

Reassessing the
Role of OSCE Police
Assistance Programing
in Central Asia

David Lewis

Central Eurasia Project



OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS

Reassessing the Role of OSCE Police Assistance Programing in Central Asia

April 2011

Occasional Paper Series No. 4

Series Editor

Cornelius Graubner

Senior Program Officer

Open Society Central Eurasia Project



**OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS**

Copyright © 2011 by the Open Society Foundations. All rights reserved.

Published by
Open Society Foundations
224 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019 USA
www.soros.org

Design and typography by Judit Kovács | Createch Ltd.

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| About the Author | 4 |
| Acronyms | 5 |
| Executive Summary and Recommendations | 6 |
| Introduction | 9 |
| The OSCE and Police Reform | 12 |
| Policing in Central Asia and OSCE Responses | 15 |
| The Kyrgyzstan Police Project | 29 |
| Thematic Areas of Police-related Activity | 40 |
| Agencies in the OSCE Engaged in Police-related Activities | 45 |
| Evaluation and Assessment Processes | 49 |
| Conclusion | 51 |
| Notes | 54 |

About the Author

David Lewis is senior research fellow in the Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford. From 2001 to 2005, he worked in Central Asia for the Brussels-based think-tank, the International Crisis Group, and he continues to visit the region regularly. Previously, he worked at the London-based security and political risk consultancy, Control Risks Group. His most recent book, *The Temptations of Tyranny in Central Asia* (Hurst/Columbia University Press, 2008), charts Western policy in the region since 9/11. Lewis continues to write and research on security and political issues in the Caucasus and Central Asia and has acted as a consultant to governments, international agencies, and NGOs working in the region. His other research interests include the impact of geopolitical change on international norms related to democracy, peace and conflict, and the rise of authoritarian state-building and conflict management strategies in Central and South Asia.

Acronyms

| | |
|-------|--|
| HCNM | High Commissioner on National Minorities |
| MIA | Ministry of Internal Affairs |
| NGOs | Nongovernmental organizations |
| NSS | National Security Service |
| ODIHR | Office on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| PAG | Police Advisory Group |
| PAP | Police Assistance Program |
| PCUz | OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan |
| PRP | Police Reform Program |
| SPMU | Strategic Police Matters Unit |
| SSR | Security sector reform |
| UNODC | UN Office on Drugs and Crime |

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Since 2001, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has developed a range of police assistance programs in OSCE states in Central Asia. These programs have mostly failed to achieve real reform in security services, and have often compromised OSCE ideals by supporting forces that have been accused of human rights abuses and high-level corruption. The increasing emphasis in the OSCE on tackling “transnational security threats” suggests that assistance to law enforcement agencies in the OSCE area may increase in the future. To avoid the problems raised by its existing programs in Central Asia, the OSCE should carefully review its strategic thinking in this area.

Law enforcement agencies in Central Asia are desperately in need of reform. Politically repressive regimes in the region use the police and other security agencies to maintain their power and control. Security forces are frequently accused of human rights abuses, including torture, unlawful killing, and sexual assault. They are often regarded as highly corrupt, and face allegations of close association with organized crime and drug-trafficking.

After 2001, the OSCE set up a specialized police unit in its secretariat in Vienna, which sought partners in Central Asia for police reform programs. An OSCE police assistance program was introduced in Kyrgyzstan in 2002; the program started badly, with insufficient attention paid to civil society concerns. Although the OSCE made some progress in areas such as community policing and tackling domestic violence, there has been no real evidence of overall police reform. The OSCE police program paid little attention to the increasing authoritarianism in Kyrgyzstan under the Bakiev regime, reflecting a general failure in the OSCE to respond adequately to changes in the political context in which police assistance takes place.

In other Central Asian states, projects have been much smaller, but often even more controversial, including training programs for Uzbek security forces, for example, despite their role in the killings of hundreds of protestors in Andijan in 2005. The OSCE has no clear criteria about the kind of political environment in which police assistance programs might be effective or appropriate. This reflects the lack of an overall strategy for police-assistance programing in the organization. The result has often been *ad hoc* projects of dubious value which undermine the OSCE's core commitments to human rights and democratic principles.

The OSCE is developing new initiatives and ideas to combat “transnational security threats” including terrorism, drug trafficking, and organized crime. These initiatives tend to envisage further engagement with law enforcement agencies on technical cooperation in these spheres. Although there are obvious areas of shared concern among OSCE states, this emphasis on “common threats” tends to gloss over some real differences on security issues, and is often used by authoritarian regimes to justify their own repressive internal security measures. This approach also ignores the extent to which regimes in the region are themselves involved in networks of organized crime and drug trafficking. This close relationship between the security forces, political leaders, and organized crime is a significant obstacle to tackling major organized crime, such as drug trafficking.

Recommendations

The OSCE should implement a comprehensive review of its policing assistance programs in Central Asia. The OSCE Secretariat in Vienna is the nexus of police programing and strategy in this area, and is the most appropriate institution to initiate change. The secretariat's review could focus on the following priorities and issues:

- **The OSCE needs to develop stricter criteria, linked to human rights issues and political development, for engagement with law enforcement agencies in authoritarian states.**

There needs to be a more explicit recognition that democratic policing is only possible within a democratic political system, and that security sector reform needs to be linked to political reform. While under hybrid political regimes it may be possible to make some progress in improving law enforcement agencies, assistance is only likely to be effective in selected areas by including a wide range of actors in the process, including nongovernmental organizations and the media. Some of the most useful areas of work in Kyrgyzstan have involved linking the police with effective nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to provide training and monitoring on issues such as domestic violence.

- **The OSCE Secretariat needs to introduce effective, independent evaluation systems that would assess progress in a realistic way, including focus groups in host countries among the population and also among the police.**

The OSCE needs better internal mechanisms to encourage more self-criticism. Program planning also needs to include criteria and processes to end programs that are not effective. External scrutiny by media and the nongovernmental sector should be welcomed.

- **The OSCE Secretariat and Field Offices should work to improve organizational links between OSCE police assistance officials engaged in technical programs and those officials and bodies engaged with human rights concerns and political engagement.**

Police assistance programs should be designed to work in close collaboration with offices within the OSCE, such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), which have extensive experience in human rights monitoring and engagement with political processes. The OSCE should also encourage strategic thinking about the specific OSCE contribution and approach to police assistance, and be more open to lessons learned from other security sector reform processes in other areas.

The OSCE—both institutions and participating States—should have a more candid discussion about the contribution of police assistance programs to other OSCE goals in the security field, particularly attempts to develop the OSCE as a more effective actor against organized crime, terrorism, and drug trafficking.

The OSCE's emphasis on transnational security threats should be treated with caution, and not used as a means of justifying new police assistance initiatives that do not fit with core OSCE principles of human rights and democratization. The original OSCE concept of comprehensive security—which explicitly linked security with human rights, fundamental freedoms, and good governance of economic and environmental affairs—continues to retain its relevance for OSCE states today.

Introduction

Since 2001, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has been engaged in training and assisting police forces and border guards in Central Asia. However, these programs face significant challenges, both in achieving real reform in security structures, and in engaging with forces that have been accused of human rights abuses and high-level corruption. This report outlines the approaches and strategies underlying such engagement, poses some questions about how effective this engagement has been, and calls for a review of police assistance programming in the region. Although this report covers the whole region, it draws a particular focus on Kyrgyzstan, which has been the location for the OSCE's largest projects in this area.

Throughout Central Asia, politically repressive regimes use law enforcement agencies to maintain their power and control. Security forces in the region are frequently accused of human rights abuses, including torture, unlawful killing, and sexual assault. In Uzbekistan, security forces have been involved in mass killings of protestors, and in Kyrgyzstan there have been accusations of complicity in ethnic violence in the south of the country. Security forces are regarded as highly corrupt, and face allegations of close association with organized crime and drug-trafficking. Reform of law enforcement agencies in the region is an urgent necessity, and recognition of this need coincides with a much broader international agenda on improving internal security ("security sector reform"—SSR) in conflict-affected states or countries perceived as "in transition."

A growing literature on SSR argues that a neutral and effective police force, under civilian oversight, is an important element in processes of peacebuilding, democratization, and state-building.¹ On the other hand, ineffective, weak, and politicized security forces may contribute to conflict or make peaceful political change impossible. As Nicole Ball puts it: "...by contributing to insecurity, instability and various forms of conflict, the security bodies were a major part of the problem confronting developing and transitional countries as the end of the 20th century approached."² As a result, SSR has become an

important tool in international engagement in post-conflict environments and also in states viewed as potentially unstable or “fragile.” In many cases, SSR programs are conducted by joint efforts involving development agencies, defense ministries, and security specialists. This major shift in programing emphasis reflects a broader overlap in security and development thinking, and has often been championed by certain EU governments, alongside UN agencies.

During the Cold War, Western efforts to assist security forces around the world focused primarily on arming and assisting militaries, particularly those fighting insurgencies supported by the Soviet Union. With the end of the Cold War, much more focus has been placed on internal conflicts and security threats, and the kind of internal security forces that can deal with such challenges, including various types of police forces, including local police, special forces, armed police units, intelligence services, and so forth. Much of the assistance in such circumstances still tends to be bilateral and primarily involves technical assistance, without substantial engagement in issues of structural reform. However, an understanding that technical assistance alone was not sufficient to transform the effectiveness of such forces produced a concept that mixed technical assistance, training, and insistence on structural reform to the security sector.

Despite increasing investment in the area of SSR, genuine success stories have been rare. A note of scepticism has begun to enter the literature. Analysts suggest that the impact of SSR programs tends to be “superficial, localised and temporary,”³ or that while laudable, the tendency of SSR programs to downplay political factors is “ahistorical.”⁴ According to two advocates of SSR, Ball and Hendrickson, much of the work in SSR is “misleadingly optimistic about the prospects for change,” and much of the policy discussion “...tend[s] to be prescriptive (and technical) in nature, focusing more on outcomes and modalities for delivering assistance, rather than on obstacles to change.”⁵ Major recent initiatives, such as the SSR program in Afghanistan, which has attempted to create a new Afghan National Police Force, have been judged to be largely failures.⁶

Many of the assumptions of international SSR programing have also informed OSCE activities in police assistance programing. It is, however, important to note that the OSCE does not often use the term “security sector reform,” reflecting some ambivalence in its overall strategy in the area of security, which is a complex mixture of competing imperatives. The OSCE has not succeeded in developing any strategic doctrine that addresses all the challenges in these areas holistically; attempts to develop an OSCE SSR concept have been unsuccessful. Instead, the OSCE has attempted to use police-related activities to train police to international standards and practices, and to promote a model of “democratic policing.” Democratic policing is a concept that is difficult to define, but generally includes the basic principles that police should observe the rule of law, respect human rights, and be accountable to citizens and subject to democratic oversight.⁷ OSCE

officials and documents tend to stress that democratic police reform involves a shift from a centralized, controlling police force to one oriented toward serving citizens. At the same time, the OSCE has also stressed the importance of police assistance programs in contributing to OSCE initiatives to tackle “transnational security threats,” such as organized crime and terrorism.⁸

This report reviews OSCE policing activities in Central Asia within the context of the broader debate about the role of the OSCE in the region, and the prospects for democratization and liberalization of Central Asian regimes. Although there is only limited evidence of significant theoretical or conceptual thinking among those engaged in police assistance programming, the OSCE engagement in police assistance programs does stem from an implicit theory about how to effect change in complex, authoritarian political systems. This view assumes that long-term engagement in capacity building and training is more likely to bring about eventual positive change in these states.

This approach is rather different from that taken by the OSCE in the 1990s, when there was more emphasis on a model of comprehensive security that highlighted the importance of human rights and democratization. That approach was not particularly successful in achieving improvements in the political and human dimensions in Central Asia, and the organization was viewed by some members as a rather hierarchical organization, dominated by the EU and United States. While the OSCE remains publicly committed to the comprehensive security model,⁹ the increasing influence of nondemocratic participating States¹⁰ within the organization has raised the possibility of a shift in the emphasis of the OSCE. Potentially, the organization may become more horizontal, less dominated by “Western” members, and focused more on “common security threats” than on political and civil rights in domestic political systems.

The OSCE and Police Reform

In the global context, the OSCE is a minor player in security sector reform, and its programs in Central Asia are a small part (in budgetary terms) of its overall police-related activities. The total expenditure in the OSCE Unified Budget on police-related activities in 2009 was €10.6 million, of which only €1.6 million was spent in Central Asia.¹¹ Nevertheless, police-related activities throughout the OSCE region have a high profile in the OSCE's "self-narrative," and extra-budgetary contributions are actively sought for these projects.

In geographic and organizational terms, police assistance has become much more important to the OSCE's core mission than in the 1990s. Police-related activities have now spread beyond the Balkans region and are now conducted in all field missions, in Eastern Europe (Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine), the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and until 2008, Georgia) and in Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan), in addition to the still extensive programs in the Balkan countries. A wide range of OSCE bodies in the secretariat in Vienna are also involved in policing in some way, as are two other key OSCE institutions, the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and the Office on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

This marks a significant shift from the early days of the OSCE, when those institutions within the organization that were engaged in security matters were predominantly occupied with military security, including confidence building measures, democratic control of armed forces, and related issues. It was only in the late 1990s, as the OSCE became more involved in peace-building and state-building programs in the Balkans, that there was a growing realization that internal security forces were an essential institution in post-conflict state-building and that the OSCE could offer assistance in training and developing such police forces. The OSCE began its involvement in policing in Croatia, followed by training and assistance in Kosovo, and subsequently in Macedonia. In the Balkans, the OSCE began to explore ideas such as community policing, which appeared to reflect the organization's emphasis on both security and human rights.¹²

The first formal declaration of the OSCE's new commitment to police-related assistance came in 1999, at the Istanbul Summit Meeting: the Charter for European Security committed the OSCE to further commitments in this area beyond its existing deployments in Croatia and Kosovo. These commitments remained rather vague, but in December 2001 a ministerial council meeting in Bucharest committed the participating States to support further police activities, including assistance in restructuring police forces, and in training and capacity building.

This shift in emphasis in the OSCE toward policing was inevitably influenced by the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. The impact of those attacks was also reflected in a declaration made in Bishkek in December 2001 (the Bishkek Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism). These declarations were followed up for the first time by new resources and appointments in the OSCE secretariat in the area of policing. A former British police officer, Richard Monk, was appointed as Senior Police Adviser (SPA), and during 2002 he developed a new unit in Vienna with four full-time members of staff with policing backgrounds, which was labelled the Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU).¹³

In 2002, the SPA undertook preliminary assessment missions to a number of countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia, but only the Kyrgyz government expressed significant interest in issues of police reform. In late 2003, the SPMU began implementation of a Program of Police Assistance to Kyrgyzstan, initially funded by Norway and the United Kingdom. An expert assessment of Tajikistan's border policing needs was initiated in late 2002, and officials hoped that programs similar to the one devised for Kyrgyzstan could also be developed for Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan. The main reported impediment for further progress on these initiatives in initial reports appeared to be the lack of funding from participating States.¹⁴ However, it was also evident that Central Asian governments were cautious about any increase in OSCE programs and activities in the region.

The interest in police reform in Central Asia at the OSCE came within a particular political context and was accompanied by an internal organizational shift. During the 1990s, the OSCE mostly emphasised the so-called Human Dimension in Central Asia, focusing primarily on human rights, and viewing the police and security forces mostly through that prism. There was some *ad hoc* bilateral cooperation with law enforcement agencies in Central Asia by Western states in the 1990s, and some limited multilateral support from UN agencies, but there was no overall policy aimed at supporting structural reforms in the security sector. The ODIHR was probably most active in the region, but for the most part Central Asia was peripheral to the OSCE's core activities. This began to change in the late 1990s, and accelerated after 2001, when international attention shifted to Afghanistan, which borders three of the five Central Asian states.

In the post-2001 world, the OSCE responded to a combination of external stimuli (new geopolitical interest in Central Asia and a new international emphasis on nontradi-

tional security threats, such as terrorism) and an internal imperative (a perceived need to find a new focus for the organization's activities, as demand for OSCE involvement in the Balkans began to diminish). There was considerable pressure to shift resources from the Balkans to Central Asia and the Caucasus, both to retain budgets and also to assert the continuing relevance of the OSCE in the 21st century. A desire to be active in Central Asia often took precedence over strategic thinking about where the OSCE could make a genuine contribution, and resulted in many projects and initiatives that were inappropriate for the very challenging political environment of Central Asia.

A new focus on security issues also reflected a desire to develop models of cooperation and engagement with the OSCE's Central Asian states that would be welcomed by host governments and reflect some common interests. Faced with largely authoritarian states that rejected many of the organization's principles of democracy and rule of law, the OSCE found it difficult to gain traction on issues of democratization and human rights. The failure to make significant progress in those areas led to a search for alternative ways to engage Central Asian states. One approach attempted to increase cooperation in the areas of economic development and the environment, but the OSCE has only limited comparative advantage in these fields, and most programs met with little success. Instead, a different trend toward a securitization of programing in Central Asia, focusing on combating drug trafficking, organized crime, and terrorism, appeared to be potentially more fruitful.

Policing in Central Asia and OSCE Responses

From the very beginning, OSCE personnel involved in police assistance programs (and many participating States supporting them) appeared to underestimate the challenges facing security sector reform initiatives in Central Asia. The scale of the potential challenges in police reform was evident from work in other regions, but there is little evidence that the OSCE applied lessons learned from previous efforts in the Balkans and elsewhere to new initiatives in the Central Asian context. Two major challenges from previous efforts stood out in particular. Firstly, the seemingly obvious lesson that the “[t]he success of foreign assistance in promoting democratic policing is directly proportional to the country’s enthusiasm for it.” Secondly, that police reform programs should not be left only to police officers: police reform is highly political and requires an understanding of the political context and culture.¹⁵ Far from being a narrow technical exercise, police reform could only take place in the context of a broad process of political reform launched by political elites inside the country.

Unfortunately, recent history offered little evidence to support the belief that the governments of Central Asia would support programs to develop democratic policing. Two of these states—Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan—have human rights records that rank among the worst in the world. Freedom House annually ranks them in the same league as Myanmar and North Korea. Kazakhstan has a more liberal society, but maintains a strong security sector that does not permit any significant political pluralism to develop; rights such as freedom of assembly and expression are in practice severely limited. In 2002, when the first police-related activities were launched, Kyrgyzstan appeared to be entering a new phase of increasingly authoritarian rule under President Askar Akaev. Since then, it has passed through several political upheavals, but the role of the police has posed significant political challenges throughout the period. Tajikistan’s security forces continue to

concentrate on the assertion of central control in the aftermath of civil war, with little interest in human rights issues or democratization.

Following independence in the early 1990s, these new regimes faced considerable problems in developing viable security structures that could control their territories. In most cases, they simply renamed existing Soviet-era security institutions. All the new states retained a dominant interior ministry, which included ordinary police (*militсия*), paramilitary armed units of various types, a prison service and other security divisions, and also related functions such as civil registration (*propiska*). The Soviet-era KGB was divided into republican branches and nationalized after independence, but retained many informal links among former colleagues. The military in each country was relatively weak, reflecting the Soviet Union's highly centralized control over the military, and the lack of significant Central Asian representation in the upper echelons of Soviet military forces.

These legacy systems of security maintenance proved highly convenient for the political authorities in each country as they asserted their own control over society. By the early 21st century there had been remarkably little change in post-Soviet policing in Central Asia, reflecting a broader continuity in policing policy and structures across the post-Soviet space.¹⁶ Central Asian governments have routinely used domestic security and intelligence services to suppress dissent and to arrest, torture, and imprison political opponents of the ruling elites. In this process they have been assisted by a highly politicized procurator's office (*prokuratura*), a Soviet institution almost unchanged since Stalinist times, when it presided over the show trials of the 1930s, and by court and legal systems which were under strong political influence in the Soviet period, and have remained equally subordinate to political elites in the post-Soviet period. While the police were highly effective at repressing alternative political forces, they also maintained, in most cases, a relatively secure everyday environment in terms of both petty and serious crime. Although all types of crime increased after the break-up of the Soviet Union, in none of the countries did they reach levels out of step with other states in the OSCE area (with the exception of Tajikistan during the civil war period).

In all of these states—with the partial exception of Kyrgyzstan—the political elites of the Soviet period remained in control. Far from being challenged by the military or security forces, they found it relatively easy to control the security sector, relying on a legacy of Soviet practice, and cooptation into rent-seeking processes in state institutions. The involvement of security ministries in rent seeking and corruption has been significant, through involvement in various corrupt schemes involving state budgets, informal extortion of legal business, and also through involvement with organized crime. This complex system of corruption and patronage has proved remarkably resilient in several of the Central Asian states, and has usually managed to rapidly reconfigure itself after any political transition.

For most of the population, these high-level machinations involving politicians and the security forces are simply the topic of rumour. For most people it is the *militia* that is their main interface with the state, or at least with its security functions. These local police officers are highly visible, and engage with citizens on a daily basis. These interactions are often unsatisfactory from the point of view of the average Central Asian; when people feel able to express a free opinion, a large proportion describe the police as corrupt, untrustworthy, and often unable to fulfil their primary function of protecting the population. In various ways, however, the worst aspects of these police forces are sometimes mitigated through a variety of personal connections, friendships, bribery or other means. In many low-level cases, such as traffic violations, the payment of small bribes can be a preferred and popular alternative to a more professional approach.

Corruption is one of the reasons why attempts at police reforms have tended to stall. Institutional reforms threaten to undermine lucrative sources of income for ordinary policemen and high-level officials alike. More prosaically, without certain types of corruption in poorer countries, such as Kyrgyzstan, the police would hardly have been able to function in the 1990s, given their limited budgetary resources. Police forces faced severe shortages of equipment and supplies, and survived on very low salaries. Inevitably, corruption emerged as a way to cope with these shortfalls. Police forces collected informal payments from businesses through protection arrangements, from drivers for real or imagined traffic infringements and more significant payments from those arrested in exchange for release or mitigation of punishment. These informal payments rapidly turned into a more formal parallel system of funding, in which money collected at the bottom of the force by ordinary police officers and traffic policemen was channelled up through the system to mid-level and high-level officers, with a final cut reserved for the minister, and in most cases, for his political masters. Various aspects of this system appear to have emerged in each of the five states, despite their relatively divergent paths of development.¹⁷

In successive surveys in different countries, Central Asians have often suggested that the traffic police are the most corrupt state institution. In Kazakhstan, for example, 69 percent of respondents to a national survey taken in 2009 thought there was a “great deal” or “fair amount” of corruption among traffic police.¹⁸ Some 35 percent admitted that they or “somebody they knew” had paid a bribe to a traffic policeman.¹⁹ In monetary terms, it seems likely that serious financial links to organized crime and drug trafficking are more significant issues, but citizens experience the corruption of traffic police on an everyday basis.

It was not simply the bribery and informal payment structures that characterized the post-independence police systems. Widespread nepotism and patron-client relations made the police forces extremely useful for local and national powerbrokers, and for powerful informal leaders who could use the militia for their own purposes, whether

political, economic or criminal. These dynamics made it easy for political elites to control the police in each country: senior officers were all vulnerable because of their involvement in corruption, and were often also obligated to political and business leaders by a web of informal ties, whether through kinship, or through business links or involvement in corrupt practices.

Lack of capacity in the police applied to both human resources and equipment. Despite the obvious drawbacks of Soviet police forces, they did possess relatively high levels of discipline and reasonable technical competence, training, and education.²⁰ Many of the most competent officers encountered in Central Asian police forces today tend to be older officers trained in the late Soviet period, but gradually these officers are reaching retirement age. Many of that cohort of officers left in the 1990s, when there was a significant outmigration of professional police officers, particularly ethnic Russians or Russian-speakers (Tatars, Ukrainians, etc). There were also Central Asians among them who found the new nationalisms of the Central Asian states uncomfortable, or simply sought better salaries and conditions in Russia or elsewhere. This appears to have resulted in a significant dip in the professionalism of Central Asian police forces, since these Russian-speaking officers were often better educated in police procedures and somewhat more resistant to the dynamics of local nepotism than their local counterparts. They were frequently replaced by officers who had little experience and had risen through the ranks on the basis of nepotism and bribery rather than competence.²¹

In addition to these problems found across the region, each state had very specific political, economic, and cultural circumstances that influenced both the institutional development of the national police force, and the political environment in which OSCE institutions could work. There is insufficient space in this paper to provide detailed accounts of each state's police forces, but the following provide some indications of the scale of the challenges faced in each country in any attempt to provide police assistance or to promote police reform. In each state, the OSCE response has also been different. Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan have all had only limited exposure to OSCE programing in police-related areas, while Tajikistan has become more significant in overall programing over the past two years. Kyrgyzstan will be examined in more depth below.

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan remains the most closed of all the Central Asian countries, despite a slight relaxation in state repression following the death of former president Saparmuryad Niyazov in 2007. However, the government of President Berdymukhamedov has continued to maintain effectively the same system of political control, relying heavily on the

police (controlled by the Ministry of Internal Affairs) and the Ministry of National Security, both of which have been heavily implicated in human rights abuses.

There is no freedom of expression or assembly, and almost all political opponents of the regime are imprisoned or in exile. In May 2009, a long-serving political prisoner, Mukhametkuli Aymuradov, was released after 14 years in prison, but many other political prisoners are still in detention.²² According to Human Rights Watch, torture and ill-treatment in police detention remain serious concerns, but the lack of access for independent monitors means that there is very little reliable information.²³ International human rights groups are not permitted to visit the country, and no local human rights organizations are permitted to function. There are no independent media outlets. As a result of this lack of openness, and the fact that there is no public political activity permitted, accounts of human rights abuses tend not to feature heavily in the international media, giving a somewhat false impression of relative political quietude.

Following the death of President Niyazov in 2006, there was hope for far-reaching political reform, including changes in the security sector. In 2007, President Berdimukhamedov set up a State Commission to Review Citizens' Complaints on the Activities of Law Enforcement Agencies, although its mandate and composition were not clear. It initially appeared to be quite active, and reportedly pardoned a group of prisoners, some of whom had been arrested in connection with the alleged assassination attempt on former President Niyazov in 2002. However, since 2008 it has become less active, and now appears to be essentially moribund. According to the U.S. State Department, it "has conducted no known inquiries in which members of the security forces were held accountable."²⁴

While the security ministries appear to be firmly under political control, there is no public oversight of their activities. There are no independent media; correspondents for international news agencies such as Radio Free Europe have been harassed and detained and forced to resign from the organization. Several journalists have been imprisoned on spurious charges. According to the activist group, Reporters Without Borders, Turkmenistan is one of the three worst countries in the world for press freedom, in the same category as North Korea, and worse than Myanmar.

The police are predominantly ethnic Turkmen, although statistics are not available. There is widespread discrimination reported against ethnic minorities. Ethnic Uzbeks, Russians, and Armenians all face different types of discrimination, including *de facto* restrictions on state employment and very limited opportunities to develop their own cultural, linguistic or educational institutions.

OSCE Police-related Activities

OSCE engagement with Turkmenistan has been sporadic, largely as a result of government reluctance to permit any extensive OSCE activities in the country, and a profound resistance to any reform of the law enforcement agencies. In 2002, the OSCE invoked the “Moscow mechanism” in response to Turkmenistan’s widespread human rights abuses after an alleged assassination attempt on President Niyazov. An OSCE report was extremely critical of the regime and of its security forces, but there was no follow-up to the report, and gradually OSCE bodies began to re-engage with the government.²⁵

In 2005, the OSCE Center in Ashgabat ran a number of round tables involving police officers, and conducted some training in human rights and cross border issues. These kinds of small-scale activities continued in 2007, with 38 police officers taking part in various activities organized by the center. Activities included practical training on drug searches, and training on aspects of international humanitarian law. In May–September 2007, Turkmen officers also took part in police canine training in Tashkent. These kinds of training events continue in related areas, and non-threatening technical areas in particular, such as small arms and light weapons control and travel documentation.

Gradually, the willingness of Turkmen officials to take part in meetings outside the country has increased. This represents a welcome change from the position under former president Niyazov, when attendance by Turkmen officials at such events was rare. Police officials attended the Annual Police Experts meeting in Vienna in October 2008, and also attended an OSCE round table on democratic policing in Almaty in November of that year. These were important breakthroughs in engagement with the Turkmen interior ministry, but so far there has been no apparent impact on the nature of policing within the country, which remains highly repressive. It is not clear whether this policy of engagement—matching similar policies being followed by the UN and the EU—will lead eventually to a measure of liberalization. So far the record of the government is not promising, with some initial tendencies toward reform failing to lead to anything more substantive.

Uzbekistan

The human rights situation in Uzbekistan remains extremely poor, and the police continue to commit human rights abuses with almost complete impunity. The police forms part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), which is the largest state institution, but the National Security Service (NSS) is also extremely powerful, although much smaller in terms of manpower. Under a previous long-serving minister, Zokir Almatov, the Interior Ministry was a significant power in its own right. Almatov was a key political player who was finally retired after the killings of protestors in Andijan in 2005, in which Interior

Ministry troops were heavily implicated. After Andijan there was significant restructuring of internal security structures, with the NSS taking over control of MIA armed units and generally strengthening its position vis-a-vis the Interior Ministry.

None of these changes appear to have affected the internal dynamics of the police, which continue to suffer from systemic corruption, widespread abuses of civil and political rights, a lack of qualified personnel, poor levels of training and education, and constant interference by political leaders or powerful “authority” figures with strong connections in the elite. There are numerous reports of ill treatment, torture, and beating of detainees. Abuses are particularly common in the pre-trial detention period, although violence is also frequently reported against inmates in prisons. Prisoners of conscience, such as the poet Yusuf Juma, have reportedly been the victims of regular incidents of torture in prison.²⁶ According to human rights groups, at least six people detained in connection with the events in Andijan in 2005 were killed while in detention during 2008–09.²⁷

During six months of monitoring in 2009, human rights groups reported on 20 cases of torture during preliminary detention.²⁸ They also reported an increase in abuse of women by police in particular. Rape or the threat of rape of female relatives of suspects has been commonly used in the past to force confessions out of detainees. Raykhon Soatova alleged that she was raped by 12 police officers while in detention in Mirzo Ulugbek District Police Department in May 2009. Her younger sister was also allegedly raped at the police station, and ended up in a psychiatric hospital. The Soatov family sent 28 different appeals to government bodies, but there was no investigation until the story reached the international media. Although 12 police officers were eventually brought to trial, charges against them were subsequently dropped.²⁹ In general, the police enjoy high levels of immunity. In a rare case, in January 2009 a court upheld the prison sentences of four police officers for beating to death Muzaffar Tuychiyev while in custody.

Torture takes many forms, but primarily involves heavy beating and various types of direct physical violence. Human rights groups claim that deliberate infection by placing a detainee with prisoners suffering from tuberculosis or refusal of medical care is also common.³⁰ The cases that come to international attention are probably only a small part of the broader picture, but there is only limited information emerging from the country. There are no genuinely independent media outlets and very limited access for international journalists. A few well known human rights activists work under intense pressure. But many human rights defenders have been arrested or forced to leave the country. Lawyers have limited rights, and their access to key materials or to their clients is frequently denied. The courts are not independent, and almost all prosecutions result in “guilty” verdicts, often based on confessions. This heavy reliance on confessions is one reason for the widespread use of torture by the police.

Political demonstrations are rare: most people are afraid to join any public protests. Security forces killed hundreds of people in Andijan in 2005 during an antigovernment protest. Some protestors had taken hostages and seized weapons, but reliable evidence suggests that security forces fired indiscriminately into the crowds, and mostly killed unarmed protestors and innocent spectators.³¹ The government has strongly resisted international calls for an independent investigation into the events. It is likely that the government will be willing to use armed force to repress any serious protest against the regime in the future.

OSCE Police-related Activities

The repressive environment in Uzbekistan has always appeared un conducive for any externally-supported police reform program, but there have been several attempts by the OSCE to engage with the government on policing matters. In 2002 and 2003, SPMU staff visited Uzbekistan, and set out a range of potential priorities for engagement, including modern criminal investigation techniques, a human rights position at the Police Academy, and increased training for noncommissioned officers in the Uzbek police.³² These proposals, however, appear to have received little response from the Uzbek government, which gradually hardened its stance toward external assistance in the wake of widespread criticism of its human rights record during 2003.

In 2007, however, when Uzbekistan was still seeking to avoid international pressure for an international investigation into the events of Andijan in 2005, the OSCE signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the MIA and the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan (PCUz).³³ A two-year program included a range of activities in the Police Academy, such as training for public security and crime-fighting operations; and support for the academy in the form of information technology and material assistance. There was no mention in the assistance program of human rights training, issues of democratic oversight or any reference to the involvement of civil society. Instead, the project appears to have mainly provided *ad hoc* technical aid to the Police Academy (an internal cable television system, for example) and a study tour: Uzbek police officers visited Ireland in November 2007 to familiarize themselves with Irish policing techniques. Even within this study tour there was no mention in the official documents of any emphasis on democratic policing or human rights protection.³⁴

Another project launched in 2007 by the PCUz was a regional canine training program for all Central Asian states, designed to assist in the fight against organized crime and terrorism.³⁵ This project attracted internal opposition from some other OSCE staff engaged in Central Asia,³⁶ and was subsequently criticised by experienced OSCE observers.³⁷ Providing such training in a system with no oversight appears to have been at best naive. Given the regime's tactic of planting illegal drugs on its political opponents and

dissidents and its use of sniffer dogs to “detect” drugs in such cases, it seemed almost inevitable that tracker dogs would be misused. In June 2008, Uzbek police using two sniffer dogs arrested journalist Salijon Abdurahmanov on charges of possession of illegal drugs; human rights groups claimed that the drugs were planted by the police.³⁸

In all these cases, there was no sense of any overarching political strategy, and no apparent awareness of how these *ad hoc* projects might be perceived by a broader public. Since 2007, similar types of projects involving law enforcement agencies in Uzbekistan have been common. In May–June 2009, the OSCE conducted human rights training for police officers. However, independent human rights groups are increasingly sceptical of these seminars and training programs. One group writes: “Such events have demonstrated that holding such activities has not changed the situation, but more likely they have been held simply to appease and even distract the international community.”³⁹

Kazakhstan

The structures and many of the dynamics of policing in Kazakhstan also derive from a Soviet past, but there have been significant changes since independence. High-level corruption and human rights abuses continue, but the latter are less systemic than in Uzbekistan, and there are occasions when the police are punished for offenses. However, the same top-down pressure to fulfil quotas and achieve convictions through confessions exists, and the MIA (which oversees the police) has reportedly been much more resistant to reform than officials in the Ministry of Justice, which oversees the prison system. The MIA includes criminal police and local police, responsible for general law and order, and also a range of more specialized departments, such as a drugs directorate, traffic police, and special response units such as the OMON forces, which are designed to deal with civil unrest.

In many ways, the police in Kazakhstan are the most professional and least abusive in Central Asia, but they preside over what Human Rights Watch calls an “atmosphere of quiet repression,”⁴⁰ in which rapid economic development has tended to undermine popular concern about human rights issues or free and fair elections. The police carry out the orders of political elites, including abuses and detentions of journalists, activists, and political opponents of the president. The regime has become more sophisticated in its treatment of journalists and opposition activists, using libel laws and privacy and secrecy restrictions to close down newspapers and detain journalists, rather than resorting to violence. Leading human rights activist Yevgeny Zhovtis⁴¹ was convicted of manslaughter in September 2009 after being involved in a traffic accident and sentenced to four years in prison. The investigation appears to have been deeply flawed, and Human Rights Watch

called it a “terrible miscarriage of justice.”⁴² There is very limited media freedom, with increasing government pressure on Internet outlets as well as newspapers. Television is completely controlled by progovernment stations.

OSCE Police-related Activities

Despite repeated efforts, the OSCE has failed to make any headway with police reform programs in Kazakhstan. A succession of seminars and round tables has taken place, but there is little evidence of any change in police behavior or structures that could be traced to the influence of the OSCE. However, there have been significant changes in Kazakh policing since 1991, including improvements in technical capacity, better conditions for personnel, and some reported improvements in behavior toward the public. Nonetheless, human rights abuses and corruption continue to be reported.

The OSCE has initiated a range of police training and technical assistance projects in Kazakhstan. In September 2003, the SPMU carried out an assessment of criminal intelligence analysis in the police, supporting the declared objective of the Kazakh police to move toward intelligence-led policing. This involved a pilot project on crime intelligence, and study tours to Spain, Russia, and the United Kingdom. The project was completed in November 2004, and involved the training of Kazakh police officers in Astana in the use of software used to improve analysis of historical and operational data regarding ongoing operations. The OSCE claimed immediate success, asserting that the police cleared up two major crimes as a result of the new methodology.⁴³

In December 2004, the ODIHR also conducted a three-day human rights training course for 20 participants from around the country, focusing on basic principles.⁴⁴ During 2002-04, the ODIHR led a series of workshops and training sessions for police officers engaged in pretrial detention facilities, and also continued its engagement with antitrafficking initiatives.⁴⁵ The pretrial detention program achieved some progress in 2005, when monitors from NGOs were allowed to visit pretrial facilities for the first time, apparently facilitated by relatively reformist officials in the Ministry of Justice.⁴⁶

The enthusiasm of the SPMU in Vienna and the OSCE Center in Almaty for more police assistance programing appears to have been based on a rather misplaced optimism about the willingness of the MIA to cooperate with further projects. In 2005, an international police expert was seconded to the center in Almaty, with the aim of developing further the cooperation between the MIA and the OSCE. This came to nothing, however, apparently as the result of a change of minister, and the impending presidential elections.⁴⁷ In 2006, further efforts to implement what was labelled the “Police Development Cooperation Activities Project” continued, but with little apparent traction for the project with the MIA. Activities were reduced to study tours for police officials, to Spain in July 2006, for example, to study Spanish approaches to community policing.⁴⁸ Officials travelled to

the United Kingdom in October, where they received training in the use of video surveillance “...with special respect for democratic values and human rights.”⁴⁹ The reduction of the project to these study visits of dubious value and to occasional *ad hoc* conferences suggests that the project had failed to develop any real strategy, and had lost any initial traction with the MIA. In 2007, the center “continued to work on the implementation of the Police Development Co-operation Project,” according to official reports, but project outputs appear to have been reduced to a single round table during the year.⁵⁰

From 2008 onwards, there was slightly more openness on law enforcement issues, particularly as the Kazakh government was bidding for the OSCE chairmanship in 2010. A number of round tables and lectures were organized, and the center in Astana⁵¹ continued to support work with NGOs engaged in police-related activities, such as the Charter for Human Rights. The latter continued their work in monitoring pretrial detention centers in Kazakhstan, perhaps one of the most impressive justice-related projects to emerge in the context of Kazakhstan. Overall, although engagement and activity intensified, there was little sign that Kazakhstan was intending to shift its stance on OSCE police-assistance programs. The government remained content to continue with its own process of modernization in the security and justice sector without any significant assistance from international bodies.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan differed from all the other Central Asian states in that it experienced a serious civil war in the 1990s, which was followed by a high level of insecurity throughout the country at least until 2001–02. Many police officers fought during the war; as a result the police grew more militarized than in other states, and were accustomed to dealing with policing problems primarily through the use of force. In addition, the high level of drug trafficking throughout the country and the very low level of state budgetary support ensured the emergence of significant corruption within all the security forces, including the border guards and the various forces under the command of the interior ministry.

According to human rights groups, the police and security forces use torture systematically to extract confessions from detainees. There is no access to places of detention for monitors from independent groups. As in other Central Asian countries, the worst abuses take place in pretrial detention as police seek confessions from the accused.⁵² In June 2009, a doctor who crossed the road in front of a presidential motorcade was arrested and died in custody within a few hours. Although the police alleged that he died of a heart attack, his body was covered with bruising and his family claimed that he had been ill treated.⁵³ Detainees accused of religious extremism have allegedly been the target of par-

ticular abuse. There is very limited freedom of expression or assembly. In particular, the police quickly disperse any gatherings that might have political connotations.⁵⁴

Tajikistan faced increasing instability during 2010, with reports of serious clashes between armed opponents of the regime and the government, in which the army and armed police units have been involved. In August 2010, 25 inmates, all sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, escaped from a State Committee for National Security prison in Dushanbe. The incident raised serious concerns both about insecurity within the country and over alleged corruption within the security services. President Rahmon later dismissed security ministers.⁵⁵ Many of the escapees fled to the Rasht Valley area, where central government control has always been tenuous. In September, armed clashes were reported in the region, in which at least five police officers, and dozens of military personnel, were killed. The government imposed a media blackout, limiting any news of security activities in the area. A suicide attack on the regional organized crime department in Khudjand in September 2010 killed two policemen. Jamaat Ansarullah, a previously unknown group, took credit for the attack, which it allegedly made in retaliation for police treatment of Islamist detainees.⁵⁶

In such an uncertain security environment, the prospects for police reform have always been rather poor. In addition, the security forces lack sufficient trained and proficient personnel, a problem which is widespread throughout most government ministries in Tajikistan. Although the security forces are better funded than some other government services, they still often lack appropriate equipment and training opportunities. Above all, there is no evidence of any political will to tackle the problems within the security forces, and systems of patronage, corruption, and political loyalty remain the key dynamics in the relationship between the political elite and the security services.

OSCE Police-related Activities

In contrast to its operations in other Central Asian states, the OSCE has long maintained a substantial presence in Tajikistan, with a large office in Dushanbe, and suboffices in several regions. The OSCE set up a mission in Tajikistan to contribute to the post-conflict peace process in the 1990s, alongside a substantial UN presence. Despite the presence of the OSCE and many other international organizations, for the most part the political system has increasingly diverged from OSCE principles. Although there has been increasing OSCE interest in policing in Tajikistan, and a rapidly developing range of activities in this area, in reality, as OSCE officials themselves admit, no real police reform program is being implemented.⁵⁷

However, the attention paid to Tajikistan, and the number of projects initiated in the field of security, has expanded. In early 2008, the OSCE began a police needs assessment, one partial result of which was the appointment of a Counter Terrorism and Police Adviser

Unit in Dushanbe. According to the mission website, the unit “...helps all law enforcement agencies to better combat the complex phenomenon of organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism. It focuses on the development of police training, structural and operational reforms and the introduction of community policing.”⁵⁸ There is no mention in its mandate of democratization of the police force or any emphasis on human rights.

The unit’s initial activities seem to have focused primarily on inviting Tajik police officers to various conferences and round tables, and initiating a project to provide Tajikistan with a real-time link to the Interpol database. Subsequently, it embarked on a series of *ad hoc* activities, but it is difficult to discern an overall strategy. One of the first activities was another canine training project, an area in which the OSCE appears to be developing a considerable track record. This project involved not just training, but initiating the construction of a whole new canine training center in Dushanbe. The center is designed to “enhance the efficiency of MIA operations and investigations in combating drug trafficking, preventing acts of terrorism and securing public order.”⁵⁹

To be fair, it is difficult to find any easy entry points for genuine police reform in Tajikistan. Popular discontent with the police is widespread, and they are generally viewed as unprofessional, corrupt, and highly criminalized. The OSCE organized a series of focus groups in 2009, in which attendees expressed their feelings about the police. In Kulyab, some of the comments included: “Police defend the true criminals.”; “The only people who believe in the police are the officials who pay them.”; “Ninety percent of the people have no confidence in the police. Only the 10 percent who have money and are well connected have confidence in them.”; “You have to know someone with power; otherwise don’t go to the police.”⁶⁰

However, in 2009 there were signs of more engagement from the Tajik side, with increased involvement of senior police officers and ministry officials on issues of police reform. A consultant report initiated some wide-ranging discussions on the challenges of reform. The Ministry of the Interior was reported to be positively engaged in the process; only the Prosecutor’s Office was unenthusiastic.⁶¹ Simply engaging with high-level police officers on issues of reform could be considered a success in the context of Tajikistan, but it will be hard to move beyond these initial steps. Some areas did show signs of movement. For example, important progress has been made in police training on domestic violence issues, where Tajikistan faces a major problem. However, the government’s failure to approve legislation on domestic violence makes it difficult to persuade women to appeal for police assistance.⁶²

In 2010, further steps on reform slowed, as political support for the idea of police reform appears to have waned. On border issues, however, the OSCE has become an important actor, primarily through its OSCE Border Management Staff College, which opened in Dushanbe in 2009. The college will provide a center for 2-month courses for

border guards, including courses in human rights, countering human trafficking, and additional training in drugs and precursor interdiction. Until 2005, Russian border guards controlled the Afghan-Tajik frontier; since their withdrawal, Tajikistan's poorly trained and under-funded border guards units have been in sole command of the border. Training is certainly necessary, and should improve work at border crossings, in particular. According to officials, it has already assisted the Tajiks in developing a more effective and more secure crossing with China. However, as explored below, such training is unlikely to have any impact on the volume of narcotics crossing the border. At best, it makes it harder for new groups to engage in cross-border trafficking, and it may help to limit other illegal cross-border activities.

The Kyrgyzstan Police Project

While police-related activities in Central Asian states have largely progressed through small, *ad hoc* events and programs, in Kyrgyzstan there has been a more comprehensive police project ongoing since 2003. The police project is only one element in a much wider program of engagement by the OSCE in Kyrgyzstan, including work on improving the prison system and monitoring of human rights abuses and trials. The police project has been complicated by frequent political upheaval during the period, including the expulsion of two successive presidents through mass protests in 2005 and 2010, and significant interethnic unrest in the south of the country in June 2010, in which hundreds of people died. Against that backdrop—and a succession of more than 10 interior ministers during the project’s lifetime—it is perhaps unfair to expect too much from one relatively small initiative. However, the project has been promoted as a model for the rest of Central Asia, and is viewed as a success within the OSCE itself,⁶³ but its implementation raises many of the key issues that affect OSCE police-related activities, including insufficient attention to the political context, an over-reliance on technical expertise, and an inability to develop effective methods of self-evaluation.

First Stage—The Police Assistance Program

The initial phase of the Police Assistance Program (PAP) owed much to the first senior police advisor, Richard Monk, who visited Kyrgyzstan in 2002, and secured support for a police program from the government and President Akaev. However, the project began in a controversial political context, which shaped popular perceptions of the program, particularly among political activists and NGO leaders. In March 2002, police had opened fire on demonstrators in the southern district of Aksy, killing five people, and sparking off several months of political unrest. In February 2003, President Akaev conducted a referendum on

constitutional changes designed to enhance his powers. Against that political backdrop, a program to assist the police was bound to elicit criticism. Some observers suggested that “the OSCE’s police program seemed to have been implemented at the wrong time and in the wrong place.”⁶⁴

Despite the criticism, the program became operational in August 2003, with a first phase designed for completion by February 2005 and costing about 3.6 million euro. The program had eight initial aims:

1. Improving the quality of police investigations;
2. Improving police capacity for drug interdiction;
3. Setting up a modern and efficient police emergency call-response center;
4. Establishing a national criminal information analysis system;
5. Providing a radio communication system for police crime investigators;
6. Improving the police’s capacity to prevent, resolve or manage public conflict and disorder;
7. Introducing community policing methods at a pilot site;
8. Expanding the curriculum of the National Police Academy.⁶⁵

This program was remarkably ambitious for Kyrgyzstan. Not surprisingly, initial implementation was beset with difficulties. Less controversial elements at this stage included input on the curricula in the police academy, provision of vehicles and computers, and the initial stages of a consultation on community policing in one district in Bishkek.

The initial attempts to augment police efforts in drug interdiction by developing stationary and mobile drug interdiction units were probably a mistake. They were not based on any reliable analysis of the dynamics of drug trafficking in the country; nor had there been any apparent account taken of the potential negative impact on trade and travel for ordinary people. Existing checkpoints were already a major source of complaint against the police and any further checks would simply add to the transit cost of goods through informal payments. Major drug consignments, meanwhile, were under the protection of senior political and security service figures and would not be checked by such units. Nevertheless, these drug interdiction units did begin work in early 2004, and reportedly seized 510 kg of illegal narcotics in 2004.⁶⁶

The second area of controversy was an attempt to improve the police’s capacity to deal with public disorder. During the planning phase, there was no formal mechanism for consulting NGOs or civil society; as a result, the SPMU and the OSCE office in Bish-

kek severely underestimated the potential negative reaction from local NGOs and human rights groups to proposals to strengthen police capacities in this area. Rumors that the OSCE was supplying the police with non-lethal weaponry, such as rubber bullets, galvanized the NGO community, concerned that the OSCE was simply making it easier for the government to crush antigovernment protests. Leading activists such as Asiya Sasykbaeva and Tolekan Ismailova were particularly vocal in their concerns over the program. In July several NGOs organized a demonstration against the OSCE in front of its Bishkek office, an unprecedented experience for an organization that had generally been highly supportive of civil society. The OSCE eventually made some concessions to NGO sensibilities, and gave reassurances that no controversial equipment would be provided to the police; NGO representatives were invited to attend the executive steering committee of the program. Nevertheless, participation in the program by NGOs remained very limited, and for the most part Kyrgyz civil society remained suspicious of the OSCE's police assistance efforts. Despite the controversy, the Training and Resource Center for Public Disorder Prevention and Resolution was opened in June 2004 at the Police Academy, and two international experts were engaged to provide regular training. Study tours to the United Kingdom, France, and Lithuania further augmented the program.

Improving police investigatory techniques proved much less controversial, partly because it was designed to eliminate the use of torture to gain confessions from suspects. In 2004, the program delivered training and seminars in criminal investigation information analysis and crime scene examination, and provided specialized vehicles with crime scene equipment. Other equipment provided in 2004 included over 800 surplus handheld radios transferred from OSCE operations in southeastern Europe to the Bishkek City Police Directorate. Other technical equipment was also provided, but such provision of equipment was mostly seen as a "goodwill gesture" rather than part of any overarching strategy.

There was more hope among OSCE officials that the community policing strand of the PAP would gain traction. In 2004, premises at the Pervomaisky District police station in Bishkek were refurbished to provide a hub for community policing requirements, and the station received 15 new police vehicles. This was augmented by a study trip to Northern Ireland, where community policing has been in place for many years. However, in its first two years, the introduction of community policing had little or no impact on people's perceptions of the police in the district, according to an OSCE-commissioned opinion poll.⁶⁷ Such changes tend to take considerable time, of course, but there is no evidence of effective long-term evaluation of the project. More significantly, perhaps, despite the emphasis on community policing within the PAP, there appeared to be no overall concept or strategy associated with the program.⁶⁸ The idea of an overall OSCE community police strategy was mooted back in 2005,⁶⁹ but does not appear to have developed further. As of

2010, such a concept document still does not exist, and there remain different interpretations of community policing among different actors in the program.

All of these technical assistance programs did not lead to any political initiative for reform of the security services. A Kyrgyz state commission on police reform had been established back in 2002, but soon lapsed into inactivity and was only revived in 2004, after some pressure from the OSCE and ministerial-level engagement on the issue.⁷⁰ Eventually, in December 2004, the MIA produced a reform concept document, with the support of two international advisers.⁷¹ However, with parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for 2005, it was highly unlikely that any political leader would embark on a potentially risky reform program.

Second Stage—Post-2005

In March 2005, mass public unrest broke out in the south of the country in response to allegations of mass fraud in the parliamentary elections. The protests gradually spread to the capital, and resulted in the ousting of President Akaev and his administration amid much chaos. Police disappeared from the streets and there was widespread looting in Bishkek. The failure of the police to maintain law and order was partly a response to earlier episodes (particularly the Aksy events) when they had been held liable for political confrontations. The PAP reacted to the overthrow of the government with an interim 12-month program designed to support the police under the new administration. The program struggled initially to attract funding, although the United States provided some 70 percent of the eventual financing needs.

Following the inauguration of a new government in 2005, there seemed to be some potential for a genuine police reform program. The new government established a National Coordination Council on Reforming the Law Enforcement System, and the MIA was tasked with developing a National Police Reform Program. A Police Reform Center was established inside the MIA, apparently to bring together like-minded officers and civilians.⁷² The OSCE continued to work on an essentially interim basis, but maintained ambitious objectives for the PAP, highlighted in official documents in 2006:

(1) improving the operational efficiency of the police by continued provision of advisory support and technical assistance in the areas of criminal investigation, analysis-based policing, public order management, police emergency response in Osh and fighting against organized crime; (2) preparing the ground for the fight against organized crime in the Ministry of Interior as well as a Directorate's field office in Osh; provision of equipment and training; provision of expert advice.

These were rather incoherent programmatic priorities and were far too ambitious in an environment in which a demoralized police force was caught in an ongoing political battle among rival political groups and organized crime leaders. Not surprisingly, this reform program never really developed any traction.

The transformation of the Scientific Research Center into the Center for Police Reform located within the MIA does not seem to have been more than a rebranding exercise. The same leadership was in charge of the new center, which carried out essentially the same activities. In similar fashion, in January 2007, assuming that the government was committed to reform, the PAP was rebranded by the OSCE as the Police Reform Program (PRP). In reality, there was no program of genuine police reform, but there was a significant upswing of activity from 2007 onwards, with repeated workshops, seminars, and conferences, but still no overall strategy, and above all no political commitment to reform from the MIA or from the political leadership.

The PRP had a more stable financial base than the PAP and was able to plan ahead with more confidence. However, the project continued primarily along the same lines, prioritising community policing, public order, and fighting organized crime. The latter area never really developed any serious projects and was confined to seminars or paper training exercises. The project provided material support for community policing, including cars and refurbishment of offices, computers, etc., but with the rapid turnover of officers in each location, the concepts of community policing sometimes appeared to have been lost.

Often the idea of community policing was understood in very different ways by different groups, both locally and internationally. It was particularly difficult to develop a common understanding of the concept with such a wide range of policing cultures present in the OSCE. In many OSCE states community policing is an unfamiliar concept. Indeed, it is primarily a U.K./U.S. approach to policing that is difficult to adapt to a different cultural context. For the most part, in Kyrgyzstan, community policing approaches have led to a kind of hybrid reinvention of the Soviet “neighborhood” policing (*uchastkovyi*), which combined crime prevention and social control with a close relationship with residents of a particular district. This reinvention of a Soviet idea does not always fit with all the principles envisaged by advocates of community policing, but it does offer improved security for many city residents and some enhanced channels of communication with the police. There remain obstacles to further development of community policing. In particular, a system of quotas for crime-solving that serves as the basis of policing in Kyrgyzstan makes it difficult for community officers to spend time on building relationships in the local community.

There are additional challenges for community policing as it is implemented in Kyrgyzstan. The revised Soviet-era *uchastkovyi*-system was most successful in cities, particularly in the planned apartment blocks that dominate Bishkek. In many smaller towns and in rural areas, the problem is often not to little interaction between the police and the

community, but too much. Police are integral elements in all sorts of community-level issues, including resolving local disputes or engaging in business issues, yet because of their links to business groups or community leaders they are often not viewed as impartial. While in theory a rotation system for officers still exists, in practice increasing numbers of police serve in their home districts, where they build up networks of patronage and clientelism. Thus community policing approaches can unwittingly provide the opportunity for further patronage of certain sections of the community at the expense of other groups. In addition, the actual everyday meaning of community policing in Kyrgyzstan will still depend on the political context in which it is implemented. As David Bayley notes: "...community policing may produce a constructive partnership between police and the public in the United States, but in authoritarian countries it can be used for co-optation and top-down regimentation."⁷³

Since 2005, there has been significant training of neighborhood inspectors in community policing methods. Over 500 Local Crime Prevention Centers, which aim to strengthen dialogue, have been set up across the country. Typically, these centers include a local neighborhood police officer(s), a court of elders (*aksakal*), and a board of women, and are usually closely supported by local government (*Ayil Okmotu*). They are designed to provide a mechanism for communities to make the police accountable and to respond to community wishes. It is not difficult to imagine these units taking on a more controlling role in the community, however, particularly in a relatively hierarchical culture. In other cases, they may become effectively "captured" by local "authority figures" or businesspeople. Some reports suggest that in certain districts local businesspeople are providing funding and assistance to local police officers, which leads to an obvious bias toward these business leaders in any disputes or local conflicts.⁷⁴

The OSCE introduced new training opportunities for the police, but it is difficult to ascertain how effective this increased training has been. Some training programs (change management seminars, delivered by international experts, for example) are unlikely to have met local requirements. For others, there was no follow-up training with students in the field, a common feature of police training elsewhere to ensure that training is followed by implementation on the ground. In most cases, however, training is divorced from the imperatives of everyday policing, meaning that once officers return to their local policing environment, they forget much of the training learned in the classroom. For example, the NGO Social Technologies Agency conducted training classes for policemen in interethnic relations, giving instruction to more than 1,200 officers, mostly in the south. This should have been a very positive program, but the interethnic violence of June 2010 demonstrated that such training may have only limited impact on the behavior of ordinary police officers, unless it is followed up and is part of an overall strategy on multiethnic policing, which has political support.

Some of the work in the police academy was undoubtedly useful, such as setting up the Center for Human Rights and Civilian Oversight, but work on the police academy curriculum does not address the real challenges faced by police trainers. Firstly, the overall level of education in primary and secondary schools, particularly in rural areas and in the south, is declining; and, secondly, the high level of corruption in all areas of education ensures that students in many colleges reportedly pay bribes to pass exams. These problems tend to undermine well-meaning innovations in curricula or more provision of IT facilities and other technical assistance.

Some simple ideas, such as police open days, appear to have taken hold. Other promising innovations included the development of a neighborhood watch program in coordination with a local NGO, and efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency undertaken in cooperation with the international NGO Everychild. But other projects were piecemeal: *ad hoc* seminars on interethnic policing in Osh; study tours for police managers to Sweden, Austria, Hungary, and the United Kingdom; a round table against school bullying in Osh; a project on resolving conflicts among teenagers in Naryn province; projects on children's rights. All of these activities may have been useful, and some conducted in conjunction with NGOs were quite effective, but they did not add up to an overall reform strategy.

Perhaps surprisingly, some real progress appears to have been achieved in the area of domestic violence. Two-day training sessions were begun in 2007, and in 2008 training of neighborhood policemen was intensified. In 2008, 95 percent of neighborhood inspectors underwent training in tackling domestic violence, and a local NGO developed a special manual for police involved in such cases. Most police officers were unaware of the law in this area, including the existence of temporary separation orders. Presumably as a result of these training events and general awareness raising, the issuance of temporary separation orders increased from 41 in 2007 to 1,114 in 2008.⁷⁵ Much of this work appears to have stemmed from one NGO, the Centre for Research on Democratic Processes, led by Taalaigul Isakunova, which had developed expertise in this area and ran much of the training. Where there have been successes in the PRP, they have often stemmed from partnerships between the police and local NGOs.

The Police Reform Program and the Bakiev regime

The PRP's public order trainings became more controversial as the government adopted more authoritarian stances after 2007. In 2008–09, the government clamped down much harder on political demonstrations, and on independent political activists and journalists. President Bakiev introduced new, restrictive legislation on freedom of assembly in September 2008, and freedom to hold meetings was further curtailed by various by-laws.

The restrictions on public protests accelerated during and after the July 2009 presidential elections. There appeared to be only a limited reaction by the OSCE to the growing authoritarianism of the government, with the PRP carrying on regardless, despite this sharp deterioration in the political situation.

By 2009, police tactics had shifted from relatively peaceful policing of demonstrations to violent dispersal of any protests. One demonstrator, who was holding a vigil in July 2009 at the Iranian embassy, commented: “We were holding a peaceful gathering for those being persecuted in Iran when the police arrived. They were very aggressive. They barked at us ‘so why have you come down to the streets?’ I was then arrested and taken immediately to the police station.”⁷⁶ These kinds of arrests of anyone involved in street protests became commonplace. In Balykchy, police using riot gear and stun guns violently dispersed a peaceful protest over election results, and arrested 21 protestors. Subsequently some of the demonstrators were charged with attempting “to overthrow the state,” and received prison sentences of up to four years. The accused claimed that they were ill-treated and threatened with rape while in detention.⁷⁷

At the same time, attacks on journalists and political activists also mounted, with at least seven reporters physically attacked during 2009: journalist Almaz Tashiev died after being severely beaten by policemen in the southern district of Nookat in July.⁷⁸ Following mass arrests of participants in a rally in Nookat in October 2008, many of those arrested alleged that they were tortured. A report by the Kyrgyz Ombudsman in February 2009 detailed how police officers had “poured hot and cold water on detainees, beat them on the soles of their feet, and almost suffocated them using plastic bags or gas masks.”⁷⁹ These allegations were ignored, however, during an appeal to the Supreme Court.

The OSCE Center in Bishkek did raise concerns about this deterioration in the human rights situation during 2009, including monitoring trials of prominent opponents of the regime. The widespread reporting of police involvement in these abuses, however, had no apparent impact on the implementation of the OSCE’s PRP. By 2009, it had become clear that there was no real police reform program in Kyrgyzstan, that the security services were deeply implicated in a significant rise in attacks on activists and journalists, and that the regime had embarked on a trajectory toward a much more authoritarian political system. The police were receiving significant increases in funding from the government, and the equipment and training provided by the OSCE was being used to modernize, but not to reform, the police. The Ministry of Interior/OSCE Police Steering Committee in Kyrgyzstan would have been an appropriate forum to at least allude to some of these problems, but the OSCE representative did not mention human rights in a speech to the committee.⁸⁰ Not surprisingly, many NGO leaders and political opponents of the regime were increasingly concerned about the direction of the PRP. The OSCE’s stance again highlighted the danger of viewing police reform as primarily a technical exercise, divorced from the political changes that are going on around it.

After Bakiev: New Challenges

During demonstrations in April 2010 against President Bakiev, security forces shot dead more than 80 people. Most observers suggest that the ordinary police on the streets were unarmed during the protests. In November 2010, law enforcement officers from the Alfa special forces group and the State Protection Service went on trial in Bishkek, charged with the killings of civilians. Kyrgyzstan's police have been extremely cautious about using firearms against public gatherings since 2002, when police officers opened fire on a crowd of protestors in Aksy, in the south of the country, killing five people. Those killings initiated several months of unrest. Since then, police have usually policed demonstrations without firearms.⁸¹ The fact that police officers did not open fire during the confrontations in April 2010 was attributed by some OSCE officials to the influence of OSCE training. This may have played a part, but more important was the experience of 2005, and the unwillingness of the police to put themselves on the line to defend an unpopular regime.⁸²

Once Bakiev had been forced to leave the country, the police quickly disappeared from the streets, apparently fearful of reprisals by violent crowds of antigovernment supporters. Several police officers had been killed in the violence; many more were badly injured. In the new political turmoil, it was unclear whether the security forces would support the interim government. Without visible policing there was widespread concern that there would be mass looting and violence in Bishkek. To avert such an outcome, members of the public developed groups of volunteers (*druzhniki*) to patrol the streets. The OSCE provided them with some support and special vests to identify them; this idea seems to have been a rather successful initiative undertaken in very volatile circumstances. The police gradually reasserted control over the next few weeks.

In June 2010, when violence broke out in the south between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks, the police again failed to quell the unrest. Hundreds of people were killed, including members of both ethnic groups, but all independent reports so far agree that a higher proportion of the dead were ethnic Uzbeks, killed in systematic killings and house-burnings by Kyrgyz rioters over several days. There is considerable dispute over the role of the police in the violence in Osh. One report suggests that the OSCE-trained antiriot unit stationed in the south was effective in controlling the situation in one area, Aravan, during the violence.⁸³ Other reports suggest that the security forces were at best ineffective, and in some cases may have colluded with the rioters.⁸⁴

In the aftermath of the violence, the police conducted a series of “sweep” operations in which they targeted ethnic Uzbeks and treated many of them brutally. In a typical report, one journalist recounts how an Uzbek man was arrested by Kyrgyz police officers in September 2010 with no arrest warrant. His brother alleged that the arrest was simply a way of extorting money from the Uzbek family.⁸⁵ Similar accusations abound, and

there are credible reports of serious abuses of prisoners (most of them ethnic Uzbeks) in police detention in southern cities.⁸⁶ It was clear during the summer of 2010 that security forces structures in the south were largely out of control of northern politicians, and that southern elites were strongly resisting attempts by Bishkek to reassert control.⁸⁷ After an unsuccessful attempt by President Roza Otunbaeva to dismiss the mayor of Osh, the city's police chief joined the mayor in what was effectively an antigovernment demonstration.⁸⁸

During the Bakiev years, the police and security forces in the south had become heavily enmeshed in organized crime, including drug trafficking. It is probably reasonable to argue that organized crime and the state had effectively merged. In one report, a senior security official claimed that "all aspects of state power are corrupt—police, military, state security, border guards, the prosecutors, the courts, everything."⁸⁹ In such a context it was hardly surprising that police reform by the OSCE failed to make a significant impact in the south of the country, but the grim events in the south in the summer of 2010 underlined the increasing disconnect between the glossy brochures and videos produced by the OSCE PRP and the reality of everyday policing on the ground.

The Police Advisory Group

Following the interethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, the OSCE proposed the Police Advisory Group (PAG), a small (52-member) international police mission deployed to Osh and Jalalabat, to provide support and mentoring to the local police force. Officials hoped that having an international presence would at least make the police more cautious and perhaps prevent some of the more egregious abuses. The Kyrgyz government had initially discussed the possibility of Russian troops being deployed in the south, but the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation appeared unable to act, partly owing to Russian reluctance (and perhaps lack of capacity), and partly owing to behind-the-scenes objections from Belarus, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. This left only the OSCE among regional actors willing and able to act.

While the PAG eventually gained unanimous support from the Permanent Council, the drawn-out nature of this process gave time to allow some politicians in Kyrgyzstan to develop a public campaign against OSCE deployment. In particular, the mayor of Osh, Melis Myrzakmatov, announced that the mission would not be welcome in the south, and there were small demonstrations arranged in Osh and Bishkek to protest against the deployment. By late September, the mission had contracted personnel, but a memorandum of understanding had still not been signed with the Kyrgyz government. President Otunbaeva had initially supported the deployment, but became increasingly concerned about the potential for any deployment to cause further instability in the south during a pre-election campaign. The PAG was effectively put on hold until after the parliamentary elections scheduled for October 10.

The failure to deploy the PAG in timely fashion was a serious setback for the OSCE. However, OSCE officials persisted in negotiations with the government, eventually agreeing in late November 2010 to a compromise arrangement, under which international staff would be deployed as part of a Kyrgyzstan Community Security Initiative. This plan was a diluted version of the original PAG, with only about 30 international staff, but it retained many of the essential features, including the deployment of police teams to Osh and Jalalabat in the south, but it is too early to tell whether there will be sufficient presence on the ground to have an impact on police behavior.⁹⁰

While the OSCE was attempting to deploy an international mission, other bilateral donors were also developing significant assistance initiatives to the security services. The United States announced a major program of aid to the Kyrgyz MIA, including patrol cars, technical assistance, and training for police. The details of the U.S. assistance program also remain to be clarified, including its relationship to the PRP. U.S. officials assert that the new aid will be coordinated with the OSCE to avoid overlap and duplication.⁹¹

Thematic Areas of Police-related Activity

Like many international organizations, the OSCE is in a continual state of reinvention. It now includes thematic approaches to terrorism, organized crime, trafficking in human beings, and border management, all initiatives that have been established in the past 10 years. While the field missions remain the key locus for operations in police-related activities, specialized units in the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna corresponding to these themes also play an important role in different aspects of police assistance programing. The interaction among all these bodies, and with delegations of the 56 participating States, is highly politicized; as a result, the organization can often appear dysfunctional. There are now attempts to try to introduce some coherence in all these activities and units, by introducing an overall theme of “Transnational threats,” with some kind of organizational restructuring to match.⁹²

Organized crime has been one of the key themes that the OSCE has attempted to address in recent years. Since 2005, there have been various attempts to raise the profile of the OSCE in international efforts in this area. These have not, however, been particularly successful, partly because of a lack of expertise within the OSCE, and partly because many OSCE states are not enthusiastic about sharing information on organized crime or allowing increased scrutiny on such a sensitive topic. Nevertheless, there has been increasing activity in the wake of a Permanent Council decision, “On combating transnational organized crime,” made in 2005 in Ljubljana.

The Belgian chairmanship in 2006 made organized crime one of three priorities for the year, but no substantive activities appear to have been implemented, despite this prioritization. The OSCE Ministerial Council, meeting in December 2006 in Brussels, tasked the OSCE structures with various activities, none of which appear to have had any lasting impact.⁹³ The Secretary-General initiated “organized crime cluster meetings,”

which led to a Task Force on Organized Crime,⁹⁴ but this does not seem to have developed a real plan of action. Since then, there has been an annual report on OSCE activities in this area, but there remains a lack of clarity over what additional expertise the OSCE can offer in the sphere of organized crime. According to the report, the OSCE undertook “228 activities” in 2009 to fight organized crime, but most of these appear to have involved merely organizing or attending conferences and workshops.⁹⁵

Most attention in the area of organized crime is devoted to countering drug trafficking in the OSCE area. In principle, this should be an obvious area for cooperation in the OSCE space. The OSCE includes some of the world’s major markets for illegal narcotics, including the United Kingdom, Italy, France, and Germany, and some key transit countries, including the Central Asian states, of which three—Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—border Afghanistan. Since 2003, Afghanistan has been a “partner for cooperation” with the OSCE, and one of the main areas of cooperation has been in border management and antinarcotics activities.

The main international actor in counter-narcotics policy in the region is the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), but the OSCE has attempted to contribute in various ways, including training counter-narcotics officers from the region and from Afghanistan. In policing projects, there have been various efforts to train police officers in detecting and interdicting both narcotics and precursors. This has been complemented by the efforts in training border guards in similar areas. Most of these activities have been conducted in conjunction with other organizations, such as the UNODC, or the Drug Control Agency in Tajikistan, for example. The SPMU has organized training in Turkey and in Tajikistan for Afghan police officers and counter-narcotics officers, an exercise promoted by the United States, and which appears to have primarily political objectives. It appears unlikely to have any impact on the continuing low level of drug seizures in Afghanistan itself.

In addition to trying to tackle drug trafficking, the OSCE has also developed an interest in trafficking in human beings. To address the issue, it formed a special unit with the rather unwieldy title of Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. From 2003 onwards the OSCE made human trafficking an important policy focus, initially working only in eastern and southeastern Europe, but gradually expanding to the whole of the OSCE area. Currently, it is doing much less work in Central Asia, despite the size of the problem of human trafficking and the existence of a wide spectrum of migration and labor issues, some involving serious problems of coercion, in the region.⁹⁶

The Action against Terrorism Unit also came into being after 2001, as part of the OSCE’s efforts to respond to the new international counter-terrorism agenda. It has a rather narrow range of activities related to travel document security, cyber-security and other rather technical issues. All of these issues are related in various ways to border man-

agement and security, which also has its own agency in the OSCE structures. However, border management officials are part of the Operations Service unit in the Conflict Prevention Center, rather than existing in a stand-alone institution like other thematic areas. This status has produced frequent battles with other institutions over responsibilities, but the borders team has been relatively active in promoting new initiatives in border management training, particularly in a new staff college in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

“Transnational Security Threats” and the OSCE

There are obvious problems with addressing “transnational threats,” including organized crime and terrorism, in the OSCE space. Although these threats are presented as issues that can bring states together in a common cause, in reality different states have very diverse understandings of what these threats are and how to deal with them, something that is reflected in organizational labels. For example, in Turkmenistan it is the Department for the Prevention of Terrorism and Organized Crime, in the Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for surveillance and arrests of journalists, political opposition, and NGO activists. In Uzbekistan, the label “terrorist” has been applied to all types of underground Islamist groups, even those that are not involved in any violent activities. Political opponents have often been arrested in Central Asian countries on charges of corruption, organized crime or drug trafficking; a favorite method to arrest journalists or political activists, particularly in Uzbekistan, is to plant drugs on them.

The indiscriminate use of these terms by states to label political opponents or nonviolent activists poses significant problems for the OSCE. Many OSCE officials are sensitive to these issues, and have attempted to focus attention on the problem, but OSCE projects and programing in this area by some OSCE bodies demonstrate much less interest in issues of interpretation and language, instead focusing on a narrow technical agenda of counter-terrorism measures.⁹⁷ This distortion of the language of terrorism and crime by some states tends to produce a discourse in which all OSCE states are described as facing the same threats, which they apparently define in the same way. Arguably, these discussions, which emphasize “common threats,” actually produce a narrative that normalizes existing regimes, and provides them with an implicit justification for both their authoritarian behavior and, paradoxically, for their close inter-relationship with criminal activities.

The close relationship in many states between the security forces, political leaders, and organized crime is the other major obstacle to effective action by organizations such as the OSCE to prevent the growth of transnational crime. Drug trafficking is an excellent example of how many of these international programs designed to tackle security threats fail to achieve the desired outcome. Western governments often cite the need to boost

counter-narcotics activities as a reason to support police assistance programs and other forms of assistance to security forces. However, for the most part, assistance programs have failed to have any significant impact on the Central Asian drug trade. In fact, as assistance has increased over the years, the level of seizures of opiates has hardly changed. While production in Afghanistan and export through Central Asia has increased since the 1990s, aggregate opiate seizure levels have remained flat overall: about 9,394 kg was reportedly seized in 2006, almost matching a 1996 figure of 9,155 kg.⁹⁸ The UN concludes that the “[post-2001] rise in opium production and estimated increase in the opiate trafficking volume has not resulted in consistently higher opiate seizures in Central Asia.”⁹⁹ These statistics suggest that that an influx of millions of dollars of aid to Central Asian border guards and law enforcement agencies from the United States and other Western countries over the past decade has not been effective in limiting the transit of narcotics through the Central Asia region.

The reasons for these failures are clear. As Central Asian countries have stabilized, groups close to the political leadership and key players in the security apparatus have increasingly monopolized the control of narcotics trafficking. These groups have successfully squeezed out rival drug gangs, which have sometimes been associated with rival political or ideological groupings. This process of centralization has led in turn to less of the instability and crime associated with drug trafficking and a more stable state, at least in the short term. As an indicator of this process, it is worth noting that drug crime in Tajikistan fell markedly after 2001, from 1,949 cases to a remarkably low 726 cases during the year of 2006. This leaves UN experts puzzled: “Given Tajikistan’s position as the drug gateway to Central Asia,” they wrote in a recent report, “it is peculiar that drug related crime and convictions are the lowest in Central Asia.”¹⁰⁰ This dynamic is echoed throughout the region: as the volume of drugs passing through the region increases, the level of drugs-related crime actually falls, because more and more of the trade is effectively conducted by a small number of groups “licensed” by the state.

Internationally funded initiatives such as the Drug Control Agency in Tajikistan (with which the OSCE cooperates in training border guards), have quite impressive seizure rates by regional standards and are often praised as models for the rest of Central Asia. Such institutions are only tolerated, however, when they are careful not to investigate major players with political protection, and instead concentrate on smaller (“amateur”) groups without the same network of connections. Thus the impact of international assistance is primarily on small-scale traffickers, who do not have the right connections or resources for bribery to ensure that they are not caught. International assistance in this area essentially helps drug traffickers linked to state institutions retain a near-monopoly on the trade in narcotics through the region. This has two positive outcomes: it reduces the potential for violence by limiting conflict between different drug gangs; and it probably

reduces the amount of drugs that are sold on the local market (most “official” transit is directed to Russia and Europe, rather than toward local markets). What it does not do is reduce the volume of drugs passing through the region to their final markets in Western Europe.¹⁰¹

As a result, assistance to states in the areas of organized crime, money laundering or counter-narcotics activities tends to have very limited impact on the actual problem. It is based, in essence, on a fundamental fallacy: that OSCE participating States have common objectives in areas of nontraditional security threats and terrorism. In reality, many Central Asian regimes use aspects of organized criminal activity both for self-enrichment and to maintain political control.

Agencies in the OSCE Engaged in Police-related Activities

As policing has become an increasingly important part of the OSCE agenda, an ever broader range of institutions within the organization has become involved. There have been frequent calls to streamline these complex and sometimes dysfunctional structures and agencies.¹⁰² With regard to Central Asia, these bodies fall into three broad categories: field missions in Central Asia, which are responsible for all operations and projects in their particular countries; thematic units, attached to the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna; and two other OSCE bodies, the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The field missions have sometimes changed their titles and mandates, but for the most part have been present in Central Asian states since the 1990s. The OSCE Center in Ashgabat was set up in 1998, and has remained active despite frequently poor relations with the government. Similarly, the OSCE project coordinator in Tashkent has experienced difficult relations with the Government of Uzbekistan, including being downgraded from a “center” in 2006, and working under a new mandate, which downplays issues of democratization and human rights.¹⁰³ There has been an OSCE presence under various guises in Tajikistan since 1994. Since 2008, it has been termed the OSCE office in Tajikistan, and it is a much larger enterprise than in other Central Asian republics. It has a specific commitment to “assist the Republic of Tajikistan in the areas of ...police-related activities, border management and security and trafficking.”¹⁰⁴ The centers in Bishkek and Astana also date back to 1998, with the latter initially being established in Almaty. The center in Bishkek also has an office in Osh.

While the field missions run all the projects and activities in police-related areas, they are supported by a growing range of thematic units in the secretariat in Vienna. Those who claim to be involved in police-related activities include: the SPMU; the Action against

Terrorism Unit; the Operations Service/Borders Team in the Conflict Prevention Centre; the Gender Section; the Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities; and the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. All these diverse units are engaged in some way in police-related activities, but their activities are frequently not coordinated, and their various activities certainly do not add up to some kind of overall security sector strategy. However, among some units there is greater cooperation than among others: the determining factors appear to be a combination of policy agreement and personal relationships. As is usually the case in large organizations, there is also a good deal of dysfunctional internal politics that makes cooperation more difficult, compounded in the case of the OSCE by the added complication of the 56 diplomatic delegations, all of which have their own national agendas.

An additional issue within the OSCE is the non-career nature of the service, with employment limited to a maximum of seven years. This has the advantage of ensuring some regular renewal of staff, but it does undermine the institutional memory of the organization and makes it difficult to develop effective processes for learning lessons from previous experience. Deployments to field missions are often of very limited duration, which can also undermine project planning, relationship-building, and cooperation within the organization. Many officials are seconded from participating States, ensuring that they are often more responsive to their own ministries than to officials in Vienna. Local government officials and NGOs are often more aware of the OSCE's history in a particular country than OSCE officials, and many government officials are highly experienced at dealing effectively with OSCE diplomats.

Organizational divides have clearly made policy planning more difficult, and the evolution of multiple thematic units has contributed to these problems. There have been consistent problems and misunderstandings within the OSCE regarding chain of command and management for project implementation in police-related projects, particularly regarding the role of the SPMU.¹⁰⁵ While heads of centers and missions have been effectively responsible for program implementation, the role of the SPMU has often appeared unclear. Bureaucratic infighting and consistent struggles for influence over particular areas of policy and programing have consistently marked its role. Overall, the SPMU now acts as a focal point for police-related matters, puts together an annual report on police assistance by the OSCE, and seeks to support some projects or events organized by field offices. It also maintains a very useful online database, POLIS. However, in recent years its role in strategic thinking and planning on policing within the OSCE has diminished, although the SPMU has produced a range of guidelines and other publications.¹⁰⁶

The ODIHR and the HCNM are two organizations in the OSCE that exist outside the main secretariat and the network of field offices, and both have developed more expertise in police-related projects in recent years.

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

The ODIHR's activities are partially outlined under specific country headings above, including the important project on pretrial detention in Kazakhstan. It also supported the introduction of jury trials in that country. In addition, the ODIHR has conducted several thematic programs, including one focused on human rights training for officers engaged in counter-terrorism activities, which was piloted in Kyrgyzstan in December 2005 and which has added an important element to OSCE activities related to terrorism and counter-terrorism.¹⁰⁷ The ODIHR has also been engaged on legislative issues, conducting a review of Kyrgyz legislation regarding the police in 2005–06, and developing a range of sources regarding legislation in OSCE states. Paradoxically, all of this activity may have come at the price of effectiveness. According to one former ODIHR official, the organization has diminished its impact in Central Asia by running too many projects, and not engaging enough in political and strategic dialogue at high level.¹⁰⁸

High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)

The HCNM has become more involved in policing activities at a strategic level over the past few years. In Central Asia this interest has primarily been aimed at dealing with inter-ethnic problems in Kyrgyzstan, where a project to train officers in multiethnic policing was begun in 2006, with a pilot project on strengthening cooperation between the police and national minorities. What were termed “minority focal points” were to be established under this project in Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Chui, to provide a point of contact for ethnic minority groups, primarily Uzbeks in the southern cities, and Dungans, Chechens, and other minorities in the northern Chui Valley region. The project also included outreach activities by the police and attempts to get more cooperation between the police and ethnic minority NGOs.¹⁰⁹ This could have been an important project within the overall remit of conflict prevention, but all those involved appear to believe that it failed to be implemented seriously, although the reasons for this failure are disputed.¹¹⁰

During 2007, the HCNM handed over the training project in multiethnic policing to the interior ministry. Officially, this “marked an important stage in the HCNM’s engagement because it increased the project’s sustainability in the long-run...”¹¹¹ In reality, it appears that the lack of engagement in the project by OSCE bodies essentially meant that it was downgraded by the ministry, and lost any momentum in implementation. During 2010, as tensions between different communities mounted in the south, many Uzbeks

complained that there was not a reliable point of contact to communicate their concerns either to the local police or to political leaders. There is an urgent need to develop new policies with regard to multiethnic relations involving the police, including redressing the balance of ethnic representation within the police force, which consists overwhelmingly of ethnic Kyrgyz.

Evaluation and Assessment Processes

Throughout the research for this paper, one common thread has emerged in all the various police-related programs: the apparent lack of robust evaluation mechanisms that could lead to effective lessons learned from previous mistakes. Frequently, the SPMU or other bodies report highly optimistic and misleading accounts of the situation. For example, by 2005, at the end of the first PAP, the SPMU was claiming that “the [Kyrgyz] project contributed to the further strengthening of a dynamic and transparent partnership between the OSCE and the Kyrgyz Police at all levels,”¹¹² an assessment that seemed very far from the truth to other observers. Similarly, OSCE reports in 2009 also seem to have underestimated the real problems posed by the political situation in which policing was occupying such a key role. The OSCE was frequently cast in the role of cheerleader for what should have been the government’s reform program; however, these claims were often an extremely glossy and misleading version of reality.

Published excerpts of an external evaluation of the PAP conducted in July 2005 offer only unalloyed praise, despite the obvious failings of police conduct during the election period in March 2005, and the limited progress that was made before that date.¹¹³ In 2008, the SPMU published a report on lessons learned from OSCE policing programs in southeastern Europe.¹¹⁴ However, most of the lessons learned appear to have been devised by OSCE officials themselves rather than from independent evaluations of the OSCE’s role in police assistance programs. An internal evaluation by the OSCE of the training element of the program conducted in 2010 has not had any impact on the functioning of the program so far. Many of the problems identified in this report are well known to officials in OSCE structures, but there is no clear institutional mechanism to channel these opinions toward improved practice.

The program in Kyrgyzstan did consider this issue of evaluation, but it has primarily relied on anecdotal evidence or opinion polls to assess whether improvements have occurred. However, opinion polls are often unreliable in Kyrgyzstan and are not necessarily a robust indicator of attitudes and perceptions. In Osh, the poll reports appeared to underestimate the importance of the most obvious problem in the city, namely the divided attitudes of ethnic Uzbeks and ethnic Kyrgyz toward the police.¹¹⁵ In other areas, the opinion polls do not appear to ask the kind of questions that would enable any evaluation of the OSCE itself, by the police or the public. Rather negative impressions from opinion polls tend not to be highlighted in OSCE reports, and there are insufficient polls to track long-term changes in opinion.¹¹⁶

Overall, the OSCE still uses statistical outcomes such as counting “activities” as evidence of progress. According to the SPMU, there have been 4,911 police-related “activities” in 1999-2009, of which 931 were in Central Asia.¹¹⁷ This is a misleading and unhelpful way to assess progress, and is likely to lead to a proliferation of non-productive activities for institutional reasons. There appears to be a lack of reliable indicators that might demonstrate real progress in policing as a result of intervention, and developing such indicators would seem to be an obvious priority.

Conclusion

As part of its reflection on 10 years of police-related activities in the OSCE, the SPMU issued a report which attempted to assess these activities according to seven criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, coherence, and value added. Not surprisingly, the report suggests that in all of these areas the OSCE has scored highly and that there are only limited areas for improvement. It concludes: “Overall, the OSCE’s competence and institutional knowledge in police-related activities as well as its capacity to promote regional cooperation among its participating States are well acknowledged and used by other international organizations, in particular, in the fight against transnational organized crime and terrorism.”¹¹⁸

This paper differs substantially from these assessments with regard to OSCE police-related activities in Central Asia, concluding that in most cases, these projects are not highly effective, and have had little immediate impact. In most cases, they are not sustainable and they lack coherence. In some cases, arguably, they may have done more harm than good, by providing legitimacy to authoritarian regimes and helping them to modernize repressive law enforcement agencies. There is no evidence that the OSCE’s programs in these areas have assisted in the “fight against transnational organized crime and terrorism.”

There are some much more modest aspects that might be highlighted as positive outcomes. The OSCE offers a useful way for Central Asian police forces to have the opportunity to discuss alternative ideas and approaches to policing, including international policing standards. Programs that combine training and ongoing monitoring, such as the ODIHR detention program in Kazakhstan, are most likely to be effective. Other programs on issues such as domestic violence that include active NGOs with expertise also seem most likely to succeed.

Some initiatives that can be adapted to fit with familiar local policing traditions, such as the neighborhood policing aspects of community policing programs, may also

be appropriate in certain political contexts. In addition, there are clearly areas where it is useful for OSCE police forces to share information, and to attempt to build up some cooperation on transnational crime, even with all the reservations outlined above. Finally, and most optimistically, these programs may put in place structures and ideas that will lay the basis for future police reform processes, when the political situation is more supportive.

However, two cardinal rules are worth recalling. Firstly, none of these potentially positive outcomes will create a genuine movement for police reform without real political leadership within a country. OSCE officials often argue that the organization may be able to act as a useful catalyst for reformers within security agencies or governments. However, in Kyrgyzstan, there is little evidence that 10 years of OSCE engagement on policing has produced any significant group of political figures or security officials dedicated to a thorough reform of the police and other security organs. In countries like Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan there is outright political hostility to the concept of democratic policing. Instead, governments continue to rely on repressive, state-oriented security services that are engaged in widespread human rights abuses.

Secondly, it is impossible to develop democratic policing in a nondemocratic political environment. The OSCE's police assistance programs have tended to ignore the political contexts in which they work, preferring to focus on the technical aspects of policing. This has led to controversial situations, such as the PRP in Kyrgyzstan at various points in its history losing the support of a wide raft of NGOs and political opposition groups. Attempts to engage in training and technical assistance programs with law enforcement agencies in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have often developed further than would be expected in an organization committed to democratic values. The promotion of such activities does not produce any sustainable results, but does feed into a narrative of normalization, suggesting that, for example, Uzbek law enforcement agencies have overcome the international censure aimed at them following the Andijan massacre.

Under hybrid political regimes it may be possible to make some progress in improving law enforcement agencies, but programs are only likely to be effective in selected areas. This is clear from the program in Kyrgyzstan, where the picture is very mixed. The police need some international assistance to make progress toward a more responsive and effective service. However, there is almost no support for reform either inside the police or among political leaders. This suggests that police reform is difficult to achieve without working to build up a constituency for reform and engaging with a much wider array of political actors than at present. Although working with NGOs also presents a range of problems, some of the most effective areas of work have involved linking the police with competent NGOs to provide training and monitoring on issues such as domestic violence.

Above all, staff involved in police programing need to understand much better the environment in which they are operating, engage more closely with specialists in local

politics and culture, and develop a system for proper evaluation of their work by developing robust indicators and welcoming candid and independent assessments of success and failure. Without such evaluation and a more self-critical stance, these projects become “virtual” processes, divorced from reality and maintained by only a small coterie of self-interested officials on both sides rather than engaging with a broad range of institutions and individuals.¹¹⁹ This need for wider engagement also applies inside the OSCE: police assistance programs should be designed to work in close collaboration with institutions in the OSCE, such as the ODIHR and the HCNM, which have extensive experience in human rights monitoring and engagement with political processes.

These issues in policing policy reflect much broader trends within the OSCE. Some officials and delegations would like to see a shift away from a focus on political and human rights issues toward more engagement in a range of security areas, including drug trafficking, transnational crime, human trafficking, and terrorism. As a result, some have argued that the OSCE has begun to lose its unique status as an arena for political engagement and has become too focused on projects and programs.¹²⁰ Others have suggested that human rights issues and democratization have been sidelined in the drive to ensure engagement with nondemocratic members of the organization. Certainly, this trajectory poses significant questions about the normative stance of the OSCE and its ability to retain a balance between engagement in security sector reform and its commitments on human rights and democracy.

OSCE programs and policies on policing assistance in Central Asia should be viewed within this broader trajectory in the organization, and the overall crisis faced by the OSCE, in its inability to encourage a significant number of participating States to meet their OSCE commitments on democratization and human rights. The difficulties in dealing with these states, including the authoritarian regimes of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, has led the OSCE to seek alternative ways to accommodate them within the organization, which has stretched its normative concepts and left many participants and observers disillusioned with its continued engagement. In addition, the development of a semiauthoritarian political system in Russia, one of the key players in the OSCE, has made achieving consensus on such issues extremely difficult. The OSCE is only the most visible organization that faces these difficulties: in one sense, the whole of Western policy in Central Asia faces a similar dilemma, as it becomes clear that two decades of international engagement in the region has achieved very limited results in the areas of political liberalization and democratic development.

Notes

1. There is a burgeoning literature on SSR, primarily focused on post-conflict environments, much of it in the shape of problem-solving manuals and guidelines. For an overview of the concept, see Nicole Ball, Dylan Hendrickson, “Trends in Security Sector Reform (SSR): Police, practice and research,” paper given at workshop on New Directions in Security Sector Reform, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, Canada, November 3–4, 2005; The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) *Handbook on Security Sector Reform*, (Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/data-oecd/43/25/38406485.pdf>), is the main set of international guidelines for SSR programming and projects. Specifically on police reform, see David H. Bayley, *Democratizing the Police Abroad: What to Do and How to Do It*, U.S. Department of Justice, June 2001.
2. Nicole Ball, *Dilemmas of Security Sector Reform*, Berghoff Foundation, available at: http://www.berghoff-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue2_ball.pdf [accessed October 1, 2010].
3. Alice Hills, “The dialectic of police reform in Nigeria,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 46(2), pp. 215–234.
4. Robert Egnell and Peter Haldén, “Laudable, ahistorical and overambitious: security sector reform meets state formation theory,” *Conflict, Security & Development*, 9(1), 2009, pp. 27–54.
5. Nicole Ball, Dylan Hendrickson, “Trends in Security Sector Reform (SSR): Police, practice and research,” paper given at workshop on New Directions in Security Sector Reform, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, Canada, November 3–4, 2005; p. 26. Available at: http://www.ssrnetwork.net/uploaded_files/3278.pdf (Accessed October 1, 2010).
6. A recent report concludes that: “Despite ... growth in numbers, the expenditure of \$10 billion in international police assistance, and the involvement of the United States, the European Union, and multiple donors, the ANP is riddled with corruption and generally unable to protect Afghan citizens, control crime, or deal with the growing insurgency.” See Robert M. Perito, *Afghanistan’s Police: The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform*, United States Institute of Peace, August 2009. Available at: http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan_police.pdf (Accessed October 1, 2010).
7. See OSCE, *Guidebook on Democratic Policing*, Vienna, May 2008, pp. 12–15. Available at: http://www.osce.org/publications/spmu/2007/01/23086_795_en.pdf (Accessed November 23, 2010).
8. On the shift towards transnational threats, see Wolfgang Zellner, “Addressing transnational threats and Risks—a key challenge for the OSCE,” *Helsinki Monitor*, 16 (2005), pp. 214–217.
9. See, for example, “The Astana Commemorative Declaration: Towards a Security Organization,” December 2, 2010. Available at: http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2010/12/48067_en.pdf.

10. The 56 states that are members of the OSCE are referred to within the organization by the idiosyncratic term, “participating States,” which has also been used throughout this paper.
11. Strategic Police Matters Unit, *Report by the OSCE Secretary General on Police-related Activities of the OSCE Executive Structures up to the End of 2009*, Vienna, April 2010, p. 127.
12. For a historical overview of OSCE involvement in police-related activities, see Thorsten Stodiek, “OSCE’s police-related activities: lessons-learned during the last decade,” *Security & Human Rights*, 2009, 20(3), pp. 201–211.
13. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2002* [SEC.DOC/2/02/Rev.2. December 12, 2002].
14. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2002* [SEC.DOC/2/02/Rev.2. December 12, 2002], p. 9.
15. David H. Bayley, *Democratizing the Police Abroad: What to Do and How to Do It*, U.S. Department of Justice, June 2001, pp. 35–36.
16. L. Shelley, “Post-Socialist policing: limitations on institutional change,” in R.I. Mawby (ed.), *Policing Across the World: Lessons for the Twenty First Century*, Routledge, 1999.
17. For a more detailed account of how these systems developed and how they work, see International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: The Politics of Police Reform*, December 10, 2002. Available at: www.crisisgroup.org.
18. International Republican Institute, *Kazakhstan National Public Opinion Survey*, April 2010, p. 26. Available at: [ww.iri.org](http://www.iri.org).
19. *Ibid.*, p. 31. Available at: [ww.iri.org](http://www.iri.org). In this survey, the police received some of the lowest approval ratings in the country. Indeed, the only institutions to get worse approval ratings were NGOs and the political opposition, which raises a whole raft of secondary questions. *Ibid.*, p. 37
20. The *militia* was also relatively popular in the Soviet period, at least by comparison with the much-feared KGB: ordinary policemen were often portrayed sympathetically in popular films of the Soviet period.
21. For some examples, see International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: The Politics of Police Reform*, December 10, 2002. Available at: www.crisisgroup.org
22. Human Rights Watch, “Human Rights Watch Letter to the EBRD in Advance of its Review of Turkmenistan,” March 1, 2010. Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/03/01/turkmenistan-human-rights-watch-letter-ebrd-advance-its-review-turkmenistan> (Accessed October 10, 2010).
23. *Ibid.*
24. U.S. State Department, 2009 *Human Rights Report: Turkmenistan*, March 11, 2010. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/sca/136095.htm> (Accessed October 10, 2010).
25. Emmanuel Decaux, *OSCE Rapporteur’s Report on Turkmenistan*, ODIHR.GAL/15/03, March 12, 2003. Available at: http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2003/03/1636_en.pdf (Accessed November 19, 2010).
26. Charles Dameron, “Torture in Uzbekistan described on Capitol Hill,” REF/RL, June 28, 2010. Available at: http://www.rferl.org/content/Torture_In_Uzbekistan_Described_On_Capitol_Hill/2085151.html (Accessed November 22, 2010).
27. Human Rights Alliance of Uzbekistan, Committee for the Liberation of Prisoners of Conscience, Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights (Germany), *Torture in Uzbekistan: Still Systematic and Unpunished* (Report submitted to the 98th session of the UN Committee on Civil and Political Rights). Available at: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/ngos/JointStatement_Uzbekistan98.pdf (Accessed September 30, 2010), p. 4.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
29. “Charges Dropped against Uzbek Police in Alleged Gang Rape,” RFE/RL, 11 April 2010. Available at: http://www.rferl.org/content/Charges_Dropped_Against_Uzbek_Police_In_Alleged_Gang_Rape/2021771.html (Accessed September 15, 2010).
30. Human Rights Alliance of Uzbekistan et al., *op cit.*, p. 9, footnote.
31. For detailed accounts, see ODIHR, *Preliminary Findings on the Events in Andijan, 13 May 2005*. Available at: http://www.osce.org/documents/odihhr/2005/06/15233_en.pdf (Accessed October 10, 2010); and Human Rights Watch, *Bullets Were Falling Like Rain: The Andijan Massacre*, May 13, 2005. Available at: www.hrw.org.
32. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2003* [SEC.DOC/2/04/Rev.I, June 11, 2004], pp. 32–33.
33. The OSCE representation in Tashkent had been downgraded from a Centre in the aftermath of Andijan, and particularly in response to a critical ODIHR report on the events in Andijan (see footnote 27).
34. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities in 2007* [SEC.DOC/2/08, September 28, 2008]: p. 65.
35. Press release: “OSCE Project Co-ordinator Helps Train Central Asian Police Dog Handlers to Combat Organized Crime, Terrorism.” Available at: http://www.osce.org/uzbekistan/item_1_26025.html (Accessed August 25, 2010).
36. Author interviews, former OSCE staff, Bishkek, Vienna.
37. Former ODIHR official Vladimir Shkolnikov commented: “What is completely clear is that the OSCE is not able to reflect on the substance and potential impact of projects. Apparently it is not at all bothered about the likelihood of strengthening the repressive apparatus of the Karimov regime as a result of such a project,” From Vladimir Shkolnikov, “Retrospective on OSCE strategic thinking on Central Asia,” *Security and Human Rights*, 2009, No. 4, p. 301.
38. *Frontline*, “Uzbekistan: Journalist and human rights defender Salijon Abdurahmanov detained,” June 20, 2008. Available at: <http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/node/1478> (Accessed September 10, 2010).
39. Human Rights Alliance of Uzbekistan, Committee for the Liberation of Prisoners of Conscience, Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights (Germany), *Torture in Uzbekistan: Still Systematic and Unpunished* (Report submitted to the 98th session of the UN Committee on Civil and Political Rights).
40. Human Rights Watch, *An Atmosphere of Quiet Repression: Freedom of Religion, Assembly and Expression in Kazakhstan*, December 1, 2008. Available at: www.hrw.org.
41. Yevgeny Zhovtis is a current member of the board of the Open Society Foundations’ Central Eurasia Project.
42. Human Rights Watch, *Kazakhstan: Court Upholds Harsh Verdict*, October 20, 2009. Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/10/20/kazakhstan-court-upholds-harsh-verdict> (Accessed September 20, 2010).
43. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2004* [SEC.DOC/2/05 June 29, 2005]: p. 32. Many of the reports on police assistance projects have a similarly self-congratulatory tone, with little evidence to support their assertions.
44. “ODIHR Annual Report on Police-Related Activities 2004,” appendix to *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2004* [SEC.DOC/2/05 June 29, 2005]: p. 3.
45. “ODIHR Annual Report on Police-Related Activities 2003,” appendix to *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2003* [SEC.DOC/2/04/Rev.I. June 11, 2004]: p. 4.
46. “ODIHR Annual Report on Police-Related Activities 2005,” appendix to *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2005*, pp. 3–4.

47. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2005* [SEC.DOC/2/06, November 2, 2006]: p. 37.
48. Some “study tours” are more blatantly touristic than others. There is no tradition of community policing in Spain; one community policing project that was initiated was closed down due to opposition from the Spanish police themselves. Author interview, SPMU official, Vienna, September 2010.
49. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2006* [no ref, no date]: p. 20. Given the political controversy related to the widespread use of CCTV in the United Kingdom, it seems unusual to have offered the United Kingdom as a model in this particular area.
50. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2007* [SEC.DOC/2/08, September 28, 2008]: p. 56.
51. In 2007, OSCE representation in Kazakhstan moved to the new capital, Astana, and was renamed accordingly.
52. IWPR, *Addressing Torture in Tajikistan*, July 15, 2009. Available at: <http://iwpr.net/report-news/addressing-torture-tajikistan> (Accessed September 30, 2010).
53. U.S. State Department, *Human Rights Reports 2009: Tajikistan*. Available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/sca/136094.htm>.
54. International Crisis Group, “Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure,” *Asia Report* No. 162, February 12, 2009, p. 6.
55. “Top Tajik Security Chiefs Dismissed Following Prison Break,” RFE/RL, September 2, 2010. Available at: http://www.rferl.org/content/Tajik_Special_Services_Head_Dismissed_Following_Jail-break/2146168.html.
56. Andrew McGregor, “Jihad in the Rasht Valley: Tajikistan’s security dilemma,” *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 8, Issue 37, October 4, 2010.
57. Author’s interview, Vienna. October 2010.
58. See: <http://www.osce.org/tajikistan/13484.html>.
59. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2008*, p. 82.
60. The publication of these kinds of findings is useful. The results suggest that candid focus groups appear likely to provide more robust findings than opinion polling in the Central Asian context. OSCE, *Report on Results of Focus Group Research Regarding Public Security Concerns and Experiences with Local Law Enforcement in the Republic of Tajikistan*, Available at: <http://polis.osce.org/library/f/3713/2979/OSCE-TJK-RPT-3713-EN-Report%20on%20Results%20of%20Focus%20Group%20Research.pdf> (Accessed September 30, 2010), p. 11.
61. OSCE/Global Crisis and Rule of Law Development Association, *Assessment Report*. Available at: <http://polis.osce.org/library/f/3710/2974/OSCE-TJK-RPT-3710-EN-Assessment%20report.pdf> (Accessed September 30, 2010), p. 7.
62. Manija Kurbanova, “Domestic violence bill stalls in Tajikistan,” IWPR, October 16, 2010. Available at: <http://iwpr.net/report-news/domestic-violence-bill-stalled-tajikistan> (Accessed September 30, 2010).
63. Author interviews, senior OSCE staff, Bishkek, September 2010; Vienna, October 2010.
64. Erica Marat, “Civil society in Kyrgyzstan before, during and after the March 24 revolution,” *Helsinki Monitor*, 2005, No. 4, p. 270.
65. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2003* [SEC.DOC/2/04/Rev.I, June 11, 2004], p. 31.
66. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2004* [SEC.DOC/2/05, June 29, 2005]: p. 33.

67. See: http://www.osce.org/documents/cib/2006/10/21692_ru.pdf.
68. Interviews, OSCE staff, Bishkek, September 2010.
69. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2005* [SEC.DOC/2/06, November 2, 2006]: p. 44.
70. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2004* [SEC.DOC/2/05, June 29, 2005]: p. 34.
71. Ibid., p. 35.
72. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2005* [SEC.DOC/2/06, November 2, 2006]: p. 40.
73. David H. Bayley, *Democratizing the Police Abroad: What to Do and How to Do It*, U.S. Department of Justice, June 2001, p. 36.
74. Author interview, journalist, Bishkek, September 2010.
75. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2008* [no ref, March 2009]: p. 76. This is one of the few claims of progress that is backed up with a substantive indicator.
76. Ben Judah, "Kyrgyzstan: a political retreat," *OpenDemocracy*, August 25, 2009. Available at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/kyrgyzstan-a-political-retreat-0> (Accessed October 15, 2010).
77. U.S. Department of State, *Human Rights Report 2009: Kyrgyzstan*, Available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/sca/136089.htm>.
78. Human Rights Watch, *Kyrgyzstan*. Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/87615> (Accessed October 15, 2010).
79. Ibid.
80. See the speech by Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere to the Forum of Ministry of Interior/OSCE Police Steering Committee in Kyrgyzstan, October 14, 2009. Available at: http://www.osce.org/documents/cib/2009/11/41479_en.pdf
81. Interview, senior police officer, Bishkek, September 2010.
82. Author interviews, Vienna/Bishkek, September–October 2010.
83. Human Rights Watch, *Where is the Justice? Interethnic Violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan and its Violence*, August 2010, p. 44. Available at www.hrw.org.
84. The most reliable accounts have been published by Human Rights Watch, op. cit. and International Crisis Group, "The Pogroms in Kyrgyzstan," *Asia Report* No. 193, August 2010.
85. Luke Harding, "Uzbek Minority Still Faces Persecution as Kyrgyzstan Goes to Polls," *Guardian*, October 10, 2010.
86. The most comprehensive account of these abuses after the main violence had passed is in Human Rights Watch, op. cit.
87. See International Crisis Group, op cit.
88. Ibid., p. 6.
89. Ibid., p. 5.
90. Press release: "OSCE Participating States Agree to Adapt Police Support to Kyrgyzstan," Vienna, November 18, 2010. Available at: <http://www.osce.org/item/47715.html> (Accessed December 1, 2010).
91. Author interviews, U.S. diplomat, Vienna, October 2010; U.S. police official, Bishkek, September 2010.
92. Author interviews, Western diplomats, Vienna, September 2010.

93. OSCE Ministerial Council, Decision No. 5/06: Organized Crime, Brussels, December 5, 2006. Available at: http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2006/12/22556_en.pdf (Accessed November 22, 2010).
94. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities in 2007* [SEC.DOC/2/08, September 28, 2008]: p. 12.
95. OSCE/SPMU, *Report on OSCE Activities in the Fight Against Organized Crime in 2009*. Available at: <http://polis.osce.org/library/f/3676/2869/OSCE-AUS-RPT-3676-EN-2009%20OSCE%20Report%20on%20organized%20crime.pdf>.
96. For example, Human Rights Watch, *Hellish Work: Exploitation of Migrant Tobacco Workers in Kazakhstan*. Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/07/14/hellish-work-o>.
97. See “Factsheet of the OSCE Action against Terrorism Unit,” July 13, 2009. Available at: http://www.osce.org/publications/atu/2008/09/13544_47_en.pdf; Author interviews, Action against Terrorism Unit officials, Vienna, September 2010.
98. The pattern of seizures has been more volatile than suggested by these figures, but overall the pattern is fairly consistent, with an average of 9,632 seized annually in 1996–2006. See UNODC, *Illicit Drugs Trends in Central Asia*, April 2008, p. 10. Available at: http://www.unodc.org/documents/regional/central-asia/Illicit%20Drug%20Trends_Central%20Asia-final.pdf. The statistics are not always reliable of course, so seizure rates may actually be lower.
99. *Ibid.*
100. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
101. For more discussion of this paradoxical situation, see, *inter alia*, David Lewis, “High times on the Silk Road: the Central Asian paradox,” *World Policy Journal* 27(1): 39–49.
102. Arie Bloed, “OSCE assistance for police has to be strengthened,” *Helsinki Monitor* 16 (2005), pp. 225–226.
103. The mandate agreed by the Permanent Council is: “To assist the government of Uzbekistan in its efforts to ensure security and stability, including fighting against terrorism, violent extremism, illegal drug trafficking and other transnational threats and challenges. To support efforts of the Government of Uzbekistan with regard to further socio-economic development and the protection of the environment in the Republic of Uzbekistan. To assist the Government of Uzbekistan in the implementation of OSCE principles and of its commitments taken within the OSCE framework, including those related to the development of civil society, as well as in the development of co-operation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the OSCE.” See OSCE Permanent Council, Decision No. 734: Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan, June 30, 2006. Available at: http://www.osce.org/documents/pc/2006/06/19751_en.pdf (Accessed November 20, 2010).
104. OSCE Permanent Council, Decision No. 852, June 19, 2008.
105. The SPMU’s mandate is: “Through the critical assessment of needs, capacity-building, institution-building and evaluation, to assist the law-enforcement agencies of participating States to uphold the rule of law.” See *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2003* [SEC.DOC/2/04/Rev.1, June 11, 2004]: p. 34.
106. *The Guidebook on Democratic Policing by the Senior Police Advisor to the OSCE Secretary General*. This was followed up by two publications in 2008, *Good Practice in Building Police-public Partnerships*, and *Good Practices in Basic Police Training*, which were launched at a conference in Almaty (Regional Roundtable on Democratic Policing, Police Powers and Oversight Mechanisms, November 14–18, 2008).
107. “ODIHR Annual Report on Police-Related Activities 2005,” appendix to *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2005*, p. 3.
108. Vladimir Shkolnikov, “Retrospective on OSCE strategic thinking on Central Asia,” *Security and Human Rights*, 2009, No. 4.

109. “HCNM Annual Report on Police-Related Activities for 2006,” appendix to *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2006* [no ref., no date]: p. 32.
110. Interviews with OSCE staff, Vienna, July 2010; and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, September 2010.
111. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2007* [SEC.DOC/2/08, September 28, 2008]: p. 72.
112. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2004* [SEC.DOC/2/05, June 29, 2005]: p. 34.
113. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-Related Activities 2005* [SEC.DOC/2/06, November 2, 2006]: p. 38.
114. *Implementation of Police-Related Programs—Lessons Learned in South-Eastern Europe*. Available at http://www.osce.org/publications/spmu/2008/12/35735_1218_en.pdf. (Accessed September 12, 2010).
115. *Results of Survey on Pilot Community Policing Program, Osh*. Available at: http://www.osce.org/documents/cib/2007/01/23035_en.pdf.
116. For example, a 2006 opinion poll found that: “If you compare with the opinion poll conducted in May 2004, then there are no significant changes overall in the activities of the Pervomaisky ROVD [police], although on a few points the situation has worsened.” The pollsters suggest that this may, however, be related to more willingness among the public to criticise all institutions, including the police. See: http://www.osce.org/documents/cib/2006/10/21692_ru.pdf, pp. 29–30.
117. OSG, SPMU, *Report by the OSCE Secretary-General on Police-Related Activities of the OSCE Executive Structures up to the End of 2009*, Vienna, April 2010, p. 135.
118. *Ibid.*, p. 66
119. On “virtuality,” see Heathershaw, J, “Tajikistan’s virtual politics of peace,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 61(7), September 2009, pp. 1315–1336.
120. Vladimir Shkolnikov, “Retrospective on OSCE strategic thinking on Central Asia,” *Security and Human Rights*, 2009, No. 4, 2008.

Active in more than 100 countries, the **Open Society Foundations** work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. Working with local communities, the Open Society Foundations support justice and human rights, freedom of expression, and access to public health and education.

The **Central Eurasia Project** of the Open Society Foundations promotes social progress and respect for human rights in Central Asia, the South Caucasus, and Mongolia. Through grantmaking, operations, research, and advocacy, the project supports initiatives that help raise awareness among policymakers and the public about issues in the region involving human rights, democratic governance, and political, economic, and social development. The project also sponsors EurasiaNet (www.eurasianet.org), a leading source of news and analysis about the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as Russia, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia.