



U.S. MISSION TO
THE OSCE

The OSCE and Its Contribution to Eurasian Security

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It is a great pleasure for me to be here. I am even more delighted to find such a distinguished and diverse group of students of foreign affairs, and experts.

I have been the United States ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for about 16 months. Of all the “security structures” you have heard about, the OSCE is the one that least gets the attention it deserves. Unfortunately, there is a lack of awareness in many countries, including our own, about what the organization is and what the organization does. During a recent Congressional hearing on U.S. policy toward the OSCE, Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell charged that even some higher-level officials in the State Department did not know what the organization was, or what it did, and he suggested that we not be shy about telling people of the OSCE’s value.

So I won’t be shy. Notwithstanding its weaknesses, the OSCE, by and large, is a success story and, to borrow a term from the financial markets, an undervalued stock with a great price/earnings ratio. Since the CSCE, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE’s predecessor, came into existence in 1973, and especially since the CSCE evolved into the OSCE in 1994, the minimal financial costs of the organization to the U.S. have been repaid many time over in benefits to broad U.S. foreign policy interests throughout Europe.

As the Balkan wars demonstrated in the 1990s and September 11 demonstrated in the new millennium, the end of the Cold War did not spell the “end of history” that the infamous Francis Fukuyama had predicted. Instead of burying the CSCE in the sands of time and proclaiming the end of history, leaders of the 35 countries which then comprised the CSCE, agreed at the Paris Summit of 1990 to transform the conference into a permanent institution. Over the course of the early 1990s, the “Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe”

was renamed the “Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe,” it grew in membership from 35 to 55 countries, and it developed its various Institutions and Missions.

The “new Europe, whole, free and at peace” required an organization that took a comprehensive approach to problems associated with countries emerging from decades of communist rule or, in some cases, just achieving independence. The countries of the CSCE decided to adapt old, and create new means to address problems based on tried and true formulas. Its focus on three baskets of issues – political-military security, economic matters, and human rights and democratic institutions – were recognized as the pillars of the organization’s conceptual and practical strength.

Recently, many pundits have been writing eulogies for NATO, EU and the OSCE. Reality is that none of these three important organizations has met its demise. Each plays a vitally important role in Euro-Atlantic security architecture, and relations between the three are maturing to the point that past rivalries have been replaced by cooperation and coordination in implementing concrete projects and in addressing issues of immediate and long-range concern.

While OSCE’s three institutions - the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, based in Warsaw, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, based in The Hague, and the Representative on Freedom of Media based in Vienna - make important contributions to the accomplishing of the OSCE’s primary tasks of early warning, conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation, the OSCE’s center of gravity lies in its field Missions. On the ground – this is where the OSCE’s work begins and where it ends, not in Vienna.

Many of you may have heard the familiar characterization of the OSCE as extending from “Vancouver to Vladivostok” – the long way round. It cannot be stated often enough that the OSCE is the only “security regime” in which full membership is extended to the five Central Asian republics, a region of growing strategic importance and with a huge workload in terms of human rights and economic development. Moreover, despite the Prague and Copenhagen Summits of last year, there are a considerable number of states that will remain outside NATO and the EU for the foreseeable future. The Council of Europe’s broader membership can be no substitute for the OSCE’s security expertise. The OSCE’s unique geographical reach remains unmatched, notwithstanding EU and NATO enlargement. The OSCE is neither a purely Euro-Atlantic organization, nor is it a purely Eurasian organization. We may have to think of it as a “Eurasian-Atlantic organization.”

So how does the OSCE fit into the “Eurasian-Atlantic” security matrix? Are NATO, the EU, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE complementing each other, or are they competing? As we see it in Vienna, this question was answered a few years ago. Adoption of the Charter for European Security and the Platform for Cooperative Security at the Istanbul Summit of 1999 turned out not to be anywhere near what Russia had been pushing for at the OSCE to counter NATO enlargement. Both documents stress the mutually reinforcing and non-hierarchical nature of the relationship between the OSCE and the other organizations. Russia has accepted the right of states to freely choose their own security arrangements. The establishment of the NATO-Russia Council in May 2002 speaks for itself – the Russians see clear advantages to closer engagement with NATO and have abandoned their attempt to establish a hierarchy among security organizations with OSCE in the lead. They are still searching for exactly

how the OSCE can serve their changing foreign policy interests, but they are no longer trying to score those propaganda points in Vienna .

The OSCE is not in competition with either of these institutions. It has its own unique place in the architecture of European security. But as we look ahead, and we recall that the OSCE, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, adapted itself to better address new needs in a new political, economic and security environment, we must ask ourselves how the OSCE should adapt itself to the new threats and challenges we and other member countries face at the dawn of the 21st century. The threats are not necessarily new, but in an era of quickly developing technology and communications links, international cooperation is more vital than ever. As President Bush stated in the U.S. National Security Strategy published last autumn, the United States cannot tackle these threats alone.

Let me give you some sense of the progress that the OSCE has made recently in tackling some of these issues. The OSCE has made an excellent start against terrorism. The implementation document we approved at our ministerial meeting in Portugal late last year lays out in detail the progress the OSCE made in contributing to international counter-terrorism efforts since 9/11.

To give OSCE participating States an opportunity to compare notes on steps they are taking to implement their OSCE and UN commitments to prevent and counter terrorism, the United States last year proposed, and ministers endorsed at their meeting in December, establishing an Annual Security Review Conference. The annual conferences, the first of which will be held later this month, can also serve as an engine for generating new OSCE proposals in the security dimension.

In a broader sense, at the request of last year's OSCE Chairman-in-Office, the Foreign Minister of Portugal, we at the United States delegation to the OSCE worked with our Russian colleagues in Vienna on the outline of an OSCE strategy to combat the broad range of security threats and challenges facing not just the U.S. and Russia but countries large and small throughout the OSCE space from "Vancouver to Vladivostok." These threats, including corruption, organized crime, trafficking of all kinds, violent extremism, ethnic and religious tensions, and environmental degradation, as well as terrorism, are not new. But they require serious and urgent attention. This year we further developing this strategy to define practical initiatives in, for instance, police, law enforcement and border security, which can contribute to security for all countries. After all, if countries throughout Central Asia, the Caucasus, eastern and Southeastern Europe can better safeguard their own borders, there may be less of a chance that terrorists or organized crime crossing those borders will cross our own.

In the OSCE's work on new threats, we see a key role for the field missions. OSCE missions in 19 countries concentrate most of their energies, at present, on assisting host government authorities and civil society in strengthening democratic institutions and promoting respect for human rights and implementation of the rule of law. Given where these are located (in SE Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia) this focus is understandable. However, over time, mission work must and should become more balanced. Missions and field operations can and should play a more active role in carrying out OSCE activities in the security and economic dimensions. For example, in 2002 officials from Tajikistan and Ukraine worked cooperatively with the OSCE leadership to reflect new situations in those countries.

Broadening the mandates of field missions is now a priority for not just those countries that host missions, but those, like the U.S., that believe they are perhaps the OSCE's greatest asset.

In the area of training, particularly in terms of police training and capacity building, OSCE's Strategic Police Affairs Unit and its advisor, senior Scotland Yard official Richard Monk, are doing excellent work in regions, including Central Asia. This includes the establishment next year of the model police station in Kyrgyzstan, which will provide training in all aspects of police work and can serve as a model for all of Central Asia.

This brings me back to the earlier question of the OSCE's success. Ask a social scientist to empirically measure the organization's effectiveness, and I guarantee you, he or she will despair. Such a performance evaluation is more than a Herculean task, it is a near impossible task.

How do you measure the organization's success when its goal is as much that "nothing happens" as it is that "something happens"? How can you know how much the organization contributed to nothing or something happening when multiple actors are involved, such as NATO, the EU, or the Council of Europe – not to mention bilateral initiatives and domestic factors?

There is simply no way to accurately quantify our or any other organization's effectiveness in reaching their goals. So we need to rely on anecdotal evidence and personal experience – and on our own healthy judgment. I would like to cite a few instances where I am convinced that the OSCE has made a difference:

In Kosovo, NATO's successful humanitarian intervention to end "ethnic cleansing" laid the ground for the OSCE to do what it can do best. With a ceiling of 450 international and 1,100 local staff, the third OSCE Mission in Kosovo is currently our largest field presence. It forms an integral part of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and takes the lead role in institution-building and human rights. Take, for instance, the Kosovo Police Service School. To date, more than 5,500 police officers have graduated from the Police School. Its multiethnic curriculum is geared towards democratic policing and human rights. Whether the topic of the day is patrol duties, use of force and firearms, traffic control, defensive tactics, or interviewing techniques – international standards of human rights are interwoven into all core subject matters. It is no minor achievement to get Albanian and Serb police officers to patrol the streets together and to protect the human rights of one ethnic group as much as of the other.

Since 1999, the OSCE Border Monitoring Operation at the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation has been a valuable tool in preventing the spill-over of the Chechen conflict into Georgia. Based on a decision of last December, the border monitoring is currently being expanded towards the Dagestan segment of the border. The OSCE Mission in Georgia also serves as an important independent source on border incidents. And in Moldova, the OSCE representative is playing a key role in producing a political settlement to end a 10-year conflict and to assist with the withdrawal of tens of thousands of tons of Soviet-era ammunition.

I could go on talking about the organization's varied responsibilities in implementing the Dayton Peace Accords of 1995, the OSCE's role in ending anarchy and turmoil in Albania in 1997, or about the many cases in which OSCE Missions have rescued individual victims of human trafficking.

Making a difference is all we can hope for. And the OSCE does make a difference. It is doing this at little cost and with a very lean central administration. Last year's budget does not exceed € 175 million. 85 % of the OSCE's resources are spent on Missions, only 15 % are dedicated to its Institutions, including the Secretariat in Vienna.

The OSCE is engaged in all phases of the conflict cycle: Its activities range from early warning and conflict prevention to crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Timely engagement, before violent conflict even arises, is crucial. If there is any lesson to draw from past horrors within or outside the OSCE area, then it is that the human and material cost of failed prevention in each and every case by far surpasses the cost of prevention itself. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," goes the old saying, words of wisdom that have not been passed on from generation to generation without a reason. With its Conflict Prevention Center, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and its several emergency mechanisms, the OSCE has a sophisticated tool box to offer in the field of multilateral preventive diplomacy.

Since 1999, and especially in 2001 and 2002, NATO, the EU and the OSCE, as organizations, and the representatives of an increasing number of countries that are members of 1, 2 or all 3 of these organizations have been attempting to foster greater coordination and cooperation between them. In places like the Balkans, and perhaps soon in Central Asia, where NATO and OSCE have field presences, on-the-ground cooperation is excellent. But, the will exists to expand this cooperation into areas such as counter-terrorism, border security and the control of the spread of small arms and light weapons. I myself have traveled to Brussels to deepen this dialogue. In my meeting with NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson and EU Foreign Policy Chief Solana I found great appreciation for the strengths of the OSCE and for finding new ways to use the strengths of each organization to assist the countries of Southeast Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to meet their security challenges. I am confident that we are moving in the right direction. My meetings in Moscow and Vienna with senior Russian officials have led me to the same conclusion.

Students, honored guests – let me conclude by referring back again to President Bush's National Security Strategy and the threats and challenges he accurately describes. In spite of current speculation about the interest of this administration in multilateral diplomacy, I take away from that document the clear message that the challenges to free societies in building secure and stable futures for their peoples cannot be met alone. The EU, but also NATO and especially the OSCE, are organizations in which American leadership is called for and which, if exercised, will pay long-term dividends for the people of the United States. OSCE offers the United States a unique forum in which to promote our overarching national interests of promoting freedom and democracy in the smaller states of Eurasia, while at the same time helping those states in ways which provide them with the security and stability that will allow their peoples and societies to thrive. This is a huge undertaking in which NATO is also engaged. As a full member of both NATO and the OSCE, the United States, will not abandon its responsibilities for leadership. Thank you.