

ASSESSING THE NEED FOR AN OSCE HEADS OF STATE SUMMIT IN 2010

Roundtable and Release of Policy Brief

Tuesday July 6, 2010

Summary

Janusz Bugajski (*CSIS*) began the roundtable by stating that a summit of the OSCE heads of state will be essential this year. This is underscored by the emergence of violence in Kyrgyzstan and the ongoing Afghan war in close proximity to the region. Security cooperation, especially with regard to Eurasia must be developed and decision-making processes should be streamlined in order to mobilize peacekeeping forces with greater efficiency. Bugajski laid out three key topics for discussion at the potential summit: (1) what has OSCE accomplished, where has it failed, and where is it going? (2) What are the major threats to security and how should OSCE respond? (3) How can OSCE further cooperate and coordinate with NATO and other political-military alliances?

Jon Chicky (*NDU*) discussed the major military security and cooperation documents of the OSCE such as the Vienna Document of the Negotiations on Confidence and Security Building Measures, and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). Although Chicky agreed that a summit is necessary, he said that the two aforementioned documents would not be ready for full revision this year. They must be completely revamped, an endeavor that has not yet begun. Both documents are outdated and have not been functioning properly. The Vienna Document, which is a political agreement rather than legally-binding document signed by all OSCE members, deals with military transparency. The CFE treaty is a legally-binding document. Thirty countries have signed the Adapted CFE Treaty during the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit, but only four have ratified it. Russia suspended its participation in the CFE treaty in December 2007 for several reasons: it conflicts with Moscow's military presence in Georgia and Moldova; does not include the Baltic States; and does not fit with Russia's ideal flank limits. The U.S. administration's refocus on broad European security, following the conclusion of the START negotiations, is producing rhetoric in line with the principles laid out in the Vienna Document. However, the U.S. is also calling for more conflict prevention, further information sharing on military capabilities, and an overhaul of CFE. So, what *should* happen at the summit? Chicky suggested that basic principles should be established, relating to where the documents fit in and how security issues in Central Asia should be dealt with.

Ariel Cohen (*Heritage Foundation*) asserted that the potential summit's focus should be on Central Asia and Eurasia. The current Kazakh Chairmanship is favorable in its location (as far as crisis-prevention) and status (as a post-Soviet state) to discuss issues relevant to the region. Cohen mentioned the need for streamlining OSCE decision-making in order to accelerate crisis response. OSCE must also advance its cooperation with international organizations, such as the UN and NATO. Additionally, the organization needs some early warning system in place to try and prevent crises such as in Kyrgyzstan. According to Cohen, the Kyrgyz crisis represented a complete failure of both the OSCE structures and the cooperation of its member states. The conflict in Kyrgyzstan could potentially affect the security of the U.S. and Europe. There are an overwhelming number of missions required presently in Kyrgyzstan; from policing to judiciary, infrastructure reconstruction, and refugee aid. Commitment and cooperation among member states, however, is lacking for these undertakings. Overall, this demonstrates that the OSCE is facing a crisis of legitimacy. In Cohen's opinion OSCE must prove itself or face becoming irrelevant.

Erlan Idrissov (*Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the U.S.*) affirmed Kazakhstan's strong support for an OSCE heads of state summit. He mentioned the 2007 debate on whether or not Kazakhstan should chair OSCE. In his opinion, all fears were alleviated and the chairmanship has been successful. Kazakhstan has pushed for the summit because Astana would like to put Eurasian security in the focus of the organization. Unfortunately, the OSCE has been incapacitated and is in dire need of a breakthrough. He also suggested that the U.S.-Russia 'reset' policy be spread throughout Central Asia to the benefit of all parties.

The presentations were followed by a Q & A session.

Janusz Bugajski asked the panelists whether they thought it was in the interest Russia and the U.S. to raise or lower the stature of the OSCE. **Ariel Cohen** said that due to the conflicts in the Caucasus, the U.S. sought to raise the stature of the organization. However, Russia has taken aim at weakening OSCE's power, by shutting down monitoring missions in the occupied territories of Georgia. Additionally, if the U.S. seeks to protect the post-Soviet states, then scrapping OSCE is the wrong action to take. **Margarita Assenova** (*IND*) reemphasized the OSCE's significance to security in the region, saying that some states are only members of OSCE, not CSTO or NATO, and their security depends solely on the organization.

Jeffrey Lightfoot (*Atlantic Council*) made several comments relating to the current state of affairs in the region and asserted that U.S. policy may be failing with regard to the Caucasus and Central Asia, and that a summit is necessary to put OSCE's focus back on the region. He also brought up the current 'bureaucratic jam' Washington is facing with three important summits later this year - EU, NATO and OSCE. He suggested that the U.S. should adopt a common theme for the three, and this should reflect a comprehensive vision for the transatlantic relationship.

Stanley Kober (*CATO Institute*) brought up the need for the people of the U.S. and Europe to be willing to spend resources on future OSCE initiatives and a summit. **Ariel Cohen** said that in the case of Europe a disconnect often exists between popular concerns at the national level and what needs to happen in Brussels. This should be taken into account. **Ambassador Idrissov** said that the public puts its faith in its leaders when they are elected. He asserted that if Central Asia is not attended to now, then more costs will be incurred via this region in the future.

Finally, **Janusz Bugajski** asked the panel on whether they thought OSCE should more effectively engage China in the region. **Ariel Cohen** said that this could be a good option due to China's increasing regional economic significance. Also, demographically China dominates the neighborhood and they have thousands of years of shared history with the area. **Jon Chicky** mentioned that China already plays a security role in the region, because three of China's Central Asian neighbors are both OSCE members and participants in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).