

The OSCE and US-Russian Co-operation in the Fight against Terrorism

As a primary tool for early warning and conflict prevention and in view of its important contribution to crisis management and post-conflict peace-building in the Euro-Atlantic region, the OSCE is perhaps the most flexible and responsive regional security and policy instrument for non-military activities, offering a number of strong advantages in addressing transnational threats to security and stability. The tragic events of 11 September 2001 in the United States have demonstrated that international terrorism poses one of the most critical transnational threats facing the OSCE States in the 21st century.

OSCE Anti-Terrorist Policies and Actions

The problem of international terrorism was not entirely new for the OSCE at the time of the 2001 terrorist attacks against the US. As early as 1975, the CSCE participating States had agreed in the Helsinki Final Act to refrain from direct or indirect assistance to terrorism, reaffirming this commitment in the following years. The OSCE further strengthened its condemnation of all forms of terrorism after the end of the Cold War, when the participating States agreed at the Budapest Summit in 1994 that terrorism could not be justified under any circumstances. This statement was reconfirmed at the 1999 Istanbul Summit, where the OSCE States promised to enhance their “efforts to prevent the preparation and financing of any act of terrorism on our territories and deny terrorists safe havens”.¹

The OSCE participating States, both individually and collectively, have been deeply affected by the events of September 11. Two days after the attacks, the OSCE Permanent Council expressed the determination of the participating States to unite to put an end to terrorism, stating: “Those responsible for sponsoring, organizing, harboring and supporting in any way the execution of these criminal acts must be brought to justice.”² On 21 September, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoană, called on the participating States to work together to develop an OSCE plan of action for the fight against terrorism and urged them to intensify inter-agency co-

1 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Charter for European Security, Istanbul, November 1999, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (Ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2000*, Baden-Baden 2001, pp. 425-443, here: p. 427.

2 OSCE, Permanent Council, Decision No. 438, Decision by the Permanent Council on the Acts of Terrorism in New York City and Washington, D.C., PC.DEC/438, 13 September 2001.

operation at national, sub-regional, and regional levels, to strengthen their legislation, including provisions for a European-wide mandate for the detention and extradition of suspects, and to identify and clamp down on the financing of terrorism. He also requested that the OSCE field missions take on or intensify a number of activities, such as increased border monitoring, policing activities and multi-ethnic police training in vulnerable regions as well as the channelling of assistance on standardizing counter-terrorism legislation and training. On 28 September 2001, the Chairman-in-Office established the OSCE informal open-ended Working Group on Terrorism which was mandated with preparing a draft text on combating terrorism for the Bucharest Ministerial Council. On 11 October, the OSCE Permanent Council adopted a statement in support of the US-led actions to counter terrorism as well as the international anti-terrorist coalition and emphasized the duty of the OSCE States to fully implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

At the same time, even at the earliest stage of the anti-terrorist campaign, the OSCE has proved to be one of the most consistent “human rights” watchdogs. The Chairman-in-Office Geoană called on the OSCE States to firmly hold on to the Organization’s values, norms and rules to prevent any damage being done to the democratic achievements in any of the former crisis areas of OSCE space and “not use the fight against terrorism as an excuse for human rights abuses”.³ In a joint statement with UN and Council of Europe representatives, the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann, urged governments to ensure that measures to eradicate terrorism strike a fair balance between legitimate security concerns and fundamental freedoms and are fully consistent with their human rights commitments. The statement stressed that “the right to life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the principles of precision and not-retroactivity of criminal law”⁴ may not be derogated from under any circumstances. At the OSCE conference on Media Freedom held in Almaty in December 2001, particularly the Central Asian governments were advised not to take the new climate of heightened security as a justification for repressive steps against opposition media.

In the meantime, the OSCE Working Group on Terrorism developed an anti-terrorism action plan, agreed upon by the foreign ministers from the 55 participating States at the Ninth OSCE Ministerial Council in Bucharest on 4 December 2001. The *Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism* outlined a general approach to the fight against international terrorism, including a mutual early warning system for any threats that may arise and measures

3 Romanian Foreign Minister and Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Mircea Dan Geoană, in his address to the Permanent Council, CIO.GAL/45/01, 21 September 2001, p. 2.

4 Human Rights and Terrorism, Joint Statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Walter Schwimmer, and Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann, Geneva/Strasbourg/Warsaw, 29 November 2002, p. 1.

for the eradication of the sources of financing and the means of support for terrorism across the OSCE region. With the assistance of the participating States and through the OSCE structures (Secretariat, Permanent Council, Parliamentary Assembly, ODIHR, High Commissioner on National Minorities, Representative on Freedom of the Media), the OSCE could take a variety of measures, *inter alia*, in the following fields:

- institution building, strengthening the rule of law and state authorities;
- promoting human rights, tolerance and multi-culturalism;
- addressing negative socio-economic factors;
- preventing violent conflict and promoting peaceful settlement of disputes;
- addressing the issue of protracted displacement;
- supporting law enforcement and fighting organized crime;
- suppressing the financing of terrorism.

Specific measures to be taken by the OSCE institutions include providing technical assistance on draft legislation, advice on the suppression of terrorist financing, border administration and visa controls, and projects to prevent hate speech in the media. Participating States committed themselves to work more effectively to prevent terrorist movements from coming into being, to take joint action against terrorist networks, to encourage regional initiatives for preventing terrorism, to control money-laundering and close money-transfer businesses suspected of aiding targeted groups; furthermore they promised to address the problem of eliminating the sources of terrorism. Efforts to have all OSCE States become parties to the twelve UN conventions and protocols related to terrorism by 31 December 2002 were also pledged, and a finalization of negotiations for a Comprehensive UN Convention on International Terrorism was called for.

The final major OSCE activity undertaken under the Romanian Chairmanship was the “Bishkek International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: Strengthening Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism”, which took place in December 2001 under the co-sponsorship of the OSCE and the UN. The *Bishkek Programme of Action*, adopted on 14 December as a further development of the Bucharest Plan of Action, committed convening states “to prevent and to combat terrorism by increasing cooperation in the fields of human rights and fundamental freedoms and by strengthening the rule of law and the building of democratic institutions, based in part on the funding of relevant programmes of the UN as well as the OSCE”. In Bishkek, first recommendations were made specific to the region. However, while growing new risks and security threats to Central Asia, “stemming from areas outside of the OSCE region”,⁵ i.e. from Afghanistan,

5 Welcoming Statement by OSCE Secretary General Ján Kubiš, in: Summary Report, Bishkek International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia:

were pointed out, minimal attention was paid to the internal sources of terrorist activities in Central Asian states.

In the changed security climate, the fight against terrorism was bound to be declared one of OSCE priorities during the Portuguese Chairmanship in 2002, whose initiatives included *inter alia*:

- appointing the former Danish Minister of Defence, Jan Trøjborg, as the Chairman-in-Office's Personal Representative on Preventing and Combating Terrorism to co-ordinate OSCE anti-terrorist policy and activities;
- contemplating the elaboration of a draft proposal for a possible OSCE Charter to Prevent Terrorism;
- proposing to organize a high-profile meeting on the issue with the participation of international organizations in Lisbon in June 2002.

Moreover, in implementing the tasks outlined in the Bucharest Plan of Action and Bishkek Programme of Action, the OSCE Secretariat as well as other OSCE structures had presented detailed Road Maps on Combating Terrorism by April 2002 specifying timetables on concrete actions to be taken and resource implications.

Against this impressive background, the first immediate challenge to be mentioned is related to the financial backing of the OSCE counter-terrorism agenda. While recommendations for resources necessary to address the administrative and financial implications for the Bucharest Plan of Action were made by the Secretariat in the draft Unified 2002 Budget of 7 December 2001, the subsequent reductions made in the Revised Unified 2002 Budget Proposal of 25 January 2002 significantly diminished the resources available for these purposes. The temporary delay in the approval of the 2002 budget also slowed down the establishment of the Anti-Terrorism Unit within the Secretariat.

As virtually all international organizations and other multilateral institutions and fora have undertaken or declared some kind of support for counter-terrorist efforts, another main challenge for the OSCE is to find its specific role in the world-wide fight against terrorism by trying to build on its specific strengths and comparative advantages as an organization. These strengths include having the largest circle of members in Euro-Atlantic space, a comprehensive security concept that links the politico-military, economic and human dimensions as well as solid expertise and field experience in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, post-conflict rehabilitation and building democratic institutions. The OSCE, for instance, can successfully build on its vast experience in police training and rule of law by co-operating with national authorities in preventing the so-called "grey zones" of organized

Strengthening Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism, Bishkek, 13-14 December 2001, p. 37.

crime activity from being transformed into safe havens for terrorists as well as intensifying efforts to rid vulnerable states and regions of illegal paramilitary forces, e.g. through programmes to support the reintegration of former combatants.

While the US-led anti-terrorist campaign has so far, perhaps inevitably, concentrated on “search and destroy” measures, more fundamental social, economic, political and other factors engendering conditions in which terrorist organizations have been able to recruit and win support have often been overlooked, particularly by individual governments overburdened with the immediate tasks of directly responding to terrorist threats. In other words, while surgical treatment for the disease is provided, its causes remain largely unaddressed. In this context, one of the OSCE’s most challenging tasks will be to explore and, to the best of its capacities, at the same time recognizing its limits, try to address socio-political conditions and root causes that provide a fertile breeding ground for extremist ideologies and make people more vulnerable to manipulation by extremist and terrorist groups. Thus, while it might not be the Organization’s direct task to literally suppress terrorist activities (this is primarily taken on by national security structures and more specialized international agencies), a long-term emphasis on OSCE anti-terrorist policy and activities could and should be on preventive action.

United States OSCE Policy after September 11

While until recently, it was the states of the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union that had experienced the most outrageous acts of politically, socially, ethnically and religiously motivated violence in the OSCE area, the events of 11 September 2001 have demonstrated that even the US as the global leader is not immune to large-scale terrorist attacks against its people and territory. Moreover, the attacks of September 11 were unprecedented in scale and lethality and, in contrast to earlier terrorist acts in this and other regions of the world, are often described as acts of “mega-” or “super-terrorism”.

Since 11 September 2001, the US has increasingly shifted its focus within multilateral security institutions inevitably to coping with international terrorist networks. A week after the attacks, speaking at the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, US Ambassador Chris Hill called for “all international organizations to join us in a great coalition to conduct a campaign against terrorists who wage war against our civiliza-

tion”.⁶ In this context, the US representatives called it an “immediate challenge (...) to enlist OSCE in the fight against terrorism”.⁷

On the one hand, the US officials cited a common value-based approach as a basis for the OSCE engagement in countering “an attack against all the universal values that we have all embraced as States participating in this proud organization” and “a threat to our way of life”.⁸ On the other hand, the US was guided by more pragmatic interests and considerations - geopolitical, strategic and financial. While international terrorist networks frequently operate within the OSCE area and, as demonstrated by the attacks of September 11, managed to penetrate throughout much of Western Europe and North America, US experts continue to view states of the former Soviet Union, including Russia (Chechnya), as the most deeply affected, and to stress the need for the OSCE to “strengthen its work to prevent terrorism from gaining a significant foothold in Central Asia and the Caucasus”.⁹ The US strategic interest in getting the support of Central Asian states and Russia for the military operation in Afghanistan should not be underestimated (and the OSCE is the only European security organization where the post-Soviet states enjoy full membership alongside Western countries). Also, in advancing US national interests, the OSCE not only has proven to be one of the most cost-effective institutions, but also brings significant dividends by sparing the US expenditures for costly military engagement, post-conflict rehabilitation and democracy-building. Cost-effectiveness has become especially important as the US has recognized that because it will be unable to “solve the problem in one drastic action”,¹⁰ its anti-terrorist effort is going to be a long-term “sustained campaign”.¹¹

After September 11, the US, within the framework of the OSCE and in accordance with the above mentioned values and interests, suggested a number of possible anti-terrorist measures that included urging members to sign relevant international conventions regarding terrorism, reviewing compliance with relevant OSCE commitments, assisting with drafting new legislation that meets international norms and exploring ways to increase police involvement in the fight against terrorism.¹² More generally, the US placed

6 Opening Plenary Statement by US Delegation to the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, delivered by Ambassador Chris Hill, Warsaw, 18 September 2001.

7 As stated, for example, in: Prepared Statement of Hon. A. Elizabeth Jones, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, U.S. Department of State, in: U.S. Policy Toward the OSCE. Hearing before the Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe. One Hundred and Seventh Congress, First Session, 3 October 2001, pp. 32-39, here: p. 39, at: <http://www.csce.gov>.

8 Opening Plenary Statement by US Delegation to the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, cited above (Note 6).

9 See, for instance, P. Terrence Hopmann, Brown University, Testimony before the Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe/Supplemental Helsinki Testimony, Helsinki Commission Hearing, Washington, D.C., on 3 October 2001.

10 Opening Plenary Statement by US Delegation to the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, cited above (Note 6).

11 Prepared Statement of Hon. A. Elizabeth Jones, cited above (Note 7), p. 39.

12 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 33.

strong emphasis on the character and capacities specific to the OSCE, stressing that the Organization can “play a valuable role in combating terrorism by exploiting its wide membership, traditional strengths in democratization and rule of law, and valuable operational capabilities”.¹³

The US emphasis on the OSCE “traditional strengths”, however, tends to be somewhat one-sided. The Organization’s counter-terrorism potential is viewed by the US largely in the context of activities performed by ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Conflict Prevention Centre in the fields of democratization, human and minority rights, and to some extent, conflict management, primarily in post-Soviet space, seen as functions “even more central to the OSCE today than they were before September 11”.¹⁴ US experts repeatedly stress the need for the OSCE to improve its capability to perform these functions “before too many additional tasks are given to it that could eventually undermine its lean and flexible organizational structure that has been the cornerstone of its success to date”.¹⁵

In sum, while, on the one hand, the US is interested in getting the strategic support of the OSCE participating States and institutions in its anti-terrorist campaign, on the other, Washington tends to focus primarily on the role of the OSCE as of a democracy-builder and human rights watchdog in the Eurasian and some other Eastern and South-eastern European countries and seems less willing to allow the Organization to assume a higher profile in confronting the transnational security threats faced by all OSCE States including the Western ones.

Russia’s OSCE Policy

The OSCE is the only Euro-Atlantic organization that includes Russia as a full member and allows Moscow to put forward and defend its position on regional security issues and voice its wider security concerns. In the course of the 1990s, with the enlargement of NATO and strengthening of the EU, Russia’s initial post-Cold War hopes to transform the OSCE into the leading security institution in Europe have gradually waned. Moreover, in Russia’s view, by the end of the first post-Cold War decade, the OSCE had moved away from addressing more critical politico-military security issues, leaving them to other European security organizations where Russia was not represented and concentrated mainly on human rights and democratization issues in post-Soviet space and in the Balkans.

Against this background, the political climate within the OSCE, as well as Russia’s attitude towards the Organization, had the potential to change sig-

13 Ibid.

14 Statement on Follow-Up Measures to the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, delivered by Ambassador David T. Johnson to the Special Meeting of the Permanent Council, US Mission to the OSCE, Vienna, 9 November 2001.

15 Hopmann, cited above (Note 9).

nificantly in the aftermath of the events of September 11. Previously, Russia's concerns about terrorist activities were viewed by most of its OSCE partners mainly as a pretext for Moscow's policy on Chechnya. Russia's attempts to include several anti-terrorist provisions, most of which were based on previous OSCE commitments, in the text of the final declaration of the November 2000 Vienna Ministerial, were heavily criticized by some OSCE participating States who voiced concerns over the potential threat to democracy. In contrast, the 2001 Bucharest Ministerial was expected to produce a broad consensus in support of a general plan to fight international terrorism.

Russia tried to make the most of this opportunity to breath new life into OSCE activities and help the Organization raise its profile in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture as declared by Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov at the OSCE Ministerial Council in December 2001. In response, Chairman-in-Office Geoană called Russia's contribution to the Organization's activities "decisive" and stated that under the new conditions that have shaped the world after September 11, Russia would probably be able "to find its place in the architecture of Euro-Atlantic security".

In Bucharest, Russian diplomats stressed the growing importance of the OSCE and of its 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security in a changing international climate and tried to link the goals of the global campaign to combat terrorism to the OSCE's own agenda and priorities. In particular, according to Ivanov, a practical role that the OSCE "as Europe's most universal and representative regional structure" is to play in the international struggle against terrorism "highlights the need to reform our Organization". Noting that Russia has long been in favour of a comprehensive reform of all aspects of OSCE activities, "so that it could take a worthy place in the international architecture of co-operation and security", Ivanov expressed hope that the Bucharest Ministerial Decisions would help remedy the current state of the Organization, which he described as one that "has not inspired optimism in recent years". As seen from Russia, one of the ways to improve the current situation is to "remove functional and geographic disbalances in the activities of the OSCE and restore its natural role as a forum of political consultations and decisions on key issues of European security (...)".¹⁶ To put it bluntly, in Bucharest, the Russian delegation once again questioned the admissibility of double standards that make it possible to portray extremists engaged in terrorist activities in places like Kosovo, Macedonia and Chechnya as "freedom-fighters".

In Bishkek, the Russian delegation went further than the US in stressing the importance of anti-terrorist activities on the OSCE agenda. While according to Russian representatives, the OSCE, as a "unique all-European structure", has already proved its utility in strengthening the international anti-terrorist coalition, "the Organization must prepare itself for a long-term effort, pri-

16 Address by Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Igor Ivanov, before the OSCE Ministerial, Bucharest, 4 December 2001.

marily aimed at revealing and confronting fundamental sources of terrorism” and start formulating its strategy on fighting terrorism, referred to by the Russians as “a new security dimension for the OSCE”.¹⁷ More specifically, Russia - like the US¹⁸ -, stressed the need to clamp down on the financing of terrorism and to help improve national anti-terrorism legislation (up to preparing an OSCE “model anti-terrorism law”) as immediate priorities for OSCE anti-terrorist activities. But while the US approach to the OSCE anti-terrorist programme tends to prioritize selected human dimension activities (particularly democratic institution building and human rights monitoring) by OSCE missions and institutions (such as ODIHR) in states East of Vienna, Russia’s emphasis is on the *politico-military dimension*. This has been reflected, for instance, in Russia’s proposal to create an *OSCE mechanism for monitoring the participating States’ compliance with fundamental anti-terrorist conventions* that “could make recommendations for fighting terrorism, such as outlawing terrorist organizations and various structures that support them (...)”.¹⁹ Well in advance of the Bucharest and Bishkek meetings, Russia suggested utilizing the Forum for Security Co-operation to undertake a review of commitments in this area and the status of compliance with them today.

In sum, the need to address transnational security threats, such as international terrorism, should, in Russia’s view, give the OSCE States a new sense of unity - something that seemed to be almost mired in the bog of past controversies over individual problems. While Russia no longer has its earlier illusions that the OSCE could be elevated to the over-arching Euro-Atlantic security body, for Moscow, a campaign to fight terrorism throughout the OSCE space, alongside its primary goal of combating a common evil, is also an attempt to bring the OSCE back from its current focus on human rights and democratization in post-communist states, often seen as excessive and driven by the policy of double standards, to the sphere of “high politics”.

OSCE and US-Russian Co-operation on Combating Terrorism

Following a distinct cooling in the relations between the US and Russia in 1999 and 2000, they have been on the upswing in the aftermath of the attacks on September 11. In particular, US-Russian bilateral co-operation in the fight against terrorism has been unprecedented and, compared to most multilateral initiatives the two states have been involved in, almost unmatched.

17 Statement by Anatoly Safonov, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, in: Summary Report, cited above (Note 5), p. 157 (original in Russian, author’s translation).

18 See, for instance, interjection by Ambassador Stephan Minikes, Chief of the US Mission to the OSCE, during Session 5, in: *ibid.*, p. 138.

19 As was, for example, expressed by Safonov, cited above (Note 17), p. 157 (author’s translation).

Russia played a key role in resupplying the Northern Alliance at the most critical stage of the US anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan. US-Russian intelligence sharing was also exemplary and even, according to some assessments, unprecedented.²⁰ Overall, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Moscow turned out to be more important for the US in its anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan, particularly at its earlier stages, than most of its NATO allies. In February 2002, at the sixth session of the US-Russia Working Group on Afghanistan, US and Russia “agreed to support expansion of anti-terrorist co-operation within the framework of the United Nations, OSCE, NATO and other international structures, as well as bilaterally”.²¹ Apart from those in Afghanistan, other important bilateral anti-terrorist measures were taken such as issuing a Joint Statement on Combating Bioterrorism in November 2001 following an outbreak of anthrax in the US as well as bringing into force the US-Russia Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty that provided a “legal basis for co-operation in identifying and seizing or freezing criminal or terrorist assets” in January 2002.

The US interest in getting the support of Russia for the anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan and access to the territory of the Central Asian states might partly explain the US stated interest in more active co-operation with Russia within the OSCE. Although priority was still given to “addressing these issues (...) through bilateral consultations with the Russians”,²² at the Bucharest Ministerial, Chairman-in-Office Geoană noted that “a new mood between Russia and the West”, emerging in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, has certainly improved relations within the OSCE “where Russia was at odds with the West over contentious issues such as Chechnya”.²³

A set of US decisions to increase its security presence in Russia’s immediate neighbourhood under the pretext of implementing an anti-terrorist campaign, however, led to first tensions in US-Russian co-operation on combating terrorism. Although Moscow did not officially object to US troops being based in Central Asian states to support the US campaign in Afghanistan or help hunt militants with suspected links to Al-Qaida in Georgia, the principal obstacles to US-Russian co-operation in this field were not removed. These obstacles have included significant differences in the geo-strategic interests of the two countries especially with respect to the situation in Georgia, and to a lesser extent, in the Central Asian states as well as a divergence in the lists of states sponsoring terrorism (particularly a controversy over Iraq).

20 See online interview with US Ambassador to Russia, Alexander Vershbow, 26 October 2001.

21 Joint Statement of the US-Russia Working Group on Afghanistan, US Department of State, Washington, D.C., 8 February 2002.

22 As stated, for example, in: Prepared Statement of Hon. A. Elizabeth Jones, cited above (Note 7), p. 34.

23 Quoted from: “US Joins Talks to Combat Terrorism”, Associated Press, 3 December 2001.

Another long-time divide in U.S-Russian relations proved less significant after 11 September, i.e. the strongly diverging perspectives between the US and Russia on Chechnya. On the one hand, while conducting anti-terrorist military operations in Afghanistan, the US softened its criticism somewhat of the methods used by the Russian troops and security structures in Chechnya and urged Moscow to step up efforts for a peaceful solution “to deny political cover to terrorists in Chechnya”.²⁴ On the other hand, the Bush administration did not have to make major concessions on this issue, as in contrast to the Clinton team, it has never viewed Chechnya as one of its foreign policy priorities.

Russian officials have also hinted at the more theoretical nuances of the Russian and/or CIS approach to combating international terrorism. These nuances have been most evident at the level of official political rhetoric. For instance, Russian officials have publicly criticized an interpretation of terrorism as a “super-crime” impossible to counter by regular methods and acting laws. Criticism has also been voiced in regard to the interpretation of terrorism as “a form of war waged by clandestine groups and individuals” according to which war and terrorism have the same causes and leading to the conclusion the latter should be countered primarily by military means and by the military.²⁵ It has to be noted that both interpretations have been actively used by the United States in its anti-terrorist policy and campaign.

Apart from these declaratory nuances, more real differences between US and Russian interpretations of the threat posed by international terrorism are observable. While the US administration’s emphasis has been on the “rogue states” (particularly on the authoritarian regimes of Iran, Iraq and North Korea) as primary “sponsors of terrorism”, Russia, like many other European countries, focuses most of its attention on the so-called “failed states”, or areas, as major actual or potential breeding grounds for terrorists. For many of the Russian political elite, the September 11 events demonstrated that a qualitative change in international terrorism had occurred. International terrorism “appears as a self-sufficient organization not connected with any particular state” and, as such, can no longer be exposed by traditional means such as “convincing or pressuring one or the other state to stop supporting terrorism”.²⁶ Also, while the Bush administration resorted to its “axis of evil” rhetoric, Moscow rejected this vision both verbally and by openly co-operating with all the three “members” of the “axis” (among other things, by repeatedly hosting the North Korean leader, preparing to sign new major economic agreements with Iraq and helping develop the civil nuclear energy

24 US Secretary of State Colin Powell in his statement at the OSCE Ministerial in Bucharest on 4 December 2001.

25 Cf. Expanding Bilateral and Regional Efforts in the Fight against Terrorism, theses presented by Boris Mylnikov, Director of the CIS Anti-Terrorism Centre, in: Summary Report, cited above (Note 5), pp. 76-77 (original in Russian, author’s translation).

26 Interview with Yevgeni Primakov, in: M. Rostovski., Prognoz tyazhelovesa, Moskovski Komsomolets, 17 May 2002, p. 2 (author’s translation).

sector in Iran). In contrast to the Bush administration, Russian top officials have not publicized a black list of states supporting terrorism. Instead, they have used the more flexible term “arcs of instability”. At the same time, they have expressed general concern about the growing number of states and areas where the existing power vacuum had been or could be filled by terrorist groups and forces. As specified by Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov, the regions of concern include “the Middle East, the Balkans, Somalia as well as a number of states in Asia and the Caucasus”.²⁷

Sceptical about certain aspects of the Bush administration’s anti-terrorist policy and of the US approach to fighting terrorism, Russian officials seemed to imply that the Russian approach was somehow different in that it interpreted terrorism as a “complex social and political phenomenon, based on a spectrum of social contradictions, embracing extremist terrorist ideology and structures to conduct terrorist activities, and as a form of political extremism”. This approach is publicized as “more serious and fundamental” and as “providing for comprehensive methods to fight terrorism”.²⁸

It should be noted, however, that despite alleged theoretical nuances as well as numerous strategic differences between the US and Russia, in practice, Washington and Moscow seem to have a lot in common in their anti-terrorism tactics. Both states tend to over-emphasize the role of military force in fighting terrorism and stress the immediate need to “cripple the ability of terrorists to operate”²⁹ while paying much less attention to the need to address the social, economic and political conditions for extremism and terrorism. It is in monitoring and calling both US and Russia’s attention to these fundamental issues that the OSCE as a Euro-Atlantic collective security forum has an important role to play. In particular, due to its broad multi-cultural and multi-religious membership, unparalleled institutional and political flexibility and comprehensive approach to security as well as its co-operation with its Mediterranean and Asian partners, the OSCE has a specific role to play in addressing the socio-economic aspects related to the prevention of terrorism (within its economic and environmental dimension) and with such human dimension activities as promoting political, ethnic and religious tolerance, contributing to multi-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, supporting sustainable return policies etc.

This does not mean, however, that the OSCE should primarily limit itself to “expanding existing activities” as suggested by the US. The OSCE could significantly contribute to the fight against terrorism, which will ultimately be led by the UN, not only by building on its traditional strengths, but also by

27 Cited in: Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie [Independent Military Review], 8-14 February 2002, p. 1 (author’s translation).

28 Expanding Bilateral and Regional Efforts in the Fight against Terrorism, cited above (Note 25), p. 77.

29 U.S. Department of State, U.S. Statement to OSCE on Addressing Causes of Terrorism, delivered by Ambassador David T. Johnson to the Permanent Council, Vienna, 1 November 2001, at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/terror/01110107.htm>.

trying “to identify, where appropriate, new instruments of action” as suggested by the Organization’s Secretary General Ján Kubiš in Bishkek.³⁰ In this context, the unprecedented experience of Russia and its eleven CIS partners in establishing the CIS Anti-Terrorism Centre in Bishkek, well in advance of the attacks of September 11, could be valuable for the OSCE in developing its own Anti-Terrorist Unit.

30 Welcoming Statement by Ján Kubiš, cited above (Note 5).