

# **Improving the Effectiveness of OSCE Missions: The Case of Uzbekistan**

David Lewis

Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'  
Conflict Research Unit  
August 2002



Netherlands Institute of  
International Relations 'Clingendael'  
Clingendael 7  
2597 VH The Hague  
P.O. Box 93080  
2509 AB The Hague  
Phone number: # 31-70-3245384  
Telefax: # 31-70-3282002  
Email: [research@clingendael.nl](mailto:research@clingendael.nl)  
Website: <http://www.clingendael.nl/cru>

© Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael. All rights reserved. No part of this report may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright holders. Clingendael Institute, P.O. Box 93080, 2509 AB The Hague, The Netherlands.

# Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>  | <b>43</b> |
| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>  | <b>45</b> |
| <b>To the Chairman-in-Office:</b>                                 | <b>45</b> |
| Building a Strategy   | 45        |
| Aspects of a Strategy   | 45        |
| Economic Dimension  | 45        |
| Political Dimension   | 46        |
| Human Dimension   | 46        |
| Regional Issues   | 47        |
| Developing Greater Impact   | 47        |
| Increasing Visibility   | 47        |
| <b>To the HCNM</b>  | <b>47</b> |
| <b>To the Participating States</b>                                | <b>47</b> |
| Staffing Issues   | 47        |
| Funding Issues  | 48        |
| <b>PART I: EXTERNAL POLITICAL CONTEXT AND CONFLICT PREVENTION</b> | <b>49</b> |
| <b>A: Political and Security Situation</b>                        | <b>49</b> |
| 1. Authoritarian Rule and Democratisation                         | 49        |
| 2. Socio-Economic Decline   | 51        |
| 3. Radical Islamic Opposition Groups                              | 51        |
| 4. Regional cooperation   | 52        |
| Water issues  | 52        |
| Borders   | 52        |
| <b>B: Official Conflict Prevention</b>                            | <b>53</b> |
| 1. Democratisation / Rule of Law                                  | 53        |
| 2. Economic Reform  | 53        |
| 3. Security Issues  | 54        |
| 4. Regional Cooperation   | 54        |
| <b>PART II: THE OSCE IN UZBEKISTAN</b>                            | <b>55</b> |
| <b>A: History of Activities</b>                                   | <b>55</b> |
| <b>B: Mandate of the Centre</b>                                   | <b>56</b> |
| <b>C: Analytical and Reporting Capacities</b>                     | <b>57</b> |
| <b>D: OSCE Centre Activities and Programs</b>                     | <b>58</b> |
| Human Dimension   | 59        |
| Economic and Environmental Dimension                              | 61        |
| Politico-Military Dimension                                       | 63        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>E: Cooperation and Coordination</b> | <b>65</b> |
| Regional Cooperation                   | 65        |
| Coordination with Other OSCE Bodies    | 66        |
| Cooperation with Other Actors          | 67        |
| Cooperation with Host Government       | 67        |
| <b>F: Personnel and Resources</b>      | <b>68</b> |
| Personnel Issues                       | 69        |
| Local Staff                            | 69        |
| International Staff                    | 69        |
| Head of Mission                        | 70        |
| Financial Resources                    | 70        |
| <b>CONCLUSION</b>                      | <b>71</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX: INTERVIEWS</b>            | <b>73</b> |

## Executive Summary

Uzbekistan provides an important test-case for the OSCE. An authoritarian regime that has undermined many of the conventions of the OSCE, it nevertheless has hosted a field presence since 1995. The Centre in Tashkent (CiT) has played an important role in monitoring and reporting on human rights abuses, but has been less successful in influencing government policy on a wider range of security, economic and political issues.

The mandate of the CiT emphasises conflict prevention activities, but in reality the OSCE has been focused more on reacting to events, with less emphasis on developing a long-term strategy based around prevention activities. There are four main areas which conflict prevention should focus on and in which the OSCE can play a key role:

- **Authoritarianism and democratisation:** the regime has failed to include wide parts of the population in decision-making, leaving the government often isolated from popular opinion and unable to effectively respond to social discontent. There is also no proper mechanism for a peaceful political succession.
- **Socio-economic decline:** An isolationist policy and lack of market-oriented reform has led to mass levels of poverty throughout the country. A small elite has benefited from the system, but for most people the economic situation is continuing to worsen.
- **Growth of radical Islamic groups:** Popular opposition to the regime has been expressed in a growth of radical Islamic groups, including the armed Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the non-violent Hizb-ut-Tahrir. Government repression has limited the activities of these groups, but a small minority of the population continue to find Islamic ideas an attractive alternative to the present system.
- **Regional cooperation:** Uzbekistan has responded negatively to calls for more regional cooperation, despite the need for increased trade throughout the region, and more open borders. Its policies have been dominated by security concerns, and poor relations with neighbouring states have stymied attempts to produce regional solutions to problems such as water shortages.

The CiT has played an important role in monitoring some of these areas, but has been less successful in achieving any lasting impact on ongoing policy issues. This report suggests three areas in which the CiT needs to look carefully at its activities and approach.

- Firstly, the CiT lacks a coherent strategy, both short-term and long-term. Both in everyday activities and in projects, much of the work is reactive or is down to individual officers to plan. A much more concrete strategy than the existing mandate is required to ensure that the CiT has proper goals and aims both for the short term and the long term;
- Secondly, the CiT and the OSCE in general in Uzbekistan lack impact on policy. Everyday monitoring and small-scale project work do not achieve significant impact on macro political

or macroeconomic change. To achieve such an impact the OSCE needs to work much more closely with other pS and with international organisations, including International Financial Institutions (IFIs), to gain more leverage in its discussions with the host government;

- Thirdly, the CiT lacks visibility. Part of its role should be raising the profile of the OSCE in Uzbekistan, and developing greater understanding of what the OSCE does and should do, both in society and within government structures. At present the OSCE is seen largely as a human rights organisation, with little appreciation of its wider security brief. Much more intensive negotiation and engagement with government structures both in Tashkent and in Vienna would pay off in achieving greater understanding of the OSCE's potential to assist in other areas.

Each of these areas need to be addressed not only by the mission, but also by central OSCE institutions in Vienna, including the Chairmanship-in-Office (CiO). Increased support from Vienna, both in logistical and in political terms, will be critical if the CiT is to be more successful. Staffing and personnel issues are critical in such a small office, and some measures need to be taken to overcome the high turnover of international staff. Much of the CiT's profile and activity is dependent on the role of Head of Mission, and selection procedures for the post and the status and guidelines for the post are clearly inadequate at present.

The CiT can play a significant role in Uzbekistan's evolving political and economic development. Much remains uncertain about Uzbekistan's future, and the OSCE is capable of becoming an influential player in assisting in that development. But to do so the CiO needs to review the approach and activities of the CiT, while also taking a more proactive stance from Vienna, and conducting more intensive and productive diplomacy with the Government of Uzbekistan (GoU).

## Recommendations

### To the Chairman-in-Office:

#### *Building a Strategy*

- The CiO, together with the CiT, and with input from the CPC, ODIHR and HCNM, should develop an annual strategy for the centre, drawing together all dimensions, and the activities all bodies of the OSCE into a coherent program of activity, with specific tasking and goals for each officer;
- The elements of such an annual strategy should be based primarily on the analysis of the CiT itself, but with significant input from other OSCE bodies;
- This annual work plan should be based on wider analysis and scenario-planning developed by the CPC together with the CiT and other interested bodies, which would help develop a longer-term strategy for the CiT based on analysis of the wider political, security and economic situation;
- This consultation and planning process should be accompanied by more intensive diplomatic engagement with the GoU both through the delegation in Vienna and through the authorities in Tashkent;
- Programs should be designed to fit within these two strategy papers, and should be drawn up in consultation with other OSCE bodies, including HCNM and ODIHR.

#### *Aspects of a Strategy*

The basis of a new strategy should be support for political change in the broadest sense, including macroeconomic reform, building up civil society, including the private sector, enhancing security in its widest sense, and working on key issues such as borders. Meanwhile, the human dimension should remain as a key part of the CiT's strategy. There should also be a strong emphasis on coordinating political and economic efforts of participating States in supporting reform. The three dimensions should be more evenly balanced, and as many projects and activities as possible should be cross-dimensional.

#### *Economic Dimension*

- The economic and environmental dimension should be reappraised to improve focus on real conflict prevention activities in this sphere;
- The existing program activity in the SME sector should be expanded to include more political aspects of business development, including:
  - corruption;
  - bureaucratic harassment of business;
  - defence of contracts;
  - rule of law in the economic sphere;

- Increased efforts should be made to engage business in developing sustainable associations and lobbying groups that would create a measure of civil society in the business sector;
- Further efforts should be focused on issues of cross-border trade, both with other Central Asian states, and with Afghanistan;
- Reporting should provide greater assessment of macroeconomic reform, including the GoU's observance of the IMF SMP;
- A particular effort should be made to increase coordination with other bodies active in this field, including that by the IMF and other IFIs.

In the environmental dimension, attention should focus on one or two areas where the OSCE can make a difference. Primarily, in terms of conflict prevention in Uzbekistan, this should include water issues, and developing civil society and public awareness of environmental issues.

#### *Political Dimension*

- The political-security dimension should be able to act as a focal point for political analysis in Uzbekistan, with a long-term view of political change, that would also feed into the programs of other international organisations and governments;
- The CiT should attempt to develop a broader discussion of political issues in society, through engagement with more liberal groups within government institutions, research institutes and NGOs;
- Much more political analysis should feed into other programs across the dimensions, producing an agenda for long-term political change;
- Confidential reports should provide more analysis of the political situation, to give the CiO a greater understanding of the situation;
- In the security field, work on drugs-trafficking and SALW should continue, but be expanded to wider issues of security, including:
  - training for law enforcement agencies, within the context of security service reform;
  - a role as an information exchange centre in the area of security service reform among bilateral and multilateral agencies;
  - border issues, including security aspects of border control, combined with concepts of freedom of movement of goods and people.

#### *Human Dimension*

It is important not to dilute the vital work done on human rights, but this should be expanded where possible to give a more holistic view of the human dimension. Given that no other international organisation is capable of carrying significant work on human rights abuses, it is critical that any re-evaluation of the Centre's activities does not dilute its activities in this area.

- A continuation of training for human rights groups, to establish more professional monitoring NGOs;
- An ongoing appraisal of government actions against non-violent Islamic groups, such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir should feed into a strategy to deal with such groups based on experiences throughout the OSCE area; a regional conference on this subject would be a useful start.



*Regional Issues*

- Regional programs are necessary, but should be planned with care, and only be pursued where there is close consultation with all OSCE missions and commitment from host governments;
- More focus should be placed on bilateral and trilateral initiatives, rather than sometimes artificial attempts to promote cooperation throughout the region;
- Programs involving states outside the immediate Central Asian region, and outside the OSCE area, should be supported.

*Developing Greater Impact*

- The CiO should encourage greater coordination and cooperation with a range of international organisations, with the aim of incorporating OSCE evaluations into their policy planning;
- Attempts should be made to develop more Common Platform policies around specific policy issues with significant OSCE involvement.

*Increasing Visibility*

- Given the present political environment, and the challenges faced by the country, Uzbekistan should be a priority for the CiO's diplomacy, and should be among the first countries visited during the period of the CiO;
- The CiO should encourage a higher profile for the Centre, by encouraging more frequent press conferences by the head of Centre and individual officers, more regular public statements on issues of concern to the OSCE, and greater contact with the media in general, to improve the CiT's image;
- More concrete guidelines for heads of mission on when public statements are appropriate would be useful.

**To the HCNM**

The HCNM has a useful role to play in Uzbekistan, and should be encouraged to explore the scope for its activities there. An initial contribution to work with school teachers on conflict prevention in ethnic Tajik areas would be useful. A high-level visit by HCNM should be a matter of priority.

**To the Participating States***Staffing Issues*

- International secondees need to be provided with better initial training, and efforts must be made to ensure some handover period for staff in missions;
- Recruitment of a new Head of Mission should focus on the proper level of qualifications for the post, and a high level of skills in personnel management;
- An expansion of staffing is necessary if activities are to be properly implemented. This may be done initially by expanding local staff capacities. In particular, an assistant to the political

officer should be suggested to the GoU. The assistant would provide back-up to the political officer, and also be able to feed more political analysis into other dimensions;

- The fast turnover of international staff is extremely disruptive for the work of the Centre. While partly this may relate to specific issues of personnel management, the overall secondment process also needs to be reviewed. In particular, the extension of contracts to a minimum of 12 months would be a useful initial signal;
- More resources should be provided in Vienna to support the economic dimension, with greater expertise in macroeconomic developments and issues of corruption and bureaucratic and legal obstacles to business.

### *Funding Issues*

- Efforts should be made to link funding to an overall strategy for the Centre, rather than for specific projects that meet the needs of individual participating States;
- An attempt should be made to introduce at least provisional funding over a three-year period to ensure that projects can be planned for the medium term;
- The participating States should make clear that significantly greater resources are available, including for the economic dimension, if agreement with the host government can be reached to expand OSCE activities in Uzbekistan;
- To this end, a shift in funding from the Balkans to Central Asia should be accelerated, and directed towards balancing resources across dimensions, and increasing personnel, both in Vienna and Tashkent.

## Part I: External Political Context and Conflict Prevention

### A: Political and Security Situation

Since independence in 1991 Uzbekistan's leadership has attempted to promote political stability above political or economic reform. However, this outward stability has been undermined by a radicalised Islamic opposition, which staged a series of terrorist attacks and small-scale armed incursions from outside the country in 1999-2001. The roots of this violence lie mainly in the difficult economic and social situation brought about by poor government policy, and by the increasing repressions of the government.

Although there is little prospect of mass civil unrest overthrowing the regime, or of radical religious groups gaining widespread support, the combination of social discontent, radicalisation of political opposition, and importantly, a number of regional and other elites that feel excluded from power, could provide the basis for serious intrastate conflict in the medium term. There are a number of key issues on which conflict prevention efforts need to focus:

#### *1. Authoritarian Rule and Democratisation*

The political system is highly authoritarian and personalised in the rule of President Islam Karimov. There are several political parties, but all have been artificially created and support the present leadership. There is no legal opposition. Secular as well as religious opposition groups are commonly refused registration, and many activists have been arrested or forced into exile. The situation is dangerous because all opposition to the regime has tended to drift towards underground, radical groups with an Islamic ideology.

The triggers for conflict are largely the result of the present political and economic system. To prevent such triggers from developing, significant policy change is required. A key issue is how the international community, including the OSCE, should act to produce policy change: some international organisations tend to work on long-term cooperation as the most likely way to produce incremental change, promoting technical assistance and educational reforms for example. Others suggest that only external political pressure on the government will force it to accept reforms. In fact, probably both approaches are needed. In the absence of macro political change, the international community can only attempt to mitigate the worst policies of the government, and ensure that its relationship and aid to the regime does not strengthen existing negative tendencies.

Since the increased engagement, politically, militarily and economically, of the West (primarily the US) since October 2001, there have been some signs of progress and increased openness in certain fields, although it is too early to say that there has been significant policy change.

- In January 2002 four policemen were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for beating two prisoners in custody, one of whom subsequently died from his wounds;
- One human rights group was given legal registration, ahead of the visit of President Karimov to the US in March 2002;

- The number of arrests of religious or political activists or sympathisers has dropped sharply in 2002;
- International organisations report increased openness from the government towards human rights issues and issues of democratisation;
- Official censorship was ended in June 2002.

These small signs of progress should not be exaggerated; trials of religious activists have continued, although most were initiated some time ago. The end of censorship has not had a significant impact on the media, which remains strictly controlled. There are no real signs of liberalisation in the political system. Indeed, in a referendum in February 2002 President Karimov increased his term in office from five to seven years. Some of the limited signs of progress represent merely cosmetic change designed to reassure the West that a new relationship can be developed. But these contradictory signs also probably represent ambivalence within the elite about the way forward. On the one hand, many people in the government understand that they have a one-time chance to make much-needed changes to the economic and political systems, with strong international support; on the other, there are many institutions with considerable vested interests in retaining the present system, and many bureaucrats who fear change.

Within this complex political environment, the international community has a key role to play, and the OSCE in particular is well placed to have real influence, perhaps for the first time, on political developments. To achieve this will require intelligent diplomacy, and an ability by the leadership of the CiT and by the CiO to convince the host government that a more active Centre will actually have a positive impact for the country, providing improved security in both the short and long term. Such an approach will require considerable patience and application by the CiO, but the potential for change is too important for such an opportunity to be missed.

Given the potential long-term implications for stability of the political system, conflict prevention should focus on a real, but gradual relaxation of political restrictions that can lead to an expansion of representation in the system, and a more developed mechanism for political succession from the present leadership. Here monitoring of the political situation is vital, particularly focusing on politics within the elite, which is poorly understood by the international community. Understanding these political processes is a key early-warning instrument, since the succession struggle is likely to be difficult and possibly violent.

Support for moderate forces, both within and outside the present political system, is important, as is support for the development of new political elites (through education, training, support for NGOs, etc.). The development of civil society will also have an important impact on future political developments, and in particular the growth of private business and advocacy through business associations and other organisations. Despite their small scale, and often difficult relations with each other, human rights groups provide an important monitoring role and deserve OSCE support. But a wide engagement with other groups, both within and without the system, is important as part of a policy of elite development.

## *2. Socio-Economic Decline*

Most of Uzbekistan's economy remains unreformed since Soviet times. The government has so far failed to introduce liberalisation into the foreign exchange regime, which ensures that foreign investment remains low, and local businessmen face major obstacles in import and export of goods. Agriculture is a particular problem, with forced sales of cotton and other goods to the state undermining incentive among farmers and leading to declines in production and low living standards in rural areas. Corruption is rife, and much of the country's wealth is in the hands of a small elite dependent on political connections for its success.

The economy has been the focus of external interest, with many states and international organisations pushing for macroeconomic changes. The OSCE has also played a limited role. At the same time, aid agencies and NGOs have expanded work in developing small-scale businesses, introducing micro credit schemes, particularly among women, and expanding poverty reduction activities.

The development of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) offers a potential growth area for the economy, and may also form a future class of business people with a vested interest in economic reform. Some programs in this area have been initiated, and institutions such as the EBRD are providing SME credit lines.

But such developments are unlikely to succeed without serious macroeconomic reform. The IMF is now pushing for a major programme of reforms for 2002. Uzbekistan has signed a six-month Staff Monitoring Programme, under which it would become eligible for IMF lending if it fulfilled certain conditions by July 2002, including current account convertibility. Some steps have already been taken by the government, but by early July the GoU had still not met the IMF conditions, and the SMP was postponed for two months to allow further efforts to achieve economic reforms. Further progress will need political will and a willingness to take on vested interests. Nevertheless, there is considerable pressure on both the IMF and the GoU to achieve an agreement, primarily from the US, and it is likely that some kind of agreement will be reached.

However, whether this agreement will represent genuine changes in the economic system that will lead to increased growth and higher living standards among the wider population is open to question. There is little independent assessment of government reforms, and here the OSCE can play a useful reporting role. In conflict prevention terms, economic reform is vital to ensure that socio-economic discontent does not spiral out of control, but the process of reform is also likely to engender popular opposition. The OSCE faces a difficult question of how best it can assist the process of reform, given its limited resources in this field and the presence of other larger actors.

## *3. Radical Islamic Opposition Groups*

Two major groups, and a number of smaller ones, seek the overthrow of the present order and the institution of an Islamic political order in Uzbekistan. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) has suffered a major defeat while fighting alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan, but it remains a threat to security in the region, if its remaining leaders manage to regroup in Pakistan or Afghanistan. The other major group, which has much wider support than the IMU, is the Hizb-ut-Tahrir-al-Islami (Party of Islamic Liberation), which advocates a non-violent struggle to establish an Islamic caliphate throughout the region. So far, its methods have been peaceful propaganda, but some of its members may be supportive of armed struggle in the future.

Conflict prevention needs to focus on developing a genuine strategy with regard to Islamic groups, that takes into account the fears of secular governments of their plans, while accepting the possibility of Islamic ideas having influence over political developments. While there is some role for the security services to play, the excessive repression of many Muslims in the past decade has merely exacerbated the situation, and radicalised the opposition. Hence measures against radicalism are inextricably intertwined with human rights, democratisation and poverty alleviation.

Government strategies towards non-violent radical Islamic groups are particularly difficult to develop, not just in Central Asia but throughout the OSCE area.<sup>1</sup> The OSCE has focused largely on individual cases of human rights abuses against members of such groups, but could make a useful contribution to discussion of peaceful government strategies against such groups, taking into account the experiences of other participating States.

#### *4. Regional cooperation*

Alongside internal conflict prevention in Uzbekistan, there are a range of inter-state issues in the region which pose a threat of wider tensions. Uzbekistan is at the centre of the region, and has in the past sought the role of regional leader, to the resentment of its neighbours. There are several issues that undermine relations between the Central Asia countries:

##### *Water issues*

Uzbekistan's agriculture - particularly cotton production - is highly dependent on artificial irrigation, fed by two rivers that rise in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The gradual decline in water infrastructure, and the increasing use of water by Kyrgyzstan for electricity generation, have led to declining volumes of water reaching Uzbekistan's fields. Kyrgyzstan's attempts to force Uzbekistan to pay for the water it receives have been rejected, and attempts to establish barter agreements between the two countries have failed. This upstream-downstream conflict is matched by increasing tensions between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan over water-sharing. Attempts by the international community - including the OSCE - to produce a regional solution to the problem have always failed.

##### *Borders*

The often artificial and poorly defined internal borders of the Soviet Union served as a poor basis for international frontiers of the independent countries that emerged in 1991. Border demarcation has been conducted in some areas, but local disputes remain, particularly where water or other resources run through a disputed village. On borders with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan has placed mines and made crossing extremely difficult, because of its fear of guerrilla fighters. The Uzbek-Kyrgyz border has also been strengthened to the detriment of regional cooperation and trade. Such measures only increase the mistrust on both sides, and do little to improve security, given the high levels of corruption present among border troops. A series of ethnic enclaves in the Ferghana valley region are potential flash-points for the future.

---

<sup>1</sup> See: Arne Seifert, 'The Islamic Factor and the OSCE Stabilization Strategy in Its Euro-Asian Region' (CORE, Hamburg, August 2001).

There are some ways in which the international community could become more involved in dispute resolution, both at the local level through assistance to NGOs, and at the interstate level, by providing expertise, objective assessment and occasional political pressure. Although none of the inter-state tensions over such issues (others include the environment, security policies, external alliances, trade, etc.) threaten major conflict in the short term, the coincidence of a number of issues could provoke a severe worsening of relations. At present there are very few functioning mechanisms through which such conflicts could be resolved. Regional cooperation bodies tend to be ineffective and seldom used by regional leaders for major political issues. Uzbekistan, in particular, prefers to deal with such questions exclusively on a bilateral basis.

## **B: Official Conflict Prevention**

Given the scope of potential conflict triggers in Uzbekistan, a wide range of international and national institutions are potentially involved. In reality, the national government remains committed to its security-led policies, and is frequently suspicious of attempts by the international community to intervene.

Of the bilateral donors, USAID programmes do have a specific conflict prevention element, and a new programme in the Ferghana valley aims to develop cross-border ties in sports, culture, and development projects. USAID conducted a significant conflict prevention assessment of the Ferghana valley and other regions in 2001. Other donors tend to have a more ad hoc approach, with only occasional attention to conflict prevention issues.

In this context the OSCE Centre could play a key role in all areas of its mandate, from Democracy and Human Rights to Economic Affairs and the Environment. In practice, it has concentrated on its strengths, in the Human Dimension sector. This has proved unpopular with the government, and there have been some attempts to establish a wider approach. A major part of this evaluation is a consideration of mission priorities in accordance with the complex external environment in which it is operating.

### *1. Democratisation / Rule of Law*

On political reform, the lead players are national governments, notably Germany, the UK and the US, and the OSCE. There may be scope here for more cooperation on wider political questions, and an attempt to ensure other national governments and institutions are more closely involved. The European Union is not a major player on the political front, with no delegation in Tashkent, only a relatively small TACIS programme, but it could expand its role through a more active approach to its Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the GoU. The UN is planning a more unified agency in Tashkent, with a more political role, and this may provide some potential for further cooperation.

### *2. Economic Reform*

On economic questions, there is much more international expertise available, and the OSCE Centre fails to match this. The World Bank and the ADB have been lead players, along with USAID, although none have been successful so far in promoting macroeconomic reform, and have cut programmes significantly as a result. The EBRD has put in significant investment, although its utility

is often questioned, and it is perceived as less strong in advocating economic reform. The IMF is mounting a new programme with the government from January 2002, which will ensure that pressure is maintained on the government to implement reforms. A key question for the OSCE is to consider the role of its programme in economics and how much real utility and expertise it can bring to this area.

Development projects run by international and local NGOs have grown sharply over the past two years. Many of these are focused on various types of poverty reduction, particularly through micro credit schemes. Development is potentially a significant conflict prevention tool in Uzbekistan, but it needs to be achieved within the context of wider political understanding. There are some very worthwhile projects in place, particularly in micro credit and related areas, but they often lack a wider political perspective. Without significant change in politics and economics at the macro level, many of these projects will be unsustainable. Tackling issues of governance is vital to ensure that local and central government take up projects from NGOs and donors in the medium term.

### *3. Security Issues*

Some security funding is provided by bilateral governments, notably the US, which has significantly increased assistance since September 2001, mostly on non-lethal equipment and moves to coordinate equipment with NATO countries. However, much of this assistance has no impact on reforming security structures, although the present status and activities of the security forces is highly detrimental to long-term security. In some cases it may be merely increasing the efficiency of forces that regularly abuse human rights. There is very little coordination of this bilateral aid, and a common approach by governments and international organisations, such as NATO, would be a significant step forward.

The real need is for a wider concept of security to be inculcated, such as the comprehensive security concept of the OSCE. NATO has supported some work in this area, through educational exchanges and conferences, but so far such assistance is limited. The new OSCE activity on fighting terrorism has not yet produced significant programs, and the new policing department in Vienna is also only just beginning its work. Conferences, seminars etc. on tackling terrorism, including those organised by the OSCE, are useful in developing a wider understanding of the roots of terrorism. But wider issues of security can only be addressed in the context of broad international support for policy change.

### *4. Regional Cooperation*

Most regional programmes, such as a UN Ferghana Valley initiative, launched in 1998, have failed to achieve their goals, largely because of Uzbekistan's unwillingness to participate in regional projects. International organisations, including the OSCE, have largely adopted a new philosophy of building up national capacities, and cooperating at lower levels in informal ways. This is a realistic response to Uzbekistan's sovereignty concerns, but does leave many issues of a regional nature untouched by international organisations. Although each of the Central Asian states is developing along very disparate paths of development, they still face many common problems, and the experiences of international organisations in different states is not always coordinated or followed-up. The OSCE with representation in each state is in some ways in a good position to act as a clearing house for information on different issues in different countries, but it also needs to develop more coordination among its own missions.



## **Part II: The OSCE in Uzbekistan**

### **A: History of Activities**

The first OSCE presence in Uzbekistan was the Central Asian Liaison Office (CALO) set up in 1995, with the aim of linking the five Central Asian countries of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan more closely to the OSCE. A Mission to Tajikistan had already been deployed in 1993, and therefore CALO activities with that country were relatively limited.

The office began work in June 1995, and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Secretary General and the GoU on 12 July 1995. In 1998, the OSCE also established Centres in Almaty, Ashgabat and Bishkek. As a result of this expanded presence in the region, the focus of the CALO's activities shifted to national issues within Uzbekistan, and the Permanent Council formalized this in its decision, on 14 December 2000, to rename the CALO as the OSCE Centre in Tashkent, placing it at the same status as the other three Centres in the region. In addition to the Centre, the other major OSCE institution active in the country is ODIHR. It funds two of the local staff in the centre, and carries out a significant number of programs in rule of law, democratisation, human rights training and so forth. The High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM) has been much less active.

The other instrument used by the OSCE in Uzbekistan has been a Personal Representative of the CiO. The Chairman-in-Office's first Personal Representative Ambassador Hoyneck's development of personal relations with Central Asian leaders seems to have improved attitudes to the OSCE, but the initial failure of the Portuguese CiO to reappoint a personal representative led to a lack of continuity in these efforts. The appointment of Ambassador Salvert as a Special Adviser to the CiO has gone some way to renew these personal contacts. Further use of a special adviser or personal representative probably depends on the strength of the CiO's own team. Ideally, some a role should be firmly integrated into the CiO OSCE team; if there is no special post, filled by a senior official, to cover Central Asia, then a separate post filled by a senior diplomat is probably the best way to ensure the region gains the necessary ongoing attention.

In all these cases there is occasionally a sense of overlap between different institutions, and there are often questions among staff about communications between Vienna, Warsaw and the Hague over different issues. Although beyond the scope of this report, there is an obvious need for some streamlining of these organisations and the establishment of a more coherent policy among them. In particular, it is not always clear how ODIHR programs fit in with the Centre's own human dimension activities. In general, they are probably complimentary, but there is scope for wider consultation and joint planning approaches.

## **B: Mandate of the Centre**

The original mandate of the CALO was to establish cooperation and contacts between the OSCE and all the Central Asian states. The CALO's mandate covered Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and to a lesser extent Tajikistan, where a mission had already been established in 1993. With the decision to establish OSCE Centres in July 1998 in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, the role of the CALO as a regional office began to lose its former importance. Hence the decision to give the office the same status as in other Central Asian countries, defining it as a Centre rather than a liaison office. The OSCE Permanent Council adopted the mandate of the Centre on 14 December 2000 (decision no. 397), defining its mandate as follows:

- Given the OSCE's role as primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, to promote the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments as well as the co-operation of the Republic of Uzbekistan within the OSCE framework;
- To facilitate contacts and promote information exchange with the Chairman-in-Office, OSCE bodies and the OSCE participating States in Central Asia as well as co-operation with international organizations and institutions;
- To maintain contacts with local authorities, universities, research institutions and non-governmental organizations;
- To assist in arranging OSCE events and activities, including visits by OSCE delegations;
- To liaise and co-operate closely with the OSCE presences in the region;
- To perform tasks deemed appropriate by the Chairman-in-Office or other OSCE institutions and agreed on between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the OSCE.<sup>2</sup>

The nature of the OSCE's work tends to ensure the adoption of broad mandates for missions, which enables considerable flexibility in program selection and broad autonomy for missions to pursue activities that they perceive as valid. This has the advantage of enabling the OSCE to react to events, and shift the emphasis of its activities depending on changes in the external political environment. However, it also means that there is only limited strategic planning in the formulation of the mandate, making it so broad as to be almost meaningless for day-to-day activities. Thus it is difficult to really evaluate the extent of mandate fulfilment, since there are no concrete elements of the mandate that can be easily evaluated.

This type of mandate probably makes sense given the complex procedure for mandate adoption. More specific tasking is likely to create problems in the PC, and may also limit the flexibility of the Centre. However, there is a clear need for more specific practical guidelines and goals for the Centre, both on a short-term and long-term basis.

It is noticeable from interviews with Centre staff, that there is little sense of an overall strategy for the OSCE in Uzbekistan. By the nature of their work, much of the Centre's activity is reactive to events, dealing with human rights issues as they emerge, or reacting to external political events. However, strong analysis of events and a forward-looking Centre should be prepared to create a strategy at least for the medium term, which includes elements of all dimensions in correspondence

---

<sup>2</sup> Decision No. 397, OSCE Centre in Tashkent, PC.DEC/397, 14 December 2000.

with possible developments within the external political environment. Given the overall structural problems created by the one-year Chairmanship-in-Office, long-term planning is always going to be a problem for the OSCE, but within the context of the Centre there is no reason why staff should not attempt to plan for a three-year period, taking into account possible scenarios for the future, and potential OSCE responses or preventative action.

However, given the resources of the Centre and the fast turn-over of international staff, it is unlikely that such a strategy could be developed within the Centre without considerable back-up from the Secretariat. A useful scenario for the Centre would ideally come from the Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna, drawn up in coordination with other OSCE bodies, including the ODIHR, the HCNM and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, in close coordination with the CiO and the incoming CiO.

Such a medium-term strategy would provide only broad guidelines for policy, but could allow the development of projects beyond the 12 months of the CiO. Although this would go beyond the mandate of the Centre, it would at least provide a perspective of longer-term development that is presently absent from the Centre's work.

For more specific activities, the CiO, together with the mission, the CPC, ODIHR, the HCNM and other appropriate OSCE bodies, should draw up a much more concrete program for the 12 months of the CiO term in office, with specific programs included and a program of activities for the year developed in coordination with the Centre. Flexibility should obviously be built into this 12-month strategy, to allow fast reaction to events, but the broad outlines of policy should be preserved.

Unless such strategies can be developed, the Centre will continue to be largely reactive in its activities, and fail to develop a real preventative role.

### **C: Analytical and Reporting Capacities**

A review of 'spot reports' and other reporting mechanisms in 2000 and 2001 demonstrates a good general grasp of the external political environment. The Centre report, issued every three weeks, covers the activities of the Centre, while spot reports cover immediate political and human rights developments. Background reports provide more depth on issues across the dimensions. Confidential reports to the Troika offer the chance to cover more controversial aspects of government policy or relations with the Centre.

Most major political issues have been covered, although the strongest reporting has been on human rights cases. However, spot reports tend to relate to individual events and are essentially straightforward reporting mechanisms, with only limited wider analysis. The nature of reports inevitably limits the level of analysis that CiT can provide in written form, since they are shared with the pS, including of course the host government. Confidential reports offer the chance for greater analysis, but from those reports viewed for this report, this deeper analysis seems to be lacking, despite the need to allow the CiO to gain a greater understanding of the implications of events.<sup>3</sup> At present the choice of issues to be reported tends to relate to external events, but there may be scope within the strategy-building exercise outlined above to encourage a focus on particular issues. At

---

<sup>3</sup> For example: Confidential Spot Report 'On the nationwide referendum to be held on 27 January 2002', 14 January 2002 could usefully have analysed the actual implications of the referendum, extending the president's term in office, rather than merely discussing the technical details of OSCE's decision not to monitor the referendum.

present the range of issues reported is largely in the hands of the Head of Mission, and a consultative process identifying key issues for the CiO and the PC to be informed about would be useful. For example, in 2003 macroeconomic reform is likely to remain at the top of the agenda in Uzbekistan, and reporting on progress or failure of these reforms, and their implications for society, should be a regular part of the reporting procedure.

Given the staffing ratio of the Centre, and the general focus of activities, it is not surprising that the main focus of reporting is on human rights issues. Political reporting relies largely on the Political Officer, who works without assistance, and on the Head of Centre. Although the Centre is largely well informed and coherent in its analysis of the political situation, much of this depends on the capabilities of particular members of staff, rather than on structural capacities that are designed to provide such analysis.

The lack of a local staff member dedicated to political analysis is a serious deficit in the Centre, and this is something that should be examined seriously in the near future. Reporting on Economic and Environmental Affairs is also generally thorough but does not always follow a regular pattern or monitoring of ongoing issues. Reports have ranged widely from economic affairs, to water resource issues, to HIV and AIDS.

Although each of these is worthy and useful, there is often little continuity or follow-up to each issue. This is understandable given the resources available, but there is a need to focus on a smaller number of topics and provide ongoing analysis, rather than one-off reports that do not necessarily feed into activities or projects. Choosing the topics to cover and using reporting as a real early-warning instrument can only be done within the context of an overall conflict prevention strategy for the Centre.

The link between analysis and reporting and program selection is tenuous. Partly this reflects the lack of strategic thinking, and partly it reflects the realities of financing projects. The voluntary contributions approach inevitably skews programs towards the interests of individual pS. The way programs are selected depends as much on personal interest or funding availability as on wider analysis of the situation or on a coherent strategy. Analysis is implicit rather than explicit in program selection, and as the range of activities that are permitted by the mandate is very broad, and the range of activities that can be construed as conflict prevention, is also equally broad, there is little difficulty in justifying reporting on almost any issue with the broad OSCE mandate.

Efforts to focus on reporting on a more focused range of subjects, preferably linked to an overall strategy, would be useful both for the CiT and for the CiO. Increased analysis of the political situation, in particular, in confidential reports, is also an important early warning instrument.

## **D: OSCE Centre Activities and Programs**

The staff of the Centre divide their time between the monitoring and reporting function of the Centre, and a range of small-scale programs and activities that complement this function. Description of activities is complicated by the involvement of ODIHR, which funds two staff members and implements its own projects through them.

Few programs or activities have an explicit conflict prevention component. Interviews with staff revealed a fairly hazy view of what conflict prevention actually is, and how it could be applied to program development. But since conflict prevention is such a wide concept, it could in theory be applied to many of the Centre's activities. The real problem is a lack of prioritisation in conflict

prevention terms, rather than a lack of the concept all together. This prioritisation should form a key part of strategy development, stemming from the CiT itself, under the overall leadership of the CiO, and with the CPC playing a key role.

Within this prioritisation, gaining the proper balance between the three dimensions (human dimension, economic and environment, and politico-military) is of key importance for the Centre. The Centre needs to consider how to strengthen the politico-military dimension, in particular, without weakening the human dimension, which remains a core strength and comparative advantage of the OSCE. Official figures in GoU tend to take the view that the balance between the dimensions is warped in favour of the human dimension. Both President Karimov and Foreign Minister Kamilov have stressed in meetings with previous CiOs that activities should be expanded beyond the human dimension, that the economic dimension should be strengthened, and that the OSCE 'should not only represent ODIHR'.<sup>4</sup>

In a document on reforming the OSCE put forward by the GUUAM group (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Moldova), the countries argued for the expansion of 'the mandate of all central institutions and respective field structures of the OSCE in order to contribute to the prevention of the spread of terrorism on an ethno-religious basis; the countries also stressed 'moving the economic dimension into a practical framework by assisting, in accordance with the Charter on European Security, states with transitional economies...'

For the FSC the states suggested a number of changes, including conducting conceptual discussions on such politico-military and security issues as terrorism, illegal military formations, VD verification regime in areas not controlled by participating states, military aspects of conflict resolution', and also complimenting mandates of field offices to cover the problem of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).<sup>5</sup>

Of course, one of the main reasons that Uzbekistan would like to see a shift in OSCE priorities is that it objects to the OSCE's emphasis on human rights because of its own poor record in this field. The work the OSCE has done in highlighting Uzbekistan's failings in human rights observance should not be underestimated. The OSCE has been strong in its support of independent human rights groups and has applied constant pressure on the government to improve its record. There is always a danger in shifting the balance between dimensions that some of this capacity and emphasis will be lost. Given that no other international organisation is capable of carrying out such work, it is critical that any re-evaluation of the Centre's activities does not dilute its activities in this area.

### *Human Dimension*

At present the Centre concentrates the majority of its resources, staffing and programs on the human dimension, and specifically on human rights issues. This has come about partly because of the nature of the external political environment, partly for internal reasons within the CiT. As a result, the OSCE tends to have a fairly strong reputation among local human rights groups, although this does vary from individual to individual, depending on the amount of support particular groups or individuals have received.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> 'Report on Visit of the CiO to Central Asia 28 May-2 June 2000', 8 June 2000, CIO.GAL/33/00.

<sup>5</sup> 'GUUAM proposals to increase the efficiency of the OSCE institutions and to improve the decision-making process', 6 March 2001. PC.DEL/124/01.

<sup>6</sup> Personal communications, human rights activists, Tashkent, Kokand, Andijan.

Structurally, and in terms of programs, there is no doubt that the human dimension dominates in the CiT. In addition to one international officer, three of the four local operational staff work in this area, and the Head of Mission has emphasised this dimension in his own work. This approach has not always been supported by all staff, but is a reflection of the strong commitment of the Head of Mission, and also of the obvious need for such work given the external political environment in which the OSCE operates. The main basic activities under the human dimension are:

- Support for human rights groups, particularly legal advice, and training and capacity-building in this sector;
- Trial monitoring and political pressure on trial conduct;
- Reporting and monitoring of human rights abuses.

In addition to the essential functions on human rights, there are a range of ODIHR programs and Centre activities relating to:

- NGO training;
- training of legal professionals in human rights issues;
- prison reform and training for prison guards;
- and plans to fund programs on human trafficking.

There are also ongoing discussions regarding a regional police training Centre to be based in Tashkent, which would offer human rights and other forms of police training to officers from around the region.

There are some small conflict prevention programs within this dimension. Some work has begun with teachers in Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya regions, providing training on human rights issues; gender awareness; and conflict prevention, focusing mainly on multiethnic tolerance. With the Open Society Institute and the Ministry of Education, the OSCE is helping to develop a school course on conflict prevention issues. Gender issue activities have included:

- A television talk show on domestic violence, which was eventually stopped by the authorities;
- Helping to draft legislation on domestic violence, with the participation of an expert from ODIHR;
- Joint program on women's rights with Winrock at the Mahalla (local community) level;
- Training for NGOs involved in women's rights.

Gender issues are often ignored by many international organisations in Uzbekistan, and this is an area where the OSCE could expand activities. It is also an area of great cultural sensitivity, as the problems involved in developing programs on domestic violence have shown.

On rule of law, the major emphasis has been placed on the activities of the law enforcement bodies, rather than on judicial reform or other elements. This is understandable given the huge problems that the law enforcement agencies pose to the country and to future stability. Training has been in the form of human rights training or expanding knowledge of international standards. This is important, but a more comprehensive approach could be developed, linking effective security, human rights and rule of law in more cross-dimensional programs.

Judicial reform is also an area ripe for significant reform. Again there is potential for some cross-dimensional projects to be developed, particularly with the economic dimension. The judicial system is a major obstacle to economic growth and business development, and this may be a useful way to enter this complex field.

Overall, the human dimension work is widely considered to be successful. The overall emphasis on human rights inevitably limits attention on other areas, but there may be ways that the human dimension could be linked more closely to activities and programs in the other dimensions.

### *Economic and Environmental Dimension*

In the economic area, CiT has concentrated on the promotion of small and medium business development through a series of training workshops in the provinces. Initially these were in Karshi, Nukus and Termez. Follow-up trainings are planned focusing on:

- Simplifying regulations regarding credit for entrepreneurs;
- Increasing opportunities for SME entrepreneurs to learn about relevant Uzbek legislation;
- Enhancing training opportunities in marketing, accounting and financial management;
- Providing opportunities for foreign investment in small and medium business ventures.

Despite the enthusiasm for this dimension among host states (although often based on an incorrect understanding of its reality) the reality of OSCE capabilities compared with other international actors is limited. As Hoynck points out ‘ For regional projects in the economic and environmental dimension the OSCE has hardly the capacity to act in a lead role’.<sup>7</sup> Yet there are areas in which the Centre could find a very important niche, bearing in mind the organisation’s pre-eminently political nature. In Uzbekistan, economics and politics are closely intertwined. Economic reform is not primarily a question of meeting macroeconomic statistics, but of overcoming political objections to liberalisation of the economy. In this context, the Centre could provide a much more political view of economic development than is possible for other organisations.

The IFIs are not formally permitted to make political judgements on host countries, although they implicitly do by withholding or offering loan agreements and imposing (at least sectoral) conditions on disbursements. The UN is also restricted in its ability to make political evaluations. The OSCE is in a position to provide a value-added component of political economy, focusing on three levels:

- Firstly, the impact of macroeconomic change, offering monitoring and reporting on Uzbekistan’s reform program, and advice to donor organisations on the reality or otherwise of the reform program;
- Secondly, an expansion of the existing SME program to tackle more controversial topics, including corruption, local government interference in business development, and the rule of law in business, including issues vital to foreign investment such as contract defence;
- Thirdly, exploring the possibilities of freer regional trade through improved border procedures, and local agreements among regional governors.

---

<sup>7</sup> ‘Report on Central Asia by Personal Representative of the CiO Ambassador Hoynck’, CIO.GAL/58/99, 14 July 1999.

Some of these issues are already on the agenda. An attempt to convene a meeting in May 2002 of governors from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the Fergana valley failed to win participation from the Uzbek side. Although this is not uncommon for such regional initiatives, the failure of the project was also partly the result of poor preparation and diplomatic work both in Vienna and Tashkent. Such concepts need very careful planning and good diplomacy if they are to reach any valid results.

Such a program of activity would require additional support from the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Affairs in Vienna. But there is already considerable experience of some of these issues in other OSCE pS and this could usefully be brought to bear on Uzbekistan. The Ministry of Justice has begun efforts to tackle abuse of powers against SMEs by local authorities, and there may be some scope for programs with the Ministry.

The other area that could be usefully explored is that of civil society and business, attempting to build up business NGOs, and associations of businessmen, which can then take on their own advocacy and lobbying initiatives.

An active class of SME businesspeople is vital to Uzbekistan's future democratisation, as well as for economic growth, and initiatives in this area should be viewed as more than just economic dimension activities. The CiT legal expert, who is predominantly involved in human dimension activities, might be usefully engaged also in aspects of rule of law for the business sector.

In the environmental dimension, the CiT has won praise from other international organisations for a number of successful small-scale programs, including:

- developing programs with Mahalla committees on recycling, water provision or other local initiatives;
- supporting a television slot, on environmental issues, including energy conservation;
- legal training for expert groups on the implications of the Aarhus Convention;
- training for Mahalla committees on environmental laws.

There is also reporting on macro-environmental issues, such as water, which is a key conflict issue, but the failure of an earlier OSCE water initiative in 2000, initiated by the UK government, has guarded against too ambitious attempts to intervene in state relations on this issue. This is probably a correct attempt to remain realistic about the potential of the Centre to have a real impact, but water is a key issue of environmental security in Central Asia, and it must be part of any attempt to improve the conflict prevention capabilities of the OSCE in the region.

One idea expressed by staff was a review of other international programs in the water sector, to provide an idea of which areas have been usefully addressed and which ignored. This kind of approach, which would emphasise the failures of international organisations in this area, and hopefully act as a catalyst to further attempts to engage the international community and national governments in this issue, might be more useful than over ambitious attempts to intervene in regional relations over water and energy.

However, the opportunity for Uzbekistan to use the OSCE as a potential arbiter in disputes and as a catalyst to bilateral or trilateral agreements over water should continue to be stressed in meetings with GoU. Programs of this type require major diplomatic commitment from the CiO and other OSCE bodies, and also a long-term commitment to support political negotiations. In the economic and



environmental dimension in particular, the lack of any outside guidance on strategy has been particularly felt, with most programs were developed independently by the officer involved.

Just as the human dimension focuses on the implementation of international agreements signed by Uzbekistan, so the economic dimension should focus on the government's observance of its own laws on business and commerce. Defending the rights of SMEs against state and bureaucratic interference would be an extremely useful activity for the OSCE that would avoid overlap with existing providers. A new approach should be much more engaged politically, and cooperate more closely with international organisations in this field. Exploring contacts with the private sector would also be useful to create realistic strategies of use to investors.

### *Politico-Military Dimension*

One of the key recommendations of the Hoyneck report was 'a further increased and more focused dialogue of all the principal organs of the OSCE on political/military aspects of security, as perceived by OSCE partners in Central Asia.' Hoyneck did not recommend many specific actions, except cooperation with UNODCCP on drugs-trafficking, and an open-ended regional table 'as a forum for consideration and settlement of specific (e.g. border-related) or general security related problems (e.g. regional arms control).'<sup>8</sup> Although this dimension is constantly mentioned as one that needs strengthening, the dimension is probably the third in emphasis of the Centre. The political officer works alone without an assistant, in an area where local knowledge is absolutely key.

In response to the Hoyneck report, an International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: An Integrated Approach to Counter Drugs, Organised Crime and Terrorism was held in Tashkent in November 2000. This was a joint initiative with UNODCCP for a two-day conference to discuss the links between drugs, organised crime and terrorism. This was clearly a useful exercise, but follow-up seems to have been limited.

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) training has been a useful program for the Centre in its attempts to develop a wider security brief. It has also managed to bring together law enforcement officers in a regional forum. In projects such as this, however, care must be taken to avoid alienating the target audience through lack of knowledge of existing local capabilities. External experts must be chosen with care, and where possible should include specialists with knowledge of the region. This area clearly offers good opportunities for OSCE engagement with the GoU: an interesting project is the OSCE's involvement in the development of training modules by the international community for a new border post with Afghanistan (Termez-Hayraton), something that might usefully be repeated in other border areas.

Border issues remain a key concern for conflict prevention, particularly with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Here the OSCE has considerable experience – including border monitoring regimes in Georgia and Kosovo – but none of it has been used in the region. A comprehensive approach to border issues should focus on developing effective movement of people and goods, while ensuring necessary security. This balance has been lost by the GoU, with borders virtually closed with Tajikistan for example, and posing major problems for the movement of other nationalities in the region. This has had a negative impact on regional trade, and there is scope here for a cross-dimensional approach which would emphasise increased trade, enhanced security and

---

<sup>8</sup> 'Report on Central Asia by Personal Representative of the CiO Ambassador Hoyneck', CIO.GAL/58/99, 14 July 1999.

improved freedom of movement for people. Selling such a project needs to focus on the improved security that can come from more effective training and enhanced border-crossing procedures.

Another area where the OSCE could be involved is in building support for demining the Uzbek-Tajik and Uzbek-Kyrgyz borders. The Uzbek mining of these borders stemmed from its fears of infiltration by Islamist radical groups, but with the decreased threat from these militants, there is a need to bring pressure to bear to remove the mines, which have caused large numbers of deaths and injuries to local residents.

The status of law enforcement agencies is something that is critical for future stability. Engaging with developments in this area is fraught with difficulty, but cannot be ignored. The appointment of a new policing adviser in Vienna should be used to the maximum to develop programs that address the serious problems in law enforcement in Uzbekistan. These are not only problems of human rights, although that remains top of the agenda, but go much wider to the efficacy of the police in combating real security threats, in engaging the community, and in managing intelligent security while preserving people's rights and freedoms.

There has been some training offered to law enforcement bodies, but this is still fairly limited. Several reviews suggested that this could be more actively pursued, with a German non-paper issued in October 2000 stressing as one of eight key points for the OSCE in Central Asia:

‘Enhanced and more coordinated technical support for law enforcement bodies in Central Asian states, which should be closer coordinated within the European Union and possibly with the US.’<sup>9</sup>

There are substantive questions over the role of technical assistance to law enforcement agencies, and the political context must be taken into account. In Uzbekistan the role of law enforcement agencies in human rights abuses will limit overall technical assistance, but if a long-term aim of reforming these structures is taken, carefully planned technical assistance can be used both as a way of preparing future officers with a different and more measured approach to law enforcement, and as a lever for change. The OSCE might consider a coordinating role here, attempting to engage with both the EU and the US. US assistance to law enforcement agencies is increasing sharply in 2002, with fears of limited oversight. Although bilateral agencies may be suspicious of any attempts by the OSCE to find a coordinating role for itself in this field, at least an exchange of information and experience in this sphere would be a useful practice for all parties.

In addition to security issues, the political dimension could work closely with the human dimension on developing civil society initiatives in the field of political development. Given the closed media in Uzbekistan, and the limited scope for academic work in this field, there is a major lack of discussion of political topics, both in society as a whole, and among elites. Lack of information on political developments is widespread in the international community also, and the OSCE could play a role as a focal point for such discussions.

A resource centre established in Tashkent university by the OSCE is a useful start to engaging a new generation of students, and such approaches could be expanded into other institutions. The OSCE needs to engage more actively wider society, particularly groups within the political elite who are seeking ways of moving the political system forward into a more pluralistic form.

---

<sup>9</sup> Permanent Mission of FRG to the OSCE, Non-Paper, ‘Enhancing OSCE activities concerning Central Asia’, 20 October 2000.

The CiT has had only limited work on the media. The external environment severely limits the possibilities for OSCE work, but greater openness for local media is a vital conflict prevention tool. More engagement with local journalists would also provide a useful counterbalance to the existing low profile of the CiT and enable the OSCE to gain a broader profile in Uzbek society.

## **E: Cooperation and Coordination**

### *Regional Cooperation*

The shift from the CALO to the Tashkent Centre had an obvious impact on the regional scope of the Tashkent mission. Partly this reflected reality, and the need for a more national approach to the region. The five countries of the region have developed very different national policies in all areas, and it is important not to overemphasise the prospects for regional cooperation in the near future. None of the Central Asian presidents is committed to regional cooperation, if it negatively affects perceived national interests. In almost all cases regional cooperation does affect perceived interests, and no state is prepared to make concessions on key regional issues, such as water or borders.

The failure of many previous projects, including some involving the OSCE, to develop a more integrated regional policy, is related to this lack of understanding of the real prospects for cooperation. Any new policy by external organisations emphasising solely regional cooperation over national development is almost bound to fail. Yet these political difficulties do not negate the need for more regional cooperation: some areas such as trade and water resources can only really be resolved on a regional level. A new philosophy is required, one that emphasises national interests and national capacity, while attempting to build parallel regional structures for the future. An example of this is the SALW training carried out in Central Asian countries in 2001, each time with national counterparts. A follow-up in 2002 included a regional aspect, which brought national forces together. But an initial focus on this kind of forced regionalism would probably have led to the collapse of the initiative.

Regional cooperation should also not be thought of only in terms of the five Central Asian states. Some issues will be better approached through bilateral or trilateral cooperation, and some areas might usefully involve states from outside the immediate Central Asian area.

This kind of approach to regional cooperation requires strong informal and formal cooperation between OSCE offices. At present the main forum is the biannual heads of mission meeting. This is clearly a useful mechanism, but it might also be useful to focus more on cooperation within the different dimensions. Several staff have mentioned that they discovered that programs they were working on had already been tried in similar environments elsewhere, and would have appreciated that knowledge before beginning. This is a question of institutional knowledge, which can only really be stored in central institutions, given the frequent changes in staffing in missions.

Some regional cooperation has been built up through conferences. A conference on religion organised by the OSCE Osh field office, in February 2002, in Jalal-Abad (Kyrgyzstan) brought together religious leaders from a number of countries, together with OSCE human dimension officers from the region. A similar conference on media in Central Asia in February also promoted some regional cross-fertilisation of ideas and experiences. But these conferences do not really provide a forum for real discussion of OSCE regional activities or programs. While continuing the concentration of resources on national issues is vital for the Centre, there are some areas where a more formal structure of cooperation, through more regular meetings of human dimension, economic and political

officers would be advantageous. This would provide a useful pool of regional knowledge, and an opportunity to exchange experiences and potential programs.

Central Asian states can also have useful exchanges with other OSCE member-states other than their immediate neighbours. Uzbekistan could also develop greater non-formal exchanges with states outside the OSCE area, including the Middle East, Afghanistan and the sub-continent. Although outside the OSCE mandate, thought might be given to facilitating such contacts or expanding conferences to include non-OSCE partners where feasible. Particularly, some increased linkage with organisations in the Islamic world would be advantageous.

Issues such as borders, national minority issues and water resources are also problems not exclusive to Central Asia. More may be achieved by expanding exchanges of knowledge and information outside the Central Asian region. The CiO-hosted conference on water resources held in Spain in 2002 was an imaginative way to bring the five central Asian states together on this issue, and show them a region that has successfully resolved complex trans-border water disputes. But for Central Asia examples of successful cooperation from other parts of the world, particularly from Asia, may be of more immediate relevance. Here again links with other international organisations could produce significant benefits.

#### *Coordination with Other OSCE Bodies*

Reporting mechanisms have been criticized by a number of previous reports and suggestions for increased flow of information between the Centre and OSCE Central Institutions have been made, but remain largely unimplemented. There is still a great need for streamlining and rationalisation of this relationship. The rather complex nature of the OSCE bodies does not make this any easier, but there is still considerable room for improvement even within the present structures.

In his report, Hoyneck suggested ‘...increased regular exchange of information and advice between OSCE institutions in Vienna, Warsaw and The Hague on the one hand and OSCE presences in Central Asia on the other will ensure the best use of the considerable OSCE potential.’ Hoyneck suggested a regular meeting in the region between the institutions and Central Asian missions, chaired by the CiO. As noted above, this could be developed into a strategy meeting at the beginning of each CiO’s term of office, but is probably best achieved with each individual mission rather than as a regional process.

Probably the best coordination and contacts are with ODIHR. This is partly because of ODIHR’s demonstrable expertise in its area, and its relatively high level of resources compared with other central institutions. There is also a clear link for human dimension officers to follow, and corresponding personnel in Warsaw who can provide support. ODIHR is occasionally seen as cross-cutting Centre programs, and there is a probably a need for greater coordination between ODIHR and the Centre in planning and executing programs, but again a coherent strategy process could assist in further cooperation.

The HCNM has been much less active in Uzbekistan than in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. There are good political reasons for this: the host government has been unwilling to accept that there is a serious issue of minorities, although the conflict potential of minorities in Uzbekistan a cause for future concern. In the late 1980s and early 1990s there were several outbreaks of interethnic violence in Tashkent and in the Fergana valley, mostly against Meskhetian Turks and other small groups. The emigration of some groups has lessened the prospects of violence on

interethnic grounds in these areas, but there is still a major Tajik minority in Samarakand region, which complains of limited rights for self-expression.

There is a real element of conflict prevention in any work in this area, and it is something that should be expanded in future programs. The existing programs on work with school teachers in minority areas is encouraging and should be expanded, but a high-level HCNM approach should also be a matter of priority. A visit by the High Commissioner should be planned as soon as possible.

#### *Cooperation with Other Actors*

The OSCE Centre in Tashkent has established cooperative relations with a number of international organisations. A monthly meeting is held in Tashkent with representatives of other organisations involved in human rights issues. The meeting is generally an informal exchange of views, but is clearly useful in keeping embassies and other institutions up-to-date on this issue. There is much less coordination on other issues, for example in economic affairs. Contacts with the IFIs should be expanded, and on the environment too there is scope for expanded contacts. On the political front, a regular meeting on political developments with embassies might be of use, and there is scope for much greater cooperation with the EU in particular. In the security field there is much more opportunity for the OSCE to act as an information-gathering and sharing body, with links to bilateral security agencies, UN agencies and NATO.

#### *Cooperation with Host Government*

Many of the problems that the Centre has faced have stemmed from difficult relations with the host government. The GoU has been at times hostile to the OSCE presence, and has consistently blocked attempts to expand the office or to establish branch offices in other regions. As mentioned above, the GoU has consistently stressed the need to balance the dimensions, with less attention paid to the human dimension, and more to economic and security issues. Nevertheless, the appointment of an assistant to the economic/environment officer was achieved only with difficulty because of objections from GoU. The CiT needs a larger office space, but again difficulties with the Government will not make this easy to achieve.

All those interviewed at the CiT mentioned an improvement in relations over the past few months, although this tendency should not be exaggerated. There is an opportunity for the OSCE to rebuild relations with the government and in particular to engage those officials who recognise the usefulness of the OSCE presence to Uzbekistan. This process requires intelligent diplomacy and commitment from senior officials of the OSCE, particularly the CiO and Secretary-General. High-level personal contacts, and a willingness to address broader aspects of security, should be the basis for an improved relationship with the host government.

A policy of 'selling' the OSCE to the host government is important, particularly through a more balanced approach to the different dimensions, but there is also a key need to increase the impact of the OSCE through greater cooperation with other actors. The OSCE on its own is largely powerless, but it can act as a catalyst for a common platform on certain policy issues with other parties, including those offering financial aid to the government. The government should be aware that IFIs and bilateral donors will take into account OSCE assessments of political and economic change in their decisions on fund disbursement. This more than anything will increase the impact of the OSCE, but it requires

an upgrading in OSCE capabilities to provide real assessments of the situation that will be relevant to the needs of the donor community.

## **F: Personnel and Resources**

The initial CALO office was limited to one international member of staff, the Head of Centre. In 1996 the staff was expanded by one Human Dimension Officer, subsequently changed to Political Officer. In December 1997 two further posts were created, A Human Dimension Expert and Economic/Environmental Expert, effective in July 1998. At present the Centre is staffed by:

**Head of Centre:** GANTCHO GANTCHEV (Bulgaria): Since July 1997 the centre has been headed by Ambassador Gancho Gantchev. From October 1994 until October 1996 Ambassador Gantchev served as Head of the OSCE Mission in Tajikistan. In 1996 he joined the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Political Officer:** CORNELIU MUSINSCHI (Moldova): Has a strong background in the OSCE, in missions in Chechnya and in Kosovo. Joined the CiT after the departure of the previous officer in April 2002.

**Human Dimension Officer:** PER NORMARK (Sweden): The newest member of staff, Mr Norman began work in June 2002. He replaced the previous officer, who only joined in January 2002. He has broad experience in the OSCE in missions in Georgia and Macedonia.

**Economics/Environment Officer:** DOUG TOOKEY (US): Came to the centre with no previous experience of OSCE work. He was formerly working on environmental issues on Ukraine, and has stressed small-scale environmental projects in his present work.

**Legal Assistant:** JURABEK AMONOV (ODIHR): Graduated from the Law Institute in Tashkent in 1997, and spent one year in the US on courses on criminal justice. He joined the OSCE in April 1999. His main focus is on receiving and dealing with complaints regarding human rights abuses, and providing legal consultation on human rights. The other main activity is trial monitoring of trials of those accused of religious, political or terrorist offences. The other role he fills is defence of human rights NGOs and activists. J. Amonov is clearly very experienced in his work, and has a strong grasp of the political context in which he works.

**Senior Human Dimension Assistant:** LOLA MAKSUDOVA: Has been with the Centre since November 2001. She has a strong experience in working with a number of US NGOs in Uzbekistan, and studied International Relations in the US. One of her main aims is to develop a national NGO network, and provide training possibly through contacts with more established networks in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

**Economic/Environmental Program Assistant:** NODIR KHUDAYBERGANOV: Has a strong background in economics, with a PhD from Tashkent university and academic work abroad, including

Malaysia. He is interested in theoretical aspects of economics, but is also strong on economic analysis. He joined in August 2001.

**Rule of Law Assistant:** SHAROF AZIZOV (ODIHR): Has strong qualifications, and clearly experienced in his work. He holds an LLM from Essex University (UK), and works mainly as an implementing officer for ODIHR projects. Presently working on a number of projects, including needs assessment for a prison monitoring program.

### *Personnel Issues*

There are three major staffing issues: the status of local staff; the recruitment and retainment of international secondees; and the recruitment and status of Head of Mission.

#### *Local Staff*

The Centre has four operational staff at the G5 level. Other local staff include the office manager, secretary and drivers,. The operational staff have considerable experience, and two of them have been with the centre for more than two years. The longest serving has three years experience. It is a source of some discontent among staff that they remain at the level of assistants, and none have been given the chance of becoming national professionals. This is not primarily a question of remuneration, and there is considerable loyalty among staff to the Centre and to the Head of Mission. There is however some discomfort over the status of local staff, who retain institutional knowledge and expert insights into the political situation, vis-à-vis international staff, who typically arrive with only limited experience in the region. It is also of cultural importance for them to have an improved title when dealing with government officials.

Here the problem of the secondment process and recruitment procedure is important. The rapid turnover of international staff ensures that institutional memory is often lost, or is retained only through local staff, who are thus critical to the Centre's operations. Partly this problem is mitigated by having a head of centre who has been in the post for some five years, and therefore constitutes the main institutional memory of the Centre. But there is no structural way to ensure that this institutional memory is retained should he leave the post.

#### *International Staff*

Although all the international staff at the Centre are clearly professional and capable of fulfilling their duties, none of the staff had previous experience in Uzbekistan. All those who had not previously worked in the OSCE said that they received little or inappropriate training. The UK secondees was trained with British paratroopers on dealing with potentially violent situations in Kosovo or Bosnia, an experience that offers little grounding for the situation in Uzbekistan. Training is largely 'on-the-job' but most staff tend to restart work according to their own agendas, rather than continuing previous programs or activities. This is less true of the human dimension, where there is a strong ongoing list of activities, supported by experienced local staff, and where there is ongoing ODIHR involvement. In the political dimensions and particularly the economic/environmental dimensions, there is much less continuity. There was a three-month gap between one human dimension officer leaving, and another arriving in January 2002. The Political Officer left on 10 April, with the process of recruiting a replacement just beginning. There was also a long gap between one human dimension officer leaving, and another arriving in January 2002. This ensures that it is difficult to develop any long-term strategy

for the Centre, and works against ideas of conflict prevention, which by its nature tends to require a long-term approach.

The turnover of international staff at the Centre has been unacceptably high. This is partly a result of the secondment process, which gives little commitment from either side, but is also a problem of personnel management, something that needs to be addressed in the context of a small office.

### *Head of Mission*

The role of the Head of Mission in a small mission is critical. He sets the agenda to a considerable degree, and has remarkable autonomy to shift the balance of policy on the ground.

Here two issues are critical. One is the appointments process for heads of mission, which is generally characterised by political bargaining among pS rather than a formal appointments procedure which seeks the best candidate for the job. The present Head of Mission has been in office for five years, a period probably much too long for any member of staff. A new appointment is critical to inject new energy into the mission. While a political element is inevitable in any new appointment, selection of candidates should be based on strict minimal criteria, including strong personnel management skills, a high level of diplomatic qualifications, and a willingness to implement all aspects of the OSCE's mandate.

The second issue is the level of autonomy for the mission from the CiO and the Secretariat. At present there is probably too much scope for missions to interpret mandates and guidelines from the CiO according to personal wishes. There should be a more developed relationship between the CiO and the mission that sets out annual goals and achievements to be reached, to which the Head of Mission will be held, and lays down guidelines on issues, such as statements issued by the Centre, reporting priorities and so forth.

### *Financial Resources*

There was general agreement that present activities were possible within the existing budget. In the OSCE 2001 budget the Centre was allotted EUR 735,900. A common complaint was that office space was in short supply, and certainly the offices are cramped and not very conducive to good teamwork.

The other problem is that funding for projects is largely through voluntary contributions by participating States. This has the effect of skewing strategies to meet potential funding sources. Although realistically this is always going to be a problem, much more effort should be made to establish a strategy first, and seek funding second.

It will be difficult to shift this emphasis until the system of voluntary contributions is reformed. A start has been made with an online database of projects, but a greater element of general funding for the Centre, based on a coherent general strategy, would make it easier to develop programs and activities, which involved proper follow-up and development for the long term.

As noted above, a major obstacle to an expansion of the Centre's activities is the attitude to the host government. But the participating States should make clear that significantly greater resources are available, including for the economic dimension, if agreement with the host government can be reached. Central Asia absorbs a tiny amount of the overall OSCE budget, despite its obvious importance for the organisation's future. A shift in funding from the Balkans to Central Asia should be accelerated, and directed towards balancing resources across dimensions, and where possible increasing personnel, both in the Centre and in corresponding institutions in Vienna, including the CPC.



## Conclusion

The Centre in Tashkent has operated in a difficult political environment and made considerable impact in reporting and monitoring on human rights abuses and other aspects of government policy. However, despite its successes, the Centre needs a thorough overhaul in terms of strategy, impact, and visibility.

At present there is no clear strategy either from the mission, or from Vienna for the Centre. International staff have no clear guidelines on the nature of their work, and are largely left to their own devices in developing activities and programs. There is a clear need for the CiO to intervene and ensure that a concrete program is developed around which everyday monitoring activities and projects revolve.

The impact of the Centre on government policy and on wider issues of conflict prevention, including economic policy, civil society and regional stability, has been limited. The Centre needs to develop greater links with other organisations and diplomatic missions to ensure that its message carries more weight. This can be done both through increased links between the CiO and the Secretariat and international financial institutions and donors, and also through greater liaison on the ground with local representatives of major bilateral states and donors, and international organisations.

The Centre needs to become more visible in political and economic life in Tashkent. At present it has little public relations activity, and issues few public statements. A new head of Centre needs to develop a more public face for the Centre, and projects should actively engage positive publicity, particularly in areas that can shift the public perception of the OSCE as solely a human rights organisation.

Work in these three areas should be complemented by a review of the balance of work in the different dimensions. The political-military dimension should be boosted with extra staffing if possible, and greater emphasis on political analysis and also on security issues. The economic/environmental dimension needs to develop its present projects into a more coherent whole, with more emphasis on issues of rule of law and the business environment. The human dimension needs to maintain its present role, but also expand the concept of human dimension beyond that solely of human rights.

Given the political environment in which the Centre works there are clear limitations on what the OSCE will be able to achieve in Uzbekistan. To make a serious impact, the CiO will need to engage in discussions with the GoU and take into account their attitudes towards the OSCE. This will require considerable commitment in time from the CiO and a commensurate commitment in terms of staffing and bringing in outside expertise. However, given the importance of the Centre both for Uzbekistan and for the wider OSCE project, it would be unfortunate if the challenge was not accepted.

## Appendix: Interviews

Some interviewees wished to remain anonymous. Among those consulted during the preparation of this report were:

- Gantcho Ganchev (Head of OSCE Centre in Tashkent)
- Annette Legutke (Political Officer OSCE Centre in Tashkent)
- Sam Jerram (Human Dimension Officer OSCE Centre in Tashkent)
- Doug Tookey (Economics/Environment Officer OSCE Centre in Tashkent)
- Jurabek Amonov (Legal Assistant OSCE Centre in Tashkent)
- Lola Maksudova (Senior Human Dimension Assistant OSCE Centre in Tashkent)
- Nodir Khudayberganov (Economic/Environmental Program Assistant OSCE Centre in Tashkent)
- Kathleen Samuel (Human Dimension Officer, OSCE Field Office Osh, Kyrgyzstan)
- Ambassador Marc Gilbert (Head of OSCE Mission, Tajikistan)
- Ambassador Aidin Idyll (Head of OSCE Mission, Bishkek)
- Tolib Yakubov (Head of the Independent Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan)
- Corneliu Musinschi (Political officer CiT)
- Per Normark (Human Dimension officer, CiT)
- Akhmed Saidov (Chairman of the National Centre for Human Rights of the Republic of Uzbekistan)
- Neil Melvin (HCNM)
- Amb Herbert Salvert (Special Adviser to the CiO on Central Asia)
- Sabine Machl (CPC officer for Central Asia)
- Margerita Trajkova (CPC officer for Central Asia)