

State, Criminality and Security in Central Asia: What Do Eurasian Regional Organizations Contribute to Security and Peace?

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1 * Anna Kreikemeyer has conducted research on conflicts and on foreign and security policies in the post-Soviet space, especially in Central Asia.

Abstract

How do the CSTO, SCO, EU and OSCE contribute to stability and peace in Central Asia? Power in the Central Asian states is patrimonial in nature. This leads to corruption and interlinkages can be identified between the state and various conflict factors, including the drug trade, ethnic conflicts, and Islamist extremism. The corrupt regimes seek above all to maintain their power and control of resources. This makes life hard for international organizations, whose contributions to security and peace are examined in turn.

Keywords

Central Asian States of the former Soviet Union; patrimonialism; domestic security; capability of institutions/organizations; Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO); Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO); peacekeeping through security policy; regional foreign policies of individual states

In June 2010, southern Kyrgyzstan was shaken by violent ethnic clashes that neither national nor international security policies were able to address effectively. Rather, these clashes revealed the many dangers to security that exist in the bureaucratic-authoritarian states around Central Asia's Fergana Valley, whose domestic peace is put to the test by every change of president, and whose ruling elites are not averse to using repressive means to keep hold of power. Corruption, criminality and drug trafficking can intensify socio-economic crises, ethno-political conflicts, Islamist extremism and uncontrolled migration. The risk of violence is all the greater given the absence of security policies that are capable of dealing with conflicts and potential dangers, which allows the growth of security vacuums.

This raises the following questions: What do two Eurasian regional organizations – the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) – actually contribute to peace in Central Asia? And: How does this affect the role in security policy of other organizations that are active in the region, such as the OSCE and the EU?

This area is under-researched. Regional Studies in the post-Soviet area has little interest in security policy, and International Relations tends to either pay little attention to the organizations with little influence in the international community, or to treat them from a post-Cold War perspective. At the same time, there is a shortage of empirically grounded analyses by regional experts. A new perspective has arisen as a result of recent theory-driven research into the interconnections between the power retention strategies used by Eurasian neopatrimonial elites and their specific foreign and security policies. Taking account of the findings of such research, the chapter at hand juxtaposes the security dangers that arise in the Fergana Valley as a result of state-crime nexus² with the security policies of the Eurasian regional organizations CSTO and SCO, and examines the hypothesis that these organizations will continue to have very limited effectiveness as long as the leaders of their member states pursue power retention strategies that are based on clientelism, corruption and criminality. At the same time, I consider what effects the security policies of the Eurasian regional organizations have on the role of the OSCE and the EU in the region.

The Neopatrimonial State as a Source of Insecurity

In the neopatrimonial states of Russia and Central Asia, society and state are structured on the basis of networks of personal loyalties and informal networks with tribal, regional and/or clan roots. These may be local, national, regional or transnational in reach. Power is, to a large extent, rooted in the ability of political

2 Cf. Svante Cornell, The Narcotics Threat in Greater Central Asia: From Crime-Terror Nexus to State Infiltration, in: China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly 1/2006, pp. 37-67.

leaderships to generate resources and use them to gain the support of competing interest groups. Economic and political power are therefore closely intertwined. Leaders (“big men”) primarily seek to retain power via a high degree of centralization and personalization as well as by controlling access to and the distribution of resources. State institutions, which, for all their variety, tend to be organized in pyramidal structures, are dominated by a mixture of patrimonial and bureaucratic patterns of thinking and acting that demonstrate a clear continuity with the Soviet regime.

In such states, the primacy of the informal over the formal is considered a given. Patron-client relations and custom count for more than the rule of law. The parties involved know how to deal with the “law of reciprocity” in patronage relations, and the nepotism, corruption and criminality that are accepted as part of the habitus of a clientelistic system. When nepotism is combined with corruption and organized criminality in the agencies of the state, it creates a vicious circle in which state structures are infiltrated by organized crime, criminality is abetted and state sovereignty is ultimately used for criminal purposes (from the “state-crime nexus” to “state capture”). The security sector, which primarily serves to maintain the security of the elite, i.e. their hold on power, is particularly affected by this. The elites exploit state structures or undermine them by means of “privatized” parallel structures that lack transparency (presidential apparatus and presidential guard, special forces). Furthermore, they have little interest in ensuring that the state security sector is adequately funded. The payment, training and equipping of agents of public security suffers as a result, and this in turn abets corruption. Thus, security forces are able to act at their own discretion and convenience rather than following the rule of law, it is all too easy to infiltrate drug-control agencies, manipulate threat scenarios, co-opt criminals and undermine the state monopoly on the use of force.³ This kind of illegality and violence can only intensify existing security problems. Two exemplary conflict clusters illustrate this well.

Conflict Cluster 1: Resource Conflicts, State-Crime Nexus and Ethno-Political Discrimination

The clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan are an example of the fatal concurrence of conflicts, the state-crime nexus and ethno-political discrimination. As was already the case in the first coup d'état in Kyrgyzstan in 2005, the violence took place against a backdrop of conflicts over resources and power between traditional rivals – clans from the north and the south.

A state-crime nexus had been established under the control of the southern Bakiev clan, with members of the president's family being granted lucrative key positions in the state and the private sector and becoming dependent on the drug mafia. In the struggle for power, the clan, fearing for their sources of wealth, did not shy away from exploiting latent ethno-political tensions between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in Osh. Since it controlled the National Security Service, the loyalty of local security organs, the provision of arms and the recruitment of mercenaries were easy to organize. Under these conditions, the transitional government, which had been in office since April 2010 and was based in the north, was unable to operate effectively.

Conflict Cluster 2: State-Crime Nexus, Drug Smuggling and Islamist Extremism

In the autumn of 2010, the government of Tajikistan undertook a clandestine military operation in the Rasht Valley against the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which has been linked to drug trafficking. In the course of the operation, a number of IMU fighters under a former field commander were killed, but government forces also lost a disproportionately high number of soldiers. Similar armed clashes between Tajik

3 Cf. Andreas Heinemann-Grüder, Reformen im Sicherheitssektor [Security-Sector Reform], in: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Dossier: Innerstaatliche Konflikte, Bonn 2011, at: <http://www.bpb.de/internationales/weltweit/innerstaatliche-konflikte/54736/reformen-im-sicherheitssektor>.

forces and supposedly criminal and/or extremist groups that the government claims have been expanding their influence continued in 2011 and 2012. These conflicts also display features of a state-crime nexus. Tajikistan is one of the five most corrupt countries in the world; clientelistic dependencies are the norm; the involvement of state agencies in the drug trade is considered endemic; the state monopoly on the use of force has already been significantly eroded; and the state is regarded as failing. President Emomali Rahmon had successfully built up his position to that point by granting key positions to members of his clan and his family, who come from the region of Kulyab. In the run-up to the 2013 presidential elections, government circles have made liberal use of accusations of involvement in drug-related crime and/ or IMU membership to take action against domestic opponents, including former field commanders. Observers have asked whether military operations against alleged threats have been carried out to eliminate long-term opponents.

Characteristics of Foreign and Security Policy in Eurasian States

The leaderships of neopatrimonial states are primarily interested in profits made from control over resources, which they use, among other things, to maintain a balance of power among competing domestic elites. Their dependency on these rents⁴ leads to a foreign policy that is strongly shaped by the need for control, competition and conflict. The following characteristics can be identified:

In order to generate rents, the Central Asian states compete for favourable relations with the dominant regional powers (“bandwagoning for profit”).⁵ The need to control access to national resources inevitably leads to a strict application of the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs, an unwillingness to surrender sovereignty, and a high degree of competition. As a result, various conflict vectors and rivalries can be found in Central Asia at the intraregional level. Mostly due to longstanding personal rivalries between the two presidents, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have tended to compete over regional ascendancy, and relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have been crisis-prone as a result of interethnic conflicts and disputes over water resources that stretch back for years, in which Russia has often played the role of a potential mediator, not, however, without its own interests.⁶

In accord with the primacy of the informal, and to maintain the status quo of maximum control, the Central Asian states frame their foreign and security policies largely in informal ways and mostly on a bilateral basis. While this initially took the form of a reorientation of the energy sector and security policy towards the US and the EU, since 2005, China has been taking centre stage as an attractive partner in the energy and financial sectors. However, neighbouring states Iran and Afghanistan and regional powers India and Turkey are also growing in importance. All these diversification activities raise questions concerning long-established dependencies on Moscow, the extent of national independence and the degree of Russian influence. The Central Asian states have to balance reorientation with these existing dependencies. Thus Kyrgyzstan, a member of the CSTO, has walked a tightrope between Moscow, which maintains an airbase at the Kyrgyz town of Kant, and Washington, which has a military presence at Manas International Airport.

4 Cf. Wojciech Ostrowski, *Rentierism, Dependency and Sovereignty in Central Asia*, in: Sally N. Cummings/Raymond Hinnebusch (eds), *Sovereignty after Empire: Comparing the Middle East and Central Asia*, Edinburgh 2011, pp. 282-303, at: http://www.psa.ac.uk/journals/pdf/5/2011/1024_516.pdf.

5 Cf. Randall Schweller, *Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In*, in: *International Security*, Summer 1994, pp. 72-107, at: <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2539149?uid=3737864&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21101903836993>.

6 Cf. Anna Kreikemeyer/Lena Kulipanova, *Weder globale Konkurrenz noch wirksame Friedenssicherung. Was kann die EU in Zentralasien erreichen?* [Neither Global Competition nor Effective Peacebuilding. What Can the EU Achieve in Central Asia] In: Margret Johannsen/Bruno Schoch/Corinna Hauwedell/Tobias Deibel/Christiane Fröhlich (eds), *Friedensgutachten 2011*, Berlin 2011, pp. 155-167.

The situation is complicated by the increasing movement in the balance of power and in relations between the leading regional powers, Russia and China, on the one hand, and the USA, on the other. These relations are shifting between old bipolarities, an authoritarian consensus, all-round competition, and strategic triangles. While the USA has attempted to adapt its security co-operation with the Central Asian states to its plans for withdrawal from Afghanistan, China has been steadily expanding its influence in the region in the energy, infrastructure and investment sectors. Moscow is trying to shore up its traditional claims to leadership in Central Asia (Customs Union, Eurasian Union) despite its weaknesses in terms of modernization, yet wavers between a hegemonic attitude that creates one-sided dependencies and one of urging Central Asian countries to take responsibility themselves. Russia continues to see a sphere of influence in Central Asia as a precondition for its strategic interaction with the USA and China. Further conflicts and complex multi-layered rivalries are inevitable.

What Do Eurasian Regional Organizations Contribute to Security and Peace?

In light of this strong orientation of foreign and security policy towards the national interest, the easiest way to explain the fact of international cooperation among Eurasian states in regional organizations concerned with security policy is to consider their history. Indeed, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, centrifugal tendencies dominated in relations between the post-Soviet states and Moscow, and a number of integration proposals promoted by Kazakhstan, primarily for domestic political reasons, were ultimately unsuccessful, while the modest level of security co-operation within the OSCE was no real alternative to a regional security policy. Against this background, both the creation of the CSTO on the basis of the CST and the founding of the SCO represent, in the first instance, attempts by regional powers to secure their interests.⁷ Questions of their appropriateness in terms of security policy are secondary.

The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)

This organization, established on the basis of the CIS Collective Security Treaty (CST), which was signed in Tashkent in 1992, and given organizational form in 2002 has not yet demonstrated a high degree of effectiveness in the area of security policy.⁸ Although it has, on Russian urging, worked to develop several models for peacekeeping forces since 2003, these efforts failed, initially as a consequence of the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. This was the argument that prevented the CSTO from intervening to secure the peace in the territory of one of its members when ethnic violence broke out in southern Kyrgyzstan, as had already been the case with regard to armed conflicts in the Fergana Valley (Batken, southern Kyrgyzstan 1999/2000; Andijan massacre, Uzbekistan 2005). Nor have CSTO efforts to combat terrorism and drug trafficking (Antiterrorism Centre in Bishkek, operation “Kanal”) been a resounding success. On the contrary, they have been criticized for taking a one-sided military approach and for a lack of coherence.

In view of the characteristics described above, it is quite obvious that the key normative principles of non-interference in internal affairs and the reluctance to surrender sovereignty place strong limits on effective intervention. Nor do the delicate interplay of Russian “top-down” regional policy and tactical balancing and

7 Mikhail A. Molchanov interprets Eurasian regionalism as a “defensive reaction to globalization”. Mikhail A. Molchanov, Regionalization from Above. Russia’s Asian “vector” and the state-led regionalism in Eurasia, Paper prepared for the conference “International Political Economy and the New Regulations of Globalization”, Poitiers, 14-15 May 2009, at: <http://people.stu.ca/~molchan/Euras-regm-above.pdf>.

8 The members of the CSTO are Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The Charter of the CSTO is available online at: <http://www.dkb.gov.ru/start/index.htm>. Cf. Anna Kreikemeyer, Herrschaft statt Sicherheit, Die Organisation des Vertrags über kollektive Sicherheit [Domination instead of Security. The Collective Security Treaty Organization], in: Osteuropa 5/2012, pp. 81-91.

bandwagoning strategies on the part of the other CSTO members create a properly stable basis for security policy. While Moscow does have an interest in protection against transnational threats, particularly from Afghanistan, it has not pursued a coherent course. In practice, it is content to accept a situation of “controlled instability”.⁹ In acute conflicts, for all its invocations of the principle of non-interference, it nonetheless intervenes in the other CSTO members in pursuit of its own agenda. Moscow makes skilful use of its superior ability to set the agenda and tends to operate on two tracks at once at the bilateral and multilateral levels.¹⁰ Beyond this, it can make use of informal relationships of the CSTO Secretary General and former domestic intelligence service (FSB) agent Nikolai Bordyuzha and the CSTO Interstate Commission for Military and Economic Cooperation to secure contracts for its own arms industry.

In addition, the CSTO has always served Russia’s interest of demonstrating its status as the West’s equal in view of Western European integration, and with regard to NATO in particular. To this end, since the start of US anti-terrorism operations in Afghanistan, Russia has been pushing to enhance the institutional strength of the CSTO, with the aim of turning it into a defensive alliance for the Euro-Asian space. Interestingly, this coincided with the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002. In any case, Russia has been seeking “international recognition of the Russian-led CSTO as a regional security organization, part of a global security system in which Russia would enjoy a sphere of influence and bloc-leader status” ever since the founding of the CSTO.¹¹ Most recently, the Russian leadership made a deliberate attempt to bring the CSTO into play once more in the run-up to the 2012 NATO summit in Chicago. For all its rhetoric of cooperation, Moscow ultimately appeared to want to pass the buck to Washington following the failure of the proposed joint NATO-CSTO initiative to combat drug trafficking at Afghanistan’s Central Asian borders. Nor did the expressed willingness of all parties at the CSTO’s tenth anniversary summit to further develop the alliance to stabilize the Eurasian space do anything to change the coexistence of nice-sounding declaratory statements, de facto Russian unilateralism, and implementation deficits. So far the organization has not been able to get beyond Soviet-type consultation and co-ordination mechanisms, and continues to move between hegemonic and protectionist instrumentalization.¹²

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

The effectiveness of the SCO in the field of security policy is similar to that of the CSTO.¹³ It made no contribution to peacekeeping in either southern Kyrgyzstan or the other violent conflicts in the Fergana Valley. Nor has the organization yet proved capable of dealing with conflicts between Central Asian member states over water management. The main argument that is usually given for this poor record on the part of the SCO is

9 Martina Bielawski/Uwe Halbach, *The Georgian Knot*, SWP Comments 2004/C 28, September 2004, p. 7, at: <http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/comments2004_28_hlb_bielawski_ks.pdf> (download 14.04.13).

10 Russia has entered into partnership agreements with all CSTO states and has established military bases in Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. “The Central Asian states never officially invited the Russian or CSTO military bases. Rather these were deployed after secretive bilateral agreements between the recipient and the provider of the military contingent. Such decisions have never been genuinely multilateral and backed by all CSTO members.” Farkhod Tolipov, *The Metamorphosis of Collective Security in Central Asia: Russia’s New Base in Southern Kyrgyzstan*, in: *Central Asia Caucasus Analyst*, 16 September 2009, at: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5176>.

11 Vladimir Socor, *From CIS to CSTO: Can a “core” be preserved?* In: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 28 June 2005, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=30584&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=176&no_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=30584&tx_ttnews[backPid]=176&no_cache=1).

12 Cf. Anatoliy A. Rozanov/Elena Dovgan, *Collective Security Treaty Organisation 2002-2009*, Geneva 2010, at: <http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Collective-Security-Treaty-Organisation-2002-2009>.

13 The SCO is an intergovernmental, international organization that was founded in Shanghai on 15 June 2001 by Russia, China, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. Cf. at: <http://www.sectsco.org>.

also based on the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. Furthermore the SCO, like the CSTO, stakes a claim to be concerned with combating terrorism and drug trafficking, but the Tashkent-based Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) and the Afghanistan Contact Group have not produced any noteworthy policy proposals. Nor do they have many notable achievements. The highly publicized annual SCO manoeuvres, such as the 2012 navy exercise in the Yellow Sea, are largely symbolic and serve, in particular, to promote Russo-Chinese military contacts.¹⁴

What holds the SCO together is its self-understanding as a “multifunctional regional club”¹⁵ that covers a broad spectrum of soft-power cooperation (education, energy policy, infrastructure, trade, finance) and unites its members in combating the “three evils” (separatism, terrorism, extremism). What the members also have in common is their pursuit of the developmental path of conservative modernization, and they are thereby rejecting Western global governance. Three factors determine SCO policy: China’s proactive regional policy, ambivalent Russo-Chinese relations and the corresponding pursuit of balancing or bandwagoning strategies by the Central Asian states. In the SCO, too, relevant questions of intra-regional co-operation are largely dealt with on a bilateral basis, which is why hegemonic and protective instrumentalization – and the concomitant cleavage between goals and implementation – can also be observed in this organization.

As in the CSTO, bilateralism and intergovernmental co-ordination in the SCO can only complement each other to a limited degree, particularly since Beijing’s relatively pragmatic bilateral co-operation with individual Central Asian states is nourishing their competition with Russia. Given its economic and financial superiority, China has more bilateral options and has already been able to make the Central Asian elites attractive offers in the areas of natural-gas exports and investment in infrastructure. If China’s bilateral security co-operation with its Central Asian neighbours was initially limited to providing military protection for pipelines, in recent years it has increasingly engaged in military activities in all three Fergana-Valley states with an eye to the security situation at the Afghan border, doing so without co-ordinating these activities with its SCO partner Moscow, which has also been strengthening its military and financial engagement in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan once again since 2012. This leads, in the first place, to bandwagoning for profit among SCO members, as they seek to secure pieces of the Chinese investment pie. Russian oligarchs also profit from the purchasing power of Chinese officials in the energy and arms sectors, while the Central Asian ruling elites can strike a balance between the two leading SCO powers and also gain. However, this leaves Russia’s declared goal of security co-operation in the CSTO dead in the water.

While the SCO does not really serve China’s security interests (border protection, containment of separatism in Xinjiang and Tibet and spillover effects from Afghanistan), it fulfils highly visible symbolic functions for Beijing’s international relations, just as the CSTO does for Moscow. In the final document of the Dushanbe SCO summit (2005), at the latest, China, by calling for the withdrawal of US forces from the Central Asian SCO states, demonstrated that it considered the region to be part of its sphere of influence.

The OSCE and the EU in the Eurasian Space

Compared to the CSTO and the SCO, the OSCE’S engagement, particularly its practical engagement, in the Kyrgyzstan crisis was relatively forceful. Under the Chairmanship of Kazakhstan, OSCE crisis management contributed significantly to limiting the violence in the overthrow of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, and the

14 Cf. International Crisis Group, China’s Central Asia Problem, Asia Report, No. 244, 27 February 2013, pp. 20-23. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/north-east-asia/244-chinas-central-asia-problem.pdf>.

15 Molchanov 2009, p. 12.

OSCE organized observation of the subsequent elections. The OSCE Centres established in all five Central Asian states have pursued the Organization's comprehensive security-co-operation approach to varying degrees since 1998. Particularly in the area of transnational security threats (terrorism, trafficking in drugs and human beings, border security, organized criminality, illegal migration), many projects exist that aim to encourage intraregional co-operation. Not least because of energy and security-policy interests, the EU has attempted to support normative security-sector reform in the areas of drug policy and border management since the 1990s (Central Asia Drug Action Programme/CADAP, Border Management Programme in Central Asia/BOMCA), and, since the adoption of its Central Asia Strategy in 2007, has also supported intraregional co-operation in the areas of environmental protection and water management. In the 2010 Kyrgyzstan crisis, the EU was quick to set the usual diplomatic and development-policy wheels in motion, but underlined that the primary responsibility for crisis management lay with the OSCE.¹⁶

Co-operating on security matters with the OSCE and the EU is not particularly attractive for the members of the CSTO and the SCO. Not only do the normative obligations and commitments of the EU and the OSCE conflict with the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, but it is also hard to generate rents from OSCE and EU projects. Even when the leaderships of Eurasian states are eager to host OSCE projects or take part in EU programmes, they display more or less strong resistance to structural change towards democracy and the rule of law and intraregional cooperation. The varying levels of co-operation with the OSCE among the Central Asian states, from the downsized Office of the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, to Kazakhstan's OSCE Chairmanship, can thus be seen as a yardstick for the levels of transformation in the five countries.

Overall, the steady drip of small contributions made by the OSCE and the EU to the stabilization of the Eurasian states have been blessed with little success, and implementation deficits are frequently comparable to those of the CSTO and the SCO. In view of the persistence of patrimonial rule in the Eurasian states, even the EU's ambitious transformation goals remain symbolic, its financial contributions are perceived in the region to be relatively modest, while its mediation role in water management can be considered to have failed. For the OSCE, which faces a wide variety of conditions and levels of willingness affecting co-operation, establishing contacts and facilitating local ownership without giving up its normative commitments is an ongoing task. Opportunities for conflict prevention in the form of operational interventions continue to be rare. The OSCE's efforts to deploy a police advisory group in Osh in 2010 demonstrate precisely the structural limits to the willingness of even a reform-oriented Central Asian country to allow external interference and to make greater use of the OSCE in its own interests – as did earlier police-reform efforts.

Conclusions

Eurasia clearly faces many threats to security that may mutually reinforce each other and are not being adequately addressed by security policy. Instead, the situation is dominated by national unilateralism, bilateralism and multipolar rivalries that potentiate security dangers and allow the emergence of security vacuums.

16 On Kazakhstan's problems in harmonizing its multilateral tasks as OSCE Chair with its role in its neighbourhood, and, above all, its commitments as a CSTO member, cf. Anna Kreikemeyer, Trust in a Traditional, Tolerant and Transparent Multi-level Game? The Kazakhstani OSCE Chairmanship 2010, in: OSCE Academy/Geneva Centre for Security Policy (eds), Security Policy Brief No. 3, Bishkek, 29 November 2010, at: http://osce-academy.net/uploads/docs/Anna_Kreikemeyer.pdf.

Eurasian regional organizations have tended to develop into “vehicle[s] for international politics”,¹⁷ characterized by the maintaining of façades, stonewalling, strategies of refusal, tactical multilevel games and implementation deficits and at best fulfil loose co-ordination and signalling functions. Domestic conditions not only set limits on the effectiveness of security policy, but also ultimately restrict the activities of the OSCE and the EU, forcing these organizations to choose between ineffectiveness and a loss of identity.¹⁸

The OSCE and the EU currently possess neither the political power nor the normative heft to play an influential role in the region. It is therefore in the interest of effective security policy for these organizations to forge close links with the states of the region and with regional organizations and to probe the possibility of antagonistic co-operation in order to work together to contribute to overcoming the security vacuums that exist and thereby to lay constructive foundations for a normative dialogue.


The authoritarian consensus in Eurasia is not going to vanish in the foreseeable future, but is more likely to become stabilized in various forms of conservative modernization. Russia appears most likely to be won over via its interest in maintaining its status in the area of security policy. At the same time the potential for a Eurasian bridging function exists in both traditional Russian Eurasianism and its contemporary Putinist form.

Given the West’s inability to act in the Eurasian space, both the OSCE and the EU could make use of Moscow’s long-term goal of maintaining its status by deepening inter-institutional relations with the CSTO and the SCO. In recognizing the peacekeeping role of the CSTO, and in co-operating with Afghanistan, an OSCE Partner for Co-operation, and China to combat drug trafficking and secure borders, it can contribute to the overcoming of the region’s security vacuums.

As far as the indispensable normative dialogue is concerned, the EU and NATO states could build on experiences of trilateral co-operation with Russia in the preparation of the Framework for Action presented at the OSCE’s 2010 Astana Summit and thereby revive the OSCE’s traditional role as the key forum for dialogue between East and West.

17 Katharina Hoffmann, Legitimacy of Regional Organisations in the Post-Soviet Space, paper given at ECPR General Conference 2011, Reykjavik 2011, p. 18.

18 David Lewis tracks the development of the West’s normative discourse through various stages, arguing that the OSCE might accept the loss of its identity as a price worth paying for maintaining contact with the Central Asian states. Cf. David Lewis, Security Sector Reform in authoritarian regimes: The OSCE experience of police assistance programming in Central Asia, in: Security and Human Rights, 2/2011, at: http://www.shrblog.org/journal/Security_Sector_Reform_in_Authoritarian_Regimes__The_OSCE_experience_of_Police_Assistance_Programming_in_Central_Asia.html?id=99.



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