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Module 1. Introduction to the OSCE

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MODULE 1: Introduction to the OSCE

Introduction

Overview

Overview The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is a security organization whose 55 participating states span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. It is an increasingly important instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post conflict security building in its region.



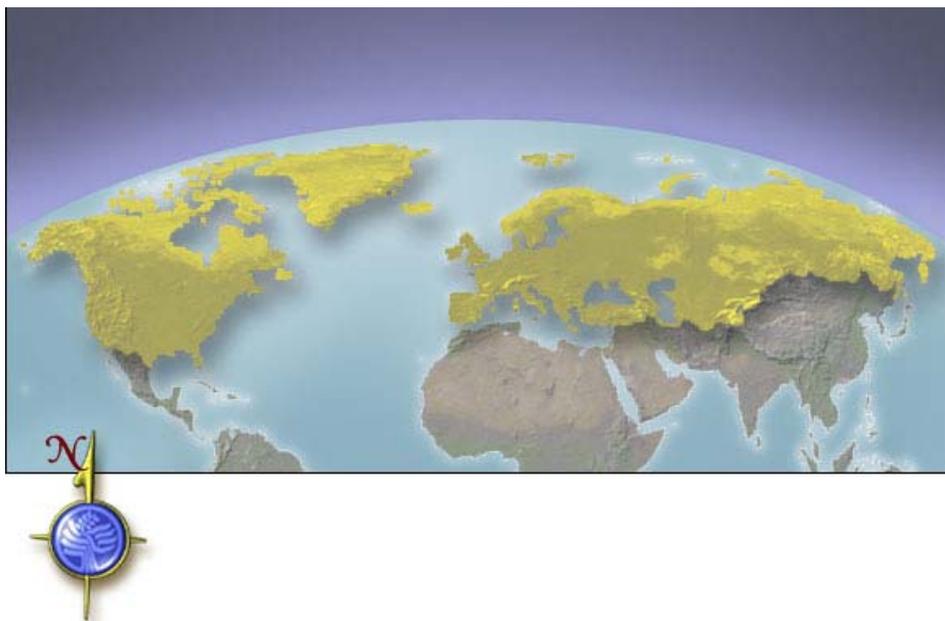
Origin Today's OSCE is the successor to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) established in 1975. The CSCE was largely an arena for East-West debate until the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The changed environment in Europe in the 1990s made it possible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

Security issues The OSCE deals with a wide range of security issues, including:

- Arms control
- Preventive diplomacy
- Military confidence and security building
- Building democratic institutions
- Human rights monitoring
- Election monitoring and supervision
- Police monitoring and training
- Preventing and countering terrorism
- Economic and environmental issues
- Combating illegal trafficking in small arms, drugs, and persons across national borders
- Promoting tolerance and non-discrimination, while combating anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and all other forms of discrimination

**From
Vancouver to
Vladivostok**

With 55 participating states the OSCE can claim to be the largest existing regional security organization. Its area includes continental Europe, Russian territory extending eastward to the Pacific coast, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the United States and Canada; and it cooperates with Mediterranean and Asian partners.



**A
comprehensive
view of security**

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

**A cooperative
approach**

The consensus of OSCE participating states is that all have a common stake in the security of Europe and should therefore cooperate to prevent crises from happening and/or to reduce the escalation of existing crises. Cooperation brings benefits to all participating states, while insecurity in one state or region can affect the well-being of all.

A unique status

The OSCE has a unique status. It has no legal status under international law and all its decisions are politically, but not legally, binding. Nevertheless, the OSCE possesses most of the normal attributes of an international organization: standing decision-making bodies, permanent headquarters and institutions, permanent staff, regular financial resources, and field offices.

A flexible tool

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

Mini-quiz

The CSCE/OSCE approach to security is comprehensive in that:

- human rights, democratization and politico-military issues are important in the maintenance of peace and security
- military issues have priority
- one institutional approach is appropriate for dealing with all crises
- its decisions are binding on all participating states under international law

Helsinki Process

Proposal for pan-European security conference

Overview

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

Soviet and U.S. Proposals

1950's

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

The Way to Helsinki

1969

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

Helsinki preparatory talks

Opening negotiations

1973

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

- Warsaw Pact
- NATO / European Community
- Neutral / Nonaligned

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

Working phase

Geneva

1973 to 1975

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

Basket I

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

Basket II

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

Basket III

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

- human contacts
- travel and tourism
- information and cultural exchanges
- cessation of jamming of radio and TV broadcasts
- educational exchanges

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

Final Act

Helsinki

1975

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

Helsinki Decalogue

1. *Sovereign equality of states*
2. *Refraining from the threat or use of force*
3. *Inviolability of frontiers*
4. *Territorial integrity of states*
5. *Peaceful settlement of disputes*
6. *Non-intervention in internal affairs*
7. *Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms*
8. *Equal rights and self-determination of peoples*
9. *Cooperation among states*
10. *Fulfillment of obligations under international law*

[Text of the Helsinki Final Act](#)

Follow-up conferences

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

Belgrade **1977**
The first CSCE follow-up conference was characterized largely by rhetorical attacks and counterattacks, with Western governments criticizing the human rights performance of the Communist Bloc countries, and the latter accusing the Western states of interference in their internal affairs. At the same time, human rights activists in a number of communist states in Central and Eastern Europe formed "Helsinki Committees" to pressure their governments to live up to the principles that they had endorsed at Helsinki.

Madrid **1980 - 1983**
The second follow-up meeting lasted for more than three years, particularly due to substantive disagreements over Soviet and Eastern Bloc implementation of the provisions of the Final Act. There was considerable debate on whether the CSCE should enlarge its commitments, especially in confidence-building and arms control, given the Eastern bloc's insufficient implementation of its original commitments, especially on human rights..

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

In addition, working meetings were set up to deal with human rights and fundamental freedoms in Ottawa, human contacts in Bern, the peaceful settlement of disputes in Athens, cultural contacts in Budapest, and Mediterranean security issues in Venice.

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

Vienna

1986 - 1989

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

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

Stockholm

1984 to 1986

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

Cooperative security regime

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

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

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

Mini-quiz

The CSCE:

- excluded non-democratic states from participation evolved from a series of conferences and multilateral agreements to a regional multilateral organization
- evolved from a series of conferences and multilateral agreements to a regional multilateral organization
- ratified the post-World War II political status quo in Eastern Europe
- has had a fixed, unchanging role and structure since establishment

Impact of CSCE

Importance of the Decalogue

Overview

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

Structure for OSCE

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

Unification of Germany

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

Emphasis on diplomacy

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

Impact of CSCE

Undermining communism

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

Human rights

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

Human rights, a long-standing taboo for the Soviet Bloc, became by virtue of the Final Act a legitimate subject of East-West dialogue. Proceeding from the premise that international relations had to include a "human dimension" directly beneficial to the individual, commitments in this field became matters of legitimate concern to all participating states and did not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of any given state. The CSCE was thus important in keeping the spotlight on human rights and linking progress in that sphere with cooperation on other more traditional security questions.

Benefits of Helsinki process

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

Military security

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

Uniqueness of CSCE

Wide membership

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

Comprehensive view

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

Decisions by consensus

Decisions of the Conference were taken by consensus thus often making the decision-making process as important as the decisions themselves.

Flexible

CSCE decisions were politically rather than legally binding, giving the Conference considerable flexibility.

No institutional structures

Prior to 1990, the CSCE had no institutional structures, the result being that the very impetus needed to keep the process going was an end in itself.

Mini-quiz

The ten principles of the Decalogue:

- became irrelevant with the end of the Cold War
- created the normative structure under which the CSCE and OSCE have operated
- did not allow for any changes in borders

From the CSCE to the OSCE

Overview

Collapse of communism

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

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

Human dimension of security

Copenhagen

1990

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

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

Charter of Paris

Overview

Paris, 1990

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

- Structures** The Paris meeting established the following structures for the CSCE:
- Secretariat
 - Conflict Prevention Center
 - Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
 - Parliamentary Assembly
-

- Meetings** The Charter of Paris also resulted in a new schedule of meetings:
- Foreign Ministers – annually (except when Summits are held)
 - Heads of State or Government Summits - usually biannually
 - Committee of Senior Officials - as needed
-

Helsinki Follow-Up Meeting

Post Cold War violence

Helsinki, 1992

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

Further institutionalization

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

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

- High Commissioner on National Minorities
 - Court of Conciliation and Arbitration
 - Forum for Security Cooperation
-

Missions

Another major advance taken at Helsinki was the decision to establish missions in areas of tension to provide for "early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management, and peaceful settlement of disputes." The original intent of the heads of state assembled at Helsinki appeared

to be largely to create temporary, more or less *ad hoc* missions to deal with conflicts as they arose.

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

Budapest Summit

CSCE becomes OSCE

Budapest, 1994

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

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

OSCE Today

Overview

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

Basic priorities

The basic priorities of the OSCE at present are:

- **Democracy:** to consolidate the participating states' common values and help in building fully democratic civil societies based on the rule of law
 - **Peace:** to prevent local conflicts, restore stability, and bring peace to war-torn areas
 - **Security:** to overcome real and perceived security deficits and to avoid the creation of new political, economic, or social divisions by promoting a cooperative system of security
-

Istanbul summit

Istanbul, 1999

At the Istanbul Summit, OSCE Heads of State or Government signed the Charter for European Security in order to better define the role of the OSCE. The Charter aims at strengthening the organization's ability to prevent conflicts, to settle them, and to rehabilitate societies ravaged by war and destruction. The REACT program (Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams) was one result of this summit.

Changing priorities since 2000

There has been a gradual but perceptible shift in OSCE priorities. Although fighting continues in Chechnya and broke out briefly in Macedonia in 2001, large-scale violence has diminished in the OSCE region. Therefore, much of the OSCE's focus has shifted towards enhancing human security and supporting the struggle against international terrorism, where the threats derive more from political violence, lawlessness and criminality rather than from inter-ethnic conflict. Specifically, these new efforts have included the following:

- The OSCE Forum on Security Cooperation adopted the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons to reduce the proliferation of such weapons.
- The OSCE has increased training in democratic policing, helping participating states in law enforcement consistent with democratic principles and human rights.
- The OSCE has stepped up its efforts to fight money-laundering and trafficking in persons, drugs, and illegal goods.
- The OSCE has increased its support for effective monitoring of international borders and "good governance."

At the 2003 Ministerial Conference in Maastricht, Netherlands, foreign ministers adopted an "OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-first Century," and took decisions on "Combating Trafficking in Human Beings," "Tolerance and Non-Discrimination," an action plan on "Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area," and further steps on anti-terrorism and politico-military affairs, including strengthening activities in the training and coordination of police work within the region, and border security to reduce the mobility of terrorists and the flow of contraband including trafficking in women and children.

In June 2003 the OSCE also organized a conference of more than 400 delegates from most participating states in Vienna devoted specifically to anti-Semitism, followed by a second conference in September on combating other forms of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination.

Mini-quiz

The CSCE began to take on the features on an institutionalized international organization, rather than a series of ad hoc meetings:

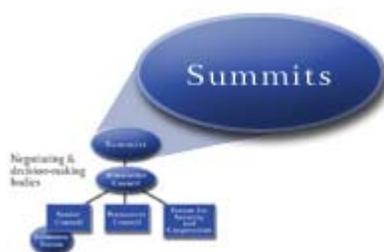
- with the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act
- after the disintegration of the Soviet Union
- with the adoption of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security
- after the first follow-up meeting

OSCE Negotiating and Decision Making Bodies

Summits

Overview

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



Summit agendas

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

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



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

Consensus

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

Review Conferences

Review conferences precede and prepare for summits.

At review meetings:

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

Review conferences are also used to:

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

Ministerial Council

Overview

During periods between summits, decision-making and governing power lies with the Ministerial Council. The Council is made up of the Foreign Ministers of the OSCE participating states.



Purpose

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



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

Meetings

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

- consider issues relevant to the OSCE
 - review and assess the activities of the OSCE
 - make appropriate decisions
-

Consensus

A method for overcoming the lack of unanimity among ministers was given new prominence at the 2003 Maastricht Ministerial by Jap de Hoop Scheffer in his annual report of the CiO, in which he often referred to "Ministers" or "Most Ministers" as a way of summarizing views of the overwhelming majority, but still falling short of absolute consensus.

Senior Council

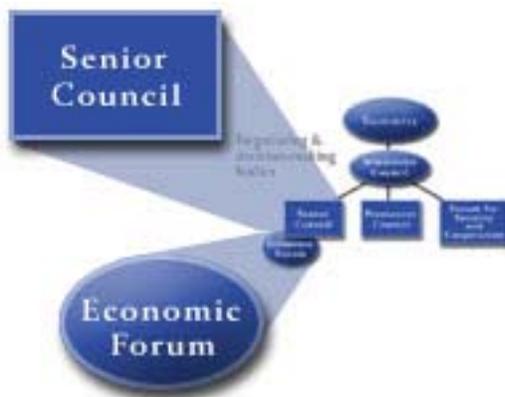
Senior Council / Reinforced Permanent Council

The Senior Council was originally established to:

- prepare the work and implement the decisions of the Ministerial Council
- oversee, manage, and coordinate OSCE affairs

Its functions have been mostly assumed by the "Reinforced Permanent Council," where senior officials from capitals may reinforce their regular delegations for important meetings.

Since 1997, the Senior Council has only met as the Economic Forum.



Berlin Mechanism

The Charter of Paris allows the Senior Council to meet in emergency situations. Under the so-called "Berlin Mechanism," the Senior Council met four times to discuss the Yugoslav conflict and the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Forum for Security Cooperation

Overview

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

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



In practice, the FSC has negotiated extensive CSBM agreements, known as the Vienna Document agreements, which have built on and superseded the 1990 Stockholm Document. The Vienna Document, binding on all OSCE participating states, is known as VDOC 1999. The FSC has not negotiated any hard arms control agreements itself.

Under the auspices of the OSCE, three agreements have been negotiated as part of the Dayton Peace Accords that ended the Bosnian war. These are an internal CSBM agreement for Bosnia (Article II agreement); a sub-regional arms control agreement involving Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia-Montenegro (Article IV); and an agreement enumerating voluntary CSBMs on a regional basis (Article V). Periodic reports on implementation of these agreements are provided to the FSC and PC.

Members

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

Meetings

The Forum meets weekly at the Vienna Hofburg Congress Centre.

Responsibilities

The Forum is responsible for:

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

Joint Consultative Group

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

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

Charter on European security

Another important product of the deliberations in the Forum for Security Cooperation was the negotiation of the Charter on European Security adopted in 1999 at the Istanbul OSCE Summit. This document enlarged OSCE responsibilities for conflict prevention and building democracy throughout the region, and it also strengthened cooperation with other international organizations with overlapping functions.

2003

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

Decision-making process

Consensus

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

This principle reflects the Organization's cooperative approach to security, and the fact that all states participating in OSCE activities formally have equal status. However, in practice, state power and influence frequently drive the deliberations and decisions of the Organization.

Politically binding

OSCE decisions are politically and not legally binding on the participating states. This is due to the fact that the Organization itself is based on the political commitment of the participating states rather than on an international treaty.

Decision-making levels

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

Summits

The summits represent the highest level of decision-making and political orientation for the Organization.

Ministerial Council

The central decision-making powers lie with the Ministerial Council which takes the decisions

necessary to ensure that the activities of the Organization correspond to its central political goals.

Permanent Council

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

Note: This three tier structure is supplemented by periodic, specialized meetings such as those of the Economic Forum, or review and implementation meetings.

Coordination

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

Consensus minus one

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

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

Consensus minus two

Another exception to the principle of consensus is the "consensus minus two" rule. Under this rule, the Ministerial Council can instruct two participating states that are in dispute to seek conciliation, regardless of whether or not the participating states object to the decision.

So far, this option has not been used.

Caucuses

Even though the OSCE operates formally as an organization of 55 sovereign and independent states, in fact there are a number of caucuses that have formed within the organization, and certain states exert substantial influence within those coalitions. By far the most important has been the European Union, which meets prior to all OSCE meetings and develops common positions on all issues. Other notable coalitions include NATO and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Consensus vs. unanimity

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

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

Mini quiz

Match the OSCE structure with the role:

Directions: Make your selection for each match to the left of the statement.

- | | | |
|-------|---|-----------------------------------|
| _____ | 1. Overall responsibility for day-to-day executive action | a. Summit |
| _____ | 2. Meetings at Head of State or Government level to provide the highest level of political guidance | b. Ministerial Council |
| _____ | 3. Meets weekly to discuss measures to strengthen security | c. Permanent Council |
| _____ | 4. Day-to-day decision -making at the ambassadorial level | d. Chairperson-in-Office |
| _____ | 5. Meetings of Foreign Ministers once a year to provide a link between Summit decisions and day-to-day operations | e. Forum for Security Cooperation |

Overview



Chairperson-in-Office

CiO

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

- representing the Organization
- coordination of the work of OSCE institutions
- supervising activities related to conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation



Troika

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



Term

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



OSCE/Ayhan Evrensel

The OSCE Ministerial Troika, Foreign Ministers Solomon Passy of Bulgaria (centre), Dr. Dimitrij Rupel of Slovenia (right) and Daan Everts of the Netherlands Foreign Ministry at their first meeting in Vienna, 16 January 2004.

Selection

There was a general tendency during the first decade of the chairpersonship to select "middle powers" to fulfill this role. The only real exception to this general rule was when a newly unified Germany served as the first CiO in 1991.

Staff

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

Political representative

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

Current CiO

The CiO for 2004 is Solomon Passy, Foreign Minister of Bulgaria.



OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy, at a press conference after his first address to the OSCE Permanent Council.
15 January 2004 (OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev)

Secretary General and the Secretariat

Overview

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



Location

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

Duties

The duties of the Secretariat include:

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

Note: The office is the principal administrative unit of the OSCE, but the Secretary General has only limited political authority. The standing Chairperson-in-Office is the key political authority of the Organization.

Office of the Secretary General

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



Jan Kubis of Slovakia,
Secretary General

The following sections describe structures encompassed by the Secretariat.

Conflict Prevention Center

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

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

The CPC provides support for the CiO and other OSCE negotiating and decision-making bodies. It maintains an Operations Center with a Situation Room that can operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Operations Center

The Operations Center:

- helps to identify crisis areas by maintaining close liaison with other international organizations and NGOs involved in conflict management activities
 - serves as the planning unit for future OSCE missions and field operations
 - acts as coordinator for deployment of new or enhanced field operations
-

Department for Management and Finance

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

- conference and language services
 - documentation and protocol
 - OSCE archives
 - Budgetary and financial issues
 - Information technology
 - Operation support functions for field missions
-

Department of Human Resources

The Department of Human Resources is responsible for:

- Personnel policies
 - Mission staffing
 - Training and capacity building
 - Gender issues
 - REACT
-

Coordinator of economic and environmental activities

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



Ambassador Jan Kubis, the OSCE Secretary General (left), and Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy, OSCE Chairman-in-Office (right), at the OSCE Troika meeting in Vienna, 16 January 2004.
OSCE

Action against terrorism unit

An "Action Against Terrorism Unit" was established in 2002 to increase the capacity of OSCE participating states to combat terrorist threats in their own countries or in the region as a whole.

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Overview

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

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

Anti-discrimination and Roma/Sinti

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

- implementing the "Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area;"

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

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

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

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

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

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

High Commissioner on National Minorities

Overview

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

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



Location

The HCNM is located in The Hague, the Netherlands.

Limitations

The High Commissioner is subject to the following limitations.

Issues must involve:

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

Issues must *not* involve:

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

Actions

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

Based on his observations he may:

- offer immediate advice to the parties
- engage in third party mediation
- prepare recommendations for the parties
- organize seminars or round tables at which parties may discuss their grievances
- make recommendations to the OSCE PC about creating, extending or enlarging missions and field activities

Field missions

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



Rolf Ekéus of Sweden,
High Commissioner on National Minorities

Representative on Freedom of the Media

Overview

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



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

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

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

The office has also been a watchdog, reporting on systematic violations of media freedom in participating states; and identifying and publicizing attacks on journalists.



Freimut Duve,
Representative on Freedom of the Media

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Overview The OSCE parliamentary assembly gathers over 300 parliamentarians from the participating states, with the aim of promoting parliamentary involvement in the activities of the OSCE, and facilitating inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation. The PA is especially active in election monitoring activities.

Location

The Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is based in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Secretary General since the inception of the office in 1992 has been R. Spencer Oliver of the United States. It also has a rotating presidency, currently held by UK MP Bruce George.



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

Court of Conciliation and Arbitration

Overview

The intention of the Court is to settle disputes through conciliation and, where appropriate, arbitration. The Court is a "legal" institution (that is based on a treaty that has not been signed by all participants in the OSCE, including the United States) which makes it different from other OSCE bodies.

Members

Members of the Court are eminent personalities with wide experience in international affairs and international law. Parties to disputes may select arbitrators and conciliators from a register.

Cases

The Court hears cases brought before it by the common consent of two or more states.

Location The Court is located in Geneva, Switzerland.

Note: As of 2003, the services of the Court have not been used.

Other Relevant Multilateral Organizations

Introduction

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

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

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

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

OSCE is unique The OSCE is the only pan-European institution dealing with security and holds certain advantages as part of a European security "architecture."

No other institution has:

- the same universal participation of all of the states in the region
 - so closely linked the human dimension of security with political-military foundations of security
 - has a similar mandate to work in the field of conflict management at the regional level
 - has the capacity to engage in these activities on a scope comparable to that of the OSCE
-

Other organizations

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

- the United Nations
 - NATO
 - the European Union
 - the Council of Europe
 - the Commonwealth of Independent States
-

United Nations

Overview

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



Members

The UN includes the 55 participating states in the OSCE *except*:

- the Holy See (Vatican City)

Chapter VI

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

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

Chapter VII

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

Chapter VIII

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

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

UN role in security

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

Originally these operations consisted largely of the interposition of UN "blue berets" between combatants after a ceasefire had been agreed upon intended largely to prevent a

resumption of direct hostilities. Since the end of the Cold War, however, UN operations have also entered into "peace enforcement" in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.



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

Preventive diplomacy

Preventive diplomacy has been identified as a principal area of activity for the UN Secretary General and his staff of special emissaries, thereby giving the UN a special role in the same domain where the OSCE is also active. This conflict prevention function has generally been performed by senior UN officials based in New York or Geneva rather than by missions permanently stationed in the field, as has generally been the case for OSCE activity on conflict prevention.

Other UN agencies

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

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

OSCE overlap with UN

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

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

In general the OSCE participating states have sought to obtain UN authorization for its major

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

Conclusion

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

[More information about the UN.](#)

NATO

Overview

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



Cold War strategy

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

Post Cold War changes

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

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

- Partnership-for-peace (PfP)

- Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)
 - Peacekeeping
 - Peace enforcement
 - Expansion, including former Warsaw Pact members
-

Current strengths

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

Overlap with OSCE

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

When matters go beyond preventive diplomacy, peaceful resolution of disputes, and cooperative security, it will be necessary to call for military forces with capability such as those provided by NATO. The fact, however, that NATO is both a military organization and one that excludes certain key states (such as Russia) from its central decision-making institutions means that many political functions in enhancing security and cooperation cannot be performed by NATO, at least not as easily as they can be performed by the OSCE.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

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

NATO's military forces are best used for military missions, rather than to run elections, promote human rights, assure freedom of the media, assist in the repatriation of refugees, or engage in many of the other activities eventually undertaken by the OSCE Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The OSCE presence, therefore, serves a useful division of labor and contributes to improvement in the political conditions which necessitated IFOR (Intervention Force) and SFOR (Stabilization Force) deployment in the first place, with the goal being an eventual military withdrawal. At the same time, given the tensions and insecurity that existed in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the war, it would have been impossible for unarmed OSCE mission officers to fulfill any elements of their mandate without the security provided by IFOR and SFOR troops.

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

Due to the improvement in the security situation in the Balkans, NATO plans to reduce its forces by a third in KFOR and SFOR by the end of 2003.

[More information about NATO.](#)

European Union

Overview

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

The common foreign policy has been implemented notably in a procedural context; for example, the EU generally makes joint statements about various international issues, for example, in the OSCE Permanent Council.

The significance of the EU for the OSCE will increase substantially in 2004 when ten new states, mostly from Central Europe, accede to membership in the EU. This will include the three Baltic states that were formerly union republics within the Soviet Union (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), four Central European states that formerly belonged to the Warsaw Pact (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), and one state of the former Yugoslavia (Slovenia).

With 25 members after 2004, the EU will comprise close to half of the participating states of the OSCE. Three more states that also participate in the OSCE are listed as candidates for EU, namely Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. Since the EU tends to vote together as a bloc in the OSCE, it will become an even more formidable factor in OSCE decision-making in the near future.



Common foreign and security policy

The European Union carried forward its cooperation in the area of foreign and security policy in the early 1990's with an agreement on a Common Foreign and Security Policy reached as part of the 1991 Maastricht Treaty.

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

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

Mr/Ms CFSP

In 1999, the EU created a "High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy" to present itself more visibly and effectively on the world stage.

Drawbacks

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

- Its membership is currently limited to Western Europe, although the 2004 expansion will bring in many countries from Central and Southeastern Europe.
 - It remains primarily an economic organization, although its functions are clearly expanding into political and social issues including the realm of security.
 - Its political-military role outside of its geographic borders has remained limited.
-

Effective function

The European Union is most effective when it focuses on its comparative advantage, namely that the dynamism of its economic integration serves as an extremely attractive magnet to all of the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, it is often essential for the OSCE to seek assistance from the EU, and other related financial institutions such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, when confronting conflict situations that require a substantial influx of development assistance in order to alleviate some of the economic and social conditions that provide the seedbed for violent conflict to develop in the first place.

Support for OSCE

The OSCE missions may also call upon the support of the EU when dealing with candidate countries seeking EU membership, several of which have had OSCE missions stationed on their territory. For example, in Estonia the effort to meet the criteria for being placed high in the priority list for EU expansion probably encouraged the government to cooperate more actively than it might have otherwise with OSCE demands regarding the treatment of its large minority group of ethnic Russians. And in Macedonia, EC/EU Monitor Missions have operated alongside NATO peacekeepers and OSCE missions on the ground (and alongside the UN force UNPREDEP during 1992-95) with related mandates.

Conclusion

Conflicts between OSCE and EU mission members have occasionally occurred in regions where both institutions have overlapping mandates. One of the most essential tasks, therefore, of mission members may be to work out arrangements on the ground, particularly

when the division of responsibility has not been clarified formally.

[Additional information about the European Union](#)
[Additional information about the Common Foreign and Security Policy](#)

Council of Europe

Overview

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

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



Members

The Council of Europe consists of 40 states, including 16 former communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, membership in the Council of Europe is a prerequisite for candidacy to enter the more prestigious European Union. Neither the United States nor Canada is eligible for membership, largely because the Council has defined its geographic scope somewhat more narrowly than the OSCE.

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

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

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

- Their government must include a parliament chosen by free and fair elections with universal suffrage
 - They must guarantee free expression including a free press
 - They must have provisions for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities
 - They must demonstrate a track record of observance of international law
-

Responsibilities

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

Influence

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

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

Techniques

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

Role

By defining its primary mission as encouraging good governance as a long-term mechanism for conflict prevention, the Council of Europe has carved out for itself a role that overlaps with that of the OSCE in many important areas.

Overlap

Close coordination between OSCE and CoE missions is essential in those countries where the two operate side-by-side.

The OSCE differs from the CoE because it:

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

Conclusion

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

[Additional information about the Council of Europe](#)

Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe

Overview

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



Focus

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

Broad Membership

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

[Additional information about the Stability Pact](#)

CIS

Overview

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was formed by Russia, Belarus and Ukraine in 1991 following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. These original signatories were later joined by nine of the remaining 12 republics of the Soviet Union. The three Baltic States declined to join the CIS. The organization was conceived as a successor to the USSR in coordinating foreign and economic policies of its member states. The receptivity of members to integration with Russia has varied widely.

The CIS formed a collective security treaty in Tashkent, signed in 1992. However, many of the most important former Soviet states such as Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova, have refused to join this organization. The CIS also includes non-security groupings, such as the Eurasian Economic Community.



Operations

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

CIS forces have cooperated with the U.S. and other Western military forces in the war on terrorism, especially in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, including support of ongoing military operations in Afghanistan.

[Additional information about the CIS](#)

Conclusion

Division of labor

The thick web of security organizations that has been modified and reformed over the decade since 1990 has not resulted in reliance on a single, dominant institution in Europe. What has emerged is a political process in which states decide on a division of labor among institutions, in which each institution uses its comparative advantage, while relying on other institutions to provide the necessary ingredients to build a more solid structure for security within the broad European/Transatlantic area.

Important functions

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

Vital role

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

[Additional information about the OSCE](#)

Congratulations!

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Module 1: Introduction to the OSCE

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