

## The Future Tasks of the OSCE

### *The OSCE and Nation Building*

My personal experience with the CSCE/OSCE began virtually with its creation, when the USA began seriously to discuss a Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe at the 1972 Moscow summit, in which I participated as a junior officer assigned to the USSR. Later, it fell to me and others to help shape these negotiations and sell the idea to the Congress while serving in the Bureau of European Affairs in the Department of State. Still later, as Ambassador to Bulgaria in the early 1980s, I had many occasions to invoke the Helsinki Final Act in dealings with Todor Zhivkov's repressive government. Then, in the mid-1980s, I headed the US Delegation to the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CDE), convened under CSCE auspices and resulting in agreement on an important range of measures to promote transparency in conventional military activities in Europe. Later still, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the USSR, I co-ordinated US assistance to the newly emerging democracies, using the tools of the OSCE, and increasingly its field missions, to support US efforts. Finally, from 1998-2001, I had the honour and pleasure of managing the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the time the largest OSCE field mission, and charged with the delicate task of implementing many civilian provisions of the Dayton Agreement, particularly related to democratic governance.

As a strong supporter of the OSCE, I reviewed the history and accomplishments of the Organization in 2002.<sup>1</sup> While I argued that the OSCE was particularly well suited to pursuing many US and EU goals in the areas of terrorism, organized crime, political repression, refugee flows, and nation building, I noted that, with the expansion of NATO and the EU, the OSCE faced a challenge to its relevance. The USA in particular was not well disposed to multilateralism in any form, and had long favoured "hard" security organizations such as NATO to the UN and the OSCE.

Two years later, much has changed. The Bush Administration has come to appreciate the need to prepare for nation building, involving the military and civilian agencies in joint efforts to create stability after a military intervention or to prevent civil conflict from breaking out. They have also been convinced of the advantages of multilateralism, especially when it comes to burden sharing. The US election campaign features both John Kerry and George W. Bush outbidding one another over their desire to emphasize the

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1 Robert Barry, *The OSCE: A Forgotten Transatlantic Security Organization?*, BASIC Research Report 3/2002, London 2002.

roles of the UN and NATO in Afghanistan and Iraq. Crises in Haiti, West Africa, Uzbekistan, Sudan, and the Middle East have given new prominence to peacekeeping, nation building, and “stability operations” as Europeans and Americans look ahead to new situations requiring humanitarian intervention or military operations to deal with terrorism or failed states. Where once politicians consciously avoided learning lessons from past experiences with nation building, today they eagerly debate how we can better prepare for inevitable challenges in the future.

If in 2002 it looked like the UN, the EU, NATO, and the OSCE would be competing with one another to deal with emerging situations in Europe, the demand for intervention now seems to exceed the capacity of the organizations to provide it. The UN is preoccupied with the role it is being asked to play in Iraq, and thus had little capacity to play the lead role in the Afghan presidential elections held in October 2004. NATO is being asked to take on a larger role in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, but is having trouble doing so, as troop-contributing nations are tied down with other commitments. The EU is assuming greater operational responsibilities, for example by taking over from the UN in providing police training and monitoring in Bosnia, but the need for NATO to redeploy troops from Bosnia to Kosovo in response to an outbreak of violence there suggests that it will be some time before the EU is ready to take over in either Bosnia or Kosovo. Meanwhile, the EU is struggling with the need to supply peacekeeping troops in Africa. Elsewhere, projected Israeli withdrawal from Gaza will create a vacuum that the international community will need to fill.

#### *The Evolving Role of the OSCE*

Over the years, the OSCE has adapted well to changing circumstances. In response to the 1995 Dayton Agreement, the OSCE took on a much larger role in nation building in Bosnia than had ever been the case in the past, and the Bosnia Mission also expanded related activities to new levels. In 1998, the OSCE quickly put together the Kosovo Verification Mission, which fielded several hundred monitors to verify the promised withdrawal of Serb forces before being pulled out on the eve of NATO military action in March 1999. In Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh, the OSCE has been planning robust peacekeeping operations. At the 1999 Istanbul Summit and the Ministerial Meetings in Bucharest (2001), Porto (2002), and Maastricht (2003), new initiatives were launched to tackle with terrorism, conflict prevention, and post-conflict stabilization activities.

Now, however, the time has come for the OSCE to become a more central player in the effort to forge strategies to deal with insecurity and instability in the OSCE area and neighbouring regions. In order to do so, OSCE par-

ticipating States should consider the need to expand the OSCE's capabilities once again, both geographically and functionally.

### *Moving Beyond Europe*

In geographic terms, the OSCE should be doing more with partners for co-operation, particularly in areas bordering on OSCE States. For instance, as mentioned above, the UN needed help in staging the October 2004 presidential elections in Afghanistan, especially as it became more involved in Iraqi election preparations. While the OSCE could not play a lead role in the Afghan poll, an OSCE Election Support Team did make a major contribution, together with the EU. No doubt the OSCE will be called on to play a similar role in the 2005 Afghan parliamentary elections. In other areas where the OSCE has more experience than NATO, such as police training and local governance, an OSCE role should be considered where local security conditions permit. The fact of the matter is that much more international support is needed if the situation in Afghanistan is to be stabilized, and requests for increased OSCE involvement have been made repeatedly.<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere, there have been a variety of proposals for OSCE co-operation in the Middle East. The Broader Middle East Initiative being promoted by the USA is based on the concept that underlay the Helsinki process. It aims to ensure that the countries of the region embark on a course of reforms that will lead to democracy. But as long as the USA is seen as the sponsor of such a concept, it is unlikely to gain much traction. The OSCE should consider entering into dialogue with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to discuss the relevance of the Helsinki Final Act to the Middle East.

More specifically, if Ariel Sharon's proposal for Israeli withdrawal from Gaza eventually succeeds, it could leave behind a failing statelet in the mould of Afghanistan. It is in the interest of the international community to consider how to field a peacekeeping and nation-building presence there, and the OSCE's experience in elections, local governance, police training, etc. have already been looked at as a possible model.

### *The OSCE and Stability Forces*

In functional terms, the OSCE ought to think about what role it can play in establishing a sustainable security environment in post-conflict situations, or in the context of conflict prevention activities. This is a topic being widely

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2 See, for example, US Secretary of State Colin Powell's intervention at the Maastricht Ministerial on 2 December 2003.

debated in the USA and the EU.<sup>3</sup> All recognize the need to provide an integrated approach to law and order – a constabulary, an armed police force, judicial teams, and corrections personnel. As combat troops are not trained to control crowds, investigate crimes, and try accused criminals, they cannot effectively deal with such eventualities. This was demonstrated, of course, in Iraq after major combat activities ended. In Kosovo, immediately after the Serbian withdrawal, international police were needed to restore order. Four years later, in spring 2004, neither KFOR nor the various national and international police units could cope with an outbreak of civil conflict. The approach of the United Nations Civilian Police (UNCIVPOL) is not adequate to meet this challenge, as seven years' experience demonstrates, and so far the EU Police Mission (EUPM) is also falling short and cannot serve as a model for similar cases. What is needed is a robust international force, one that is trained and armed to deal with such situations. The OSCE has a role to play here, but first must reach a consensus that under some circumstances it should countenance armed international police under OSCE control.

To date, the issue of whether such a force should be under military or civilian control has received a lot of attention. The answer clearly depends on the nature of the conflict and the stage in a post-conflict situation. Immediately following military intervention, a stabilization force and its policing components must be under military control. Combat commanders must be able to mix constabulary forces, armed police, and combat units as needed to deal with looting, riots, and insurgencies. They must also hold combat units in readiness to reinforce police or constabulary if they are in danger from heavily armed attackers. This can be accomplished in a NATO command structure, or an *ad hoc* command arrangement such as exists in Iraq.

During a second phase, however, civilian control of a still robust force is required. An OSCE field mission could provide this structure, as could an EU mission or an *ad hoc* arrangement such as the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Bosnia. Again, such a force would have to be armed, and include the kind of constabulary force needed to deal with violent uprisings.

Although an EU Conflict Prevention Service and a US Stability Corps could in theory exist in parallel, this is not the outcome preferred by either side. At a minimum, they should be structured so that they can be deployed together as part of a NATO- or OSCE-led operation. This means that there should be early discussion of interoperability, equipment, rules of engagement, etc. There should also be discussion within NATO, the EU, and the OSCE of command and control arrangements, so that optimum use of these capabilities could be ensured at an early stage.

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3 See, for example, *Stabilization and Reconstruction Act*, report of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Robert M. Perito, *Where Is the Lone Ranger When We Need Him? America's Search for a Postconflict Stability Force*, US Institute of Peace, Washington 2004; *A Conflict Prevention Service for the European Union*, BASIC Research Report 2/2000, London 2000.

Terror is a means, not an end. Although its reach is longer and more potent today than ever before, it has a much longer history than many Americans realize.

There are many factors that breed terrorism, most of which cannot be eliminated by military action or even law enforcement. The OSCE's comprehensive approach to security offers more tools than any other security organization, but they must be used more boldly if they are to make a difference. Field missions need to expand their mandates, and the Permanent Council should support efforts to deal with emerging problems early. Increased attention to women's issues, discrimination, education, the environment, and poverty all have a role to play in the war on terrorism, as do efforts to improve local governance, limit corruption, and introduce transparency and accountability in government.

The OSCE's role in elections is increasingly important. Working with member governments to improve election laws and their implementation has had a major impact in many cases. Positive OSCE election-monitoring reports can help countries integrate more closely with NATO and the EU. Sharply negative reports can even lead to peaceful transitions of power, as happened in Georgia in 2003. But if OSCE election monitoring is to maintain credibility, missions must avoid the temptation of providing more favourable judgments than circumstances warrant.

The most crucial function of the OSCE in the war on terror is to prevent civil conflict and deal with failing states. While negotiations on Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh offer little promise at the moment, the Organization must be prepared for a breakthrough and for a "vital role" in an international stabilization force if agreements are reached. Given the demands currently being made on the UN, NATO, and the EU, it is more likely now than before that the OSCE will play a central role in implementing an agreement.

In Georgia, the new government under President Mikhail Saakashvili faces both old and new challenges as it attempts to maintain its territorial integrity and control over internal security. The large OSCE mission there ought to consider what new activities it might be asked to undertake.

In Central Asia, the challenges of transition to independence and democracy are complicated by the spread of militant Islam. The OSCE can play a larger role in conflict prevention, protection of minority rights, and judicial and legal reform – something that should be welcomed by the governments of the region.

## *OSCE Leadership*

With nation building, stability operations, and multilateral organizations back on the agenda in the USA as well as Europe, the OSCE has the opportunity to play a larger role on the international scene. If member states want it to do so, they will need to strengthen the OSCE's leadership.

Uniquely among international organizations, the OSCE has insisted on a Secretary General with a limited political role and a small Secretariat focused on management and administration. Political leadership has been supplied by the Chairman-in-Office – the foreign minister of a participating State, chosen in rotation for a one-year term. This has resulted in wide variations in the kind of leadership provided, depending on the size of the country holding the Chairmanship and the other demands on its foreign minister.

As the OSCE conducts its search for a new Secretary General this year, it should specify a larger political role for him and his supporting staff. The model should be NATO, not the UN: The Secretary General should be a leading political interlocutor, who, directed by the Chairman-in-Office and the Permanent Council, should be more prominent in negotiating with participating States and international organizations. This is no reflection on the individuals who have held either the Chairmanship or the Secretary Generalship in the past, but on the need to alter the roles of the Organization's leaders to meet new demands.