultations with other OSCE participating States about matters of security. The United States has thus come to realize that Vienna, both within the formal structures of the OSCE and on its margins, has become one of the most important centres for gaining information necessary to make policy decisions about some of the most important security issues confronting United States foreign policy. This fact alone has subtly given the OSCE a more central role in U.S. security policy than was the case previously.

At the same time, it should be noted that all of these activities are managed at the working level of the U.S. government, and they seldom attract the attention of senior officials (with the partial exception of the Missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo), of the press, the scholarly community, or the general public. Indeed, it is surprising that senior officials in the U.S. administration sometimes seem unaware of the significant contribution that the many cumulative activities of the OSCE make in U.S. foreign and security policy. And even though the U.S. government has increasingly found the OSCE to be a useful instrument during the past decade, there still remains a residue of scepticism, especially at the most senior level, about the long-term importance of the OSCE within U.S. security policy in Eurasia. Some U.S. policy-makers still see the OSCE as playing a useful role only on the margins of European security. When it comes to an ability to respond decisively to crises that may present real threats to U.S. or Western European interests, U.S. political leaders have generally preferred to act through NATO or even unilaterally. If a strengthened OSCE would somehow reduce U.S. freedom to employ these other tools, especially coercive diplomacy, American leaders have generally refrained from supporting measures to strengthen the OSCE. Therefore, in the concluding section of this article I shall turn to some of the sources of that ambivalence, and I shall attempt to assess the views of the sceptics and supporters of the OSCE's contribution to Eurasian security during the past decade.

#### *Views of OSCE's Critics and Supporters in the U.S.*

The preceding review of the attitudes of U.S. policy-makers towards the CSCE and later the OSCE have been characterized by considerable ambivalence. In the post-Cold War period, as noted in the previous section, the assessment of leading policy-makers in the United States towards the CSCE and later the OSCE has become more positive regarding its contribution to non-military aspects of Eurasian security, but thus far it stops far short of viewing the OSCE as the foundation for a broad-ranging security regime in the unstable regions that have appeared in post-Cold War Eurasia. There remains a significant realpolitik strain in U.S. foreign policy, and many senior

policy-makers adhere to the fundamental tenets of realist beliefs about the anarchic nature even of post-Cold War international politics. Their scepticism about the potential for multilateral security institutions to diminish the impact of anarchy is especially great at higher levels in the foreign policy and national security bureaucracy. Diplomats who have served in OSCE missions and in the U.S. delegation to the OSCE in Vienna in the 1990s have frequently expressed dismay at the low level of support given to their activities by official Washington. Perhaps even more notable is the almost complete absence of public awareness about the OSCE, which is generally unknown to the vast majority of the U.S. public and even to well-educated and informed members of the "attentive public". But even among those who are familiar with the Organization, it is frequently dismissed as being irrelevant to U.S. interests in Eurasian and European security. The critics of the OSCE in the U.S. generally cite several key arguments.

First, many critics argue that OSCE decision-making, being based on the consensus principle, makes it impossible to act decisively on important security issues, especially in times of crisis. There is a general tendency to equate "consensus" with a universal "veto," meaning that there is a widespread belief that all 55 participating States have the power unilaterally to block OSCE decisions. U.S. policy-makers have been especially concerned in recent years that OSCE decisions could be blocked by a Russian veto, especially on issues like the conflict in Kosovo where the U.S. perceives that their interests diverge from those of the Russian Federation. Therefore, rather than allowing the United States to have its hands tied, these critics argue that the United States should not depend on the OSCE in any case where vital U.S. interests are at stake.

Second, many critics believe that the OSCE detracts from political and popular support for the enlargement of NATO and the centrality of this former Cold-War military alliance as an instrument of European security. Those individuals who believe that there can be only one major security institution in Europe argue that this role should be filled by NATO. Being composed exclusively of democratic countries, NATO's members share similar values and approaches to international relations, so that agreement is easier to achieve than in the OSCE. This issue crystallized in the debate during 1997 over NATO enlargement. Those who wanted to expand NATO Eastward as rapidly as possible found themselves confronted with the counter argument, advanced especially by Russia, that the OSCE should be the dominant player in post-Cold War European security, with all military alliances subordinated to its political authority, especially considering the OSCE's universal membership. The end of the Cold War notwithstanding, this Russian argument simply fed the fears of the OSCE's critics in the United States who were reluctant to give a significant role to an organization whose decisions could be blocked by Russian opposition. Furthermore, the apparent inconsistencies in

Russian policy, especially its reluctance to accept any significant OSCE involvement in the conflict in Chechnya, has added to this cynicism.

Third, U.S. policy-makers generally perceive that the OSCE lacks appropriate means to implement whatever decisions it takes. Although the OSCE has played an important role in political and humanitarian spheres in Bosnia, for example, it was unable to provide security for its own personnel, including election monitors, to say nothing of Bosnian citizens, without the support of the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR). Similarly, the unarmed KVM was forced to withdraw from Kosovo in part because it was constantly vulnerable to attack from militants on both sides of the dispute, and the failure of the KVM and the necessity of eventually replacing it by a NATO-led peace-keeping force was viewed as evidence of the weakness of an institution that was unable to implement its decisions by force. The critics argue that only a party capable of wielding real "carrots" and "sticks," such as the United States at Dayton in 1995 and in Kosovo in 1998 and again in 1999, can successfully push intransigent parties to settle their differences when they are based on deeply felt hostility. This further reinforces the argument that the United States needs a capacity to be able to act unilaterally or through NATO without being constrained by any broad-based multilateral organization like the OSCE.

Finally, many of the OSCE's critics point to its alleged history of "failures" to prevent or to resolve conflicts as evidence for its unreliability. Most often cited is the alleged failure of the CSCE to prevent war and ethnic cleansing in Croatia and in Bosnia. Similarly, critics often point to the failure of the OSCE to resolve the conflicts where cease-fires have been in place but where so far negotiations have failed to yield significant results, including the conflicts over Nagorno-Karabakh, Trans-Dniestria, and South Ossetia. Finally, they note that anarchy and sporadic violence have prevented a return to anything like normal life in Tajikistan and that warfare has re-emerged in Chechnya in 1999, following the OSCE brokered cease-fire in 1996. These are taken as evidence of the inability of the OSCE to provide lasting security in post-conflict situations. It is perhaps for this reason that the United States agreed, along with other major states in the international community, to pass much of the responsibility for political and administrative operations in Kosovo to the United Nations after the end of the NATO aerial campaign in June 1999. The OSCE was assigned a relatively minor role, especially by comparison with the much larger role it has played in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The critics thus conclude that these many "failures" in the few years immediately after the end of the Cold War so seriously undermined the credibility of the OSCE in the field of conflict management that it can no longer be effective in promoting agreement and insuring peace in regions that have experienced deadly conflicts.

The supporters of the OSCE in the United States, on the other hand, argue first that the OSCE has developed a normative structure that very much re-

flects American values, both those articulated domestically and internationally. By promoting democratization, the rule of law, economic liberalization, and human rights throughout Europe and Eurasia, the OSCE acts as a major proponent of fundamental American values, albeit values shared widely with other European countries. The OSCE has more clearly linked these values to issues of national, regional, and global security than any other multilateral organization in which the United States participates, including NATO and the United Nations. It legitimizes a *droit de regard* for the United States and other Western democracies over the transition process in countries that are trying to throw off decades or even centuries of authoritarian rule and centrally planned economies. After the United States devoted such vast resources to defending these rights and values during more than 40 years of the Cold War, it would seem to be foolhardy, supporters argue, not to take advantage of the opportunities afforded to it by the end of the Cold War to promote as rapid and thoroughgoing change as possible in these regions after the fall of communism. The OSCE offers a vehicle for doing just that without requiring the U.S. to expend vast resources or to shoulder the burden single-handedly. Second, advocates contend that the OSCE offers to the United States an unparalleled forum for dialogue and transparency about security issues affecting the United States, its Western European allies, and its former adversaries in Central and Eastern Europe. One of the major strengths of the OSCE has been the degree to which it has promoted transparency in issues such as military exercises and force deployments, military budgets and the development of new technology. The OSCE missions provide a continuous source of information about events taking place in the most volatile regions of Eurasia. This information can provide early warning of possible threats and trouble spots. It can also provide reassurance in cases where questionable behaviour may be shown not to reflect malign intentions. Although some of these functions may be performed also by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and NATO's Partnership for Peace, the institutionalized information exchange and opportunities for on-site observation provided by the OSCE are unparalleled in modern history. Third, simply put, conflict prevention is cheaper than fighting war or even than peacekeeping in the aftermath of a war. The United States annual contributions to the OSCE in 2000 are on the order of 22 million Euros: nine per cent of the general OSCE budget of 40 million Euros and 12.4 per cent of the budget of about 150 million Euros for the three large missions.<sup>20</sup> By contrast, for the United States in fiscal year 1998, the incremental costs in the U.S. budget for the Bosnia Peace Operation (mostly SFOR and its civilian support) amounted to approximately 2.473 billion US Dollars,<sup>21</sup> more than 100

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20 Cf. OSCE, Permanent Council, PC-Journal no. 262, Decision no. 331, PC.DEC/331, 15 December 1999, Annex I (Year 2000 Budget).

21 Cf. US Government Accounting Office, National Security and International Affairs Division, report no. 98-138, "Bosnia Peace Operation", p. 21. Incremental cost refers only to

times its contribution for all OSCE operations. Certainly by this standard, the old aphorism that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" holds true. This cost comparison also has to be added to the less easily measurable, but even more important consideration of the lives that can be saved and destruction of property and human spirit that can be avoided when preventive diplomacy successfully averts the outbreak of violence.

Fourth, supporters argue that the appropriate response to the present weakness of the OSCE is not to disregard it, but rather to strengthen the Organization so that it can become more effective at serving specific U.S. interests and simultaneously enhancing co-operation to build a stable foundation for security throughout the Euro-Atlantic region. The present limitations of the OSCE are not necessarily inherent to the Organization, and some modest measures could significantly strengthen its capacity to act more effectively, especially to undertake its missions of long duration with greater staying power and a greater chance that they can lead to concrete results in preventing and resolving conflicts in those regions where they operate.<sup>22</sup> It is not fair to judge the OSCE's performance record based solely on the early years of the post-Cold War period, its supporters emphasize. In those years, the CSCE's institutional structure was still being created and taking shape. Furthermore, the international community as a whole was overburdened by the many conflicts that erupted in the time span of just a few years as the communist bloc was falling apart. Since the OSCE has become more fully institutionalized by the end of the 1990s, and the pace of change in international relations has also settled down, the institutional capacity to cope with conflict is greater. With only a modest increment of resources, it could become even greater still.

Finally, U.S. supporters of a multilateral approach to security policy in Eurasia tend to believe that the OSCE's capacity to deal with issues such as ethno-national conflict can also be enhanced by increasing the co-operation between the OSCE and other regional and global security institutions, including NATO, the WEU, the CIS, the European Union, the Council of Europe, and the United Nations and its various agencies such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). While one may appropriately be sceptical about the OSCE's ability to mount peacekeeping operations alone such as those that have been discussed for Nagorno-Karabakh, its ability to do so would be significantly enhanced if it could call on military alliances such as NATO, the WEU, and the CIS to participate in peacekeeping forces under an OSCE mandate. The collaboration between the OSCE and IFOR/SFOR in Bosnia illustrates that the two organizations can work well in tandem, one stressing the political dimensions of security-building, while the other pro-

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"additional costs to DOD that are directly related to the Bosnia operation and would not have otherwise been incurred" (p. 20).

22 For some of my proposals about how the OSCE conflict prevention machinery might be strengthened at modest additional cost, see: P. Terrence Hopmann, *Building Security in Post-Cold War Eurasia: The OSCE and U.S. Foreign Policy*, United States Institute of Peace (Washington, D.C.), *Peaceworks* 31/1999, pp. 46-52.

vides the military security that is necessary for the political process to work effectively. Rather than debating which institution should be "number one", it makes far more sense to consider how they can combine roles, each contributing its own special capabilities, to fashion solutions to the major security issues that confront Eurasia since the end of the Cold War.

Advocates of the OSCE thus conclude that much of the scepticism about the role of the OSCE in post-Cold War Eurasian security in the United States is based on a limited understanding of what the Organization has accomplished in a few short years since 1992, to say nothing of what it might be capable of accomplishing with only modest increments in its political and material support from participating States.

There are several explanations for this lack of appreciation of the OSCE's potential. First, where the OSCE is most successful, "nothing happens". And busy policy-makers in capitals like Washington do not have time to pay attention to conflicts that have been prevented; they only pay attention when large-scale violence breaks out and crosses over the threshold of public awareness. Second, many of the OSCE's most successful activities have taken place in relatively obscure locations such as Crimea, Macedonia, Tajikistan, Moldova, and Georgia; unless one does a systematic survey of all of the many accomplishments of the OSCE across many zones of conflict, one cannot begin to comprehend the extent of its efforts and even of its many, if modest, successes. Recent operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Kosovo have brought more attention to the OSCE, but unfortunately this has often come from those activities where the Organization's resources are most widely stretched and where the most serious problems have arisen alongside the many successes. Therefore, only those officials who have devoted much of their time and attention over long periods of time to the work of the OSCE have come to appreciate its accomplishments and to understand its potential to contribute to Eurasian security in the future. And since only a few scholars and virtually no journalists in the United States have given the OSCE similar attention, its work has gone largely unnoticed by both the general public and even the community of security specialists.

There is also an element of a "self-fulfilling prophecy" at work here: Those who start from the assumption that multilateral political institutions make little difference in the realm of security are unlikely to take the time and effort to investigate thoroughly the activities and accomplishments of the OSCE in order to appreciate its potential contribution to North American, European, and Eurasian regional security interests. Consequently, support for the strengthening of the OSCE within the United States tends to be confined largely to a relatively small group of security specialists in the U.S. government, in the Helsinki Commission, in NGOs that work closely with the OSCE, and among a small set of scholars within the academic community. Until senior policy-makers and members of the policy elite in and around Washington come to realize that security in Eurasia depends more on the

prevention and resolution of conflicts than on the use of coercive force to make and enforce the peace, there is unlikely to be a major shift in the balance of U.S. attitudes towards the OSCE and a reassessment of its potential to contribute to a more secure future for the region extending from "Vancouver to Vladivostok" in the 21st century.