

BALANCING HEGEMONY

The OSCE in the CIS

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CHAPTER FIVE

The OSCE and European Security Architecture

David Law

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, the relationship between the OSCE and the other institutions that constitute the European security architecture — NATO, WEU, EU and arguably the UN and the Council of Europe — has passed through three rather loosely defined phases. The first phase was one of understandable, but largely misplaced, institutional ambition. This was true not only of the then CSCE, but also of other bodies having or seeking to have a security role in the new Europe. The second phase involved an unsuccessful attempt to accommodate the varying mandates, memberships, capabilities and expectations of the CSCE and its sister institutions under the overarching notion of interlocking institutions. In the current phase, we are witness, in Bosnia and elsewhere, to a new effort to ensure institutional synergy. Unlike in the second phase, where a certain amount of institutional anarchy was on display, a hierarchy may now be emerging that could bestow on the OSCE a leading role. After addressing these three phases in some detail, this paper will turn to the question of how the OSCE's role might develop in future.

Great Institutional Expectations

In the immediate post-Cold War period, there were great expectations for the role of the then CSCE in European security, and powerful reasons for entertaining them. Ideologically, the CSCE constituted a playing field which was level for all its members. It was comparatively inexpensive, an argument which then as now can weigh heavily for financially strapped governments. Moreover, its soft security experience seemed well suited to the post-Cold War security

agenda. Its inclusiveness gave it a major advantage in dealing with the most pressing security problems on the Eurasian land mass, namely those stemming from systemic transition underway in countries where communist parties had once ruled alone. Finally, the CSCE enjoyed considerable support in key capitals, not the least of which was Moscow.

The CSCE was, however, not alone in hoping that the changed security environment and its own transformation would secure it a privileged place in the institutional sun. The disappearance of the tidy bi-bloc arrangement of War-saw Treaty Organization versus NATO had, of course, ushered in a dramatic shift in security relationships and security perceptions throughout Europe and North America. As they changed, there was a marked inclination on the part of both international bureaucracies and member countries to seek out new roles, both geographical and functional, for the various institutions with which they were affiliated. This was true of course for the UN, with its hope that the end of East-West conflict would allow the organization to realize the full promise of the collective security provisions of its Charter. It was true as well for the Western European bodies. The European Community (later EU) sought to become a fully fledged union with a proper security identity. The WEU hoped that post-Cold War circumstances would make it possible, desirable, and even necessary for the organization to emerge from the obscurity that had enshrouded it throughout the Cold War. At a minimum, the WEU's perspective was that it would come to act as the security vehicle of the emerging Union. At a maximum, it saw itself as the security vanguard of a widening and deepening process of European integration.

Ambitions at NATO were more modest. There was some support for the notion that the Alliance would become the all-encompassing European security organization. This was, however, a largely marginal view. In fact, there was perhaps relatively more sympathy among members for the idea that the time had come for the institution to make a graceful exit. Of course, the mainstream view was that the organization, assuming it could successfully transform itself, was still necessary. Above all, this was understood to mean that it would have to share responsibilities in the European theatre, whereas previously it had for the most part acted alone.

The difficulty with these expectations was quite apparent. There was no agreement either between or within institutions on the division of labour among them, or on how the overall institutional framework should evolve. In view of this, it was unrealistic to look for an inter-institutional consensus on which organization should become the security *supremo*. Moreover, the ambitions of the individual institutions all had a certain logic. If realized, however, they ran the risk of being mutually exclusive. Although over the long term it was perhaps possible that the question could be resolved by a struggle for survival of the fittest, over the short term it seemed that either there would have to be some form of accommodation or there would be anarchy.

Interlocking Institutions

As it turned out, the security landscape of the early 1990s exhibited elements of both accommodation and anarchy. It fell to NATO, perhaps because of its relatively modest ambitions and the fact that its rationale under post-Cold War circumstances was subject to the greatest scrutiny, to take the lead in attempting to come up with a viable concept. The challenge was to devise a strategy that captured the changing ambitions, perceptions, and expectations within the institutional environment and at the same time recognized the continuing need to be able to project force if the strategic landscape proved to be less benign than the hopes of the moment suggested.

NATO's answer was encapsulated in the phrase "interlocking institutions," a term that first found its way into a communiqué in 1990.¹ Interlocking institutions was meant to acknowledge that henceforth there would be many institutional actors sharing the security action. To paraphrase communiqué language, in some situations one institution would be best placed to lead, while in other situations this role would fall to another organization. Multi-institutional involvement would, however, be the norm. This would require flexible patterns of cooperation and institutional synergy or, as expressed in the diplomatic jargon of the time, by a trio of buzz words:

- transparency (of agendas and decisionmaking);
- complementarity (in objectives and in action); and
- additionality — in other words, at the end of the day, more institutions working together was to translate into more security, not less.

Such was the concept. In practice, the viability of interlocking institutions was severely hampered by the very problem that had led to its being devised in the first place: insufficient consensus among member states as to the roles of individual organizations under the new circumstances, and as became increasingly apparent, substantial inter-institutional rivalry as to who should do what, with whom, and how.

This was understandable. Memberships diverged, a fact complicated by the tendency for each country to want to be a member of each institution and for the latter in turn to want to develop as broad as possible an agenda. In addition, institutional cultures were anything but uniform which complicated coordination and communications. Beyond that, interlocking institutions multiplied the number of variables at work in the decisionmaking process. The interrelationships among the international bureaucracies, national diplomatic and military representations, governments and national bureaucracies, parliaments and publics — already highly complex in each individual institutional setting — became even more complicated in the emerging multi-institutional environment. This aggravated the ever-present problem of ensuring accountability on the international level, and exacerbated decisional delay in what was

a very fast moving environment. Much of this was inevitable. It was also highly ineffective in addressing security challenges that emerged soon after the Cold War. Especially significant were the following three sins of the interlocking institutions.

First, there was a tendency for countries to attempt to exploit their relative strengths in individual institutions. For example, France would tend to push for a strengthening of the CSCE's mandate while the US would work to extend that of NATO. This was very clearly put in evidence in the development of the NACC before and after the latter's founding in late 1991. Each step in NACC's development came at the price of a similarly significant step in the CSCE's. Another example was provided by Greece seeking to exploit its membership in the EU to rally support for national concerns (more often than not involving Turkey) — and as of 1995 its full membership in the WEU. Non-EU member Turkey would, on the other hand, attempt to use its membership in NATO to ensure that its interests would be taken into account by the WEU. This could take the form, for example, of blocking the exchange of documents between the two organizations. The French-American rivalry was also very much in evidence here with France championing the EC and the WEU while the US favoured NATO. Achieving consensus in one body could be contingent on the ability to obtain consensus in the other. This translated into such anomalies as WEU and NATO sanctions monitoring missions operating separately in the Adriatic for about a year until they were put under combined command in June 1993.² Instead of the two bodies complementing or substituting for one another, there was institutional "tweedle dum / tweedle deeism."

A second manifestation of the problem was institutional buck-passing. With several institutions sharing the action where NATO had previously enjoyed a virtual monopoly, new scope was provided for shirking obligations, shifting tasks and muddying lines of responsibility and chains of command. As a former speechwriter and supervisor of speechwriters at NATO in this period, I can express the wish that I had a dollar for every time I inserted into a speech for then NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner paragraphs designed to deflect criticism of NATO's action in the Yugoslav conflict by explaining that the organization had done everything requested of it by other institutions involved in the crisis management effort. The bottom line was that NATO members had for the most part been quite content to see the EU take the lead in the first phase of the conflict and the UN in the second.³

With regard to the second phase, the official explanation tended to be that the UN as an universal organization had a mandate that NATO did not. Of course, there was an interest in NATO circles in associating Russia with decisionmaking in the FRY. More important than this were probably two other considerations: first, the inability of the 16 to take a common line that the main peacekeeping contributors among them — the US, France and the UK, felt comfortable with and the desire of countries reluctant to commit forces or the

organization to any significant extent to transfer the burden for the conflict in its political, military, and financial dimensions to another organization. The problem was that, at the other address, divisions were no easier to resolve and the legitimacy of the mandating power, the UN Security Council, was highly questionable.⁴

As for the CSCE, various reasons explain why it did not become a player in the first and second phases of the conflict in the FRY. In part, this reflected an anti-CSCE bias. In part, it reflected concern that the decisionmaking base of the CSCE was simply too broad and too diffuse for it to deal with the challenging questions on the Yugoslav agenda. But the decisive consideration was probably that the CSCE was too much caught up in the process of adjusting its structure and self-understanding to the more sobering realities of the post-Cold War world to be able to become involved, particularly in a decisive capacity.⁵

A third problem with this institutional framework was that it led to "strategic disconnect," a phenomenon which might be explained as follows. In the first place, with Western governments anxious to cash in on what was presumed to be the post-Cold War peace dividend, there were too many institutions chasing too few, and diminishing, financial means and there was a serious dispersal of resources. Second, with each institution tending to frame possible solutions to problems as a function of the wherewithal available to it, proposed solutions tended to fall woefully short of the mark. In other words, there would be a decision to resort to a peacekeeping formula such as in the FRY, notwithstanding the fact that a much more robust kind of intervention was called for, because it was thought that this would require fewer resources and a smaller commitment, and because this seemed to correspond best to the resource limitations facing decisionmakers. The result was a delinkage between the reality of the battlefield and the policy culture prevailing in the institutional environment. Initially, interlocking institutions inevitably produced solutions that represented the lowest common inter-institutional denominator. In the FRY, this denominator was very low indeed. In fact, it was so low that the term fell into disrepute. In its place came the less value-neutral and, initially at any rate, even more euphemistic "mutually-reinforcing institutions."⁶

The New Multi-Institutionalism?

The difficulties outlined above have not been chased away by a name change. But there has been an undeniable improvement in inter-institutional cooperation since mid-1993, with the search for a new formula to govern the intervention in the FRY, the resulting Dayton Agreement, and subsequent efforts to implement it. The situation remains far from perfect, but on the whole it is much improved.

The multi-institutional action that Dayton has spawned contrasts favourably in several respects with previous EU- and UN-led campaigns. The Dayton Agreement placed the peacebuilding dimension of the intervention mainly in the hands of the OSCE, a recognition of the fact that peacebuilding in the FRY is first and foremost an all-European responsibility. The agreement also recognized the need for a conflict suffocation effort and for NATO to take the lead in providing it, rather than the hopelessly overburdened and haplessly out of place UN. In IFOR and its successor SFOR, the agreement brought together a broad coalition consisting of more non-NATO than NATO members and among them a number of extra-European OSCE non-member countries — a dramatic indication of the extent to which the post-Cold War security paradigm differs from its predecessor. Finally, a coordinating element was introduced in the office of Carl Bildt, High Representative Responsible for Coordinating the Civilian Aspects of the Peace Agreement for the Former Yugoslavia.

If the peacebuilders can muster the necessary staying power — and that is, of course, by no means guaranteed — then what we may have in the making is a prototype for successful future interventions in the affairs of splitting states and separating communities. Such interventions would display the following characteristics:

- flexible, ad hoc arrangements;
- comprehensive policy approaches, bringing together political, military, civil, informational, and economic strands in a single package;
- multi-institutional involvement, for example, as in the case of the Dayton arrangement, a core of all-European responsibility through the OSCE, underpinned by a modest, but still strategically significant, US role through NATO and supported by a small but politically significant Russian or CIS role, and open to the participation of extra-European states.

The other major institutional improvement has come in the FSU, where the OSCE has come to find a particular niche as a provider of early warning of things possibly going amiss, a neutral party in disputes and one seen as such by most parties, as well as an arbiter in situations that get grossly out of hand, incapable of opposing a show of force but making a show of force just that more difficult to mount.

The level of involvement of the OSCE in the CIS is clearly inferior to that in the FRY. This is not surprising. Nothing in the FSU approaches the level of state disintegration which has befallen the FRY. Moscow has generally been able to keep conflict situations under control and has tended to resist any major outside involvement. This has corresponded with the prevailing preference in western capitals not to assume any major responsibilities in theatres very far from home, particularly in the difficult and unwelcoming circumstances of the FSU.

In fact, what we see through the experience of institutional involvement in the FRY and the FSU is a certain complementarity. The OSCE can do very useful things in the FSU because of the inclusive nature of its membership and its low military profile. NATO could not play a similar role, even if that were its inclination, because of its more limited membership and military capabilities than Russia, in particular, would find intrusive and threatening. In contrast, NATO can undertake missions in the FRY that are beyond the reach of the OSCE precisely because of its more compact membership and its ability to project force.

As for the WEU, the third major institution of European Security Architecture, some progress has also been registered with the development of the concept of CJTF or Combined Joint Task Forces. The original EU experience in the FRY demonstrated that a stand-alone European force was not capable of responding effectively to a situation requiring the use of force. Nor are there any signs that such a capability will be forthcoming in the near future. The consensus reached at the June 1996 NATO meeting may offer another possibility.⁷ This set out a policy framework for CJTF and spelled out the modalities for transferring to allies participating in a conflict situation the assets of NATO allies electing not to engage.

Whether this will work in practice remains to be seen. In particular, no foregone conclusions can be drawn about the preparedness of a US Administration or Congress to lend material support to a WEU-led operation of which Washington had elected to opt out. Still, the CJTF decision is potentially of considerable importance for the establishment of an intervention force of the type that could follow SFOR in Bosnia. Beyond that, it signals that an organic evolution of the European Defence and Security Identity, one which is separable from NATO without being entirely separate from it, remains a distinct possibility.

Fault Lines

After a period of hectic and counterproductive competition, the approach adopted in the Dayton Agreement suggests that individual institutions seem to have found their respective niches. While this has improved the prospects for effective institutional interface, several fault lines continue to run through the institutions and their practice of cooperation. One of the more obvious challenges concerns the changed nature of great power involvement in Europe. Russia, once feared for its strength and political ambitions, now raises concern because of its weakness and the unpredictability of its power elite. The key question, one which may well remain on the agenda for some time to come, regardless of who is in control in the Kremlin, is how this internationally weak but regionally strong state will interact with its immediate strategic environment:

will it attempt to dictate its will to the CIS and the near and not so near abroad, or will it continue to invest the lion's share of its energies into economic modernization and social regeneration, in the hope, by no means assured, that this will promote a voluntary reconsolidation of political relationships in the FSU space and a regeneration of ties in the erstwhile WTO zone.

As for the US, its decision to place ground troops in Bosnia should not be interpreted as a renewal of US willingness to lead after the hesitation of the first years of the Clinton White House. Rather, the US ground involvement in the Dayton operation is a fire-fighting operation with a very short fuse on it. The Americans stayed after December 1996, notwithstanding Clinton's *nyet*. They may yet decide to stay after mid-1998 despite the declarations to the contrary that have been made by members of his second Administration. The larger issue is, however, that Americans are no longer systematically prepared to take the lead in European security. They will support a European lead but under post-Cold War conditions they will not substitute themselves for it. Indeed, the most likely variant in American behavior is continuing vacillation between neoleadership and neoisolationism, such as has been on display since the successful prosecution of the Gulf War with the US very much in command.

The uncertainty in Russian and American strategic conduct means more than ever that Europe needs to be able to take the lead in addressing the security and strategic challenges of the European continent. It is by no means clear, however, that the only European body with the necessary resources for doing so still has the requisite ambition. The EU is divided on whether to favour the widening or the deepening issues on its agenda. It seems incapable of re-engineering itself in a way that would allow it to carry out successfully its crucial mission of overcoming Europe's still haunting divides. Rather, the EU seems to be bent on concluding agreements that either enhance the powers of national governments at the expense of supranational institutions or extend the area of common responsibility without enhancing the viability of common decision-making. Such are the driving characteristics of the Maastricht Treaty of 1992. If they prevail, the EU will hardly be able to cope with the dilemma of intra-state and ethnic conflict, likely the dominant challenge in European security for some time to come. Beyond that, they point to a trend that could ultimately call into question the pattern of cooperative relations that emerged in Western Europe after World War II.

The fault line which most challenges the OSCE and its sister institutions, however, is the sorry state of governance and possible non-viability of several states in the Vancouver to Vladivostok area. The democratic system that was supposed to take hold throughout the OSCE area is in trouble, in both its embryonic and established varieties. Society has changed massively since the suffragettes, but democratic decision-making and statecraft has changed little if at all. Western governance lags well behind the requirements and possibilities of late 20th century circumstances. This is reflected in the widespread public

apathy towards the political process and lack of confidence in the ability of democratic parties to shape and integrate the complex forces of modern society.

An associated problem is that some, perhaps several, of the OSCE states do not constitute effective frameworks for generating wealth under postmodern conditions. For this and related reasons, the states that form multilateral institutions are almost invariably weaker than they were during the Cold War. One manifestation of this are the budgetary pressures confronting many central governments. Another are mounting demands for the shift of powers downwards to lower levels of aggregation or out of the orbit of the state altogether.

The forms this assumes in various parts of the Euro-Atlantic space vary enormously. In general, however, we witness trends in geoeconomics and technology that are driving a paradigm shift in the traditional attributes of government and the profiles of their states. In some cases this will amount to a radical redimensioning of the existing state; in others, the result can be the eclipse of a state as we have known it altogether. The end of the Czechoslovakia, the USSR and Yugoslavia, and the ongoing interstate struggles in the areas once occupied by them are part of this process. So are the ongoing power-sharing and identity dilemmas encountered by such diverse, developed democracies as Belgium, Canada, and Italy. The result is a worrying, perhaps increasing, number of weak states in the OSCE area. This represents major challenges for our institutions. At one end of the spectrum, there is the risk that they will simply be overwhelmed by the number and complexity of crises. At the other end, there is the opportunity for the institutions to play a decisive role in limiting conflict and enhancing prospects for soft landings.

What in any case seems certain is that there will be a rising demand for impartial intervention in all manner of disputes and conflicts that flow from the reconfiguration of states and the reallocation of decisionmaking prerogatives. Modern society cannot afford to be plunged into civil war and interstate conflict every time there is a need to reallocate responsibilities and modify sovereignties. But in the rapidly changing world we now find ourselves in, this could well become the norm rather than the exception.

OSCE Futures

Against this background, how can the OSCE's role in European security architecture be expected to develop in the future? For several reasons, the OSCE would seem to be ideally placed to deal with the European security agenda of the twenty-first century. Its inclusiveness, ideological neutrality, low cost, and the comprehensiveness of its approach to security have already been mentioned. In addition, as the OSCE has transformed itself, its members have demonstrated a preparedness to be innovative when dealing with the problems

posed by fallen states and renegade countries. This has particularly been the case with such innovations as the HCNM and the limited, but all the same precedent-setting, consensus-minus-one procedure.

But juxtaposition of the OSCE's short term and long term prospects yields a paradox. Over the long term, it may be the ESA institution with the best prospects for survival. Over the short term, the OSCE is extremely vulnerable to any of the fault lines described above. For example, any pronounced renationalization of decisionmaking in Western Europe would be likely to stoke US neoisolationism. With both the EU and NATO in paralysis, the OSCE might still survive on paper. It would, however, be very hard-pressed to perform effectively.

As for the longer term, the OSCE's prospects are rather more complex. Five OSCE futures are imaginable, loosely labeled as *noSCE*, *chapeau*, *UNization*, *absorption* and *confederalist*. No Security and Cooperation in Europe is an extension into the future of a breakdown scenario, such as outlined above, that renders dysfunctional the major western institutions on which the OSCE has traditionally been dependent. *Chapeau* is essentially the status quo, whereby the OSCE continues to act as the reference organization for ESA, contracting out for big security jobs and/or supporting them in a variety of ways, while maintaining its niche as a body that addresses security problems not requiring large levels of force or that is active in situations in which it is difficult for force to be used by third parties. Such a status quo OSCE would remain one among many pillars of the architecture. At the same time, as the ongoing effort in Bosnia suggests, it might enjoy a certain political leadership.

In this *UNization* scenario, the organization would evolve into the dominant institution on the European continent, led by a regional security council armed with an exclusive mandating authority and effective control over the use of force. It is very difficult to imagine a consensus vote in the OSCE that would give greater powers to the more powerful members of the body on anything but an ad hoc basis. However, the idea has been put forward in various guises and bears mentioning. The fourth model would be the *absorption* of other institutions and their sub-institutions by OSCE bodies. Thus, the CoE would be absorbed by ODIHR, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (the successor to NACC) would be absorbed by the Vienna institutions of the OSCE, while organizations with a military capacity such as NATO, WEU and possibly some future form of the CIS, would pool their resources under OSCE authority and become an OSCE version of PifP. The fifth model is roughly the fourth in reverse. This would see Western European and transatlantic bodies so enlarging their membership that a *confederalist* structure takes form on the continent. This would transcend the OSCE through a process whereby the essential characteristics of the organization would be maintained, albeit under a different institutional format.

Of these five scenarios, two would appear to be most likely. *noSCE* is a definite possibility if there is a rupture in the European unification process around the EU. An extended period of the *chapeau* or status quo model is most likely if there is not. However, the latter could well embrace elements of what we have called the *UNization*, *absorption* and *confederalist* models. For example, the OSCE and other institutions continue to defer to UN mandates in the FRY.⁸ Moreover, during the period of UN leadership in the foreign intervention there, the Security Council had a virtual veto over other institutions' actions. As concerning *absorption* of other institutions, the OSCE has already incorporated many functions supporting the democratic and civil transition of post-communist Europe that might more logically have been assumed by the CoE. Older, more established but unlike the OSCE non-inclusive, admitting new members as they attain certain standards of democratic governance and lacking North American membership, the CoE could conceivably be absorbed in its entirety, perhaps once the EU has increased its present membership to levels approaching the current number of Council states.⁹ At the same time, NATO enlargement and the accompanying merger of PifP and NACC in the EAPC could well diminish the attractiveness of the OSCE as a point of reference for former WTO and neutral states. This seems particularly likely in the security domain, notwithstanding the NATO commitment to (yet again) reinforce the OSCE in connection with the signing of the Russia-NATO Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security.¹⁰

Thus, features of the *UNization*, *absorption* and *confederalist* models are very much at work in the ESA of the late 1990s. While the three are potentially mutually exclusive, they are not necessarily so. Barring collapse of the EU, the combination of trends could well continue to be the norm into the next decade. There are two main reasons for this projection. The first is that even if an institution forfeits its function, it can prove extremely difficult to wind it down. This is certainly the case if a consensus decision of its members is required. The second is, as the recent history of ESA suggests, that institutional arrangements are becoming increasingly complex. PifP, with its differentiated approach and its huge flexibility, is one example. Another is the various kinds of WEU memberships which have emerged — full, associate, observer, partner — since the organization's revitalization in the mid-1980s. Variable geometry also seems to be in the cards for the EU. Finally, there is the CIS, with its countless agreements among varying casts of Commonwealth states.

What should probably be expected as the institutions continue to adapt to post-Cold War realities are internal and external arrangements that are messier and more complex than those that emerged after World War II. Just how the individual institutions will fare remains, however, very much to be seen.

Notes

1. Communiqué of the meeting of the North Atlantic Council on 17-18 December 1990, paragraph 7.
2. "NATO's Role in Peacekeeping in the Former Yugoslavia," *NATO Factsheet* No.4, September 1996.
3. The phase of EU leadership lasted from May 1991, with the visit of European Commission President Delors to Belgrade for talks with the Yugoslav government, to October 1992, when UN Secretary General de Cuellar appointed Cyrus Vance as his first special envoy for the Yugoslavia crisis. UN leadership was eclipsed in December 1995 with the decision to terminate the UNPROFOR mission and the placement of forces under NATO command and control. Ibid., and Mihailo Crnobrnja, *The Yugoslav Drama*, 2nd edition (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), pp.198-207.
4. Unlike NATO, the UN can claim to be a universal organization, empowered by the vast majority of the world's states to act on their behalf. However, its key decisionmaking body, the UN Security Council, is dominated by a group of five permanent members consisting of only three fully-fledged democracies — France, the UK and the US — as well as the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. That of NATO, the North Atlantic Council, consists of the same three democratic states plus an additional 13, each with a veto power like the permanent members of the UNSC. Why should then a decision of the NATO 16 be less legitimate than one taken by the UNSC 5?
5. For a description of the transformation that the CSCE underwent in 1992-93, see Heinz Vetchera, "European Conflict Prevention: the Role of the CSCE," in *The Art of Conflict Prevention*, ed. W. Bauwens & L. Reyckler (Brassey's, 1994).
6. Communiqué of the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, 10 June 1993, paragraph 9.
7. Communiqué of the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, 3 June 1996, paragraph 6.
8. See, for example, the above-cited *Factsheet* which makes clear that the enabling mandate for NATO's assumption of the command and control function is UNSC Resolution 1037.
9. As reported on its homepage, the CoE accepted Croatia as its 40th member on 6 November 1996.
10. For the text of the Founding Act, refer to the USIA Washington File website of 31 May 1997.

CHAPTER SIX

The OSCE and Security in the CIS

Oliver Thränert

Introduction

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, its 15 republics became independent and 12 of these new states belong to the CIS. For most of these new states, independence has been difficult to establish and maintain, as they lack a strong tradition of independent statehood. Their borders are often ill-defined; when they were drawn in the Soviet era, it was not anticipated that they would become borders of independent states. The borders fit poorly with the ethnographic distribution of the populations. Some ethnic groups within the new states are dissatisfied with the new situation, as they were not allowed to declare their own independence or to live within the state they believe they belong to. Moreover, all states are simultaneously experiencing the difficult processes of political and economic transformation.¹ In short, most CIS states are weak and vulnerable; a number of them are involved in various conflicts, some of them violent. Most of these conflicts are far from being resolved.

Another important aspect is the asymmetrical structure of the CIS area. Russia is by all measures the most powerful state. It has the largest population and is militarily (its current weakness notwithstanding) the most significant country in the area. It is also far ahead of most of the others in its economic transformation. In practice, Russia is involved in all conflicts on CIS territory, be it directly as in Chechnya or indirectly as a result of the activities of Russian-speaking minorities or locally stationed Russian military units (as in Moldova, Georgia, Tajikistan, and Ukraine). Moreover, Russia is seen by its political elite as a great power and pursues a number of regional strategic interests, such as Caspian oil in the Transcaucasian area.

In this situation, international organizations such as the OSCE and the UN face two important tasks. On the one hand they are obliged to contribute to