

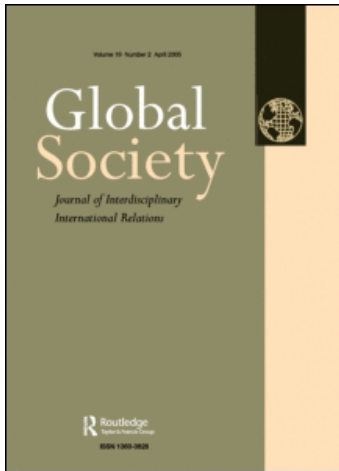
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## The OSCE's Post-September 11 Agenda, and Central Asia

MARIA RAQUEL FREIRE

*With an enlarged membership and a wide agenda including politico-security matters, economic and environmental issues and human aspects, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) aims at promoting stability and democratisation in its area, fostering good governance. The September 11 attacks on the United States in 2001 have prompted the organisation to reinforce its commitments with regard to the prevention of and combat against terrorism, as a primary goal in the pursuit of its main tasks of conflict prevention and management, and post-conflict rehabilitation. The institutional response of the OSCE has been translating its effort to address the new concerns while promoting its founding principles, both at headquarters and in the field. The extent to which the organisation's institutions and commitments are adequate to respond to the new challenges and promote good governance in the OSCE area are analysed. Are the OSCE principles, agreed commitments and elaborated post-September 11 agenda adequate to meet the many uncertainties and to build cooperation and security in the OSCE space? Is the OSCE prepared to respond effectively to the current challenges particularly with regard to Central Asia? Which means and what actions might the organisation pursue in the context of its new agenda? By matching words with action OSCE's contribution to global governance in Central Asia is clarified through assessing its means, activities and adequacy to meet old and new challenges.*

### Introduction

The word 'terrorism' gained new momentum after the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington, when several thousand civilians were killed and enormous material damage was caused. The motivation, means and purposes of the attacks have been widely discussed. Traditionally the uncontrolled use of violence can erode legitimacy and support for a particular cause;<sup>1</sup> the 'new terrorism' assumes new levels of violence and technological means, knows no boundaries (transnational character and reach of terrorist networks), and involves political, social, economic, religious and ideological aspects. New threats and more sophisticated means combine to produce more devastating results.

The events of September, 2001 have brought the theme of terrorism to the top of the agenda, mobilising national and international entities, and demanding new

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1. See for example Steven Simon and Daniel Benjamin, "The Terror", *Survival*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (2001–2002), p. 5 and Jonathan Stevenson, "Pragmatic Counter-Terrorism", *Survival*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (2001–2002), p. 35.

responses to the new faces of an old menace. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was no exception in focusing on the need to respond to terrorism as a source of instability and an obstacle to the spread of democratisation and rule of law principles, the very basis of a more secure Europe, according to the organisation's principles. At the time of its establishment in 1975 with the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)<sup>2</sup> stated its concern with terrorism, a recurrent theme in the OSCE meetings and respective documents since then.<sup>3</sup> Despite being neither a recent phenomenon nor a new issue for the OSCE, terrorism has assumed new dimensions and enlarged its reach in post-Cold War Europe, to become a dangerous menace affecting global security.

Not having reached a consensual definition of terrorism, the OSCE states agree it constitutes a serious challenge, affecting security and stability and demanding a comprehensive and collectively pursued response. Identifying the many threats associated with the phenomenon, the organisation's participating states appeal for cooperation in the combat against terror, "in all its forms and practices".<sup>4</sup> The growing transnational character of terrorism and its links to organised crime, money laundering, trafficking in human beings, drugs and arms, and other illicit activities have also been acknowledged, demanding a comprehensive response, since these issues constitute fertile ground for the development of terrorist activities. In the face of the new dimensions of terrorism, the OSCE post-September 11 agenda conferred increased attention on the issue, as evinced both at headquarters and in the field. In the pursuit of its main preventive and conflict management tasks, the concern with terror is present at the decision-making level, in the activities of the OSCE main institutions, such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the Office of the OSCE Coordinator on Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), as well as in the mandates of its field operations.

The institutional response of the OSCE has been to address the issue of terrorism in a dynamic way, reflecting the organisation's flexibility with the overall aim of contributing to the building of security and stability in its area. The extent to which the OSCE institutions and commitments are adequate to respond to the new challenges and promote good governance in the OSCE area are analysed in this article. Are the OSCE principles, agreed commitments and post-September 11 agenda adequate to meet the many uncertainties and to build cooperation and security in the OSCE region? Is the OSCE prepared to respond effectively to the current challenges particularly with regard to Central Asia? By matching words with action, this article envisages to clarify the OSCE's contribution to global

2. The CSCE became the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) after decision at the 1994 Budapest Summit, with effect from January 1, 1995.

3. For example, CSCE Final Act, chapter VI, Helsinki, 1975; Charter of Paris for a New Europe, "Security", and Annex 1, paragraph 6, November 1990; OSCE Charter for European Security, 1999, paragraph 4. See also "OSCE on Terrorism", Office of the Secretary General, Section for External Cooperation, SEC.GAL/167/01, September 21, 2001; Seminar on Human Rights and Terrorism, Opening statement by the OSCE Chairman-in Office (CIO) Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, CIO.GAL/90/03, September 24, 2003. For an overview of the OSCE and terrorism before 11 September, see Rob Zaagman, "Terrorism and the OSCE. An Overview", *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2002), pp. 206–208.

4. OSCE Lisbon Document, *A Framework for Arms Control*, 1996.

governance in Central Asia, assessing its means, activities and adequacy to meet old and new challenges.

### **The OSCE Agenda: Quiet Diplomacy, Flexibility and Cross-Cutting Nature**

Since the September 11 events, the OSCE has concentrated efforts on counter-terrorism activities, as a central aspect to its main tasks of conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Both at headquarters and in the field, the organisation has adopted new measures and has been making an effort to render operational the commitments and practices agreed. The institutional framing of the OSCE fight against terror was set at the December, 2001 Bucharest Ministerial with the definition of an Action Plan for Combating Terrorism and the ensuing outline of road-maps by the OSCE institutions, leading to the adoption of the OSCE Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism in December, 2002, and the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century in December, 2003. These documents set the basis for the development of the organisation's strategy, organised around three main stages and institutionally anchored on the Action Against Terrorism Unit (ATU), based in Vienna, with the support of Jan Trojborg, the Chairman-in-Offices's (CIO) Personal Representative to coordinate activities in the fight against terrorism.<sup>5</sup> Stage A relates to the necessary legislative framework regarding action against terrorism, including accession of the OSCE states to all United Nations (UN) Conventions and protocols on terrorism,<sup>6</sup> showing the need for a collective response. Stage B focuses on the mechanisms for implementation, particularly preventing recruitment or movement of terrorists, the establishment of terrorist safe havens and any other form of passive or active support for terrorists, including OSCE assistance in the development of monitoring structures and effective border controls to avoid unrestricted movement of terrorists and their access to illicit weapons and drugs. Stage C concerns international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, at the bilateral, regional and international level, including exchange of information, transborder judicial and criminal cooperation, and the identification of links between terrorism and other threats to security, such as arms and drug trafficking, money laundering and organised crime. In December 2003, the ATU was complemented with a Counter-Terrorism Network entrusted with strengthening the coordination of counter-terrorism measures and information sharing between OSCE participating states, by facilitating the timely exchange of information in counter-terrorism programmes, training and legal

5. OSCE Action Against Terrorism Unit, established in December, 2001, <<http://www.osce.org/atu>>.

6. The 12 International Conventions and Protocols related to terrorism are as follows: (1) Offences and Certain other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft (1963); (2) Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (1970); (3) Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation (1971); (4) Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons (1973); (5) Against the Taking of Hostages (1979); (6) Physical Protection on Nuclear Material (1980); (7) Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports serving International Civil Aviation, Supplementary to the 1971 Convention (1988); (8) Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (1988); (9) Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf (1988); (10) Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection (1991); (11) Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997); (12) Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999).

developments,<sup>7</sup> showing a pragmatic effort at conferring substance on the OSCE strategy in the fight against terrorism, as a much needed supporting tool to render operative the organisation's normative framework.

This, built around the above-mentioned documents, set the OSCE's post-September 11 agenda, with an increased focus on terrorism. Following the traditional OSCE style wording, the Charter on Combating and Preventing Terrorism and the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, among other terrorism-related texts, comprehensively identify the main threats to security and their origin as well as the organisation's instruments to respond to them. However, and again not really a novelty, these documents lack an operational dimension, by not identifying concrete activities to meet these risks and challenges in an efficient manner. Despite this drawback, which has direct impact on the programmatic action of the organisation both in Vienna and in the field, eventually allowing dispersion and mismanagement of already tightened resources, the OSCE Strategy was the first such document to be approved within the OSCE framework, setting the "strategic directions" to OSCE activity, though in a vague and general tone.<sup>8</sup>

Underlying the stated commitments is the OSCE emphasis on prevention as a privileged area for action, embracing democracy building and implementation of rule of law principles, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and resolution of politico-economic issues related to corruption, social precariousness and the environment—thus linking the organisation's three dimensions (politico-military, economic and environmental, and human) in a combined approach. In the OSCE view, the fostering of democratic regimes and of its associated principles, and of market economy rules, contributes to enhancing stability, thereby reducing the ground for the development of terrorist practices. These, together with the need to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, were identified as fundamental principles in the OSCE fight against terrorism, fitting well into the organisation's encompassing understanding of security,<sup>9</sup> and concentration on soft power approaches.

This effort constantly to adapt to the changing international conditions, here in particular those relating to terrorism, has been strengthened by the Porto decision to hold an Annual Security Review Conference from 2003, with the goal of assessing developments and the level of implementation of agreed commitments, as well as eventual new areas requiring attention. According to the OSCE's Secretary-General Jan Kubis, this strategy aims at creating an inventory of threats to security and stability in the OSCE area and analysing their changing nature and main causes, setting out how the OSCE can prevent or counter

7. OSCE Counter-Terrorism Network Terms of Reference, 11th Meeting of the Ministerial Council, Maastricht, Annex to MC.DEC/6/03, December 2, 2003.

8. OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, MC(11).JOUR/2, Annex 3, 11th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Maastricht, December 1–2, 2003; Victor-Yves Ghebali, "The 11th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council: Political Deadlock and Institutional Change", *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2004), p. 11.

9. Since its establishment in 1975, security within the OSCE framework has been defined in broad terms, concerning not only military aspects—the traditional conceptualisation of the term—but also political, economic, environmental and social aspects. This understanding of security, broadly diffused in post-Cold War Europe, in particular through the theoretical approaches of the Copenhagen School, demonstrates the innovative OSCE approach as early as the time of the Helsinki consultations.

threats to security and stability and contribute to relevant international efforts.<sup>10</sup> The two Annual Security Review Conferences held in June, 2003 and June, 2004 followed these general guidelines, focusing on the 'hard' dimensions of security, mainly developments regarding tightening control over MANPADS (man-portable air-defence systems), portable missiles capable of bringing down civil and military aircraft; control and security measures to render more difficult the forging of travel documents; and effective policing, regarded as dimensions gaining weight within the organisation's contribution to the fight against terrorism, and identifying as a new focus chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material.<sup>11</sup>

The fight against terrorism within the OSCE framework crosses, therefore, the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions, while embedding the OSCE institutions in a web of contacts, since the comprehensive approach developed by the OSCE to face the challenge of terrorism requires cooperation and interaction between and among the organisation's institutional resources. For example, combating the trafficking in human beings, an issue central to the human dimension of the OSCE, demands tighter border monitoring and policing activities, while having social and economic implications, revealing the inter-connection of mandates and instruments. This approach, not qualitatively new, has nevertheless been provided with new means and instruments, matching the high ranking of terrorism in the OSCE's post-September 11 agenda.

Through the Forum for Security Cooperation, the main institution within the politico-military dimension, the OSCE member states seek to increase border monitoring and policing activities. The establishment of the post of senior police advisor, with the task of formulating police assistance programmes, including border-policing projects, the use of crime intelligence systems and networks, and police training, reflects this aim. Closely linked to these tasks, monitoring the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and the provisions of the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, are also on the Forum's agenda. The enhancement of the OSCE capabilities with regard to specialised training, modern investigation techniques and criminal analysis methods, is fundamental to respond to the many threats associated with terrorism, such as illegal practices associated to trafficking. The OSCE experience in border monitoring and arms control might be useful in this regard, and together with policing are a particularly relevant area of OSCE activity.

The OSCE possibilities within the politico-military dimension should, nevertheless, be expanded and ameliorated. The sharing of information between OSCE states to foster transparency and further coordination of activities could be cost-effective. Moreover, the more visible specification of these activities in the mandates of the OSCE field Missions as fundamental vehicles for the spreading and implementation of OSCE commitments should be pursued, through increased field contacts between the OSCE Missions and Centres in particular regional

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10. "OSCE Secretary General outlines Organization's response to new threats to security", OSCE Press Release, April 11, 2003.

11. OSCE First Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, June 25–26, 2003 and Second Annual Security Review Conference, June 23–24, 2004, official documents available at <<http://www.osce.org>>. See also "OSCE Chairman Calls for Focus on New Areas in the Fight against Terrorism", OSCE Press Release, June 23, 2004; "OSCE Holds First Annual Security Review Conference", *CSCE Digest*, Vol. 36, No. 7 (2003), <<http://www.csce.gov>>.

areas, thus allowing for the exchange of experiences and alternative approaches to shared problems. The building of this type of regional networking for the fostering of policing-related practices, which could provide for coordinated policies to address transnational menaces to security and stability is problematic in Central Asia, showing the difficulties faced by the OSCE in the field.

Within the economic and environmental dimension, suppressing the financing of terrorism and money laundering, and addressing the socio-economic aspects related to the prevention of terrorism, such as good governance, support to educational systems, small and medium enterprise development and international trade relations, constitute the main areas of activity of the OCEEA. However, due to limited human and material resources regarding economic and environmental aspects, the OSCE must seek the cooperation of specialised partners, though it may be a facilitator and a political platform for discussion, formulation and implementation of local projects, given its field knowledge. This has been the case of several projects conducted by the OSCE presences in the field and sponsored by the European Union (EU) and the UN, such as cooperation between the southern Caucasus countries and the EU on a project contemplating the revival of the ancient Silk Road through the building of a pipeline bringing oil from the Caspian Sea to Europe.

The economic dimension is gaining momentum within the OSCE, given the identification of the economic aspects as fundamental in the fight against terror, since inefficient governmental policies, lack of transparency and abuses in economic practices and socio-economic underdevelopment combine in a dangerous recipe undermining stability. In addition, terrorist groups profit from these administrative non-transparent procedures and from corrupt officials to consolidate and perform irregular monetary transactions, in many cases resulting from illegal practices. Therefore, the strengthening of the economic dimension within the OSCE and its better integration in the daily activities of the organisation has been a concern. This could be done by better integrating the political aspects of economic development, such as fighting corruption, promoting the rule of law and good governance and eliciting government adherence to these principles.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, there are many difficulties to be faced by a limited-budget organisation and by its marginalisation, in many instances, as a partner by more influential and specialised organisations in the economic realm.

The human dimension is at the core of OSCE activities, embracing issues as diverse as legislative adaptation, minority concerns and trafficking in human beings. The multiple institutional involvement in the development and implementation of human related projects—through the activities of the ODIHR, the HCNM and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, in particular—is relevant since these are both overlapping and complementary. The adoption of new legislation and amendments to existing laws in order that they conform to international standards is an example of an issue addressed by all these human dimension institutions—minorities, electoral procedures, respect for human rights, and media freedom are some of the areas covered. The need to counter ‘hate language’, combat the trafficking in human beings,

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12. See International Crisis Group, “The OSCE in Central Asia: A New Strategy”, Asia Report 38, September 11, 2002; Martina Huber, “The Effectiveness of OSCE Missions”, *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (2003), p. 126.

and minority problems, together with the fostering of democratisation and institution building, are on the OSCE agenda. These might become sources of instability, used by terrorist groups to instigate protests and undermine socio-political cohesiveness.<sup>13</sup> In fact, according to OSCE sources, "fostering human rights, civil society and institution building can deprive terrorists of fertile breeding ground and undermine their recruitment potential".<sup>14</sup> The human dimension, at the core of the OSCE activities, is the most developed dimension within the organisation, and central to its contribution to global governance at the various levels of social and political interaction, from the governing authorities to the grass-roots level. It has, nevertheless, also been facing fundamental problems, particularly in Central Asia where a tendency to regression on democratisation related matters has been registered.

Complementing the work of these institutions, the OSCE field presences are a relevant tool for rendering operational the organisation's post-September 11 commitments. They may address the factors, developments and local conditions providing fertile ground for terrorism, in order to assist in preventing and countering them, in all three dimensions of the OSCE activities. Once these threats are properly identified, a proactive strategy addressing the root causes of terror can be developed, in consultation and cooperation with the host country authorities, and benefiting from the political support of the organisation's member states. In theory it demonstrates the OSCE's flexibility and capacity to adapt to the new challenges, particularly regarding the focus on terrorism, underlying the cross-cutting nature of its agenda and the use of soft power and quiet diplomacy as primary tools. However, its practical application has been raising a number of questions about the OSCE's ability to respond to the various challenges in its area.

The OSCE post-September 11 agenda envisages responding to the many threats associated with terrorism and in particular to address its roots in a preventive manner. However, while adopting new documents, reinforcing existing institutions, and establishing new bodies is a first step, the need for concrete measures and action is real since "today's weak states can easily turn into tomorrow's failed states, which could attract terrorists like flies around a carcass".<sup>15</sup> Therefore, rendering operational the wording of documents and the OSCE institutions' mandates is a precondition for a positive contribution of the organisation to the global fight against terror, as a fundamental dimension of the more general goal of promoting global governance. The relevance of the OSCE is measured not by the words and activities on its agenda, but by their concrete implementation.

Central Asia has become a preferential area for the implementation of the OSCE post-September 11 agenda, particularly of its strategy in the fight against terrorism, due to the favourable conditions in place for the birth and development of terrorist groups, including fragile political regimes and poor socio-economic conditions. The

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13. Besides OSCE official documents, see Freimut Duve, Special Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council on Combating Terrorism, FOM.GAL/6/02, April 12, 2002; Helga Konrad, "Trafficking in Human Beings—The Ugly Face of Europe", *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2002), pp. 260–271; Rolf Ekeus, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), "Preventive Diplomacy", Muller Lecture, The Hague, January 30, 2003, p. 13.

14. Kirsten Biering, OSCE Representative at the Bishkek Conference, OSCE Bishkek Conference Report, December 13–14, 2001, p. 68.

15. "OSCE: Foreign Ministers Adopt Broad-Ranging Action Plan to Combat Terrorism", Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), December 5, 2001.



area's instability associated with the spreading of illicit practices combines to form a potentially dangerous cauldron which must be damped down by thwarting the development of illegal activities with the diffusion and application of the OSCE principles and commitments—a challenge entangled in complexity.

### **Addressing the Challenges to Global Governance in Central Asia: The Fight Against Terrorism as a Primary Goal**

Central Asia has been focus of attention as a place where radicalism is taking root, owing to the area's economic resources—in particular oil and natural gas—lack of political unity, serious socio-economic difficulties, and the sprouting of extremism based on illicit practices of a transnational character. In addition, domestic national tensions and unsettled minority issues, such as in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, further aggravate the existing difficult and volatile situation. Moreover, the tendency of the already tough Central Asian regimes further to tighten control has led to a multiplication of human rights violations and restrictions to fundamental freedoms, justified on the basis of the increasing threats of terrorism and on the need to hinder the growth of terrorist networks.

The fight against terror gave the “authoritarian regimes of Central Asia more opportunities for strengthening their security forces, increasing control over society, for fighting political opposition and dissidents under the pretext of counteracting extremism and radicalism”.<sup>16</sup> However, in the OSCE view, terrorism cannot be used as an excuse for human rights violations. “We must not allow the erosion of the principle of the universality of human rights, which forms the core of our value system and the foundation of our legitimacy when fighting terrorism”.<sup>17</sup> Such attitudes contradict the very basis of the OSCE activities by violating one of the core principles of the organisation since its inception, and resulting in the loss of credibility of the OSCE efforts in the last decades since the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms has been at the heart of the organisation's concerns, as reflected in the mandates of its institutions and field operations.

The United States has shown its commitment and support for OSCE activities in the area, aiming at expanding “the circle of peace and democracy” by exploring proposals to strengthen the economies of Central Asia and promote the kinds of political reforms that will ultimately give these countries long-term stability and

16. Yevgeniy Zhovtis, Director of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, “11th September: Consequences for Human Rights in Central Asia”, *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2002), p. 1. See also Aaron Rhodes and Paula Tscherne-Lempiäinen, “Human Rights and Terrorism in the Central Asian OSCE States”, *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2002), pp. 37–50; Gérard Stoudmann, “Finding a Balance between Ensuring Security and Protecting Human Rights in the Fight against Terrorism”, *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (2002), p. 282.

17. Gérard Stoudmann, “Finding a Balance between Ensuring Security and Protecting Human Rights in the Fight against Terrorism”, *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (2002), p. 284. See also “OSCE CIO Calls for a ‘Campaign to Combat Terrorism Worldwide’”, OSCE Press Release, September 21, 2001. “We are living in difficult times when the temptation to roll back on some of the civil liberties under the fighting terrorism flag is stronger than ever”, Freimut Duve, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, “Lessons Learnt from 11 September”, address at the Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale Entwicklung. “Just as religion may wrongly be used to justify terrorism, so can ‘anti-terrorism’ actions of governments wrongly be used to justify actions that undermine human rights and freedom of religion or belief”, OSCE Conference on The Role of Religion and Belief in a Democratic Society: Searching for Ways to Combat Terrorism and Extremism, Baku, CIO.GAL/86/02, October 17, 2002.

security.<sup>18</sup> However, since the United States is looking for the support of these countries in the fight against terrorism, it may overlook human rights violations and other sensitive issues, which nevertheless should not be lost within the OSCE framework. Unfortunately, all of this is accompanied by the fact that Western states, engaged in the resolution of global geopolitical problems and satisfied with the support coming from these authoritarian regimes, clearly distance themselves from developments within the area.<sup>19</sup> This reflects the paradox resulting from the violation of human rights in some Western countries, including the United States, which has lately been confronted with severe criticism over the treatment of prisoners of war and of personal data.<sup>20</sup> This has led to the questioning Western legitimacy in making humanitarian accusations and demands.

Moreover, the competition between the United States and Russia for economic and politico-military influence in the area, instead of generating positive developments might incite contradictory policies with undefined consequences. For instance, in Kazakhstan the United States have been involved in the reform of defence structures and the training of officials, while Russia maintains its policy of supplying military equipment at favourable prices. This has been leading to an increasing dependency on the United States regarding military aspects and on Russia concerning the acquisition of weaponry,<sup>21</sup> revealing antagonist trends that instead of contributing to the building of a stable regime, might instil internal competition exacerbating the weaknesses of the regime, such as widespread corruption. In addition, for Washington, furthering its engagement in the area is understood as more leverage in the fight against terrorism, while Russia does not want to lose what it regards as privileged access to an area described as Moscow's 'backyard'. The strengthening of its military presence in Central Asia, in particular in Tajikistan, after the June 2004 agreement with the Tajik authorities which permitted Russia to transform its 201<sup>st</sup> Motorised Division in the country into a permanent military base, extended Russian control of the border with Afghanistan until 2006, and allowed its administration of the Nurek space-surveillance centre, in exchange for a reduction of the Tajik debt.<sup>22</sup> In addition, to contour the increasing Western presence in the area, Russia has been seeking to expand its influence through multilateral regional agencies, such as the Collective Security Treaty Organisation and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, where Russia is a full member.<sup>23</sup> These organisations have turned their attention to

18. Speech by United States Ambassador Elizabeth Jones at the German Studies Association Annual Conference, United States Department of State International Information Programs, October 5, 2001.

19. Yevgeniy Zhovtis, "11th September: Consequences for Human Rights in Central Asia", *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2002), p. 2.

20. Arie Bloed, "The War Against Terrorism Raises Concerns About Human Rights", *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2002), p. 74. For example, in this regard, Freimut Duve has criticized the United States' authorities for using new legislation against terrorism to monitor the private lives of citizens, through the exposure of individuals' library records, newspaper subscriptions and bookstores receipts. See "Press Profile", *OSCE Newsletter*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2003), p. 19.

21. Vicken Cheterian, "Na Engrenagem da Guerra: A Ásia Central, Retaguarda Americana", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Vol. 4, No. 47 (2003), p. 18.

22. "Carrots, Sticks, and the Tajik-Afghan Border", *REF/RL Central Asia Report*, Vol. 4, No. 22 (2004); International Crisis Group, *Crisis Watch Bulletin*, No. 11 (1 July 2004), p. 4.

23. Within the CIS framework, the Collective Security Treaty of 1992 gave place in May, 2002 to the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation was established in June, 2001, including Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

the fight against the “three threats to regional security”—terrorism, separatism and extremism—giving Russia a prominent place in the area. Furthermore, the area’s proximity to Afghan territory gives it an added geo-strategic and political relevance, which has been translated in this deeper involvement from external players. However, these competing exogenous influences, do not form a clear part of an integrated and cohesive strategy within the global fight against terror. Indeed they may have a negative impact on building stability in the area, and on raising awareness of the urgency to construct solid democratic principles, respecting the rule of law and opposing all sources of illegal revenues which could favour the development of terrorist networks.

The events of September 11 have made clear in the West the importance for general security of stability in Central Asia, an area where the OSCE might play a fundamental confidence-building and democratisation role. In this sense, the OSCE should provide an alternative view of political and economic development in Central Asia, addressing the region’s specificities and cultural differences. In a place where other international organisations have been increasingly involved, the OSCE must focus on its comparative advantages in order not to lose relevance, particularly its decade’s long presence, local knowledge and interlocking nature of its agenda. The increased involvement of the United States in the area should also be acknowledged, a military presence that has been shifting the traditional geo-strategic local balance by countering Russia’s leading role in the region.

The OSCE’s involvement in Central Asia dates back to March, 1995, when the organisation opened the Central Asian Liaison Office (CALO) with headquarters in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, with the goal of bringing the Central Asian states more into the ambit of the organisation. The tasks of the Office related to the promotion of contacts and exchange of information as well as the implementation of human dimension projects in collaboration with the ODIHR, particularly on gender issues, migration and election assistance. CALO was renamed OSCE Centre in Tashkent in December, 2000,<sup>24</sup> after the deepening of the OSCE involvement in the area by opening Centres in Almaty, Ashgabad and Bishkek, all of them with a reduced staff of four or five officers.<sup>25</sup> This increasing presence was complemented by the decision also to establish OSCE Offices in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, and to rename the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan as OSCE Centre in Dushanbe, with five field delegations following the regional political and security situation, in Guam, Khujand, Kulyab, Kungan-Teppa and Shartuz. These centres, by promoting OSCE principles and facilitating contacts and cooperation with these republics in all OSCE dimensions,<sup>26</sup> reveal the organisation’s concern for the Asian dimension before the tragic events of September 11, and its reinforced counter-terrorism commitments afterwards.

Emphasis is placed on the regional aspects of all OSCE dimensions, including the economic, environmental, human and political aspects of security, translated in institution building, strengthening the rule of law, law enforcement and improving the efficiency of a judiciary as a strong barrier against terrorist

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24. 314th OSCE Permanent Council (PC) Meeting, PC.DEC/397, December 14, 2000.

25. 179th OSCE PC Meeting, PC.DEC/243, 244 and 245, July 23, 1998 on the establishment of the OSCE Center in Almaty, Kazakhstan; the OSCE Center in Ashgabad, Turkmenistan and the OSCE Center in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, respectively.

26. 269th PC Meeting, PC.DEC/339, agenda item 6, February 10, 2000; to “Annual Report on OSCE Activities 2003”, OSCE Secretariat, Vienna, 2003.

activity,<sup>27</sup> that is, soft security at the service of good governance. Providing opportunities for a timely identification of threats and tensions, these offices serve as a tool of preventive diplomacy.<sup>28</sup> This strategic focus is fundamental since the potential for conflict stems from a wide range of sources, but mainly from poor security policies, declining socio-economic opportunities, and authoritarian political cultures and institutions. Therefore, "a (preventive) anti-terrorism policy which does not pay attention to social structures of oppression, exploitation and marginalisation is doomed to failure".<sup>29</sup>

One of the OSCE's main goals in the area is the promotion of regional cooperation in the fight against terrorism by mobilising these countries to act in concert. This strategy became clear in the Tashkent and Bishkek Conferences, where the main conclusions drew on the need to combat terrorism while fully respecting human rights and the rule of law, and on the need to assist these countries financially in order that they may consolidate the path towards democratisation,<sup>30</sup> a difficult task in an unfavourable setting. Despite the commitments made, the regional approach has not always been efficacious in creating the necessary synergies and fostering links in the area. The interpretation of this regional strategy as lack of knowledge or unwillingness from the international community to address the specificities of each country has led to poor cooperation, described by a local diplomat as an "abject failure".<sup>31</sup> The regional approach might be important, but it must be filled with substance in the sense that the states involved must understand regional cooperation as an advantage from which formulated expectations and concrete results will materialise.

The economic and political differences between the Central Asian countries make a patchwork of competing interests and clashing agendas that render difficult the promotion of a regional framework for cooperation. The various problems include political and transnational issues, the rise of radical extremism and illicit trading practices. Moreover, the energetic imbalances in the area, for example, which could have become a factor for enhanced regional cooperation, did not raise the anticipated possibilities for collaboration. Therefore, the OSCE must combine in-country activities directed at particular problems with the implementation of a regional strategy involving these states in a cooperative framework. To pursue this ambitious goal, a progressive strategy must be adopted, building on bilateral agreements, fostering the understanding of the cross-cutting nature of the challenges faced and, from then, persuading the various governments in the area to take advantage of the profits that might result from enhanced regional cooperation—if not in general terms, at least with regard to the most pressing matters, most notably border issues, water management and energy resources.

27. Ambassador Zannier, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, "OSCE in Central Asia", SEC.GAL/107/03, June 11, 2003.

28. Rolf Ekeus, OSCE HCNM, "Preventive Diplomacy", Muller Lecture, The Hague, January 30, 2003, p. 13.

29. Ige Dekker, "Declaration on the Fight Against Terrorism and the Protection of Human Rights—A Resolvable Conflict", *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (2003), p. 326. See also International Crisis Group, "The OSCE in Central Asia: A New Strategy", Asia Report 38, September 11, 2002.

30. Declaration of the Bishkek International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: Strengthening the Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, December 13–14, 2001. Refer also to the December 28, 2001 Tashkent Declaration of Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, OSCE registered as SEC.DEL/9/02, January 17, 2002.

31. "Hanging Separately: The Heavy Costs of Non-Cooperation", *The Economist*, July 26, 2003, p. 11.

Successful initiatives already in force in one or more countries could be enlarged to the whole area, such as enlarging the reach and rendering operational similar law enforcement agencies to the Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU) established in Kyrgyzstan under the OSCE aegis.<sup>32</sup> This addresses policing concepts and practices in areas such as police investigations, drugs control programmes, operational information, analysis systems and police capacity to prevent public disorder. Reflecting this effort at regional cooperation, the SPMU, at the request of the government of Tajikistan, conducted an assessment of border policing issues in Tajik territory and prepared a draft plan concerning training and technical support, constituting an example of regional cooperation promoted by the OSCE. The OSCE Centre in Bishkek has been engaged in the facilitation of intra-regional cooperation among Central Asian states on transborder issues, an area of much concern for these governments and where regional cooperation practices might also be promoted.

The promotion of good governance, with a focus on human issues, particularly democratisation, rule of law and human rights, has been a key area for OSCE intervention. It has been involved in the reform of the judiciary, including penal reform, prison regimes and law enforcement agencies and the adaptation of national legislation to international standards, addressing such issues as the fight against corruption and violation of fundamental freedoms and human rights, and the creation of legal precepts to address legislative gaps. An example of such gaps is the total absence in the Central Asian countries of comprehensive anti-money laundering legislation. The OSCE has also favoured the establishment of Ombudsman institutions. Many projects have been initiated, by the OSCE alone or in collaboration with other international organisations, with mixed results. For example, the European Commission and the OSCE ODIHR have signed an agreement on a joint programme for advancing human rights and democratisation in Central Asia, financed by the former, including technical assistance projects in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. In collaboration with other partners, the OSCE has engaged in the setting up of an independent consultative body to support the newly created Public Council for Good Governance in Kyrgyzstan, envisaging the fight against corruption and the promotion of best practices, a relevant step in a regional context where, for example, in Turkmenistan, several reports denounce the involvement of regime officials in illicit activities, such as drug trafficking.<sup>33</sup>

Together with the UN, the OSCE has organised workshops on money laundering in Bishkek and Astana, and national roundtables in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, discussing anti-money laundering and other means of financing terrorism, allowing the preparation of draft laws, under consideration by the national governments. To improve monitoring and control practices, the organisation has launched initiatives directed at the training of border officials and related to arms control, including police training courses in Azerbaijan with a focus on conflict resolution, public order policing and human rights. There has been assistance in border service reform in Kazakhstan, a pilot project on border traffic between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan at the Hayraton Bridge checkpoint, and a seminar

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32. "OSCE Envoy Urges Kyrgyzstan to Become Example of Good Governance for Central Asia", OSCE Press Release, May 21, 2003.

33. "Turkmen President in a Somber Mood", *RFE/RL Asia Report*, Vol. 4, No. 25 (June 29, 2004).

on the falsification of travel documents. In addition there have been discussions with these states on the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security.

The OSCE has also been addressing the problems of multi-ethnic communities, which have brought about sporadic clashes, particularly in Kyrgyzstan with the Uzbek minority and in Turkmenistan regarding the Russian minority, a source of instability demanding preventive efforts. The measures adopted have included the development of conflict management skills in particular sensitive areas, and the facilitation of dialogue between authorities, civil society and opposing groups. The HCNM has been supporting the OSCE Centres, initiating projects related to language, the regular monitoring of inter-ethnic relations, and maintaining contacts with national authorities as well as organising events involving civil society and raising awareness about multiethnic communities. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has also been attentive to developments in the area, reporting many violations with regard to manipulation of information, restrictions to free reporting and harassment of journalists. In this context, projects related to the role of the media as a vehicle for the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination have been launched.

However, progress has been slow and some obstacles are almost insurmountable. These activities have been pursued with many difficulties, due not only to the political inflexibility of the authorities in the Central Asian countries, but also owing to OSCE's limitations, such as the lack of persuasive power, enforcement mechanisms and financial means, together with the non-legally binding nature of its decisions.<sup>34</sup> The deep socio-economic and cultural differences among these states along with a political unwillingness to cooperate, and reluctance to relinquish power or hand advantage to regional rivals,<sup>35</sup> with arguments that "strong rule is the only way to ensure stability in the region, and that democratisation is an alien or at least premature process, likely to unleash uncontrollable political forces, including ethnic, tribal and sectarian strife",<sup>36</sup> have raised difficulties in rendering OSCE goals operational in the area. "From west to east, Central Asia moves from simplistic clarity to muddled middle ground. If 'one-man rule' makes for an easy starting place in Turkmenistan, the situation grows somewhat more complex in neighbouring Uzbekistan, murkier still in Tajikistan, and downright bewildering in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan".<sup>37</sup>

In addition, the Central Asian states have expressed their disappointment with OSCE involvement, seeing it as a stigma since OSCE involvement signals an area of tension, and criticising the organisation's focus on human dimension matters while paying little attention to politico-military and economic and environmental issues. In order to overcome such criticism, the OSCE has enlarged the scope of its activities to reflect a more balanced approach. Exemplifying this effort, the OSCE has been facilitating training for officials from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and

34. For further detail on the OSCE's crisis management difficulties see Maria Raquel Freire, "Crisis Management: The OSCE in the Republic of Moldova", *Journal of Conflict, Security and Development*, No. 2 (2002), pp. 69–90.

35. Edmund Herzig and Neil Melvin, "Central Asia: Aspects of Security and Stability", *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2003), p. 182.

36. *Ibid*, p. 181.

37. "The Personal and the Political in Kyrgyzstan", *RFE/RL Central Asia Report*, Vol. 4, No. 22 (June 8, 2004).

Tajikistan to study ways of cross-border cooperation focusing on economic and environmental aspects, and institutionalising police practices,<sup>38</sup> translating the organisation's belief that increased exchange of experiences and effective police practices—whether controlling borders or directing road traffic—can have a major impact on the business and investment climate.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, while these activities have been reflecting the main principles underlying its post-September 11 agenda—those of flexibility and interlocking nature of its mandate—the OSCE's limitations have been surpassing its possibilities in a highly demanding area.

The transference of Western liberal-democratic principles to these societies does not correspond to the region's needs. Acknowledging the profound differences between these societies and the West is necessary for an effective response to their problems. The OSCE experience in the field has allowed a growing awareness of the need for a particularly tailored approach to the region, though its concretisation has revealed a difficult task. "In Central Asia there is a widespread popular and elite perception that concessions to [the] Western agenda are a mark of weakness and dependence".<sup>40</sup> Besides a dynamic approach involving the organisation's various dimensions, an innovative strategy moulded to the area's specificities is required. And this must encompass stronger OSCE influence over the governments of the region, by demonstrating the relevance of its strategy and activities to their societies. This is necessary in order that the OSCE does not "fade into irrelevance, as the political paths of Central Asian states take them further away from the ideals on which the organisation was founded".<sup>41</sup>

The many difficulties experienced by the OSCE in Central Asia should, however, not discourage its engagement. The slow changes and small achievements should encourage further action and the exploration of other options. It should be no surprise that the process of democratisation and reform is a long-term challenge to the organisation, demanding its continuous involvement and the field presences' flexibility to adapt to regional specificities and to adopt adequate procedures to respond to local needs, particularly in such an undemocratic setting. In fact, any lasting solution for effective government must be

firmly grounded in democratic politics in the broadest sense. In other words not democracy as practised by any particular country or group of countries—but rather a set of principles and core values that allow poor people to gain power through participation while protecting them from arbitrary, unaccountable actions.<sup>42</sup>

And the OSCE must reflect this broad and flexible understanding of good governance to attain success in a much unstable and mistrusting setting.

38. "Central Asia and the OSCE: Intensifying the Spirit of Partnership", *OSCE Newsletter*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2003), p. 7.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Edmund Herzig and Neil Melvin, "Central Asia: Aspects of Security and Stability", *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2003), p. 185.

41. International Crisis Group, "The OSCE in Central Asia: A New Strategy", *Asia Report* 38, September 11, 2002.

42. "Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World", *United Nations Human Development Report* 2002.

## Matching Words With Action: An Assessment of the OSCE's Involvement in Central Asia

The OSCE states have shown their concern over increasing terrorist activities and in a short time frame have adopted a series of documents condemning terrorism and the illicit practices often associated with it. This effort led, for example, to the adoption of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, in December 2003, as a sign of the consensus found among the OSCE states regarding the need to face the current threats. However, the role of the OSCE has been limited to constructing a political framework for action, encouraging cooperation and coordination between actors, and urging states to adopt national legislation in support of OSCE goals. The OSCE, which should be the instrument of choice for dealing with these problems, particularly in Central Asia, is under-utilised and has been relegated to the margins by policy makers.<sup>43</sup> This depreciation has been evident both concerning field operations and headquarters' decisions along with the member states positioning within and towards the organisation. This has been notorious, for example, in the low key representation at the organisation's most important meetings, such as the annual Ministerial Council, for example, which may signal the reduced importance attached to the organisation by some of its participating states, in particular European countries and the United States. Decision-making by consensus together with the politically-binding nature of the commitments endorsed by all participating members have revealed vagueness and political unwillingness, constituting a potential handicap regarding the implementation of the organisation's objectives.

In addition, Russia has been demonstrating apprehension towards the OSCE, criticising it for applying double standards. While arguing "the OSCE is entering a new phase of its existence after 11 September", and that it "should play a far more prominent role in the security architecture of Europe and find adequate answers to the current security threats, mainly terrorism and organised crime",<sup>44</sup> Russia maintains the OSCE should take on a more balanced approach, not only with regard to the geographical focus of its activities, but also concerning its main areas of activity, i.e. politico-military issues, economic and environmental aspects, and the human dimension. Moreover, while Moscow is one of the principal defenders of the OSCE, it is also one of its most controversial participants, refusing to be constrained when its own interests do not coincide with those of the OSCE. Russia is increasingly reluctant to see the OSCE's role in peacekeeping and arms control expanding in the former Soviet area, which might limit its actions, of a political, economic and military nature, in neighbouring countries.

The OSCE states commitment to the organisation's decisions should be pragmatic and avoid privileging national interests to the detriment of the building of a collective will in the fight against terror. "It is often forgotten that the organisation is really us. It is as strong or as weak as we want it to be".<sup>45</sup>

43. B. Robert, "For Eurasian Security, Call the OSCE Not NATO", *OSCE Newsletter*, Vol. 9, No. 11 (2002), p. 6.

44. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, cited in "Security Issues Dominate Meeting between Mr. Ivanov and Mr. Geoana in Moscow", OSCE Press Release, October 23, 2001. See also Ivanov's address at the OSCE 9th Ministerial Council Meeting, December 4, 2001.

45. "The OSCE is Us", says incoming Dutch Chairman-in-Office", *OSCE Newsletter*, Vol. 9, No. 11 (2002), p. 3.



Decision-making at headquarters should not be obstructed by particular interests, as has often been the case, hampering the reach of detailed and focused decisions relating to the many challenges in the OSCE area. The result is often loose recommendations and vague commitments, allowing misinterpretation and having a negative impact with regard to the rendering operational of the organisation's tasks in the field. This political will must be extended to the receptor countries of OSCE field activities, since "in order for a dialogue to be constructive, visible steps must be taken towards fulfilling the commitments that all of us assumed when we joined this organisation".<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, in the fight against terrorism, the use of soft power in the form of diplomacy and the building of shared consensus as well as acceptance of differences is fundamental. The politics of most of the Central Asian countries differ from Western standards. Their commitment to the anti-terrorist cause and Western economic and political support might mean that they will not comply with the OSCE human rights standards. Since these states are vital elements in the international coalition against terror, the international community may tolerate practices contradicting OSCE commitments in order not to build resentment and opposition within these administrations. Thus, the OSCE has the added task of getting closer to the authorities in these countries and managing to construct a transparent relationship with them based on mutual confidence, respect and open dialogue. Gaining the Central Asian states' confidence towards its activities in the area, the OSCE might be able to influence positively the formulation and adaptation of legislation as well as to foster democracy-building and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It should, however, be clear that the fight against terror cannot be an excuse for the violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms, nor should economic and social difficulties be used to carry out violent actions.

A close relationship between the organisation and the Central Asian states might be promoted through the OSCE Centres in the area. The problem is that these—one of the OSCE's greatest strengths—have not been as active and as involved as would be desirable.<sup>47</sup> Despite defining border monitoring, police training and law enforcement as privileged areas for action, and proposing the development of activities to raise awareness, foster the OSCE principles and implement projects focusing on these issue-areas, the OSCE in the field has been facing many limitations, arising from both internal and external aspects of the organisation's functioning. A better integration of terror-related tasks in the field mandates is mandatory along with the definition of matching capacities in terms of physical and material conditions as well as human resources necessary for the success of any field initiatives. These field presences need a long-term strategy, with a strong regional dimension, developed in an integrated way by all OSCE Centres in the area and in close collaboration with the OSCE institutions and headquarters. The OSCE should, therefore, enlarge the reach of its field mandates by incorporating economic and security issues more clearly, reflecting the complementary nature of its different dimensions of activity, and transforming generalities into concrete action, balancing politico-security issues with economic

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46. Report of President Martti Ahtisaari, personal envoy of the CIO for the participating states in Central Asia, CIO's Activity Report for 2003, OSCE Vienna Secretariat, 2003, p. 147.

47. See D. Norris, "The EU and the OSCE in the War on Terrorism", *BASIC Notes*, September 5, 2002.

and human dimension measures. "It is the connected nature of these dimensions rather than the dimensions on their own which constitutes the major competitive strength of the OSCE and that needs to be reflected in Mission activities".<sup>48</sup>

A more active chairman-in-office, bridging the various OSCE institutions' initiatives and conferring on them a united and strongest face, could be advantageous. In addition, the organisation's activities should follow the conditionality principle in order to ensure that progress in meeting OSCE standards is verified. Considering possible ways of rewarding compliance could reveal advantages, both politically by praising in a visible way the states concerned and economically by directing additional resources for the development of new projects.

From 2003 the OSCE field projects have depended not only on the voluntary contributions of its member states, but also claimed a share of the organisation's budget—about one million euros to the OSCE Centres in Central Asia.<sup>49</sup> This increase in financial means aims at allowing more dynamism and independence of those in the field in promoting initiatives directed at the fostering of democratisation and the building of security. Nevertheless, this financial improvement must be matched by the deployment of a sufficient number of field officers, as well as care regarding the skills and qualifications of these officers, in order that the concretisation of the new activities might be pursued. In many cases, the field presences have a strength of only four or five people, an insufficient staffing for managing and implementing the necessary initiatives related to the fight against terrorism, as well as to the daily work of these missions.

Moreover, the implementation of projects should be planned in collaboration with local authorities and, if applicable, other international agents in the field, and attend to the needs of the host governments and of the populations. Thus, the prior knowledge of the situation and the definition of a clear strategy of intervention, focused and needs-oriented should underline the OSCE presences in the field. These should focus more on problem solving than on the organisation of seminars, many times with little visibility and a reduced impact.<sup>50</sup> "A proliferation of meetings, seminars, conferences and workshops carries a risk of these being identified as the sole measure of field work", with negative consequences for the organisation both at the programmatic and operational level.<sup>51</sup> In addition, in the words of a local expert, they should reflect a change from "the current approach of 'stability through democratisation' to one of 'democracy through stabilisation'".<sup>52</sup> Confidence and legitimacy will be acquired not by nicely-worded declarations, but by effective action and the implementation of concrete programmes with direct impact in the daily lives of the populations and at the level of the local and central authorities in the host countries. In addition, the promotion of good governance should not be understood by the local leadership as a

48. Martina Huber, "The Effectiveness of OSCE Missions", *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (2003), p. 130.

49. "Fresh Funding Boosts Economic-Environmental Work in Central Asia", *OSCE Newsletter*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2003), pp. 7–9.

50. See R. Barry, "The OSCE: A Forgotten Transatlantic Security Organisation?", BASIC Research Report No. 3, British American Security Information Council, July 2002.

51. Ambassador Francisco Seixas da Costa, "Central Asia: Not Always a Silk Road to Democracy. The View Beyond the Hofburg", *OSCE Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (2004), p. 16.

52. Valentine Bogatyrev, director, International Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, "The Central Asia Transition: Threats to Security", *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2003), p. 286.

direct threat to their centralised and authoritarian power, suggesting negative reactions towards OSCE-promoted goals and activities.

Therefore, a balance is necessary between this interaction of the field presences with the host authorities and the completion of OSCE mandates. While there must be mutual adjustments, these should not mean disregarding fundamental principles or become benign cooperation in the sense of overlooking violations or minimising non-compliance. "Criticism and monitoring of events have their uses, but they are no substitute for assistance to participating states in those fields where it is requested, and in strict and full compliance with the Mission's mandate".<sup>53</sup>

The crosscutting character of the OSCE dimensions, many times referred to by its main representatives,<sup>54</sup> might reveal advantages in addressing the multi-faceted challenges of terrorism. By linking security with economic and environmental aspects, as well as humanitarian concerns, the organisation may formulate comprehensive responses, integrating these different dimensions and generating a complex and integrated approach required to address the threats associated with terrorism. The implementation of all-encompassing projects in Central Asia, including cooperation with other international organisations, is an example. However, the former Soviet countries should not be assumed to be an homogenous group given the many differences with regard to their political orientation, cultural traditions and economic options, despite a shared past under Soviet control. Regional rivalry, particularly between the two major powers in the area, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan's commitment to permanent neutrality, have been constraining the advancement of regional cooperation initiatives. Only by taking into account the region's specificities and each country's expectations and willingness to comply and benefit from the OSCE's involvement, might the organisation have a positive impact in the area. The fight against terrorism, for all the complexity of elements that it entails, demands from the OSCE a clear strategy respecting differences, while simultaneously playing with this diversity for the richness it offers, to foster collaboration and the effective implementation of the OSCE commitments in its entire area.

In sum, the OSCE's post-September 11 agenda has been elaborated by the inclusion of a set of systematised guidelines regarding the roots, principal threats and joint commitments of the OSCE states in the fight against terrorism. This has been pursued within the global effort to combat terrorism, including the OSCE's effort to harmonise the commitments made by its participating states, through acceptance and ratification of the twelve UN terror-related Conventions.<sup>55</sup> Within the OSCE, the decisions and commitments reached have a consensual basis and reflect the traditional OSCE understanding of security as an enlarged concept involving politico-military, economic and human dimension aspects. Moreover, security within the OSCE region must be built over the fostering of the rule of law and democratisation principles and the promotion of respect

53. "Albanian Ambassador Urges OSCE to Hold Summit in 2005", *OSCE Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (2004), p. 25.

54. Address by the OSCE Secretary-General Ambassador Jan Kubis, First Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Almaty, SEC.GAL/98/02, June 6, 2002.

55. Intervention of Ambassador Inocencio F. Arias, Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the UN Secretary-General, Special 477th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, PC.DEL/1376/03/Rev.1, November 18, 2003.

for human rights and fundamental principles. Although this emphasis on soft security might seem to drive the OSCE away from the central focus of the fight against terrorism, which to a certain extent is mainly grounded on hard security matters, such as controlling flows of weapons and active measures to address money laundering and counter the financing of terrorism, the fact is that the OSCE, within its limitations, has added an harder dimension to its approach. Increasingly focusing on police training and border monitoring, the organisation has been conferring greater emphasis on hard security questions as a relevant dimension in the fight against terrorism and the promotion of regional security. The focus on the implementation of the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, including agreement to tighten control over the export of some weapons, in particular MANPADS, and further work on the monitoring of security and destruction of stockpiles of ammunition and explosives, are examples.<sup>56</sup> For the OSCE, these demonstrate how small steps in the right direction might become potential preventive measures and incite regional cooperation, with positive repercussions for overall regional stability.

This all-encompassing approach, combining democracy-related aspects with operational policing activities, has become a unique feature of the OSCE, with valuable potential when applied to counter-terrorism activities. Despite the many limitations faced by the OSCE, with regard to its areas of strength the organisation has been able to demonstrate dynamism and a positive contribution to global governance. The essence of the OSCE strategy concentrates on the diffusion of its main principles to its wide area, allowing that the new commitments agreed in the framing of its post-September 11 agenda, such as the fostering of transparency in politico-military affairs, including for example the combat against corruption and other illicit practices, have a positive effect in the promotion of good governance. However, the OSCE states must be committed to these principles since without their implementation there will be no improvements.

The singularity of the OSCE derives also from the combination of an enlarged membership, including the United States, Russia and the Asian countries, thus providing a unique European forum for dialogue concerning the strategies to follow in the combat against terror. In addition, the OSCE also envisages operational measures through the mandates of its field deployments. The field experience of the OSCE, despite the many difficulties, has strengthened its institutional record on human dimension issues, particularly democratisation-related matters, and of its politico-military mandate. The OSCE's politically binding resolutions allied to non-military means have also allowed its direct involvement in delicate matters, particularly those relating to policing, border control, minority issues and democratisation. These features allow the OSCE an unique role and place in the global campaign against terror, despite the increased involvement of other international organisations in the area. A low profile role, addressing the various levels of governance, including the grass-roots level, as well as interlinking the organisation's different dimensions of activity, and underlining the relevance of the non-military aspects of the fight against terrorism, combine in an innovative way to respond to the challenges of global governance, though not without difficulties.

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56. "OSCE States Agree to Tighten Control over Export of Shoulder-Fired Missiles", OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation Press Release, May 26, 2004; Speech by James Cox, Chief US Arms Control Delegate to the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, Session 3, Vienna, June 24, 2004.

## Conclusion

The fight against terrorism has revealed a complex task, requiring the combination of efforts and political willingness to implement restrictive measures of an economic and political nature against terrorist groups, in order to diminish their possibilities for violent action. In addition, "anti-terrorism policies and strategies should not only concentrate on countering the most immediate threats. They also have to be forward looking and capable of anticipating tomorrow's security scenarios, in order to prevent future terrorist actions".<sup>57</sup> The OSCE contribution to this global fight has been limited, though not without relevance. The organisation's efforts have concentrated on the areas where it enjoys comparative advantages in the face of other actors, particularly preventive aspects of this fight along with key areas of activity, including human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy-building, legislative adaptation and politico-military aspects, such as the reformation of security forces, in particular the police and border monitoring. By developing its activities in an integrated way, where politico-military, economic and humanitarian aspects are intertwined, and combining these to form an all-encompassing strategy, the OSCE aims at addressing the issue of terror in all its dimensions.

After the September 11 attacks on the United States, the OSCE has strengthened and enriched its agenda on terrorism. However, despite many declarations and the good intentions expressed, the OSCE has been facing many obstacles in the implementation of agreed commitments. These limitations arise both from endogenous constraints and exogenous aspects directly related to its daily activities and decision-making, thus affecting the organisation's functioning. Conciliatory decision-making by consensus limits in many instances the adoption of detailed resolutions. This results in ambiguous and vague compromises which are difficult to apply and allow for misinterpretation of the mandate. The means available both in Vienna and in the field impose budget restrictions preventing the appointment of more specialised personnel, and thus the human and material strengthening of field activities is not an easy task. In addition, rendering decisions taken by the OSCE Vienna made operational in the field demands not only physical resources but also a capacity to build trust and find openness and receptiveness in the host country, at all levels of social and political interaction, from the central authorities to the population, as well as with other international organisations.

These aspects associated with the OSCE's lack of real power have limited its contribution in the global fight against terrorism, though its norm-setting, monitoring and advising role should be positively mentioned. The adoption of the Charter on Terrorism and of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century by the organisation's 55 states demonstrates the OSCE's concern for systematising commitments and practices in the fight against terror. Moreover, its presence in the field, particularly in the former Soviet area, has revealed the OSCE's possibilities in an area of much instability, where it might play a unique role.

Terrorism is a global phenomenon requiring a global response. No institution or state by itself is ready to embark upon this fight alone. Therefore, progress in

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57. OSCE Chairman-in-Office Martins da Cruz, High Level Meeting on the Prevention and Combat of Terrorism, Lisbon, June 12, 2002.

controlling the spread of terrorist threats and violent actions will result from a combined approach, whereof the OSCE should be a part. Expectations should not be too high, but realistic regarding the organisation's possibilities and limitations, and the emphasis should be placed where the OSCE has shown comparative advantages, particularly in preventive tasks. Moreover, the OSCE states must be whole-heartedly committed to the organisation's decisions if its activities are to have real impact, in particular through the translation of words into concrete measures. Creating obstacles at the decision-making level or raising difficulties with regard to the pursuit of field projects will certainly diminish the OSCE's possible contribution to the building of stability and security, particularly through the fostering of human rights principles, the rule of law and democratisation as core issues to the organisation. The OSCE's adequacy to meet the new challenges is therefore dependent on matters related to its inner functioning, including the positioning of its participating members within and towards the organisation, as well as on the international community's receptiveness to its proposals and activities. Any assessment of the OSCE's role in the fight against terror should therefore embrace these considerations in order not to judge the organisation for what it should not be doing, nor excusing it for not doing what it should do.

