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OSCE
MAGAZINE

Dealing with racism and intolerance on the Internet

Northern Tajikistan: Religious and secular interests meet halfway

Central Asia: Opening the window to greater freedom of belief

U.S. Ambassador Minikes: "Bold ideas for transforming OSCE will require careful consideration"



Special coverage

Police in Kyrgyzstan

Finding their own pride of place



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Message from the Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek

This issue of the *OSCE Magazine* features some of the men and women who are playing a dynamic part in the ground-breaking Police Assistance Programme in Kyrgyzstan — a first in Central Asia and also the Organization's largest activity of its kind.



It has been a tremendous challenge to bring together the different perspectives of all those with a stake in the programme's success — national leaders, law enforcement personnel, the general public and OSCE experts. However, I believe that 12 months into the programme's implementation, we have made significant strides toward building a working relationship based on trust.

For all of us closely involved in the Programme, it has been extremely rewarding to be part of bringing about important developments in the history of Kyrgyzstan's policing — whether it was launching the work of the first 60 Community Police officers, or inaugurating one of several specialized training centres at the Police Academy, or holding open discussions with the media and the public on the findings of an opinion poll.

One such highlight took place in September when a fleet of 32 new police vehicles rolled onto the capital's Ala-too Central Square. For most people, a vehicle is simply just that: a means of transportation. But for Kyrgyzstan's police, who have not been able to upgrade their tools and equipment since the early 1990s, the four-wheel-drive cars and vans — along with a richer range of training courses — represent a quantum leap into the world of democratic policing.

Where does the Police Assistance Programme go from here? Its continuation would make good sense only within the context of a well thought-out concept for comprehensive police reform, agreed on by the Government, the police and civil society. I believe that during the past several months, we have made a great deal of progress in crystallizing such a concept, which also identifies the OSCE's precise role.

The newly revitalized State Commission on Police Reforms is expected to be at the centre of efforts to examine policing in a multi-ethnic society, to amend the legal framework in the law-enforcement sector, and to introduce other basic features that will protect people from old and new security risks while safeguarding their human rights.

One thing is clear: Sustained support from the OSCE's participating States will be essential to ensuring that Kyrgyzstan is able to continue what it has started.

Markus Müller
Bishkek
October 2004

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Front cover: First Lt. Jamal Seidakhmatova, a new police graduate, is blazing the trail for Kyrgyzstan's women. Back cover: Hundreds of families spanning three generations watched the graduation ritual at Kyrgyzstan's Police Academy in June.

Photos: OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev

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SECURITY AND RULE OF LAW

Kyrgyzstan's police seek entry into fraternity of professionals

OSCE Senior Police Adviser Richard Monk called on the new graduates of Kyrgyzstan's Police Academy to strive to be genuinely professional police officers as distinct from mere "uniform-carriers" by being scrupulously honest both in their private lives and in public office, and by upholding the rule of law without fear or favour. "Doing so entitles you to membership in the fraternity of professional police officers around the world," he said at the graduation ceremony in Bishkek on 26 June.

In an interview on the same day for a new OSCE film now under production, the former New Scotland Yard Commander and United Nations Police Commissioner explained how the OSCE is helping boost the professionalism of Kyrgyzstan's police force by sharpening "hard" law enforcement expertise and introducing "soft" skills aimed at transforming the current policing culture.

How will good policing in Kyrgyzstan contribute to the country's and to the region's security?

Policing everywhere is crucial — crucial to political, economic and social development. We know that many countries all over the world are overwhelmed by the extent of wrong-doing and criminality, which is draining them of vast human and financial resources. If we don't have the rule of law, it's very difficult to know how on earth soci-

eties will thrive. It's absolutely essential that police officers understand that they have a very special place in society.

How would you describe Kyrgyzstan's concept of policing?

At the moment, the Government and the Interior Ministry need to create a vision for the country's policing, and the OSCE is trying to help them do exactly that. The State is barely 14 years old and is still in the process of establishing a uniquely Kyrgyz identity. It's important that the values and principles that the police force commits itself to reflect that identity.

Why did the OSCE choose Kyrgyzstan as the first country in Central Asia to receive policing assistance?

What impressed me most on my very first visit was the willingness of the Government, particularly the Ministry of the Interior, to learn more about policing in other countries. At the Police Academy, we found tremendously enthusiastic officers and trainers, but their teaching materials belonged to the past and the conditions they were working

Photos:
OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev

in were absolutely dreadful. It was their energy and their determination to carry on, and their eagerness and hunger for professional development, that convinced us that Kyrgyzstan was ripe for assistance and that a programme there might well serve as a model for other states in Central Asia to follow.

What precisely is the Police Academy's role in bringing about more effective policing?

There's a global culture in policing, and it is a culture of service. It's the Academy that is supposed to shape that attitude, which is why the assistance we have been providing for more than a year now — for instance training in forensics work, in the proper methods of maintaining public order and in local-needs policing — is so vital.

One of the special privileges I had earlier today was viewing the passing-out parade of the Academy's cadets. The Academy has about a thousand young people in the five-year police programme in any one year. Watching the new graduates — almost 250 of them — you understand the Academy's significance in the professional development of these officers of the future. And seeing the turn-out of hundreds and hundreds of families — from excited grandparents to little babies dressed up for the occasion — you also realize how much the officers need the support of the people they represent and serve.

Are the initial activities already producing results?

I think General Beksultan Ishimov, who heads the Academy, should answer that question for me. At the moment, he would probably agree with me when I say that he would want to do so much more. Kyrgyzstan's police officers simply have an enormous burden and responsibility on their shoulders. They would like to join the modern world of professional, democratic policing, but there is a long way to go before they can be sufficiently equipped with both "hard" and "soft" skills through upgraded equipment and training in new standards and new attitudes.

We're a long way from finishing what we launched, but I think we're going the right way in building local and international co-operation. We can expect our efforts to start showing some results in about two to three years' time. The important thing is that we were able to get started with fairly modest financial means. We are actually in the business of "pump-priming" the process, and we hope that — as more and more countries see what we're doing, how we're doing it and what good value professional police



Passion for policing is behind Richard Monk's "Cup for Endeavour"

"It gives me pride and personal pleasure to present the Cup for Endeavour for the first time to Mederbek Muratov," Richard Monk announced at the end of his address to the Kyrgyzstan Police Academy's new graduates on 26 June. Mr. Monk was conferred the title of *Professor Emeritus* by Academy officials last year.

"Because I care passionately about professional policing, I have commissioned an annual Cup to be made and engraved," he said. "It will be presented each year to a student of this Academy — someone who, in the judgment of the Academic Board, has shown the most consistent commitment and highest personal development across every aspect of his or her professional life."

He stressed that the aim of the Cup, which comes with a monetary reward from the Academy, was to recognize the student who had exerted the most effort in living up to the highest values of policing — and not necessarily the student with the best academic record.

"It came as a complete surprise to me when I was informed about it," Mr. Muratov, 24, from Jalal-Abad, said after the ceremony. "I've always dreamt of becoming a police officer since I was a child. I still have one year to go, and this Cup will inspire me and help bring me closer to my goal."

His biggest hope, he said, is that Kyrgyzstan will one day have world-class professional police officers who follow the law themselves so that citizens can look to them for help and protection.



OSCE/MIKHAIL EVSTAFIEV

Major-Gen. D. Akmatov, a former Interior Minister, and Col. K. Asanaliev, Deputy Head of Kyrgyzstan's Police Academy, welcome OSCE Senior Police Adviser Richard Monk to the Academy's graduation ceremony.

officers represent — the OSCE programme will draw increased support.

Have you detected any resentment from Kyrgyz police officers over westerners coming in and telling them how to do things?

No more resentment than I would detect in the reaction of police in other parts of the world to anybody coming in and telling them what to do. It's the same everywhere. Police officers are traditionally very conservative. They are wary of experts who come from out of town with a briefcase and an overhead projector. But if we come armed with good ideas that they can try out and adapt, then we stand a greater chance of passing the credibility test and of their letting us help them. I think that's what's happening now.

Are the law enforcement issues in Kyrgyzstan similar to those in the Balkans, where you used to work?

There's a similarity in that there's a great deal of evident corruption permeating society as a whole. It's symptomatic of a state that has not established itself and of criminals taking advantage of the situation. Another similarity relates to the ethnic mix of the police force. Does it reflect the composition of the society it polices? At the moment, in Kyrgyzstan, probably not.

The Police are a national institution. How are they regarded by the people of Kyrgyzstan?

There is a deep mistrust between the police and the public. We hope that the findings of our surveys and the relationships we've built with some of the officers will help us steer the police force toward a path that inspires greater public confidence. People want to see their law enforcers as beyond reproach. The police and the public share the perception that low salaries, poor

working conditions and the lack of professionalism among some of the ranks contribute to low morale and corrupt practices.

Speaking of low salaries, are there sufficient government funds for policing?

I'm afraid that whenever the OSCE takes an interest in something, it's usually because there's not enough funding for it. And that's why we hope that the OSCE's participating States will continue to allocate funds especially for police-related activities in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. We are keen to have the Interior Ministry tap other promising sources so that the salaries of police officers can be raised.

Can western policing standards and methods be imported or do they have to be adjusted for individual countries?

They have got to be adjusted. We can help point them in the right direction. In community policing, some general principles hold true everywhere, but the Kyrgyz police authorities must decide for themselves. We don't want to give the impression that we are coming in and telling people that we know best. We've actually made a lot of mistakes in our own countries and we hope people have enough sense to learn from them. So, yes, cultural relevance is enormously important. This is why consulting not only the police force but also the community is an indispensable part of the OSCE's policing programme.

Briton Richard Monk was appointed Senior Police Adviser to the OSCE Secretary General in February 2001. He also heads the Secretariat's Strategic Police Matters Unit. A police officer for 35 years, Mr. Monk was Commissioner of the United Nations International Police Task Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina from March 1998 to March 1999. In 2000, he was invited by the United Nations Secretary-General to be a member of the UN Panel on Peace Operations, which prepared the Brahimi Report on past peacekeeping operations. In 2001, Mr. Monk carried out a five-month study of policing in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on behalf of the OSCE. He also reported, on behalf of the OSCE and the Office of the High Representative, on the role of a follow-up mission to the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was adopted as the starting point for the future European Union police mission in the country.

Kyrgyzstan's international partners

No "quick fix" for police reform, but outlook is optimistic

The Executive Steering Committee of the OSCE's Police Assistance Programme in Kyrgyzstan serves as a regular forum for joint consultations among the main stakeholders in the country's police reform. Members meet quarterly at the Police Academy in Bishkek. At its third meeting in June, three representatives of donor countries spoke with the OSCE Magazine about their impressions of the programme's prospects.

The European Union is very optimistic about the OSCE's policing activities in Kyrgyzstan, which we're funding through our Rapid Reaction Mechanism. Things have been going well and even at this early stage, we're already seeing a series of good results. The opening of two Centres was a great achievement. We saw the modern laboratories and equipment of the Centre for Criminal Investigation and walked through the modern and comfortable training rooms of the Centre for Public Disorder Prevention and Resolution.

We're also impressed with the other

projects. The pilot project on community policing focusing on one district in Bishkek is especially interesting, as it's trying to change the relationship between the police and the Kyrgyz citizen on the street. If the activities go well in Bishkek's Pervomaisky District Police, they could spread out quickly to the rest of the country.

If the programme continues to progress as smoothly as it has so far, I see a very good chance that Brussels will agree to continue supporting it. The recent upgrading in the diplomatic

relationship between Kyrgyzstan and the European Commission is a positive step; after overseeing projects in Kyrgyzstan from my base in Kazakhstan for about a year, I have now moved to Bishkek and am finding it a lot easier to work on the spot.

Carina Skareby, chargée d'affaire a.i., Regionalized Delegation of the European Commission in Kyrgyzstan



The United Kingdom has always had a keen interest in having the OSCE undertake police reform. I was on the UK delegation in Vienna from 1996 to 1998, the year of the UK's European Union presidency. That was when we as the EU started thinking that the OSCE should undertake police reform, which is such a central element in reforming civil society in transition countries.

I think that the programme partners, on both the Kyrgyz and the international sides, have done an outstanding job in the past several months, making sure that the different disciplines all come together and that all the different specialists are found. The people in Kyrgyzstan have been highly appreciative of what the OSCE has been doing. Police Academy officials have been very enthusiastic about how their institution is being strengthened through the wide range of training courses that are being introduced.

The new Centre for Public Disorder Prevention and Resolution did cause some controversy among some NGOs in the light of what happened in Ak-Sy two years ago. There was some concern that OSCE assistance would enable police to suppress demonstrations. In fact, the incident served as a wake-up call to the police — that they simply had to improve the way they were taking action.

Clearly, the way this part of the programme was presented to NGOs could have been done a little bit better and misunderstandings could have been avoided. But I trust that we're over that now. We re-examined this activity and decided to proceed in consultation with NGOs by inviting them to take part in the quarterly meetings of the Steering Committee.

It's the OSCE's only major police programme in Central Asia, and if we get it right, it can be introduced to other coun-

tries. Back in Kazakhstan, we've been encouraging officers to look at what the OSCE is doing in Kyrgyzstan, especially in community policing, and I'm happy to say that they have done so.

Deep-seated corruption and low salaries are just two of many very tough issues for which there is no quick fix. How do you deal with low pay in these very poor countries? That's why I regard police reform as a fairly long-term strategy and that's why leaving after 18 months is clearly not a feasible option.

James Sharp, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan



The financial investment of 3.8 million euros sounds huge, but the challenge it addresses is enormous, with longstanding historical roots.

It is of course too early to assess the successes and failures of the programme's many aspects. All activities of this size will have failures and successes. It would be unrealistic to believe that the problems can be solved within the programme's current scope. No one has a magic formula to transform things within a few months or even years. But the rule of law

is the foundation of all political, social and economic development, and we have no choice but to try.

At today's meeting of the Executive Steering Committee, we considered it especially important to give the special representative of NGOs in the south, Sadykjan Mahmudov of *Luch Solomona* (Solomon's Ray), the opportunity to comment on the programme. This shows that we are trying hard to work in a transparent manner and that we're not some "secret circle".

We believe that civil society should be included in every aspect of the programme as much as possible. I am not sure if we've achieved it fully, but that is our goal.

Klaus Achenbach, Former Ambassador of Germany to Kyrgyzstan (now Ambassador to Kuwait)





French Sergeant Jocelyne Lacourt

An advocate for life-long learning in law enforcement

Shortly before her return to the French Interior Ministry's Department for International Police Co-operation in early July, Chief Sergeant Jocelyne Lacourt of the French National Police spoke about her role as the first Operational Programme Manager of the Police Assistance Programme in Kyrgyzstan. "The people deserve a first-class police force and we owe it to them to try and help put one at their service," she said in an interview in Bishkek with Patricia Sutter, Editor of the *OSCE Magazine*.

Sergeant Jocelyne Lacourt served as the first Operational Programme Manager of the Police Assistance Programme in Kyrgyzstan from June 2003 to July 2004. She has returned to the French Interior Ministry where she now works on issues related to the European Union's PHARE and CARDS programmes, which assist transition countries in Europe with their integration process.

Photo: OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev

What led you to Bishkek to oversee the most complex and comprehensive OSCE project of its kind in Central Asia?

I was in Skopje on my first mission with the OSCE, co-ordinating a six-month training programme for newly deployed police officers — both ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians — in the former crisis area. I was about to complete the second phase of my assignment, as a trainer in community policing, when I came across the vacancy for Operational Programme Manager for the new Police Assistance Programme in Kyrgyzstan. I immediately thought: "That's for me!"

So there I was, transported from the Balkans to Bishkek, in mid-July 2003 after a short break in Paris. Shortly after my arrival, on 7 August, we raised the OSCE flag over the newly opened OSCE Police Assistance Programme Office in Bishkek — the day of the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by Prime Minister Nikolai Tanaev and Ambassador Aydin Idil, who

was then the Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek.

I've always enjoyed a good challenge, and managing a 3.8 million-euro programme was certainly a huge responsibility and quite an honour. I felt really fortunate to be working in a region that I know well and visited frequently from Paris. For almost four years, while working in the Department for International Police Co-operation within our Interior Ministry, I managed our bilateral police assistance projects with Central Asia. The job took me to places such as Osh and the Ferghana Valley in the south of Kyrgyzstan where drug smuggling is concentrated.

What did you find when you arrived? And what is it like now, as you prepare to leave?

One of the first things I did was to visit the main police station in the Pervomaisky District, where we were going to introduce community policing as a pilot project. I remember seeing crime investigators using antique typewriters. Today, a year into the programme, the investigation unit is hooked up to a local area network including 20 PCs with scanners and printers, which should make crime investigation more efficient.

The police station used to have only one old car on call for emergencies. In fact,



Jocelyne Lacourt's first assignment as a constable was to introduce community policing in an immigrants' settlement in the outskirts of Paris.

many officers had no choice but to use their private cars, most of which were not exactly in top condition. Now, the Pervomaisky Police District has 15 brand-new Ladas. The neighbourhood inspectors who deal directly with the public are about to be equipped with car radios and other reliable communications gear.

Our team can give you an endless list of “before” and “after” which may sound very basic to you but, believe me, it is making all the difference.

I also remember so well first seeing the premises of the Police Academy’s Centre for Criminal Investigation. The whole place was cold and damp. There was no emergency exit. There was no ventilation so the staff had to inhale fumes from the photo laboratory and forensic chemicals. After three months of extensive refurbishment under the OSCE programme, the centre is now the best of its kind in the region: 1,000 square metres of well-lit and well-ventilated facilities, with spacious training rooms and laboratories equipped with the latest technology used in investigating crimes and in forensic work.

So this gives you an idea why, during the start-up phase, we devoted a lot of our energy and efforts to the time-consuming task of procuring technical equipment, furniture and supplies to upgrade the police’s physical working conditions. How can you ask a police force to adopt a culture of service if it does not even have the most basic tools?

Then of course we have been introducing training, training, and more training. There is nothing easier than to give advice to our fellow law-enforcers here in Kyrgyzstan, but there’s nothing like having experts guiding them, and explaining, correcting, encouraging, and letting them find their own local solutions. We’ve also sent key police personnel abroad to see for themselves how things are done in specific areas.

Obviously, we can’t claim to have had any significant achievements yet — if you think you can reform the police in 18 months, you’re obviously out of your mind! — but we do know that we have started something tremendously important for this country. We have opened some doors.

Did your experience as a police officer in Paris hold any relevance at all in your dealings with both the police and the citizens in this part of the world?

As a young constable in the mid-1980s, I patrolled a very sensitive area with a large influx of immigrants in the outskirts of Paris. Later, I was in charge of introduc-



ing community policing in another rough neighborhood. The joint problem-solving approach was new to us and to the residents, but all the building blocks were there to make it work.

So I can fully sympathize when people here come up to us and say, “How can we even begin to trust a law enforcer who asks for money from us every five minutes? If someone breaks into our home, why should we report it to the police?”

At the same time, I’ve wanted to cry for my colleagues in Kyrgyzstan: They are fathers, they are husbands. How can you be an honest police officer if you are sometimes not paid your salary of an equivalent of 20 euros a month? And if you have to pay your boss so you can keep your job? How can tough structures be put in place and how can an anti-corruption campaign be launched under these conditions?

For that reason, I am convinced that our work should be part of an even larger effort with other partners. The OSCE Centre in Bishkek and the Strategic Police Matters Unit in the OSCE Secretariat have been looking closely at this issue.

In your day-to-day management of the programme, did you ever feel that it was “one step forward, two steps back”?

As westerners, we’re always running against the clock. I’ve had to learn to be patient. We also need to be more humble and less arrogant, and not to behave as if we know everything. People from other cultures can teach us some things as well.

The people here truly deserve a first-class police force, and we owe it to them to try and help put one at their service.

The traditional contrasted with the modern at the police graduation ceremony in June.

Although the project was meant to last only 18 months and is dependent on extra-budgetary resources, we need to continue proving that our assistance is not meant to be only ephemeral.

Of course there are some who still doubt that the old way of doing things can be changed and who do not have much faith in their own officials. But there are many who have understood what the project is trying to do and whose hopes have been raised by what they are seeing.

We should also understand that officials who were part of the old system are still in place. But it's the young people I would like to pin my hopes on. We need to give the cadets, whose average age is 20, opportunities for a good education, good training and good tools.

When I joined the police force 20 years ago in France, there were only three women in my police station. Most of the men had had about 25 years of service. Some — not all — were caricatures of the old school and a bit pushy towards our citizens.

We younger ones tried to oppose their style because it was different from what we were taught, and I remember how difficult it was in the beginning. However, as more and more young people joined, we were no longer a small minority. The older ones started retiring and it was my generation that started to change things little by little, with an important contribution from

women, who now make up about 30 per cent of the National Police.

In Kyrgyzstan, what is the level of participation of women in the police force?

I have been told that internal regulations prevent the female contingent from going beyond five per cent of the total, which by any standards is not satisfactory at all. And most of the female officers are limited to administrative and office tasks. To the best of my knowledge, no woman has yet been assigned to field operations because it is thought not to be “appropriate”. The community policing pilot project has started recruiting women as Neighbourhood Inspectors, so that's at least a modest initiative. Soon they will be more visible, as more and more of them work directly with the population. I really hope that we will see changes in this area in the coming years.

What attracted you to policing in the first place?

My father was a police officer all his life. When he retired in 1981, it was exactly when women were being actively encouraged to join the police service. But it was only a few years later, in 1984, when I told myself, “This is exactly what I want to do!” after seeing a recruitment ad. So I realized it was my vocation quite late; I was 24 and already a mother.

What I like about being in the police service is that the possibilities for learning are endless. Similar opportunities should be developed further in Kyrgyzstan, where the practice at the Police Academy is to offer a continuous five-year programme but where on-the-job training and specialized courses are still rare.

What are you going to miss most about life in Bishkek?

It may sound strange, considering how intense the pace of work has been every single day — including weekends — but every morning when I opened my eyes, I had the feeling I was somewhere on holiday when I heard the cock crow.

Bishkek can be absolutely magical. It's a city of trees, roses, birds and even squirrels. Our offices are right next to a small park shaded by old elm trees. You can be out in the evening in a café with excellent musicians and you walk home feeling safe and secure, unlike in many other capitals. Everyone falls in love with this place and its peace-loving, family-oriented people.

What a pity no one knows much about this charming side of Kyrgyzstan. What a pity there aren't more tourists climbing its breathtaking mountains.

Some of the national staff of the Police Assistance Programme (left to right): Kyial Arabayeva, Interpreter; Ulan Japarov, Procurement Assistant; Guljamal Sharipkanova, Interpreter; Alyona Turchina, Budget Assistant; Jahnibek Temiraliyev, Interpreter; Victoria Tsekanova, Interpreter; Altynai Nosinova, Administration Assistant; and Oleg Kolenko, Driver.





PROJECTS IN REVIEW

Kyrgyzstan's law enforcers “feeling positive” about programme's progress

This is the first international programme to provide Kyrgyzstan's police agencies with substantial support, and we're very happy to be running it. Fortunately, we are changing the perception of policing we carried over from the Soviet era, and most of our officers are aware of the hard work that still has to be done before we can achieve a higher level of policing.

We feel so much more positive about ourselves because of the modern equip-

ment and training that have been placed at our disposal. Most importantly, the issue of human rights has gained more prominence. I must confess that our attitude towards criminals and offenders had always been one of indifference, but we are now trying to do something about this.

We have recently brought our national legislation into line with international standards in human rights and policing. Notably, we have amended the Code of Criminal Procedure, allowing a suspect under inter-

The Police Assistance Programme's international core team (left to right): Urban Karlsson, Community Policing Expert (Sweden); Mamyrov Shamshybek, National Project Officer; Evgeny Cherenkov, Acting Operational Programme Manager and Police Academy Expert (Russian Federation); and Jean Pierre Contal, Public Order and Conflict Prevention Expert (France). In the background, the OSCE flag flies over the new Centre for Public Disorder Prevention and Resolution. Photo: OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev

rogation to have access to a lawyer. We have also adopted an article making police officers more accountable if they resort to violence.

Turning to the important issue of police salaries, we have a saying: "A hungry police officer is a dangerous police officer." The Kyrgyz President and the Minister of Interior have been looking into ways of improving the welfare of our police officers. Starting early this year, we raised salaries by 55

per cent and we are currently discussing whether we can afford another 100 per cent increase.

Every day we get inquiries from other states in Central Asia about how we are implementing the programme, since we all share the same weaknesses in the safety and security sector.

First Deputy Minister of Interior Rasul Raimberdiyev, Chairman of Co-ordination Board of Police Assistance Programme



Responding to Kyrgyzstan's "hard" and "soft" policing needs

The OSCE's 18-month police assistance programme for Kyrgyzstan, launched in August 2003, was about 80 per cent completed as of early October 2004. Developed at the request of the Government and run in co-operation with the Interior Ministry, the full programme comprises:

- upgrading the quality of police investigations;
- improving police capacity for drug interdiction;
- creating a modern and efficient police emergency call-response centre;
- setting up the core of a national criminal information analysis system;
- providing the criminal police with a radio-communications system;
- strengthening police capacity to prevent, resolve and manage public conflict and disorder;
- introducing community policing methods as a pilot project in Bishkek's Pervomaisky District; and
- expanding the curriculum of Kyrgyzstan's Police Academy.

Main contributors

European Union, Norway, United Kingdom, United States, Netherlands, Germany and Sweden

Countries that have seconded experts

France, Russian Federation, Sweden and Bulgaria

One-week study tours with a maximum of four participants:

France and United Kingdom: Prevention and management of public disorder

Lithuania (two tours): Prevention of juvenile delinquency and management of public disorder

Spain: Criminal intelligence analysis

Russian Federation: Prevention of juvenile delinquency, police management and administration

Poland: Prevention of juvenile delinquency

Switzerland: Civilian oversight of the police and human rights

Germany (two tours): Human rights

Northern Ireland: Community policing in practice and civilian oversight



During a study tour in Belfast in July, Lt. Col. M. Aliyev, Deputy Head of Bishkek's Pervomaisky District Police, tries on a jacket used by community police in Northern Ireland.



OSCE PAP

Completely renovated, the Centre for Criminal Investigation is now one of the most modern in Central Asia.

FIGHTING AND SOLVING CRIME

About one-third of crimes in the country take place in Bishkek, a city with one million residents, or about one-fifth of the country's total population. Most of the crimes involve theft and robbery, and some involve the use of firearms.

I must say that the exercise we went through from 5 to 17 July, simulating a murder case, was well designed. We all felt as if we were investigating a real crime in real life. We examined the victim's office where we found evidence that he owed money to someone. We also discovered that the victim's daughter had been kidnapped. The criminals were asking for a \$15,000 ransom. We identified the exact spot where they wanted the money to be dropped off. We split up into several groups to track the criminals, and we succeeded in identifying their car, which led to their arrest.

This practical training allows us not only to improve "hard" skills but also to learn about differences in approaches to police work. In this course, the instructor, Captain Erik André from the French *gendarmerie*, introduced techniques that were completely new to us. We found out that in France, an investigator does everything: investigating, carrying out arrests, analysing cases and solving crimes. In our system, an investigator heads and manages operations and assigns roles separately to the police, to special troops and to operational officers.

So far, more than 150 officers and trainers have completed a variety of basic and advanced courses conducted by two international experts. In June, the Police Academy inaugurated its completely refurbished Centre for Criminal Investigation. Its modern facilities and equipment will make highly technical training possible in fields such as forensics and ballistics.

In July, we received 12 mini-vans equipped with crime-scene kits, digital



OSCE PAP

cameras and mobile phones. This makes it possible for investigation teams to reach the scene of a crime much more quickly and to carry out investigations much more thoroughly, which should increase our success rate in solving crime cases.

Police Captain Melisbek Baynazarov, Senior Investigator, Bishkek City Police Headquarters

Russian trainers share their expertise in forensics.

COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN DRUGS

The OSCE's assistance in strengthening our capacity for intercepting illegal drugs was set in motion early this year when we received the keys to eight new vehicles. Each mobile unit comes with a sniffer dog.

"Boy," an English cocker spaniel, is a valuable member of the Drug Enforcement Unit of Bishkek City Police Headquarters.



OSCE MIKHAIL EVSTAFIEV

I'm happy to report that our finds have gone up considerably. The dogs, trained in Almaty, are proving to have excellent "noses" for drugs in houses and in cars.

Bishkek and Osh are major transit points for heroin and opium coming from Afghanistan through Tajikistan to Kazakhstan, Russia and European capitals, where the money generated is laundered into legitimate businesses. So, the more drugs we find here, the less drugs will end up in other OSCE countries.

Colonel Salymbek Alymkulov, Deputy Head of Drug Enforcement Department, Ministry of Interior

MANAGING PUBLIC CONFLICT AND DISORDER

In 2002, five people died after police officers used firearms to stop a riot in Ak-sy, in the south. We learned important lessons from that tragic incident.

At the Police Academy's Centre for Public Disorder Prevention and Resolution, which we inaugurated on 26 June, non-specialist senior police officers and cadets undergo training to respond properly to potential threats during mass events. An expert from France, together with teachers from the Police Academy, has already trained more than 100 officers. Training will be extended to Jalal-Abad in the south.

The aim is to prevent a conflict from escalating through the use of negotiation, and to "de-escalate" public disorder by using tactics that are in accordance with democratic policing principles — that is, with a minimum use of force.

Since the success of our work depends to a great extent on the public's understanding

of the programme's eight projects, we have been working with the OSCE to inform people and the media about the programme. I must say we have been receiving very positive feedback.

Police Major-Gen. Keneshbek Duishebayev, Head of Bishkek City Police Headquarters



Police Major-Gen. Keneshbek Duishebayev

I was one of 16 officers who completed the first training for trainers course in community policing from 26 April to 14 May. I did very well because I really enjoy interacting with people. We're trying to build on Kyrgyzstan's old "neighbourhood inspectors" concept. What's new for us is that our role is more clearly defined, and feedback is emphasized.

As part of the training, we actually patrolled the streets and tried to chat informally with people. There were some awkward moments for both sides. Some encounters were negative and some were fun and amusing. I'm optimistic that when the concept is fully implemented, we will be able to carry it through, provided we all pull



Neighbourhood Inspectors learn how to interact with Bishkek residents (left to right): explaining the meaning of community policing to schoolchildren, organizing a football match and coming across a wedding party.

Photos: OSCE PAP



together. To start with, we've been provided with computers, radio communications sets and 15 patrol cars.

Recently, the next phase of this project was launched after 61 officers were chosen, in a competitive process, to undergo the first training course in community policing.

I attended the Turkish Policy Academy in Ankara, where I saw the differences between the Turkish and Kyrgyz police. I wish we had the same system! It was truly inspiring. Here, the whole police structure has to be reformed, but step by step, because it's impossible to do it all at the same time. One of the first things I would do is raise the salaries of police officers. Right now, we are paid an average monthly salary of 1,500 soms (\$30). We need at least 10,000 soms (\$200) to be able to live comfortably. The low salaries explain why there is so much corruption among the police.

Lt. Bekchoro Alaiskarov, Neighbourhood Inspector from Pervomaisky District Police Station

What is community policing? Simply put, it means that police officers work in a trusting partnership with society to decrease crime and increase safety. It isn't "soft" policing at all — in a sense, it's actually tough because you're much more involved and it takes more time, effort and energy. It's pro-active, not reactive. It's much more than patrolling by foot or by car, which is easy enough. It's based on the premise that the police, on their own, cannot stop crime. It's often called "local-needs policing" — which is why we carried out a survey recently to find out what the community of Pervomaisky expects of its law enforcers.

I understand police officers' fear of losing power if they tap civilians as a resource. Paradoxically, though, it's when you interact with local citizens that you become a real professional. I have been a police officer for 26 years in Stockholm; 10 of those years were devoted to community policing. In my home town, we thought we were all experts, we had technology, we knew everything. In 1993, we decided to form a group that would go around on bicycles, talking to people. We found we were solving a lot more crimes than we had done before! People would come up to us saying, "Thank you for being here. We can walk safely in the streets again." That was our greatest reward.

Before my assignment ends, I would like to see citizens sitting down with their police



OSCE/MIKHAIL EVSTAFIEV

officers and trying to find ways to increase safety and security in the neighbourhood, to have the concept of "service" fully understood, and to turn law enforcers from a "force" into a service provider. We have now recruited the first female Neighbourhood Inspectors and I'm looking forward to seeing them working in the field, side by side with male officers, for the first time.

Of course I know one cannot transplant one country's practices to another just like that. However, the concept of community policing is basically the same all over the world; the Kyrgyz simply have to make adjustments according to their local culture. *Urban Karlsson, Community Policing Expert (In Sweden: Police Superintendent and Head of the Public Order Department in Sodertalje Police District, Stockholm)*

Father and son at the Police Academy's graduation ceremony

In September, 32 vehicles were delivered to Bishkek's police authorities for use in community policing and investigating crimes.



OSCE PAP



Some 1,000 cadets are enrolled in Kyrgyzstan's Police Academy.

I was chosen by more than 40 NGOs from three southern regions to represent the general public from that part of the country on the Executive Steering Committee of the Police Assistance Programme. This gives me the opportunity to give presentations, offer comments, and ask the Programme Manager and Kyrgyz leaders questions on how activities are progressing.

At the third meeting, which took place in June, I suggested that in addition to the two checkpoints that are being planned to counter drug-trafficking, two more should be constructed in the South, which faces an even more serious drug-trafficking problem.

We are also worried about the possibility that the programme will create an armed unit to deal with mass disturbances, and at the NGOs' request, this part of the programme has been suspended for the time being.

Some results can already be highlighted. In September, international experts from the Centre for Criminal Investigation con-

Several centres within the Police Academy have either been completely refurbished or upgraded.



ducted some courses in Osh; further training is scheduled for October. We're looking forward to finding out more about achievements in this area at the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

Sadykjan Mahmudov, Executive Director, "Luch Solomona"

STRENGTHENING THE POLICE ACADEMY'S TRAINING CAPACITY

Although day-to-day work at the Police Academy under this project appears routine, the teaching staff are well aware that they are actually building the foundation for a whole new system of education that will turn out future generations of police who will be more professional than ever.

Besides developing training courses and teaching material, we are also conducting training in various disciplines for police in the field, cadets, senior officials at the Academy, and the Academy's trainers themselves. By the time my assignment ends, a whole range of new training courses will have been introduced into the curriculum and the teaching staff will have been equipped with the most modern teaching techniques.

Within the Academy, several centres have been either created or upgraded, each devoted to a special discipline: professional training, practical communication and situational training for police officers in the field, scientific research, human rights and civilian oversight of the police, and juvenile justice. The more visible Centre for Criminal Investigation and the Centre for Public Disorder Prevention and Resolution also fall into this category.

Most of the centres have been renovated, provided with special equipment, and equipped with computers.

Several training courses have been included in the curriculum for the first time — on community policing, protection of human rights, working with juveniles, conflict prevention, crises management and inter-ethnic policing. We are also introducing methods that will strengthen the Academy's research potential and streamline the organizational and management structure.

All in all, I believe our goals are realistic and down-to-earth, and the expected results tangible and easy to evaluate.

Col. Evgeny Cherenkov, Police Academy Expert (In Russia: Deputy Head, Department of Administrative Law, University of Law for the Police, Nizhny Novgorod)

Armenia and Azerbaijan seek donor funding for police reform

A new era in professional policing in southern Caucasus is poised to begin with the design and development of OSCE police assistance programmes in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Project activities will be implemented by the OSCE Centres in Yerevan and Baku in co-operation with the two countries' police authorities. Responsibility for co-ordination rests with the Secretariat's Strategic Police Matters Unit, which is also facilitating fund-raising efforts for the pioneering programmes.

In Armenia, in close co-operation with the Police Department:

- ◆ Community policing methods will be introduced in Yerevan's busy Arabkir district to serve as a model for the rest of the country. An earlier survey by the Centre for Regional Development and Transparency International was a first step in police-community consultations.
- ◆ The capability of the police to respond to emergencies will be strengthened through a call-response centre. Technicians have visited similar operations in Germany, the Russian Federation and Sweden.
- ◆ Armenia's Police Training Centre will be upgraded through improved courses and teaching materials in basic policing to provide non-commissioned police staff with basic uniformed police skills, including patrolling. The head of the Training Centre has visited similar institutions in the Russian Federation.

In Azerbaijan, in close co-operation with the Ministry of the Interior:

- ◆ Community policing methods will be introduced at a police station in the town of Mingechevir, to serve as a model for the rest of the country.
- ◆ Intelligence-led drug investigations will be strengthened through an information system that will link up with the operations of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.
- ◆ The Police Training Centre's basic training for non-commissioned police will be modernized. A group of trainers have visited similar institutions in Turkey and the Russian Federation.

The activities in Azerbaijan usher in a new phase in its OSCE Police Assistance Programme, following the recent major refurbishment of the Police Training Centre.



Armenia. Col. Artashes Andreasyan (right), Head of the Police Training Centre, guides OSCE Police Affairs Officer Tim Del Vecchio on a tour of the Police Museum. A special exhibit features the history of Armenian policing.



Azerbaijan. A room in the Police Training Centre is especially reserved for teaching traffic policing. Left to right: Lt.-Col. Natig Gasimov, Capt. Fikret Tahirov, Lt.-Col. Akif Aliiev, and OSCE Police Officer Viacheslav Vorobiev.



USOSCE/ELKE JUNG-WOLFF

PERMANENT COUNCIL

“Bold ideas for transforming OSCE will require careful consideration”

U.S. Ambassador says changes should further Organization’s ideals

Nearly three years into his term as United States Ambassador to the OSCE, Stephan M. Minikes gave an interview to OSCE Spokesperson Richard Murphy and surveyed the current general debate regarding the Organization’s future directions. “If we were to re-create the OSCE today, none of us might replicate its current organizational structure exactly,” he says. “But I think we would replicate some of its central features.”

What do you think of the recent call of the Chairman-in-Office for a transformation of the OSCE?

Ambassador Stephan Minikes: The hallmark of the OSCE has always been its responsiveness and flexibility, and that it is not bogged down by bureaucracy — not yet, anyway — and we need to keep it that way. We talk about this often because these features distinguish the OSCE from other regional organizations, are key to its effectiveness and must be preserved. We believe that the OSCE, like any organization, should always be looking for ways to improve itself, and to adapt to the changing needs of its participating States and to changing political environments. We are always prepared to discuss constructive ideas for transforming the OSCE.

The OSCE is based on principles that represent the shared values of the participating States. What these principles mean in practice has been elaborated in a long series of consensus documents over the years. They, too, must be preserved if we are to remain faithful to the ideals to which all participating States have committed themselves.

Our Chairman-in-Office, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy, has outlined some bold ideas for changing the OSCE. Our responsibility, it seems to me, is to consider them carefully to be sure that whatever we decide to do, does indeed strengthen the Organization and furthers its ideals. This will require lots of time, thought and negotiation.

In what direction would you like to see the OSCE develop, both politically and organizationally? How do you see the future of the Chairmanship, the Secretary General and consensus decision-making?

We believe the OSCE meets a profound need in its promotion of democracy, human rights, good governance and arms control. The most important conflict-prevention and confidence-building measures we can undertake are establishing democracy and market economies, fostering security, and promoting and protecting human rights.

The job of perfecting democracy and achieving security is far from finished. Conflicts are now occurring in Eurasia. Terrorism afflicts all of us. Intolerance abounds. Some elections are neither free nor fair. This is where OSCE’s principal challenges are.

If we were to re-create the OSCE today, none of us might replicate its current organizational structure exactly. But I think we would replicate some of its central features. A rotating chairmanship breathes new ener-

gy and political accountability into the OSCE every year. The consensus rule ensures that what we all agree upon will stand the test of time. The field presences ensure that the OSCE's work is operational, practical and relevant.

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Secretariat provide expertise, organizational continuity and the capability to transform dialogue into action. Special Representatives call political attention to urgent issues.

Are there controversies over some of the OSCE's operations? Of course. If there weren't, then the Organization would not be doing its job.

With the term of Ambassador Ján Kubiš coming to an end, there has been a lot of discussion about whether and how the role of the Secretary General should or could be changed. This is an important and serious issue that my Government is considering carefully.

And the future of the system of short-term secondments to field missions?

The secondment system fills an important role, namely supplementing a unified budget that has long been insufficient to meet the core needs of the Organization. That said, I believe it's time to re-evaluate the duration of these short-term appointments. In the past five years especially, the OSCE has become much more of a conflict-prevention and post-conflict stabilization organization and much less of a crisis-response operation.

The six-month contracts for field personnel were initially established because these people were largely responding to crises. With the evolution of field work toward longer-term conflict prevention and confidence-building, six-month contracts may be a disadvantage as they tend to hinder any sustained activity and may be an obstacle to recruiting the best talent. It might be time to designate applicable jobs in the field presences as longer-term positions and fill them for 12 months at a time. This would improve effectiveness without losing any real flexibility.

Some commentators in the United States have been critical of Washington's decision to invite ODIHR to observe the presidential election. How would you respond?

First and foremost, I would say that the United States takes its OSCE commitments seriously; in line with these, we are obligated to invite OSCE observers. We can hardly expect other participating States to abide by their commitments to the Organization if we do not abide by ours. It's as simple as that.

Second, election observation in established democracies provides invaluable experience to monitors who might not have had the opportunity to see how countries with long traditions of free and fair elections organize election campaigns, voting and tabulation, and how they resolve disputes, whether at the polling station or through well-established institutional processes.

I've had the opportunity to talk to public officials who've visited Vienna to learn about city administration and planning, for example, and they were effusive in their praise for on-site visits, noting that one can learn more about how a system really works by a short personal visit than from months of reading about it. When it comes to election observation in the United States, we have nothing to hide. In fact, we are proud of what we have to offer and believe others can learn from it.

How would you respond to suggestions from some participating States that the OSCE applies double standards and that there is a geographic and thematic imbalance in its activities?

As the Ambassador of a country that is frequently on the receiving end of critical interventions in the Permanent Council, I cannot agree that the OSCE applies double standards. Participating States may voice concerns about policies and practices that worry them or that are not in compliance with OSCE commitments. That is a fundamental privilege that has also been reaffirmed in numerous OSCE documents, not the least of which is the Charter on European Security.

Where the OSCE concentrates its attention, and in what substantive areas, is a function of need. It is demand-driven, because States hosting OSCE field presences are involved in requesting and approving OSCE activities on their territory. The OSCE, through the activities of its field presences and its bodies and institutions, helps countries make the transition from command to market economies, from dictatorship to democratic elections, from an official press to an independent press. The OSCE also helps transform state institutions, such as the police and the courts — from bodies that protect the State, to bodies that protect the constitution and the people.

It is a huge undertaking — but a necessary one — for emerging democracies to shed the legacy of half a century or more of thwarted economic and democratic development and move as quickly as possible into the increasingly integrated international

community and global market. Helping with this transition is part of the OSCE's fundamental contribution to comprehensive security, as it has been since 1975.

I have heard complaints that insufficient attention is devoted to the economic and environmental dimension and the political-military dimension. Let's look at the record. Since I have been in Vienna, the second dimension has been strengthened, both in terms of budget and staff in the Secretariat. Last year we adopted the Strategy Document, designed to address some of the most pressing problems facing transition economies. Still, what I have seen in my three years here is that among some participating States, there is a stunning unwillingness to accept the fact that, more than anything else, it is domestic policies and practices that are blocking economic transformation and development.

This was recognized in the preparation of the Strategy Document and is the reason why there is a strong focus on good governance. Expert after expert at economic dimension seminars and at the annual economic forum tells us that governance problems are keeping countries from achieving the benefits of economic integration and globalization. The problems include lack of transparency in contracting, legal requirements that benefit friends and families of those in power, the absence of conflict-of-interest regulations, lack of an impartial and independent judiciary, onerous registration requirements, and laws and practices that hinder rather than facilitate business development and expansion, to say nothing of outright graft and corruption.

This is a hard message for governments to hear, and the transformation process is neither easy nor painless. I strongly believe that the OSCE is here to help governments with this process. It is in our collective interest in building security for all OSCE participating States to move as quickly as possible to consolidate democracy and build market economies; in short, to come into full compliance with basic OSCE commitments. We have high expectations because we have high hopes!

Similarly, in the political-military dimension, the record shows that we have strengthened this dimension considerably over the past years. In the Forum for Security and Co-operation (FSC), we are, collectively, destroying excess ammunition, restricting transfers of small arms and light weapons, and controlling shoulder-fired missiles, or MANPADS. Several participating

States, notably my own, have contributed many millions of euros toward these goals, including funds that are still available to offset the costs of removing excess military equipment from Moldova.

We have created the Annual Security Review Conference, where we concentrate on opportunities to increase security throughout the OSCE region. The OSCE has extended the Wassenaar Arrangement on MANPADS to all 55 participating States. We have dramatically enhanced our contribution to fighting terrorism, an area where I believe we could do even more together. Where the OSCE has been less successful — for example, in resolving the so-called frozen conflicts — it has not been for a lack of interest or effort on the part of the OSCE.

Has the OSCE outlived its usefulness now that NATO and the European Union are enlarging?

Absolutely not. Quite to the contrary. In fact, changes in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture make the OSCE even more important than before to many countries, particularly those that do not belong to NATO or the EU.

You only have to look at the OSCE's work on counter-terrorism to see how useful it is, and how quickly and effectively the OSCE adapted to the changing political and security environment in the post-11 September 2001 world. In barely three months, the OSCE produced the Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism. OSCE bodies then quickly produced their own roadmaps outlining how they would go about their Bucharest taskings.

In July 2002, OSCE participating States committed themselves to completing the Financial Action Task Force self-assessments on compliance with anti-terrorist financing measures. This started work that continues to this day on combating terrorist financing and money-laundering, enhancing States' abilities to detect and deter illegal financial flows. Most recently, we agreed to focus on making sure that NGOs and charity groups are not misused by terrorists and other criminals. The decision on travel document security, agreed in Maastricht in December 2003, will significantly impede the ability of terrorists and criminals to move about the world undetected.

The OSCE Secretariat now has a fully functioning Action Against Terrorism Unit which is helping the OSCE set the standard for what a regional organization can do to address the multi-faceted threat of terrorism.

On a political level, the OSCE brought Afghanistan into the fold, making it a

Partner for Co-operation in April 2003. That paved the way for joint activities and confidence- and security-building measures aimed at helping Afghanistan in its own efforts to make the transition to peace and stability. This is essential for peace and stability throughout a region that encompasses several OSCE participating States. The OSCE provided Afghanistan with an election support team at its October polls.

The OSCE is doing tremendous work in Georgia and Moldova on early warning and conflict prevention, largely through its field presences. The fact that contentious problems in South Ossetia and Transdniestria are being dealt with through negotiations and have not led to open conflict is testimony to the critical work that OSCE field presences perform.

What is your reaction to recent comments on the future of the OSCE from the leaders of many members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)?

I very much welcome the engagement of Heads of State and Government of several CIS countries in the future of the OSCE. It demonstrates that what the OSCE does is highly relevant to these and many other countries, as it is to mine. The United States is always willing to engage in constructive discussion with participating States on the functioning of the OSCE, on ways to improve it, and on ensuring that the OSCE is important to participating States, both individually and collectively.

As I've said regarding recent activity in the political-military and economic dimensions, I disagree with the claim that there is a fundamental imbalance in the OSCE's work. My Government is, and will remain, a leader in proposing more concrete activities in those areas. Nor do I believe in the least that field activities are ineffective. Indeed, I always hear during my many visits to countries that host field activities — including countries of the CIS — just how helpful they can be. And those comments come from government officials, NGOs and private citizens. Nevertheless, I welcome the opportunity to discuss how the OSCE can do an even better job in all these areas.

What troubled me more in the statements was the extraordinary re-emergence, for the first time in many years, of a criticism that participating States have repeatedly agreed to lay to rest — that of interference in internal affairs. In fact, I had to read it twice to be sure I was reading it right — that's how surprising it was.

Any discussion of the OSCE's fundamen-

tal documents must include what States actually committed themselves to in the Charter for European Security (1999) and the Moscow Document (1991). The former says: "Participating States are accountable to their citizens and responsible to each other for their implementation of their OSCE commitments. We regard these commitments as our common achievement and therefore consider them to be matters of immediate and legitimate concern to all participating States."

This language built upon the Moscow Document, which says: "The participating States emphasize that issues relating to human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law are of international concern, as respect for these rights and freedoms constitutes one of the foundations of the international order. They categorically and irrevocably declare that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the CSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned."

Concern expressed about States' practices that violate OSCE commitments is not, therefore, an example of meddling in internal affairs; rather, it reflects what the Charter for European Security and the Moscow Document say the OSCE should be doing.

We now find ourselves in the midst of a very active period of elections in many OSCE countries. I think that OSCE participating States can agree that we all aspire to conducting truly free and fair elections. In the ODIHR, we have, together, over the years established the world's strongest institution for observing elections and helping to improve them. That's what the OSCE is and should be doing to serve our collective interest in comprehensive security.

Stephan M. Minikes assumed his post as the United States' Ambassador to the OSCE in December 2001, shortly after his nomination by President George W. Bush and his confirmation by the U.S. Senate. A graduate of Cornell University and Yale Law School, he is a well-known member of the Washington and New York legal community. He has lectured widely on issues focusing on foreign policy, national defence and security, democracy and human rights, and international trade and finance. Ambassador Minikes was born in Berlin, where he grew up and lived through the Second World War. His family emigrated to the United States in 1949.

Is virtual hatred real?



Dealing with racism and intolerance on the Internet

Do the worrying waves of hate crimes in a number of OSCE countries and the increasing volume of racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic content on the Internet feed on each other? To exchange views on the subject, some 200 professionals from the Internet industry including staff from Yahoo, UPC and T-Online, experts from non-governmental organizations, and senior officials from participating States met under the auspices of the OSCE and the French Foreign Ministry in Paris on 15 and 16 June. Shortly after the event, OSCE Press Officer Alexander Nitzsche invited Ambassador Yves Doutriaux, Head of the French Delegation to the OSCE, and Daniel Bryant, U.S. Assistant Attorney General for Legal Policy, to discuss some of the issue's complexities from their perspectives on different sides of the Atlantic.

Dynamic interaction between civil society and Internet industry should be encouraged

Did the meeting in Paris answer the central question posed by its title?

Ambassador Yves Doutriaux: It should not come as a surprise to anyone that there was no definitive answer on whether there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between hate material online and the incidence of hate crimes. What the meeting did accomplish was to underline the need to pay serious and continuous attention to this possible link.

Several participants in Paris gave credence to the belief that the new technology is being misused by criminals and terrorists. Speakers cited recent trends, such as the use of Internet by Islamist extremists as a tool to spread their message and to coordinate terrorist activities.

Having said that, let's not jump to the conclusion that the existence of a link justifies imposing any kind of censorship; quite the contrary. Any attempt to limit access to the Internet would be a mistake. It was clear to everybody that fostering access to the Internet remains paramount, along with

defending freedom of expression and communication, provided that online content does not break the law. In France, as in most countries in the European Union, the spread of racist propaganda is prohibited by law.

There did not seem to be any clear consensus among the participants on how to approach the problem.

I'm afraid I have to disagree with you there. It is true that the issue is still open to debate, but there was a general feeling that progress had been made. For example, we all agreed on the importance of raising the awareness of all parties concerned, especially on the need to counter the negative impact of cyber-hate on children. Participants were unanimous in their view that the efforts of civil society to monitor hate sites should be supported and that the possible correlation between racist propaganda and hate crimes needs further analysis. They also agreed that dynamic interaction between civil society and the Internet industry should be encouraged, especially in matters concerning the terms of use drawn up by Internet service providers to regulate access and uploading of individual content to host computers.

Governments have a key role to play in supporting these measures. In accordance with national laws and international commitments such as the Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime, governments



are charged with the responsibility of setting up proper mechanisms and training public servants to investigate and prosecute threats of violence transmitted over the Internet.

The European Union itself has launched a four-year programme, Safer Internet Plus, to combat online child pornography, racism, spam and other illegal content. The initiative, aimed at making the Internet safer for children, will mobilize the efforts of the public, private and voluntary sectors.

As for the OSCE's role, it is widely acknowledged that one of our strong qualities is our ability to co-operate closely with civil society, which is a clear advantage in tackling intolerance and discrimination issues.

In this connection, I'd like to commend the timely efforts of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in implementing its tasks stemming from the 2003 Maastricht Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, the 2004 Berlin Decision on the Fight against Anti-Semitism, and now, the Paris recommendations. Among several initiatives, the ODIHR will compile best practices in combating the dissemination of hate crimes online as well as lists of offensive sites.

Similarly, the OSCE's Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media is making a decisive contribution towards making the phenomenon of cyber-hate better understood.

France strongly advocates reinforcing the ongoing co-operation between these two OSCE institutions as a concrete follow-up to the Paris meeting.

Could you describe the special initiatives proposed by France, including the *Charte éthique*?

On the day before the Paris meeting, the French Internet industry and the Ministry of Industry signed — voluntarily — a

charter of good practices focusing on the problem of cyber-hate, among other related issues. The charter stipulates that when Internet service providers are alerted to illegal content, they should remove the problematic sites.

Let me just add that the French Internet industry has been consistently pro-active for quite some time now in combating illegal content online, as seen in its close involvement in INHOPE, the Association of Internet Hotline Providers. This network of 18 members in 16 countries receives and processes reports from the public with a view to banning illegal material from the Internet.

Given the international and transboundary nature of the Internet, do you think France's "legalistic" approach is effective?

You have zeroed in on the crucial issue. France, just like most countries of the European Union, prohibits hate speech. It is precisely the Internet's transboundary nature which makes co-ordination of efforts absolutely essential, since hate sites can use — or rather, misuse — opportunities presented by diverse legal traditions or gaps in specific legal provisions. In other words, it is fairly easy for hate sites to move around, from country to country, from provider to provider, depending on where it is easiest for them to spread their inflammatory messages.

Doesn't the legal approach imply restricting freedom of expression and stifling the media?

I really don't see any contradiction, provided the necessary safeguards are ensured. Freedom of expression and the media are, in fact, legally protected in most OSCE countries. What is actually at stake here is the basic issue of regulating content on the Internet — whether there should be regulation, and if yes, whether this regulation should be exercised by the govern-



ment, by the industry itself or both.

It seems to me that, at the meeting, there was a broad consensus on the need to follow closely the ongoing debates on this specific issue, with a view to arriving at an understanding on possible solutions.

What kind of self-regulatory measures can the Internet industry take on?

We cannot expect the Internet industry to do everything on its own. This could even prove dangerous, as it would be shifting to the industry the responsibility of applying a new kind of censorship. We would prefer promoting new partnerships based on a dynamic interaction between all actors involved, especially between NGOs and the Internet industry.

Education is one of the priority themes under the Bulgarian OSCE Chairmanship. How relevant is this to the problem of racist material on the Internet and hate crimes?

Education is the key word: the education of young people, the education of parents and the education of teachers. We should do our utmost to provide our children with tools they can use to protect themselves from racist literature, and we should give parents access to filtering devices and software and other instruments which they can use to protect their children from harmful contact with sites disseminating hate and intolerance.



Ambassador Yves Doutriaux has been Head of the Delegation of France to the OSCE since February 2003. Prior to his assignment in Vienna, he served as Deputy to the French Permanent Representative at the United Nations in New York for four years. Previous positions included Deputy Spokesperson at the French Foreign Ministry in Paris, Consul-General in Toronto and adviser at the French representation to the European Union in Brussels. Ambassador Doutriaux is a graduate of the Institut d'études politiques in Paris and attended the Ecole nationale d'administration.

Respecting freedom of speech on the Internet and combating prejudice can go hand in hand

BY DANIEL J. BRYANT

The Government of the United States deplores racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic speech on the Internet. In our efforts to combat intolerance, however, it is important that we do not lose sight of the forest for the trees. The development of the Internet represents an enormous step forward in the history of communications and holds significant promise for a wide range of human endeavours. Among other attributes, the Internet empowers individual citizens, both by putting an amazing array of knowledge at their fingertips and by giving them a far greater ability to voice their views and, ultimately, influence public debate.

It is, therefore, the policy of the United States to promote the continued development of the Internet and the expansion of

access to it. We also believe that to realize the full potential of the Internet, government regulation must be kept to a minimum, and the fundamental freedoms of speech, expression and the press must be respected. Robust debate lies at the cornerstone of our constitutional tradition, and we believe that all individuals must be permitted to add their voices to that debate. While we may not like what every participant chooses to say, democracy is premised, at least in part, on the notion that the best viewpoints will ultimately win out in the marketplace of ideas.

Moreover, once government is given the power to restrict speech it disagrees with, where does one draw the line? While all participating States no doubt condemn racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, granting governments the authority to suppress speech that they disagree with puts at risk



the right to free speech of all individuals holding unpopular viewpoints. We are concerned, for instance, that laws restricting hate speech may be hijacked and used by governments as a guise for silencing opposition voices.

In addition, there is social value in allowing those holding intolerant views to express their opinions and ideas freely. While it is certainly possible to punish those engaging in bias-motivated expression, such measures only address particular manifestations of prejudice; they obviously do not eliminate the prejudice itself. And so long as individuals hold biased or prejudiced views, it is in society's interest to know that fact so that we may confront those embracing intolerance by addressing their falsehoods directly.

Our experience in the United States demonstrates that respecting the freedoms of speech and expression, on the one hand, and combating prejudice, on the other hand, are not mutually conflicting goals; indeed, we believe they go hand in hand. The United States today is a much more tolerant society than it was 50 years ago. Significantly, this progress has occurred during a period when freedom of expression was steadily broadened. Indeed, some of the most significant U.S. Supreme Court decisions of this era that aimed to expand freedom of speech worked to the advantage of those in the civil rights movement who were struggling to bring about racial equality.

These are the reasons why the United States believes that government efforts to regulate bias-motivated speech on the Internet are fundamentally mistaken. We also believe, however, that there are areas where participating States and NGOs should take action to combat racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism on the Internet.

◆ Firstly, in their efforts to combat cyberhate, participating States and NGOs should focus on children, both by developing educational programmes and by encouraging parents to exercise greater supervision and control over their children's use of the Internet — through the use of filters, for example.

◆ Secondly, more study is needed of the nature of the relationship, if there is one, between hate speech on the Internet and bias-motivated crime.

◆ Third, we must recognize the important role that should be played by NGOs and industry groups. Private organizations perform a valuable service by monitoring racist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic expression on the Internet, and these groups should share information regularly. In particular, NGOs are very effective at alerting Internet service providers to hate speech, which often violates "Terms of Service" clauses that prohibit intolerant material.

◆ And finally, the United States agrees that governments themselves must take certain steps to address this problem. Participating States, for example, should investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute threats of violence transmitted over the Internet. Likewise, participating States should train investigators and prosecutors on how to address bias-motivated crimes on the Internet, given the complexities of these prosecutions.

At the conclusion of the meeting in Paris, the United States delegation offered a ten-point action plan containing specific recommendations for making progress in each of these four areas. We hope that the plan can serve as a basis for immediate action in the fight against racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

While participating States may differ on the question of whether or not hate speech should be regulated, we believe that there are broad areas of consensus where they can work together in the coming months to combat intolerance on the Internet.

Daniel J. Bryant, Assistant Attorney General for Legal Policy in the U.S. Department of Justice, is responsible for planning, developing and coordinating the implementation of major legal policy initiatives. Previous functions include Counselor and Senior Adviser to the Attorney General; Assistant Attorney General for Legislative Affairs; and Majority Chief Counsel of the House Judiciary Committee's Crime Subcommittee.





What the media said

Most news reports and commentary on the OSCE meeting in Paris played up the contrasting traditions of free speech in the United States and Europe's more hands-on approach in combating hate speech on the Internet. Excerpts from a small selection of articles follow.

U.S-French gap narrows over fighting Web hate

A trans-Atlantic gap over fighting Internet hate crime is narrowing as the United States and France put aside differences to seek a common strategy against Web sites spreading racism and anti-Semitism, experts said.

One French delegate said approvingly that Washington and Paris were now holding "a sustained dialogue" on the issues. "They thought countries would come here to criticize U.S. laws," he said on condition of anonymity. "But we're not trying to change the First Amendment. There is no hidden agenda."

"The Atlantic divide is bridgeable," said Brian Marcus, head of the Anti-Defamation League's Internet monitoring project.

Reuters, 17 June

International conference targets Internet hate speech

Purveyors of hate have found a potent tool in the Internet, spreading fear with such grisly images as the beheading of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl in 2002. The new technology has proven to be a boon for hatreds of old, many experts say. But differing views about the limits of free speech and the ease of public access to the nebulous, anonymous Web largely stymied officials hoping to find common ground in Wednesday's talks. The dilemma is all the more acute because the Internet is global, easy to use and tough to regulate — as shown by widespread sharing of music online, an illegal practice that has confounded record companies. Terror groups have also used the Internet to plot attacks. There are no easy solutions, delegates said. Many urged more youth education, better co-operation between governments and Internet service providers, or new studies on links between Web racism and hate crimes.

CNN/AP, 17 June

Racism on Internet: OSCE puts onus on NGOs and Web providers

Divided on the need for new legislation to fight racism on the Internet, the OSCE countries have given the responsibility of cleaning up the "Net" to Web users, NGOs and the Internet industry. At the end of a two-day conference, the OSCE published general "conclusions", but no concrete measures.

The OSCE calls especially for the strengthening of educational measures and for promoting co-operation among the actors, in particular NGOs and associations that are engaged in the fight against fascist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic propaganda on the Internet.

The two days were marked by constant disagreement between the United States, who — in the name of freedom of expression — is opposed to any regulation, and European countries, who are in favour of a policy of controls and sanctions.

Libération/AFP, 17 June

Brussels Declaration: "Acts of intolerance pose threat to values of civilization"

"We now have a clear route mapped out. Action is called for and the OSCE is determined to provide a strong lead," OSCE Chairman-in Office Solomon Passy announced at the end of an OSCE conference in Brussels, on 14 September. The event was the third in a series held this year to promote tolerance. It brought together more than 700 government representatives and leaders of civil society.

By adopting the "Brussels Declaration", participants

recognized that acts of intolerance pose a threat to democracy, the values of civilization, and, therefore, to overall security in the OSCE region. Specifically, participating States:

- ◆ condemn without reserve all forms of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism and other acts of intolerance and discrimination, including against Muslims;
- ◆ condemn organizations and individuals promoting hatred

or acts of racism, xenophobia, discrimination, or related intolerance, including against Muslims, and anti-Semitism;

- ◆ urge OSCE participating States to adopt effective measures to combat acts motivated by intolerance and to speak out publicly against such acts;
- ◆ examine the need for a structural follow up within the OSCE to ensure implementation of the commitments on tolerance and non-discrimination;

- ◆ reject firmly the identification of terrorism and extremism with any religion, culture, ethnic group, nationality or race; and
- ◆ declare unambiguously that international developments or political issues never justify racism, xenophobia or discrimination.

The official document is on: www.osce.org/events/conferences/tolerance2004.



This fight is not virtual any more

Michael Wine, director of the Community Security Trust, which seeks to protect British Jews, said: "We know there has been an explosion of the number of sites encouraging hatred and racism on the Internet, and at the same time, we are witnessing an alarming increase of tensions between religious and ethnic communities." Wine said riots across several cities in northern Britain in 2002 followed racist calls over the Internet by far-right groups.

The Paris conference, called to discuss a code for Internet providers to weed out racist messages, revealed the extent of hatred on the Web. Up to 60,000 racist sites function across the world, according to Marc Knobel, founder of *J'accuse* ("I accuse"), a French association against racism on the Internet. [French Foreign Minister Michel] Barnier said that "between 2000 and 2004, the number of racist sites grew 300 per cent".

Inter Press Service, 17 June

Hate online, role of industry debated

[Senior analyst Mukul] Krishna argued that the Internet and its users would be better served by improvements in the way Internet service providers (ISPs) and others handle complaints about racist or other offensive materials and help law enforcement to keep tabs on hate groups.

"It makes more sense being able to leave them out so law enforcement can keep tabs on them," Krishna said. "Shutting sites down and canceling accounts doesn't do anything. If law enforcement can have certain deals with ISPs before shutting down sites, they can track them. I always feel that monitoring what may be deemed illegal and being able to check them is better."

TechNewsWorld, 17 June

OSCE meets in Paris to tackle online racism

"The problem is clearly there and it faces the whole world," said the U.S. Ambassador to the 55-member OSCE, Stephan M. Minikes, who agreed that there was a lack of consensus on the issue. "The private sector are certainly smart enough in dealing with non-governmental organizations and others to decide on their own," he argued.

The Vienna-based OSCE is currently studying answers to a questionnaire sent to participating States concerning national legislation on racism and the Internet.

AFP, 15 June

Disagreement on racism on the Internet between France and U.S.

For now, there is no immediate prospect of an agreement among the countries that are taking part in a meeting in France on how to fight cyber-racism. The disagreement is particularly evident between France and the United States. It is not the first time sparks are flying as a result of conflicting opinions between the U.S. and France over the regulation of the Internet.

Politiken (Denmark), 17 June

"Respect" was a common thread running through the keynote addresses of Prince Philippe of Belgium and Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan at the conference in Brussels:

We are fortunate to live in a country where respect for the other is becoming a culture — a country which is, in essence, multicultural, where we are constantly searching for an equilibrium and for harmony between the various cultures, languages and opinions of our citizens. In searching for this equilibrium, this harmony, we breed pure respect for the other.

This is what I hope my country can bring to this conference: not only that we continue to denounce all acts of intolerance and racism, but that we commit ourselves to an attitude of active respect for the dignity of the other.

Prince Philippe of Belgium



With all due respect to all this talk of tolerance, Mr. Chairman, may I say I prefer the word "respect". I do not want to tolerate you and you do not want to tolerate me. But I think if we can learn to respect each other's traditions, particularly at this point in world history when it seems to me it is being determined by exceptions rather than the rules. We need to develop a continuum of commitment to respect for the other.

The three traditional baskets for discussion — economics, politics and security — which can be traced from Helsinki through to Barcelona have had humanity and culture as an after-thought. How long will culture remain an after-thought? A fourth basket, culture, should be added if we are to make a real change in the human, as well as our physical environment.

Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan



CONFLICT PREVENTION

Northern Tajikistan: Religious and secular interests meet halfway

Sughd shows the way to compromise

Tajikistan is often showcased as the only country in Central Asia that has accommodated the participation of an Islamic-based party in its political life. This has its roots in the complex negotiations leading up to the signing of a peace agreement in 1997, ending the civil war that erupted in 1992.

In practice, however, the relationship between the country's secular and religious sectors has been an uneasy one. The Tajik authorities' stepped-up efforts to monitor religious organizations after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States have only served to fuel mutual wariness.

Under a small, pioneering project funded by Switzerland and Germany, the OSCE's Khujand Field Office joined hands with the local Centre for Civil Society to build trust and mutual confidence between religious and secular authorities in the northern part of the country.

BY HENK HULSHOF

Independence in Central Asia ushered in a period of religious revival, and Tajikistan was no exception. In Sughd, the northern province, unregistered mosques and *madrasas* (Koran academies) mushroomed from some 200 in 1980 to about 715 in 2002.

Tensions between secular authorities and religious organizations arose in 2002 following a presidential speech that criticized the proliferation of mosques and poorly educated religious leaders. In Sughd, said to contain several pockets of strong support for extremist Islamic organizations, local authorities banned *imams* (prayer leaders of a mosque) and *imam-khatibs* (orators of Friday prayers) from carrying out their functions if they failed state-organized examinations. Several mosques had to close down.

To an impartial observer, the ensuing outcry from the Islamic community was not entirely unjustified. Local government officials were often perceived as ill-informed about the laws governing relations between the authorities and religious organizations. The same, however, could be said for religious leaders.

To try to fill the information gap and ease mounting tensions, the OSCE's Khujand Field Office and the Centre for Civil Society, a local non-governmental organization, drew up a plan to bring both sides together and provide them with more than cursory knowledge of Tajik legislation and international norms concerning freedom of religion or belief.

Over more than a year, from March 2003 to May 2004, the Centre for Civil Society conducted 23 four-day training seminars on law and religion for some 550 representatives of local government, religious bodies and political parties in 18 districts in Sughd. In addition, five seminars were held in *madrasas*. To avoid the impression that outsiders were attempting to influence the way Islam was

Young Muslims at a mosque in Isfara, northern Tajikistan
Photo: OSCE/Peter Wohlsen

practised, the project called on leading legal and Islamic experts from Tajikistan to draw up the seminar contents and conduct the sessions.

BREAKING THE ICE

The experts ensured that the stipulations selected from domestic legislation, global covenants ratified by Tajikistan, and *Sharia* law left little room for misinterpretation and were as relevant as possible to the local situation. Simulation of real-life dilemmas challenged participants to clearly identify violations of the law and ways of seeking legal redress.

Predictably, the sessions often started in a chilly atmosphere, amidst a sea of counter-accusations. The ability of the three experts and three trainers to break the ice and put everyone at ease was crucial, as they patiently sought to explain common misinterpretations of the law, coaxed compromises out of the two sides and persuaded them to collaborate more closely.

“It was the first time local clerics and local authorities had ever sat around the table discussing such sensitive issues as registration of mosques and Koran academies, religious education and Islamic rituals,” said Munira Asrorova, who is on the Committee of Religious Affairs in the remote northern district of Penjikent.

“You could feel the relationship between the two sides becoming more open, as the clerics grasped the importance of civic law and secular authorities came to grips with the concept of freedom of belief and other complex issues related to worship. I think this was a great achievement.”

Defying the sceptics, the dynamic exchange of views led to surprisingly simple on-the-spot solutions to some tough issues. The discussions revealed that ignorance of the legal framework was just one aspect of the problem; confusion also reigned in the interpretation of the laws, reflecting the existence of ambiguities, deficiencies and contradictions.

GREATER LEEWAY

A commonly held perception, for example, was that small study groups on Islam were allowed by official authorities only at Friday mosques, severely limiting learning opportunities in villages that did not have one.

The seminars’ legal expert, however, assured participants that there was no reason why this educational activity could not take place in five-times-a-day-prayer mosques too, provided it was scheduled in the mosque’s charts. It had emerged that

the official charts — supplied to mosques by local authorities — often did not carry provisions for study groups.

The practical compromise: Religious and local officials agreed that upon re-registration of the mosques, the charts would be amended to give greater leeway for scheduling study groups.

Another source of friction was removed when there was a meeting of minds on the issue of radical Islam. Both sides unequivocally stated that providing the public with better access to Islamic knowledge through the study groups would go a long way towards discouraging young people from joining *Hizb ut-Tahrir* and other radical Islamic organizations.

The use of loudspeakers in central mosques, another bone of contention, was settled once it was clarified that current legislation did not prohibit their use. In a decision that served as a precedent, authorities agreed to lift the ban that had been imposed in Penjikent, paving the way for the resolution of similar disputes in other districts.

The spirit of compromise and conciliation was also much in evidence at the project’s concluding roundtable held in Khujand in May.

A civil servant from the small town of Taboshar was bemoaning the fact that the required minimum of 15,000 participants for a Friday mosque to be opened was impossible to meet in the country’s remote mountainous towns and villages. The response of the Head of the State Committee on Religious Affairs was swift. He gave his personal word that Taboshar would soon have its own Friday mosque.

The Law on Religion and Religious Organizations (1990, with amendments in 1994 and 1997) and the Constitution are the main documents governing religion in Tajikistan. In addition, some laws indirectly affect the religious sector, such as the Tax Law, the Civic Code and the Law on Civil Organizations.

Boy studying the Koran in Isfara, northern Tajikistan



This emboldened participants to call for an amendment to the law to take into account the special circumstances in isolated, sparsely populated areas.

Not surprisingly, not every single contentious issue between authorities and clergy could be solved. For one, the question of Islamic clergy's membership in political parties, although not ruled out by law, is still highly charged.

The registration of religious organizations is another long-standing disputed matter. Many believe that the instructions by the State Committee on Religious Affairs, which require up to 15 documents for registration, blur registration procedures even more and contradict the current Law on Religion and Religious Organizations under which only three documents are needed. OSCE standards, in fact, oblige participating States to grant legal status to religious organizations that operate within the framework of national laws.

The concluding roundtable produced an impressive list of recommendations which were presented to local government authorities, religious organizations, political parties and the international community.

REGULAR PLATFORM

To ensure that follow-up work rests not only on the shoulders of government officials, each district in Sughd, with Swiss support, will create a regular "platform"—a forum for dialogue—to maintain the momentum for conciliatory dialogue between religious and official structures.

Abdukhakim Sharipov, head of Khujand's Ideology Department, says that the project's added benefit of fostering regular contact between local religious and secular interests has already started bearing fruit.

Describing some of the many lingering problems that are finally being solved, a participant in the regular discussions in the district of Jabor Rasulov said: "We finally received the certificate for the land on which we will build our Friday mosque and the five-time-prayer mosques. We are also conducting law classes for our *imams* who missed the opportunity to take part in the 23 seminars. Local authorities have been helping us prepare and broadcast a daily ten-minute educational television spot on Islam."

The seminars also sparked the idea of a civic education summer camp for students



OSCE/LUBOMIR KOTEK

from *madrasas*, which was organized by the rector of Khujand's *madrasa* and a local NGO in August.

When the time comes for the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe to expand the seminars on law and religion to the south, as it is poised to do, Sughd's clerics, local authorities and residents will rightly claim credit for having blazed the trail.


Khujand mosque

Henk Hulshof from the Netherlands has been serving as Head of the Khujand Field Office since August 2003. Located in the capital of Sughd, the Office is one of five scattered across Tajikistan, under the wing of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe. The Khujand staff comprises three field assistants and seven support staff. Inaugurated in early 2000, the Office has enabled the OSCE to maintain an important presence in the Ferghana Valley, a densely populated area shared by Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.



OSCE/KHJAND FIELD OFFICE

Field Officer Henk Hulshof (top row, left) with the staff of the Khujand Field Office: Alexander Rakhmonov, Senior Field Assistant, human rights and political affairs; Takhmina Rakhmatova, Secretary; Munisa Vahobova, Field Assistant, media and gender affairs; and Natalya Vershinina, Senior Field Assistant, economic and ecological issues



COUNTERING EXTREMISM

Central Asia: Opening the window to greater freedom of belief

Author and independent specialist in Central Asian affairs, Martha Brill Olcott, says expanding political space is one of the most effective means of isolating radical extremist groups. The following are excerpts from her talk to the first in a series of OSCE meetings on combating extremism in Central Asia.

BY MARTHA BRILL OLCOTT

In the past few years, we have had to take a good, hard look at the risks and threats posed to our societies by extremism, and have gained a new appreciation of the complexity of the task of combating it. I believe this has made us more sensitive to the challenge of defining threats and identifying potential perpetrators while preserving the sanctity of the law. And it has made us more aware than ever that protecting individual rights is not a simple task; no country has been able to do it in a fashion that has not occasioned criticism

This underlines the importance of looking at this dilemma in a collective fashion — by exploring common problems and possible common solutions rather than by having one nation or a group of nations lecturing another.

My current research is on the evolution of Islamic groups in Uzbekistan and the tension within the community of believers — between those who advocate peaceful means of spreading Islam and those

who advocate the use of force to create an Islamic state. As my work progresses, I am gaining a better understanding of the nuances of the situation and am becoming increasingly convinced that the issue should be addressed from a regional perspective.

Internationally, there has been a tendency to lump together different types of extremist threats. This has been especially true in Central Asia. By doing so, governments in the region risk eroding their credibility and moral authority in claiming the right of the State to assert primacy over the rights of the individual.

In most parts of the world, the public has proved to be a better regulator of extremist behaviour than the State, and there is no reason to believe that this should not be the case in Central Asia. More often than not, it is individuals who appeal to the State to mediate their grievances.

Clearly, then, the focus should be on the legal elaboration of personal protections (and the setting up of effective mechanisms for their successful implementation), rather than on the legal elaboration of what constitutes extremist behaviour. This is especially true in the management of non-traditional religious groups.

As for human rights advocates, they are also not without shortcomings. I am referring to the community broadly and not crit-

The Kalyan Mosque in Bukhara, Uzbekistan, dates back to the fifteenth century.
Photo: OSCE/Alexander Nitzsche



Kazakhstan's rich religious and cultural heritage as seen through the camera lens of photographer Lubomir Kotek

icizing any specific group. Too often, they give identical treatment to those arrested on charges that seem to have been politically motivated and those accused of acts that are clearly criminal in most developed democracies.

Some of the groups seem to pin their hopes solely on an expression of political will and co-operation on the part of judicial and penal authorities to end the abuses. They demonstrate little interest in the complexity and cost of engaging in effective legal reforms, expecting the State to be capable of financing and pursuing these reforms.

Although I am an "outsider" to the region, I do feel able, after a lifetime of studying Kazakhstan and Central Asia, to offer some specific proposals on how governments should approach the challenge posed by extremist groups.

SELF-REGULATION

Central Asia's religious communities should be permitted to be self-regulating and self-governing. In return, they should be required to finance their activities through internal tithing to lessen their dependency on foreign funding.

Religious communities should be allowed to choose their own leaders, determine their own dogmas and doctrines, and run their own schools and advanced educational academies. This is particularly relevant to the Islamic community, which currently falls under the close supervision of the State Committee on Religion. In each of the five Central Asian countries, it is this Committee that chooses the *Mufti* — the head of the Islamic community — and that licenses and controls the curriculum of the country's *madrasas* (religious schools).

The region's governments justify much of this control in the name of advancing the cause of moderate Islam. But moderate Islam cannot be spread and regulated by secular figures. Any Central Asian state that loses the support of its clerics is in deep trouble, as its legitimacy is threatened.

Fortunately, Central Asia's Islamic community is still largely dominated by moderate elements which oppose the approach taken by radical and extreme Muslim groups and often seek to adjust some practices in keeping with secular societies. These moderate Muslims are likely to be far more successful in the struggle against religious extremism than the secular state can ever be, since they are in a position to introduce discipline within the community of believers even during periods of economic hardship.

ISOLATING RADICAL GROUPS

If governments introduce greater religious freedom by granting devout communities the right to self-regulation, they will find themselves in a much stronger position to defend and prosecute groups seeking to use force to destabilize the State. This would also help isolate radical groups such as *Hizb ut-Tahrir*.

PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

Focusing on the development and enforcement of laws that protect the human and civil rights of individuals is more important than drawing up laws on extremism; there would be no need for the latter if the former existed.

What about the need to protect the citizens of these countries from the influence of propagators of non-traditional faiths? This particular aspect is not easy for those outside the territory of the former Soviet Union to understand.

In the first years of independence, it was frequently argued that because of the years of religious repression, the faiths that had existed for centuries in the region (Islam, Russian Orthodoxy, Judaism and Buddhism — and to this list, Kazakhstan added Catholicism) required special conditions to bring about their renaissance.

According to this line of thinking, these religions should not be expected to compete on equal terms with “foreign” or “non-traditional faiths” — usually referring to Christian fundamentalist groups that have been proselytizing in the newly independent states and spending extremely large sums of money in the process.

Nearly 15 years later, however, I believe the formerly persecuted traditional faiths no longer need any special protection. Instead of seeking to restrict the formation of non-traditional faiths, sects and cults, the State should concentrate on prosecuting the excesses of individual members. The distribution of hate literature and the forced conversion of children and spouses are some examples of practices that compromise the civil rights of non-members.

EXPANDING POLITICAL SPACE

In Kazakhstan and even more so in the rest of the region, there is a great deal of controversy surrounding restrictions on the registration of informal and non-governmental groups as well as those that are considered radical and non-traditional. In most states, the right of informal groups of individuals — that is, unregistered groups — to organize public events or hold bank accounts is restricted.

This issue would be obviated, however, if political space were expanded by liberalizing current regulations that limit the right

of citizens to hold public gatherings and to rent public halls.

PURSuing JUDICIAL AND PENAL REFORMS

The definition of “extremism” will always remain controversial. Some definitions could lead to the arrest of innocent people and other citizens who may well be in violation of current law but are merely espousing values and expressing their conscience without any overt intention to harm others.

I believe that undertaking comprehensive reform of the judicial and penal systems is the most important step that can be taken by Central Asian states towards protecting human rights at a time of heightened fears about risks posed by extremist groups. In doing so, the region will be helping to ensure that the accused are treated fairly — that their arrest, trial and possible incarceration are conducted within the rule of law and without the use of torture or other forms of cruel or unusual punishment.

Martha Brill Olcott is Senior Associate in the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C., and Co-Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center Project on Ethnicity and Politics. Soon after the events of 11 September 2001, *The Washingtonian Magazine* included her in a list of “71 people the President should listen to” in the fight against terrorism. She is the author of *Kazakhstan Unfulfilled Promise* (Carnegie Endowment, 2002), *The Kazakhs* (Hoover Institution Press, 1995) and a forthcoming book, *Central Asia’s Second Chance*.

Martha Brill Olcott takes questions from the media after her talk.



OSCE CENTRE IN ALMATY/ALDAR BOSTAGAROV

Almaty hosts first OSCE/ODIHR roundtable on combating extremism

“We need look no further than the recent past for a vivid illustration of how destructive and divisive extremist doctrines are, and of their inevitable and often tragic results,” said Ambassador Ivar Vikki, Head of the OSCE Centre in Almaty, at the first in a series of roundtables on combating extremism in Central Asia.

The ground-breaking event, held on 1 and 2 July, was hosted by Kazakhstan and was organized by the OSCE Centre and the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

Kazakhstan officials and representatives of think-tanks, non-governmental organizations and the international community

discussed the multiple factors contributing to the growth of extremism in the region, including social, economic and political exclusion, human rights violations and the suppression of religious freedom.

Several participants called attention to the fact that some OSCE participating States, in their efforts to stamp out extremism, had established legislation that infringed on freedom of expression and assembly, and on the right to a fair hearing and judicial review.

Kazakhstan’s draft law on extremism was presented by a senior judiciary official, followed by a discussion on its strengths and shortcomings. The preliminary com-

ments of the ODIHR were well received by the Government and could lead to ODIHR’s involvement in the drafting process.

A representative of the Venice Commission, the Council of Europe’s advisory body on constitutional matters, was on hand to explain European standards concerning the prohibition and dissolution of political parties.

The next roundtable in the series will be held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in November. The topic of terrorism and extremism is under consideration as a subject for an OSCE-wide conference in 2005.

Alcee L. Hastings is elected President of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

U.S. Congressman Alcee L. Hastings was elected **President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly** (OSCE PA) at its Thirteenth Annual Session, which took place in Edinburgh, Scotland, from 5 to 9 July. He succeeds British parliamentarian Bruce George, who served as President for two terms, from July 2002 to July 2004.

Alcee L. Hastings has been a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives since 1992, representing his native state of Florida. His last re-election was in 2002.

He has served as OSCE PA Vice-President, Chair and Vice-Chair of the First General Committee, as well as Committee Rapporteur for two terms.

"I am overwhelmed by the support and confidence entrusted to me by parliamentarians from 55 European and North American countries," said Congressman Hastings. "There is no doubt that the trans-Atlantic relationship will improve during my tenure."

He is a member of the House Rules Committee, and a senior member of the Select Committee on Intelligence. He also serves as one of four House Democrats on the U.S. Helsinki Commission. He is Vice-Chairman of the Democratic Select Committee on Election Reform and is

Vice-Chairman of the Florida Delegation.

As an attorney, judge and civil rights activist, he has championed the rights of minorities, women, the elderly, children and immigrants.

A graduate of Fisk University, Congressman Hastings earned his law degree at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee. Appointed by President Jimmy Carter in 1979, he became the first African-American



Federal Judge in Florida, serving in that position for ten years.

"When the OSCE PA meets next year in Washington, D.C., I hope my European colleagues will look back to an exceptionally productive year under my presidency," he said. "I look forward to tackling the many challenges ahead."



The Congressional office of PA President Alcee L. Hastings in Washington, D.C., was the setting for discussions between the U.S. Representative and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy, on 21 July.

The two leaders reviewed co-operation between the governmental and parliamentary branches of the OSCE and pledged their full support to ongoing efforts to reform the Organization. They also discussed the decisions taken at the Parliamentary Assembly's Annual Session, which focused on the theme, "Co-operation and Partnership: Coping with New Security Threats".

Minister Passy had called on some 300 parliamentarians at the annual gathering to help bring the Organization closer to their constituencies. "You play a vital role in generating fresh initiatives and influencing decision-makers to use the OSCE in tackling contemporary challenges," he said.



OSCE OFFICE IN BAKU

Maurizio Pavesi, a career diplomat from Italy, took up his post as **Head of the OSCE Office in Baku** on 12 July, succeeding Peter Burkhard from Switzerland.

"I am firmly committed to assisting the Republic of Azerbaijan in any way I can to advance its economic and democratic reforms," Ambassador Pavesi said. "I believe that a more dynamic economic climate, increased respect for

human rights and the rule of law, and greater religious and media freedom will help bring about long-term political stability in the country."

Prior to his OSCE appointment, Ambassador Pavesi handled Stability Pact matters in the Italian Foreign Ministry, working closely with the Director General for European Affairs. From 1999 to 2002, he served as First Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations in New York.

After starting his diplomatic career in 1978, he held postings in Moscow, Warsaw, Aden and Riyadh.

Born in Arezzo, Ambassador Pavesi is a Political Science graduate of the University of Florence.

Pavel Vaček, a Czech diplomat, has succeeded Osmo Lipponen of Finland as **Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania**, starting 1 October.

Ambassador Vaček spent a great part of his career working on multilateral affairs. His most recent post, which he held until July 2004, was Head of the Czech Republic's Permanent Mission to the United Nations and to the OSCE in Vienna. During this period, he chaired several U.N. and OSCE bodies, including the OSCE's Forum for Security Co-operation.

He has served as Director-General for Multilateral Affairs and Director for Security Policy in the Czech Foreign Ministry. In the 1990s, he was assigned in Brussels as Deputy Head of the Czech Mission to NATO and the Western European



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Union (WEU) and Deputy Head of his country's delegation to the talks on the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.

"I would like to put my diplomatic experience at the service of Albania," Ambassador Vaček said. "I strongly believe that to succeed, an OSCE mission's work must be driven by the shared commitments and collective political will of our participating States as well as by the needs and interests of the host country."



OSCE NERMIN PODZIC

Douglas Davidson was appointed **Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina** in June 2004, succeeding Robert M. Beecroft of the United States.

A career diplomat, Ambassador Davidson has had extensive experience in the Balkans as well as in the OSCE. Most recently, he was the United States' Deputy Representative to the OSCE in Vienna, a post he assumed in 2001.

In 1998, he served at the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade, where he also supervised the only diplomatic presence in Kosovo at that time. The following year, he was appointed the first Director of the Department of Media Affairs in the newly established OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

From 1995 to 1998, he was assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb, with a brief stint in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1996 as Spokesperson for the U.S. Presidential Observer Mission to the country's first elections, which were run by the OSCE.

"I have always looked forward to working in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the Mission enjoys a good reputation among the citizenry," Ambassador Davidson said. "Having begun my assignment by travelling to our field offices, I can concur with the High Representative's opinion that the OSCE's effectiveness and added value lie in its strong field presence and in its high-calibre staff, most of whom are citizens of this country."