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The OSCE's Sleeping Beauty: The Politico-Military Dimension Waits for the Magic Kiss

Once upon a time, the CSCE had three baskets: the politico-military, the economic-environmental, and the human. When it was in its teenage years, these became the institution's three dimensions. Once it had grown up, it noticed that one dimension was much stronger than the others. It concentrated on this dimension, which appeared to be doing so well. It largely gave up on the one that never worked. But, with respect to the third dimension – the one that had once been so important but, of late, was increasingly facing problems – it did not know what to do.

Although the OSCE has been attempting to rethink its politico-military dimension for quite a while, the situation remains inconclusive. The members of the OSCE family continue to be divided on the matter, particularly since they have decided to address the problems of the Organization, their child, in all their complexity, seeking remedies for a host of policy and organizational problems.

This article addresses the problems the politico-military dimension of the OSCE has been facing recently. It analyses the objective conditions and the interests of the major players as well as the various proposals put forward lately to give a new lease on life to this dimension. Although subjective factors contribute to the problem and the solutions offered, it is the starting assumption of this article that there are objective underlying reasons why the politico-military dimension faces problems when some participating States are interested in helping it regain the gleam it once had.

There is no reason to reiterate those shortcomings of the OSCE that represent general constraints on its activity. However, attention should be called to the fact that some of the characteristic features that experts often cite as strengths of the Organization (comprehensive participation of European states, flexible and adaptable organizational structure, etc.¹) may also be considered weaknesses. It has been fashionable to speak about the crisis of the OSCE. There is one major difference between the current situation and those faced in the past: It used to be only academic experts who noted the OSCE's decline. Now those who act on behalf of the Organization also share the same critical view – although the language they use is understandably somewhat toned down. The sense of crisis and the crisis proper should be differentiated. The former undeniably exists, whereas the latter requires some qualification.

¹ I have listed those factors in the chapter: Improve What You Can – Ignore What You Can't: Reform and the Prospects of the OSCE, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2004*, Baden-Baden 2005, pp. 41-59.

I think it is better to speak of a relative decline. This is a combination of loss of importance and a loss of orientation. The loss of importance can be identified relative to both the Cold War era and to the first post-Cold War decade. The loss of orientation has occurred because there is no cohesive set of ideas supported by each participating State to show the Organization the way.

The Transformation of the European Security Landscape and Its Impact upon the Politico-Military Dimension

Since the Cold War ended, Europe has had to adapt to a new situation. The continent is no longer the centre of confrontation between two systems, it no longer has privileged status in the international system in this negative sense of hosting *the* conflict. Although the Cold War was an all-out conflict with many sides (military, political, economic, ideological), its core was military. Hence, with the end of this conflict, the importance of military matters also declined in Europe. In sum, a double decline was noticeable: The decline of the continent's importance in world politics and the decline of the significance of military matters. The two have been cumulative. Throughout the 1990s, the war in the former Yugoslavia made it possible to believe that the military aspect of security was just as relevant as it had been before. This is partly the reason why we are having a belated debate on the role of military matters in European security in the early years of the 21st century.

The end of the Cold War and the elimination of the structural causes of conflict in the Western Balkans by 2000 have given way to other types of conflict. Although most of them – except for a few² – are political in nature, the bulk also have humanitarian causes, such as the mistreatment of minorities and disrespect for human rights, at their roots. Consequently, their purely military relevance is generally low. It is necessary to emphasize this, as the politico-military dimension has traditionally been identified as having military matters – and particularly arms control – at its core. Due to this somewhat unusually narrow definition, matters that common sense would regard as politico-military fall between various dimensions.

A further problem is presented by the fact that there is only one point of reference: a scholarly definition of the politico-military dimension. Accordingly, it “was exclusively applied to international, inter-state relations and primarily to military matters. Consequently, it included disarmament, arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, and security dialogue. Since the early 1990s, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation have been added, although these tasks are not limited to the politico-military dimension. More recently, the term has also been applied

2 The few exceptions are the so-called frozen conflicts in the former Soviet Union, including the anything-but-frozen conflict over Chechnya. Among their root causes are usually secessionist claims.

to efforts to address transnational threats such as terrorism, organized crime, and trafficking in weapons.”³ It is clear from the definition that the contours of the politico-military dimension have changed over time. This happened in parallel with the main security concerns of the states in the Euro-Atlantic area. However, as security concerns have grown more complex, it has become increasingly difficult to draw clear dividing lines between the various dimensions of security. Let me add three comments here: 1. The negotiations on arms control during the Cold War were closely associated with the core military security matters of those times. Hence, arms control meant more than it does nowadays in the European context. 2. During the early 1990s, when conflict prevention and crisis management started to dominate the agenda, the boundaries of the politico-military dimension were challenged for the first time. Most conflicts, including ones that had nothing to do with the politico-military dimension, had complex causes and required complex treatment. The division of activities into dimensions started to become eroded. 3. This has continued as transnational threats have come to dominate the European security agenda. Here, as in the case of conflict prevention and crisis management, not all of the OSCE’s activities have belonged to the politico-military dimension. Although, terrorism comes under this dimension, the reaction to it, and particularly the non-military response, does not fully belong to this sphere. The same applies to transnational organized crime. Consequently, the concept of the politico-military dimension has gone through a number of adaptations to prevent it from being entirely emptied of content.

The Changing Content of the Politico-Military Dimension

Ever since the Helsinki Final Act, the politico-military dimension (or basket) has always had a strong arms control aspect. This greatly contributed to the management of the Cold War and its immediate aftermath. Confidence-building measures (CBMs, later known as confidence- and security-building measures or CSBMs) and efforts to limit conventional arms were the traditional objects of arms control in the CSCE. While the former were integral to the CSCE/OSCE, the latter had only a loose connection with the Organization but were not a direct part of its work.⁴ The relevance of both has de-

3 Wolfgang Zellner, *Managing Change in Europe. Evaluating the OSCE and Its Future Role: Competencies, Capabilities, and Missions*, CORE Working Paper No. 13, Hamburg 2005, p. 7.

4 This was due to the fact that not each participating State of the CSCE/OSCE took part in the negotiating process. During the negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) of 1973-89, it was a select few members of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization, whereas in the talks on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) of 1989-90 and the talks on adapting the CFE Treaty of 1997-9 all members of the two alliances, respectively 23 and 30 countries from among the 55 participating States, attended. Hence, it could not be regarded as a CSCE forum.

clined due to the change in the overall conflict environment. Moreover, no new CSBMs have been adopted, and the CFE process was brought to a halt after the signing of the adaptation agreement in 1999.

Although the CFE Treaty and its adaptation process, which is still incomplete, do not form part of the OSCE *acquis*, the treaty's future is so closely associated with other matters of European security that it forms part of the broad security agenda the Organization addresses. When the adaptation agreement comes into force, it will be possible for additional countries to accede to the CFE Treaty, and this may open the way to turn it into a pan-European arrangement. There are various links between the CFE Treaty and the (rest of the) politico-military dimension. The most significant at present is Russia's grievance at the refusal of 26 States Parties to the CFE Treaty of 1990 to ratify the adaptation agreement.⁵ Nowadays, discussions on European arms control begin and end there. Russia's reasons for wanting the adaptation agreement to come into force include the desire to turn the CFE process into a pan-European arrangement; to involve the new NATO member states, and especially the three Baltic republics; and to have it recognized that the political commitments taken by Russia upon signature of the adaptation agreement and not yet fully put into effect are not related to its coming into force. Although Russia has not fully implemented its commitment to withdraw its forces from the territory of Georgia and Moldova, it is certainly inching towards faithful implementation. The recent accord to withdraw its forces from Georgia may open a window of opportunity again. But even if this problem is eliminated, those pieces of arms control that have their roots in the Cold War would not bring about a change big enough to set the full politico-military dimension of the OSCE into motion.

The last time the OSCE adopted a new set of confidence- and security-building measures (at its Istanbul Summit Meeting in November 1999), the most important innovation the document produced was its agreement on regional measures. It declared that the "participating States are encouraged to undertake, including on the basis of separate agreements, in a bilateral, multilateral or regional context, measures to increase transparency and confidence [...] Taking into account the regional dimension of security, partici-

5 It is known that some European NATO members were in favour of ratification despite strong US reservations and were considering lobbying Washington to change its stance. As relations between the US and a number of European states have deteriorated significantly due to the war in Iraq, however, the European countries have tended to de-emphasize this relatively minor issue rather than burdening relations further. The US, on the other hand, argues that "unconditional" ratification would leave certain states that have complex security relations with Moscow indirectly involving the CFE Treaty – primarily Georgia and Moldova – exposed to Russian pressure. This dates back to the statement of then Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright who pointed out as early as 1997 that "any CFE agreement must take into account the interests not just of NATO's 16 allies or any individual country, but of all 30 CFE states". Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, Statement at North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting, Sintra, Portugal, 29 May 1997. As released by the Office of the Spokesman, at: <http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/970529.html>.

pating States, on a voluntary basis, may therefore complement OSCE-wide confidence- and security-building measures through additional politically or legally binding measures, tailored to specific regional needs.”⁶ The conditions upon which such regional measures can be agreed are more or less self-evident. Among other things, such measures must a) be in accordance with the OSCE’s basic principles, b) contribute to the strengthening of the security and stability of the OSCE area, including the concept of indivisibility of security, c) add to transparency and confidence, d) complement (not duplicate or replace) OSCE-wide CSBMs or arms control agreements, e) be in accordance with international laws and obligations, f) be consistent with the Vienna Document, g) not be detrimental to the security of third parties in the region.⁷ The only element of this set of conditions that requires further elucidation is that such regional (sub-regional/bilateral) CSBMs should “contribute to the [...] indivisibility of security”.⁸ When, within a region where the level of arms control commitments is in any case the highest in the world (i.e. Europe), states agree upon additional sub-regional or bilateral arms control measures, this demonstrates the existence of varied security needs. It is an indirect demonstration of the fact that European security is not indivisible. More precisely put, *those elements of security that can be addressed by arms control measures do not provide either for the indivisibility of security or for the perception of such indivisibility*. It remains to be seen if other measures can provide for the indivisibility of security. Furthermore, it is obvious that the wording here is due to a diplomatic compromise aimed at strengthening the conditions of sub-regional/bilateral CSBMs.

This major step on the part of the participating States can be interpreted in a variety of ways. It can be regarded as a positive contribution to further enriching CSBMs in the European context. Even more important may be that the OSCE countries wanted to explicitly recognize the varied security situations of the participating States. In this way, it was underlined that while there is need for CSBMs in some parts of the OSCE area, they are not necessary elsewhere. Because these regional measures are intended to complement Europe-wide measures, and not merely to enact them locally in the name of subsidiarity, their advent demonstrates that the fragmentation of European security also makes differentiation necessary in the area of CSBMs.

The rationale for OSCE-wide measures has undergone a change as NATO has expanded to include new member states, which accept its democratic principles and partnership mechanisms. These states no longer demand additional confidence-building measures among themselves (unlike Greece

6 OSCE, Vienna Document 1999 of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, FSC.DOC/1/99, adopted at the 269th Plenary Meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation in Istanbul, 16 November 1999, paras 138 and 139, p. 42.

7 Cf. *ibid.*, para. 142.

8 *Ibid.*, para. 142.2.

and Turkey among the “old” members⁹). Had they given any indication they needed special CSBMs in bilateral or sub-regional contexts, the conclusion would have been drawn that pre-existing rivalries between the new members of the Alliance meant that they remained possible security risks. One may conclude that CSBMs are not there to indicate the persistence of security risks but rather to further security. Still, this view is not generally shared. It is also to be expected that some bilateral CSBMs adopted before NATO accession would be phased out in the coming years.¹⁰ It is arguable that bilateral and sub-regional CSBM accords do not necessarily have to be terminated upon accession to the Alliance and that such a decision should be left to the parties. Particularly since the existence of bilateral CSBMs is not an indication of a security problem but rather a demonstration of security co-operation. Furthermore, bilateral CSBMs of this kind, such as the unique Romanian-Hungarian Open Skies accord, can set an example to countries in other parts of the world. The claim that the need for sub-regional/bilateral CSBMs is eliminated when the states to which they apply become members of a common alliance is not well founded. Some states have taken this position, mistakenly arguing that the continued application of existing arrangements after accession would be evidence of an ongoing security problem. The latter position is part and parcel of a broader agenda that plays down the importance of arms control in international security.

Once it was clear that European security was no longer jeopardized by the possibility of a major conflict between two military blocs, but rather that the that needed to be faced were local and sub-regional, it became only a question of what the role of arms control in post-conflict settlements would be. There was one conflict that was ripe for resolution: The war in the former Yugoslavia, particularly with respect to the three main players in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnia itself, Croatia, and the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). The resolution was made possible by peace imposed upon the region in the Dayton Agreement and the peace operation established on the territory. Later, it became apparent that the introduction of arms control measures and their extensive on-site monitoring may contribute to stabilization, particularly if the effectiveness of monitoring is increased by a permanent military presence. This, however, will not bring about stability unless the sources of conflict are addressed. This happened to some degree in the year 2000. It will also happen in the second half of the first decade of the 21st century if the pending status and statehood issues of the former Yugoslavia are regulated to the satisfaction of all parties and without snowballing destabilization.

9 For the bilateral CSBMs agreed upon between the two see Zdzislaw Lachowski, *Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in the New Europe*; SIPRI Research Report No. 18, Oxford 2004, pp. 151-155.

10 The termination of the 1998 Hungarian-Slovak CSBM agreement in January 2005 was a good example. The forthcoming termination of the Romanian-Hungarian bilateral Open Skies agreement is intended to demonstrate the same.

Two agreements were subsequently concluded: one on confidence-building measures in January 1996, the other on arms limitations in June 1996. Both of these post-Dayton agreements benefited significantly from earlier documents (the former from the 1994 OSCE document on CSBMs, the latter from the CFE Treaty), reproducing elements contained within them. Without the European “technology” of conventional arms limitations and CSBMs, the two arrangements would have been extremely difficult to achieve at all, and certainly could not have been concluded within such a short period of time. The implementation of both agreements was highly successful, which was certainly due to the facilitating role played by the foreign forces controlling the territory where arms reductions had to take place and the transparency measures implemented. Although one may say that the population of the former conflict parties were tired of violence – and in that sense that the conflict was “ripe for resolution” – it is more important to consider the role of extensive foreign military assistance in the implementation of arms limitations and confidence-building measures. If we conclude that the implementation of such measures – which has certainly fostered neighbourly relations – was conditional on foreign military presence, this does not hold out much promise as far as finding indigenous solutions for extant (frozen) conflicts. If, however, we conclude that the parties would have returned to normality one day with or without external (including military) assistance, the conclusion is entirely different.

It is correct to conclude that long-lasting conflicts usually have lasting repercussions on the parties following their formal resolution. This is no doubt the case not only in the former Yugoslavia but also in some parts of the South Caucasus and elsewhere. Hence, the normalization or re-establishment of good neighbourly relations should not be fostered by external players – states and international institutions alike – merely until a formal resolution is achieved, but also afterwards. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the reconciliation of the parties forming the Federation has been demonstrated so successfully, that at their review conference in June 2004, the parties agreed that the changed circumstances had made the agreement obsolete in practice and that they would immediately cease to apply most of the measures and terminate the agreement by 29 September 2004.¹¹ A further demonstration of reconciliation was the fact that a single army covering two Federal entities could be set up soon afterwards. This is bound to have repercussions for the arms limitation agreement, an issue that was intensively discussed during 2005.

In light of the success of the post-Dayton arms control arrangements in the former Yugoslavia, experts advocate that similar arrangements should be part and parcel of agreements ending conflicts elsewhere. However, the ques-

11 Cf. Heinz Vetschera, Mission accomplished in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures declared obsolete. *OSCE Magazine* No. 2, June 2005, pp. 28-30.

tion has to be raised about how many conflicts we are going to face in Europe that could be influenced by arms control measures (among others). How could conflicts be made “ripe for resolution”? It does not reduce the importance of arms control measures if there are only a few cases where they can be used effectively.¹² It may, however, reduce the contribution of arms control to neighbourly relations and regional security. Furthermore, if there are only a few cases where arms control (meaning both structural and operational arms control measures) in the broad sense could contribute to conflict settlement, it may make it difficult to present it as a new function of arms control. This is certainly the case since in the European context there are very few international conflicts where arms control could contribute to resolution. Certainly, arms control could be part and parcel of the settlement of inter-state conflicts. But if political conflict resolution is not achieved, there is no room for a settlement that entails arms control. Although this may not be tragic for neighbourly relations it may contribute to arms control losing its relevance.

Post-conflict stabilization efforts in Yugoslavia have convincingly demonstrated the key role that can be played by arms control measures, including CSBMs. During the Kosovo intervention, for example, CSBMs showed that they could contribute to improving the political atmosphere in the hot phase of a conflict. Russia went even further in 2000 by voluntarily arranging a one-off observation visit by representatives of other European states to an area of “ongoing military activities” in Chechnya. As a follow-up, Russia proposed a procedure for triggering verifiable CSBMs in crisis situations in its model for a modernized Vienna Document. Other states have been either reluctant or unable to make use of such measures in voluntary schemes.

It seems that the future of CSBMs in Europe lies in sub-regional and bilateral arrangements. This fact provides evidence that the agenda of narrowly defined CSBM agreements has been exhausted and there is no reason to negotiate further Europe-wide accords. And while this does not exhaust the CSBM agenda in Europe, it certainly causes one problem. The rejuvenation of the OSCE requires measures capable of attracting political attention and providing visibility. Sub-regional and bilateral CSBMs do not belong to this category.

There is an emerging arms control agenda that is closely integrated with questions of human security. The key focuses of this sub-field are landmines, small arms and light weapons (SALW), and man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). The OSCE has addressed these matters and adopted various documents. In this manner, it has contributed to the new arms control agenda that has been shaping global arms control recently. On landmines,

12 On the basis of the experience gained from the agreements under the Dayton Peace Accords it has been concluded that there “is some reason to believe that similar agreements might have a similarly positive effect in the southern Caucasus”. Neil MacFarlane, *Arms Control, Conflict and Peace Settlements: The Caucasus*, in: Keith Krause/Fred Tanner (eds), *Arms Control and Contemporary Conflicts: Challenges and Response*, Geneva 2001, p. 50.

OSCE participating States were aware of the priority of the Convention on Anti-Personnel Landmines and adopted a complementary measure, thereby fostering ratification of the convention.

The OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons adopted in November 2000 reflects a recognition of the responsibility the participating States have for the production and the global spread of such weapons. The main objective of the participating States is to combat the illicit trade in SALW without affecting the legitimate arms business. In addition, the OSCE has since produced a set of best-practice guides on issues relating to various stages of the service life of SALW. A compilation of the guides was later published as a handbook. This handbook is intended to help governments, NGOs, and international organizations to address the matter.¹³

Ever since Afghan irregulars used MANPADS against the Soviet forces in the 1980s, it has been known how dangerous these weapons are and how cheaply they can be employed against valuable targets, including civilian planes. Their potential use by terrorists against civilian aircraft left the realm of theory when an Israeli charter plane was targeted by a MANPADS in Kenya. By resolving that the participating States should adopt the principles developed by the Wassenaar Arrangement, the OSCE was instrumental in enhancing the number of states that have committed themselves to abiding by export controls on conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, including MANPADS.¹⁴

The politico-military dimension is not confined to arms control, however. When the CSCE was a conference, this dimension was an extensive security dialogue that certainly contributed to mutual understanding. Although the CSCE/OSCE retains this element in the post-Cold War era, it also now has a broader agenda. As the channels used to exchange views have multiplied, for instance, as a result of the intensified exchange of information between the militaries of Euro-Atlantic nations, the visibility of this aspect of OSCE co-operation has experienced a relative decline. Nonetheless, there are certain politico-military developments that would be worth addressing. Strategic concepts have changed, pre-emptive doctrines have been put into practice and applied in some countries, and laws of war have been more extensively violated by armed forces of OSCE participating States than before in the name of the “war on terrorism” – and certainly not only by the state that declared that war. Still, there has been little high-level exchange within the framework of the Organization. Recently, Russia put forward an idea to hold a “high-level seminar on military doctrines and defence policy in the OSCE area”, with a particular focus on the consequences of NATO’s recent enlarge-

13 OSCE, OSCE Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Vienna 2003, at: <http://www.osce.org>.

14 Cf. Zdzislaw Lachowski/Pál Dunay, Conventional arms control and military confidence-building, in: *SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Oxford 2005, pp. 659-60.

ment.¹⁵ This is an idea worth considering. It is regrettable that when the Russian Delegation to the OSCE was approached for details of the thinking behind the proposal, they appeared unable to give an adequate account. If Russia is interested in “rebalancing” the various dimensions of the OSCE it should put forward initiatives that had been professionally prepared.¹⁶ It has been recognized that this topic is worthy of discussion, and doing so is certainly not an unacceptably high price to pay for convincing Russia of the ongoing value of the OSCE. Thus, the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) took the decision in June 2005 and the two-day seminar will actually be held in February 2006.¹⁷ It remains to be seen whether it will be put to good use or not. According to some, it “might be the right place to identify a future-oriented arms control agenda including a review of the 1999 Vienna Document”.¹⁸ It would be regrettable if the seminar convened to discuss matters of doctrine were to be confined to debating arms control at a time when a number of participating States feel entitled to fight wars of intervention and have adopted highly destabilizing offensive nuclear doctrines. The violation of international humanitarian law by participating States, both in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond, is also disquieting and should be discussed within that framework.

The OSCE has been a major contributor to conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation. Its strength in conflict prevention cannot be accurately estimated without giving attention to those instruments that have been established in other areas, such as the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM). This post was created to address the most prominent conflict source of the 1990s through mediation and low-profile conflict mitigation. It is not easy to say whether the activity of the HCNM effectively contributed to prevention in the case of conflicts that might have increased in political significance or even become violent without his involvement.¹⁹ This is because conflict prevention is not a visible activity

15 Statement by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at the Twelfth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Sofia, 7 December 2004, p. 2, at: <http://www.mid.ru>.

16 It would be wrong to give the impression that only Russia has launched initiatives at a high level without backing them up with professional preparation. It is sufficient to mention the so-called Byrnes speech of then US Secretary of State Warren Christopher that launched the idea of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in Stuttgart that was followed by intensive preparation.

17 OSCE, Forum for Security Co-operation, Decision No. 3/05, Dates of the OSCE Seminar on Military Doctrine, FSC.DEC/3/05, 29 June 2005.

18 Wolfgang Zellner, *The Reform of the OSCE: Problems, Challenges and Risks*, Paper presented at the Joint Conference of the PSIO Focus and the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, *The Reform of the OSCE 15 Years After the Charter of Paris for a New Europe: Problems, Challenges and Risks*, 7-8 September 2005, pp. 18-19.

19 It is well founded to conclude, however, that the HCNM had a major impact upon the relations between minorities, the states in which they live, and so-called “kin states” in which the majority population is of the same ethnicity as a minority in another country. The Centre for OSCE Research at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH) has published several reports giving the results of its empirical research in this area. Details can be found at: <http://www.core-hamburg.de>.

when successful. The factor of “invisibility” creates certain problems, as, unfortunately, the OSCE does not receive credit for successful conflict prevention activities.

The OSCE is a major contributor to carrying forward the resolution of frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space. It is partly due to the frameworks established by the OSCE (e.g. the Minsk Group) and to international attention in general that these conflicts have remained frozen for such a long time. The conclusion could be drawn that the constant attention of the OSCE significantly contributed to those conflicts not heating up again. It is arguable that more could have been done in order to move the conflicts closer to resolution. Some recent developments have indicated, however, that major changes in state policies may be necessary before solutions can be found. It is sufficient to mention the successful resolution of the conflict in Ajaria due to the policy of the new Georgian leadership or the potential impact of the Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” on Transdnistria. Although some of those separatist conflicts still linger on they are not central to European security.

The OSCE should stand ready and provide a platform for the communication that may ease the settlement of those conflicts. Frozen conflicts may temporarily give the superficial impression that they are closer to resolution than they were. This seems to be the case now as far as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is concerned, while others (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transdnistria) give no impression of moving towards resolution. In all likelihood, however, frozen conflicts will not be resolved solely by offering “carrots”. The option of using “sticks” may well be equally important, although these are not in the hands of the OSCE. Furthermore, the co-operation of the main actors is an indispensable precondition of any settlement.

Europe as a whole can live very well with frozen conflicts. This is one of the factors some of the conflict parties need to recognize. It appears, however, that they have not yet done so. For one, the conflict parties do not recognize this situation, and assume that sufficient attention will be paid to their conflicts to “rescue them” in accordance with their own interests. This is the classic tunnel vision familiar to everybody who has ever attended a negotiating course or exercise. Furthermore, there are often interests – both within the conflict zone and in the world at large – that run counter to terminating the conflict. As in conflicts in other regions of the world, there are those who would lose status, economic benefits, or both if the conflict were to come to an end and who therefore oppose its resolution. Although these conflict zones are not and cannot be recognized as state entities, nor may they be erased from the map of Europe or simply labelled “Here be Conflicts”. It is important that they are made objects of both positive and negative attention. By negative attention I mean that efforts should be stepped up to combat the lawlessness prevailing in some of these areas, which have become hotbeds of organized crime, including trafficking. If operations exist in those areas, they

should have a strong police element.²⁰ The fact that there is no effective state responsibility there does not mean that efforts could not be made to prevent the spread of transnational threats. On the positive side, rehabilitation efforts and development projects could improve living conditions. The OSCE could provide these with political support.

The key security concerns in the contemporary environment are all transnational in character. Whether the politico-military dimension regains its relevance will depend primarily upon addressing them. They include terrorism, organized crime, and various forms of trafficking, all of which are inter-linked. Organized crime networks are often implicated in financing terrorist groups, and trafficking is actually a specific form of organized crime. When addressing these matters it is necessary to take into account that they are cross-dimensional, global, and take advantage of a benign environment if state capacity is weak and the level of corruption is high.²¹ Addressing these matters requires long-term attention, very often co-operation with non-participating states, and intervention in the building of state capacity, including the capacity to fight corruption.

Terrorism is the primary threat to global security nowadays, and many OSCE participating States, including the US, the UK, Spain, Russia, and Uzbekistan, have been targeted by terrorism. The OSCE has made a fair effort to address it since 2001. Bearing in mind the objective importance of the matter and the significance several participating States attribute to it, it is unimaginable that it would not continue to do so. As the OSCE does not have the operational capacity to fight terrorism, its role in this area will have to remain supplementary. The establishment of a focal point in the OSCE to address counter-terrorism matters has certainly not lowered the issue's profile.²²

The activity of the OSCE will remain confined to adopting certain political documents and helping countries to build capacity and engage more effectively in global efforts through the transfer of knowledge, for example, by guaranteeing that the twelve UN conventions and protocols relating to terrorism are generally recognized by the participating States. It is necessary that the OSCE continue to perform its role in this area, however, limited or marginal it may be as this enables the Organization to share its valuable knowledge on topics such as alternative ways of addressing terrorism. This is of particular importance when two major players within the OSCE, the US and the Russian Federation, agree in "tend[ing] to over-emphasize the role of military force in fighting terrorism and stress the immediate need to 'cripple

20 Cf. Dov Lynch, New thinking about 'frozen' conflicts, in: *Helsinki Monitor* 3/2005, pp. 192-195, here: p. 194.

21 Cf. also, for example, Wolfgang Zellner, Addressing transnational threats and risks – A key challenge for the OSCE, in: *Helsinki Monitor* 3/2005, pp. 214-217, here: p. 215.

22 In spite of the undeniable importance of appointing a specialist dedicated to addressing terrorism, it is still relevant to ask whether it is organizationally sound to increase the number of functions and thereby to further increase the need for horizontal co-ordination inside the Organization.

the ability of terrorists to operate”²³ Under the current conditions and given the emphasis on operational activities, countering terrorism should entail no more than a minor supplementary role for the OSCE.²⁴

It is in other areas, such as fighting organized crime, including trafficking and corruption, that the OSCE could make a difference. There are two reasons for this: 1. It has built a limited capacity to address some of these phenomena, and particularly human trafficking. 2. As these matters are lower down than terrorism on the list of other organizations’ security concerns, the stage is “less crowded”, i.e. there are not so many organizations that address them in the European context. In common with all transnational security problems, these are cross-dimensional matters. They are just as much part of the politico-military as of the human dimension.

The OSCE has paid a remarkable degree of attention to human trafficking, first in the context of the Western Balkans and later generally. It should be emphasized not only that this is an emerging matter of increasing importance, but also that it is linked to some other transnational threats, such as other forms of trafficking. Moreover, it is also important to mention that it must be addressed in time. Although there are national organs and a number of international bodies addressing the matter operationally, the OSCE has made a unique contribution through raising awareness and politicizing the matter in the European context.²⁵

The OSCE has successfully developed capacity and transferred national knowledge to help the capacity building of those states willing to address corruption. Here again, success is contingent upon the readiness of participating States facing this phenomenon. The EU has regularly called the attention of candidate countries as well as certain states in the Western Balkans to this phenomenon and will certainly continue to do so within the framework of European “new neighbourhood” policy. Some NGOs, primarily Transparency International, have been doing a lot to increase knowledge and raise consciousness. There is room for further activity, however. It is apparent that in countries where corruption is endemic in state structures up to the highest level of government, co-operation will be confined to payment of lip service. In fact, it may be necessary to remove corrupt structures before this attitude can change. The words of the new President of Kyrgyzstan that corruption “has penetrated so deeply into all aspects of our lives that we will have to

23 Ekaterina Stepanova, The OSCE and US-Russian Co-operation in the Fight Against Terrorism, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2002*, Baden-Baden 2003, pp. 59-71, here: p. 70.

24 For more in a similar vein see Gudrun Steinacker, The Role of the OSCE as a Regional Security Organization in Combating International Terrorism, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2003*, Baden-Baden 2004, pp. 89-93.

25 For a good overview of its various aspects see Helga Konrad, Trafficking in human beings – the ugly face of Europe, in: *Helsinki Monitor* 3/2002, pp. 260-271.

continue addressing this problem for a long time to come”²⁶ may serve as reminder. This matter cannot be addressed if political conditions are not favourable. The intrusion necessary to effectively address corruption may itself be used for manipulation. As fighting corruption would entail the transfer of knowledge by some participating States to others, it would be possible again to interpret it as relationship of “mentors and pupils”.²⁷ This kind of language is likely to be used in this context only by those who want to find pretexts for rejecting or impeding the benign co-operative transfer of knowledge in this area.

The OSCE's Key Players and the Politico-Military Dimension: Tactical Interest, Lack of Interest, Negative Interest

The CSCE/OSCE has proved to be a flexible and highly adaptable institution. The emphasis of its *acquis* has shifted over time. It is a sign of the Organization's strength that, on two occasions – upon the inception of the CSCE process in the mid-1970s and upon the fundamental rearrangement of the international system in the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s – it was successful in adapting itself in order to face the future. Only thanks to this forward-looking willingness to adapt, has the Organization remained relevant in the years that have followed. Although no major changes have taken place at the start of the 21st century as far as the structure of international relations in Europe is concerned, the OSCE has nonetheless recently faced a major challenge. This has grown out of the Organization's increasing marginalization in international relations within the Euro-Atlantic area. The structure of these relations has changed, leaving three major actors in place: the US, the European Union, and the Russian Federation. However, there are significant differences among them. The US is a single, unified actor that has increasingly become the key power in a unipolar international system. However, its dominance is more apparent in international security than in other spheres of international affairs. The EU has become much larger following the May 2004 “big bang” enlargement, and it now unites more than half of OSCE participating States. There are also a number of non-members that align their policies with those of the EU. It could thus be concluded that the “EU circle” is far broader than the member states alone.²⁸ The EU's “circle of friends” also means that formal membership status, and hence enlargement, matters less than is usually assumed. The Russian Federation is of major im-

26 Kurmanbek Bakiev, Kyrgyzstan: Counting on the OSCE, *OSCE Magazine* No. 2, June 2005, p. 15.

27 This terminology is used by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Reform will enhance the OSCE's relevance, in: *Financial Times*, 29 November 2004, p. 13.

28 For example, the British EU Presidency spoke on behalf of 35 participating States (25 EU members and ten others) at the High Level OSCE Consultations. See United Kingdom Presidency of the Council of the European Union: EU Statement for High Level OSCE Consultations in Vienna, PC.DEL/865/05, 13 September 2005, p. 4.

portance for the Euro-Atlantic area in itself. It is even more important as a regional power that takes the lead in representing those countries in the former Soviet sphere that have not made a successful transition to democracy. It is the relationship of these three power centres that largely determines the OSCE agenda.

The *United States* has to some extent lost interest in those multilateral organizations that reflect the power relations of a previous era. This is partly because it is of the view that it has a better chance to influence international relations bilaterally, relying upon its preponderance of power, and partly because it can rely on other multilateral frameworks and mechanisms that reflect current power relations, such as the G8, various contact groups, or the structures that emerged in connection with the Proliferation Security Initiative. As far as the OSCE is concerned, the US is only interested in maintaining the status quo: "We must recognize that the OSCE cannot resolve every problem, nor should it try. There are certain things this organization does well, such as early warning and conflict prevention, the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law, and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The OSCE must continue to make this work its first priority."²⁹ A few months later, Secretary of State Colin Powell emphasized at the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting that the US is "open to increasing the OSCE's activities to promote security and economic development, but not at the expense of the OSCE's core democracy and human rights work".³⁰ This means that, on the one hand, the US is satisfied with the situation of the human dimension being on the top of the OSCE's agenda and does not want to change the emphasis. On the other hand, however, it has also sounded a negative note: "We are against negotiating new traditional style arms control/CSBMs, although we MAY be willing to consider specific proposals if there is a clear security need to be addressed."³¹ The US has been cooperating with the new arms control agenda and has actively supported arms control measures closely linked to human security – e.g. those addressing SALW – or countering terrorism, e.g. efforts to control the proliferation of MANPADS. The US has also clearly expressed its concern at negotiating the same matters in various forums: "We are against opening duplicate negotiations on issues, e.g., on WMD, already being negotiated elsewhere. We are open to appropriate OSCE reinforcing measures."³²

29 United States Mission to the OSCE, Statement to ASRC Session 4: The Way Forward, as delivered by Deputy Representative Douglas Davidson to the Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, 24 June 2004, p. 2.

30 Remarks by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell to the Ministerial Meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Sofia, 7 December 2004, p. 2, MC.DEL/52/04

31 Statement by U.S. Permanent Representative Ambassador Julie Finley, Presented at the morning session of the High Level Consultations, Vienna, 13 September 2005, p. 3 (emphasis in the original); available at: <http://osce.usmission.gov>.

32 Ibid.

The US has, understandably, been extremely forthcoming on countering terrorism as the primary common threat to the OSCE area and has recognized the complementary role the OSCE has been playing in this field. At the same time, however, Washington has tacitly been of the view that the OSCE does not have the operational capacity necessary for countering terrorism. Bearing in mind the inclusive membership of the OSCE in the Euro-Atlantic area, the Organization is certainly well suited for issuing statements and other documents to demonstrate the resolve of the participating States. It has also contributed to the transfer of knowledge among them.

It is possible to characterize the US approach to the OSCE as a vector. The two factors that determine it are: the long-term pragmatic OSCE policy and the short term ideologically based democratization agenda of our times. It is obvious that the latter prevails for the time being and will continue to dominate US thinking for the foreseeable future. As the OSCE has proved instrumental in democratization several times recently, the prime interest of the US is to retain its current values with the minimum adaptation necessary to achieve compromise with other participating States. Hence, the politico-military dimension is not the priority of the US and it cannot be expected that it would become so any time soon. Whenever it attributes importance to this dimension, it does so pragmatically and selectively. All in all, since the US is reluctant to increase the role of the politico-military dimension it can be concluded with some qualification that the US has a *negative interest* in the further development of the dimension.

The position of the *Russian Federation* could be described as diametrically opposed to that of the US. While the US would like to retain the primacy of democratization and the human dimension, Russia would like to reverse current priorities. Russia would like the OSCE to shift its focus from democratization, and to reduce its role in humanitarian affairs, counterbalancing this by increasing the role of the other dimensions. As the economic-environmental dimension does not hold out much promise, it remains to be seen whether something might happen to the politico-military dimension that would give the impression of a better balance between humanitarian and politico-military matters.

Russia has been playing the lead role in criticizing the OSCE for its current bias as far as the various dimensions of its activity and the emphasis on the area "East of Vienna" are concerned. In the so-called Astana Appeal, launched in September 2004, eight former Soviet republics expressed their desire for the reform of the OSCE's agenda. It called for greater attention to be paid to the politico-military aspects of security, and also a modification of the emphasis within the human dimension to shift to "ensuring the freedom of movement and people-to-people contacts, improving the conditions for tourism, expanding ties in the area of education and science and exchanging

and disseminating cultural values between all the participating States”.³³ This document also proposed that the role of field activities be modified by moving away from “the monitoring of the political situation” to emphasizing “specific project activities”. If one takes a closer look at this, one may draw the following conclusions: The Russian Federation and its partners want to see the OSCE increase its activity in fields other than the humanitarian. In the human dimension, they want to see a change of emphasis. It is their objective to have less political monitoring, including most probably election observation, and more project-related activity. Project-related activities should be financed most probably by those participating States that have the means for it. Even more clearly, the former Soviet republics want to gain access to the resources of the West – Russia apparently to a lesser extent than other participating States from that region. At the same time, they wish to face less scrutiny in their political affairs, including the – not necessarily democratic – direction of their political development. Furthermore, the same countries have initiated the integration of extra-budgetary resources into the OSCE budget. This would mean the application of the consensus rule for the use of resources. Taking it one step further, it would mean that the economic dominance of the West could no longer be used to serve Western political priorities.

It may be somewhat superficial to conclude, however, that the Organization has neglected the politico-military dimension. It has certainly paid less attention to it than during the 1970s and the 1980s, when politico-military affairs were heavily emphasized within the CSCE. However, we have witnessed continuing efforts to resolve “frozen” conflicts, such as those in Georgia, Moldova, and over Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as counter-terrorism initiatives. The OSCE’s police reform and training programme in Kyrgyzstan, which is being carried out in parallel with EU efforts, is another initiative in the field of politico-military security. Russia and other countries in the former Soviet area know only too well that the politico-military dimension is not in terminal decline, at least not relative to the decline of the OSCE as a whole.

Those states that have not completed their democratic transition or, in some cases, have not even embarked upon it are understandably fearful of the strength of the forces that intend to change the political status quo and preferably to do so within a short period of time. They are attempting to bring this change to a halt or at least slow it down. The argument that the three dimensions of the OSCE should be rebalanced certainly sounds better than a simple rejection of the views held by those forces, including participating States that favour democratization and democracy spreading to the rest of the OSCE area. It is for these reasons that the conclusion could be drawn that the Russian Federation and many other successor states of the former Soviet

33 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Information and Press Department, Appeal of the CIS Member States to the OSCE Partners, Astana, 15 September 2004 (unofficial translation from the Russian), at: http://www.in.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/70f610ccd5b876ccc3256f100043db72?OpenDocument. Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Turkmenistan did not sign the document.

Union have a primarily *tactical interest* in the development of the politico-military dimension.

The *European Union (and several countries that align their policies with it)* has become the third decisive player within the OSCE. It is a diverse entity in many ways, although united in its conviction that long-term stability can be best based upon democratic conditions. The similarity of values between the US and the EU means that the positions of the two have often been closely associated. During the presidency of George W. Bush, the democratization agenda has been accompanied by efforts to implement a radical change in the status quo, both globally and regionally. The EU is thus faced with the difficulty of keeping its distance from this policy while not distancing itself from its member states' common values. This also presents a dilemma for the EU within the OSCE. The EU has no particular interest in the OSCE's arms control agenda, except perhaps for the contribution of arms control measures to the resolution of frozen conflicts in the Caucasus and in Moldova. There, regional or bilateral arms control is conditional upon conflict settlement. With the launch and extension of its "new neighbourhood" policy, the EU will be playing a more active role in regions that are home to frozen conflicts. Its direct interest in relying upon the OSCE may well decline, however. The EU's rapidly developing and significant leverage in the countries affected by conflict may be enhanced if it acts directly on its own behalf, rather than through the OSCE. The OSCE has one major advantage that the EU may choose to utilize. Its missions establish a field presence, and their activity may extend to areas outside the EU's reach. However, some of these field activities touch upon the politico-military dimension, and the EU, which already has a presence within post-Soviet space, may not be particularly interested in relying upon the politico-military dimension of the OSCE. Nonetheless, in that part of the former Soviet Union where the EU's presence is less well established, as a result, for instance, of the fact that the "new neighbourhood" policy does not extend to Central Asia, it may indeed be interested in the activity of OSCE missions. But still, it must be remembered that missions will continue to be multi-dimensional and thus may not be sufficient to provide the politico-military dimension with a new lease of life. In sum, the position of the EU in the politico-military dimension could be best characterized as one of marginal interest tending towards *a lack of interest*. It is also worth noting that, following the address of the EU Presidency at the High Level OSCE Consultations, several EU member states also made their own national statements, demonstrating that the common position does not always wholly assimilate the positions of the individual EU member states.

By Way of Conclusion: Reform Proposals and the Politico-Military Dimension

The chances of the current reform of the OSCE achieving a major breakthrough and placing the Organization at the centre of European politics are not good. It may nonetheless contribute to the ongoing adaptation of its activities. The contribution of the politico-military dimension has become limited – partly for objective reasons, partly due to subjective matters of interpretation. The most important objective reason is that the prime concerns of European security are no longer confined to the realm of the politico-military dimension. The subjective one is that none of the major players attributes particular significance to this dimension, in spite of its adaptation to changing realities.

The CSBMs agreed upon in the 1980s and the 1990s and the CFE process are not being neglected due to malign intentions, they are in decline because they are not addressing the OSCE participating States' primary security concerns. This is recognized by the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons, which points out that those measures "should be brought up to date".³⁴ The CSCE/OSCE's effective reaction to certain inter-ethnic and separatist conflicts in the post-Cold War era contributed to the vitality of the politico-military dimension.

Although the politico-military dimension of the OSCE has lost some of its appeal since the Cold War era, it has not become irrelevant. To conclude that it is now unimportant and is being ignored by many participating States would be unjustified. This is particularly true if field mission activities that relate to the political dimension, the prevention of potential conflicts, and addressing frozen conflicts are taken into account. If the OSCE were to address one or more transnational threats that belong in part to the politico-military dimension, the significance of its contribution could be enhanced.

While it may be tempting to conclude that the Organization's and highly complex diverse activities transcend the categories of its conventional three dimensions, it would certainly be going too far to conclude that "thinking in terms of 'dimensions' or 'baskets' is outdated and counter-productive".³⁵ It would be better to state that, due to the post-Cold War challenges to Euro-Atlantic security, the lines between the various dimensions are increasingly blurred. There are areas of activity where the dimensions can be identified and others where it is impossible. This applies particularly to field missions, which represent and will continue to represent the core of the OSCE's activity. As long as missions continue to remain integral to the OSCE and extend

34 *Common Purpose: Towards a More Effective OSCE, Final Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons On Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE*, 27 June 2005, reproduced in this volume, pp. 359-379, here: p. 366.

35 Wolfgang Zellner, The Future Development of OSCE Field Missions, in: Victor-Yves Ghebali/Daniel Warner (eds.), *The Politico-Military Dimension of the OSCE: Arms Control and Conflict Management Issues*, Geneva 2005, p. 45.

their activities to the politico-military dimension, the OSCE, and the politico-military dimension with it, will continue to retain some of its relevance. The OSCE will muddle through irrespective of its half-hearted reforms.