

Article Summaries

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The OSCE Chairmanship: Captain or Figurehead? Walter Kemp

The author asks whether the annual Chairmanship is the captain or the figurehead of the OSCE ship. It looks at the mandate of the Chairman-in-Office and how this works in practice. The author, who used to be an adviser to OSCE Chairmanships, concludes by making a number of recommendations for a successful Chairmanship.

The Challenges and Opportunities Awaiting Kazakhstan in 2010, Herbert Salber

In November 2007, the OSCE's participating States agreed on future Chairmanships of the Organization through 2011. The 2010 Chairmanship will be held by Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan's Chairmanship is unique as it is the first country from Central Asia, indeed the Commonwealth of Independent States to chair the OSCE. Yet, the challenges the country will face will be the same as for all Chairmanships, namely to seek consensus on the issues of the day in an evolving Eurasian-Atlantic security environment. Kazakhstan will also have the opportunity to draw on its unique experience and perspective while contributing to the political dialogue of the OSCE's participating States. At the same time, the country will have the opportunity to demonstrate its leadership by engaging in domestic reforms.

Observations on Finland and the 2008 OSCE Chairmanship: Intentions, Challenges and Outcomes, Nina Suomalainen

The OSCE rotating Chairmanship in 2008 was held by Finland. The golden years of the OSCE in the 1990s were in early 2000s replaced by strain and difficulties when the Organization could barely agree on each year's budget let alone on major substantive political declarations. The aim of the Finnish Chairmanship was to get back to basics by drawing from the joint value base that brought about ambitious commitments on all three dimensions in 1990s. The three objectives of the Finnish Chairmanship — continuity, coherence and co-operation — besides focusing on dialogue and keeping the Organization operational, also included a hint to those that possibly sought to undermine the commitments. This article will look at the challenges known to the 2008 Chairmanship at the start of the year, and how the Organization responded to them and to the events of the year as they evolved. It also glances at what possible issues arise from the concrete cooperation and coordination within the Organization and between its Institutions.

Kazakhstan's Chairmanship: Challenges and Opportunities from the Moscow perspective, Andrei Zagorski

Russia would hardly expect much value to be added by the Kazakhstan Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010. It would not expect much harm either. This made the overall balance of supporting Nazarbayev's bid positive to Moscow which found it better to honour rather than to deny (or to allow others to deny) it. The Kremlin must have been struck, however, by the manifested readiness of Astana to seek a successful Chairmanship by engaging not only (and not predominantly) with Russia but particularly with the US and the European nations. As a result Astana's approach towards the OSCE sharply contrasted the toughening rhetoric of Russia. However, while having little leverage to either persuade or punish Kazakhstan's policies, the Kremlin has also little choice next year but to avoid spoiling relations with Astana by denying it a successful Chairmanship.

Kazakhstan's Upcoming OSCE Chairmanship: Election Related Issues, Eltje Aderhold

Electoral standards and commitments are at the core of the OSCE Acquis in the human dimension. The most urgent election-related challenge is the implementation of existing standards and commitments. However, instead of identifying and considering pathways towards better implementation of standards and commitments, OSCE participating States over the past years maneuvered into a political deadlock. As OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Kazakhstan should help identify creative ways in which to achieve better implementation of existing standards and commitments. Kazakhstan could also foster consensus on additional electoral commitments, supplementing existing ones.

Human Rights: An International Context and Internal Developments. A View from Kazakhstan — The Future OSCE Chairmanship country (2010), Yevgeniy Zhovtis

This article looks into the situation of human rights activists in Kazakhstan, the challenges they face and the role of international organisations, in particular the OSCE. The article maintains that in the mid-nineties significant change of policy took place and the 'war on terror' put further challenges on human rights defenders and civil societies. In view of the author, the advancement of democracy and human rights in the modern world has had four main adversaries: oil, gas, war on terror and geopolitics. These issues increasingly determine decisions taken at all levels, including those related to the ability of the international community to influence the countries where human rights violations happen frequently. Concerning Central Asia, the governments have ratified a number of international treaties on human rights and have joined the United Nations and the OSCE. However, they have failed to meet the majority of their obligations under the ratified international treaties and faced no major consequences for this failure. Internally there is a host of challenges that civil societies face and the author points to a number of frustrations on their part.

The European Union and Kazakhstan's Chairmanship of the OSCE, Neil J. Melvin

Kazakhstan's OSCE Chairmanship in 2010 represents a considerable opportunity for the Organisation. While Kazakhstan's Chairmanship cannot 'save' the OSCE from its current problems, it could help set a new direction for the Organisation and inject a degree of movement at a time of growing paralysis. This will be a tall order which Kazakhstan alone will be unable to achieve. To make the most of the opportunity presented in 2010, the countries of the European Union need to work closely with Astana to prepare the country for the Chairmanship and also to help to develop ways forward for the organisation. Relations between Astana and Brussels are built on a shared interest in diversifying energy export routes from Kazakhstan, growing business ties, a common caution about the role of Russia in Eurasia and on Kazakhstan's commitment to promoting European forms of development in the country. The EU should place the 2010 Chairmanship within the context of this growing relationship, linking Kazakhstan's domestic and international initiatives of the year to the longer term ambition of the country to build a deeper relationship to Europe as a means to achieve a European form of modernisation.

Respecting Human Rights in Central Asia: Will This Stabilize or Destabilize the Region? Oskar Lehner

All five Central Asian states have signed most of the major UN Human Rights Conventions. However, due to poor implementation the level of fulfillment of Human Rights — although varying from country to country

— is unsatisfying. Poverty, violations of basic economic and social rights, torture, violence against women, lack of freedom of media and freedom of assembly, arbitrary arrests, wide-spread corruption, restrictions regarding freedom of religion, child labor and lack of protection of refugees are the key problems. Poor quality of election, restriction of political and religious freedom, and non-realization of economic and social rights on the long run will contribute to destabilize societies and fuel extremism. Kazakhstan, the first post-Soviet country to take over the OSCE chairmanship in 2010, fails to meet many agreed standards for democratic elections and respect of human rights. It therefore would be over-optimistic to expect that Kazakhstan will become a driving force in promotion and protection of Human Rights. However, the very fact that Central Asia for a certain period will be in the spotlight and that Kazakhstan's domestic human rights policy will be closely monitored and scrutinized provides a window of opportunity to advocate for improved respect of Human Rights in Central Asia.

Criminal Justice Reform in Kazakhstan and OSCE commitments, Daniyar Kanafin

In his article Daniyar Kanafin writes about how Kazakhstan follows one of the key international standards related to fair trial, judicial independence. Based on the analysis of the national legislation, special publications and his own experience, the author tries to identify what causes insufficient judicial independence in Kazakhstan and offers possible solutions for this problem.

Kazakhstan's Chairmanship of the OSCE: Challenges and Opportunities in the Human Dimension, Jeff Goldstein

Kazakhstan's 2010 chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has potentially far reaching consequences for Europe's premier international human rights organization and for democratization and human rights in Kazakhstan and other OSCE participating States. Some have argued that Kazakhstan's chairmanship will help tamp down dissatisfaction among some participating states that the organization devotes too much attention to human rights and democracy in the countries of the CIS and the Balkans. Others worry how a Kazakhstani Chairman would react in case of events such as the violence in Andijon in 2005 or the Russian attack on Georgia in 2008. Another significant question is whether the upcoming chairmanship will spur reform in Kazakhstan. To date, unfortunately, the Government of Kazakhstan has failed to deliver the real reforms promised at the 2007 OSCE Ministerial.

NATO and Central Asia: Security, Interests and Values in a Strategic Region, Alexander Vinnikov

The author provides an analytical overview of NATO's relations with, and policies towards, its Central Asian Partners. Since 11 September 2001, pursuing deeper engagement with Central Asian governments responds to the — at times conflicting — requirements of realpolitik and of advancing core values upon which the Alliance was founded sixty years ago, and which are also enshrined in its Partnership for Peace (PfP). In analysing this tension between pragmatism and idealism, the article focuses on five main aspects. The author concludes that NATO's approach towards Central Asia reflects an ever-present/inherent tension between pursuing security imperatives, underlying interests and core values. The result is a complex and somewhat uneasy policy, which seeks to reconcile these at times contradictory elements. Hence the Alliance has pursued enhanced engagement with Central Asian Partners in the belief that through daily co-operation in key areas of NATO and/or common interest, some core democratic values would eventually be incorporated into Partners' approach towards security, the role of the military, and international co-operation, thus benefiting the long

term process of democratisation.

Kazakhstan's Military Reform and OSCE Chairmanship: Regional implications, Erika Marat


This article argues that Kazakhstan's strengthening relations with NATO and the EU, as well as its prospective OSCE chairmanship in 2010 has impacted the wider Central Asia region. Neighboring Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were able to use Kazakhstan as a shield when Russia pressed them to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in August 2008. Kazakhstan's successful cooperation with NATO contributed to its recognition as a nation with great economic and political potential, though it remains questionable whether positive changes inside Kazakhstan in regards to democratic control of armed forces and other political sectors entailed by the OSCE chairmanship would similarly reverberate on a regional scale. Kazakhstan, for its part, should promote its successes regionally as part of its obligations as the OSCE chair.

Afghanistan: The Right Mission on the Wrong Footing, Daan Everts

Afghanistan is a tragic case of failed preventive diplomacy. International indifference allowed a civil war to develop and escalate after the liberation from Soviet rule and, as a consequence, the rise of Taliban. In the aftermath of the horrendous 9/11 event Taliban rule was quickly ended, but US policies and UN reticence prevented a truly multilateral, comprehensive post-conflict approach to take shape — combining reconstruction, development and reconciliation while stressing Afghan ownership. The international mission remains in essence a 'noble mission', serving both humanitarian and security objectives, it needs basic adjustments for success: 'de-westernization', 'civilianization', Afghanization and political reconciliation are all important keys to achieving better and lasting results.

Regulating Religion in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Some Remarks on Religious Association Law and 'official' Islamic institutions in Tajikistan, Tim Epkenhans

Although Tajikistan is a participating state of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and has acceded to the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), religious associations are under increasing scrutiny limiting the freedom of conscience. Tajikistan's government follows a similar policy as her Central Asian neighbors Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. While a restrictive and contradictory religious association law limits the public space for religious associations, the government successively strengthens 'official' Islamic institutions and therefore directly interferes in internal religious affairs. Considering the diversity of Islamic beliefs in and practices in Central Asia and Tajikistan in particular, this policy could generate further friction among religious communities.



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