

The conclusion of agreements providing mechanisms for arms control and confidence-building, in which the FSC has played a facilitating role, does not mean that the issues covered in the agreements are resolved. Much work remains in operationalizing the commitments that states have undertaken in the FSC, as is typified by the efforts to help states implement the provisions of the Code of Conduct and to improve communications between capitals in the "OSCE Communications Network Document" of late 1999. This work requires extended consultation and the FSC has proven to be an effective forum for such consultation. There is, consequently, an argument for sustaining the forum in its current form.

On the other hand, it is also worth asking whether the implementation of agreements on CSBMs, as well as consultation on CFE implementation, might not proceed more effectively in working groups devoted specifically to these tasks, without a need for a broader FSC umbrella. Moreover, for reasons discussed above, the issues upon which the FSC has focused are less salient in the overall European security equation than they once were. Sustaining the *status quo* option is a recipe for the marginalization of the FSC as a mechanism for coping with the actual problems that challenge European and transatlantic security planners. This creeping marginalization is arguably evident in the shortness of recent FSC meetings and the aridity of FSC journal descriptions of them, as well as the absence of reporting on the FSC's activities by the OSCE's newsletters and press releases, and the somewhat critical assessment of the FSC at review conferences.⁴⁰

Closure

A second possibility is to close up the shop and to transfer the residual responsibilities of the FSC to other bodies (e.g. the PC and the CPC). This has some potential advantages. The PC, for example, is a more authoritative body and its deliberations consequently may be perceived to have greater weight. There might also be efficiency gains.

On the other hand, the agendas of other bodies are frequently crowded already and it is not clear that they could devote the sustained attention necessary to embedding the OSCE's security regime in state practice that is possible within the FSC. Moreover, there is a certain value in sustained dialogue, independently of its concrete results. Keith Krause has rightly pointed out that arms control involves both process and outcome, and that "most contemporary attempts to catalyse arms control in different contexts ... have ... attempted to leap to the end products of this process (architectures, security-building, broad or formal agreements), without paying attention to the importance (or laborious and time-consuming nature) of the *process* itself."⁴¹ The process of dialogue itself has utility in providing a mechanism for continual exchange of views on security. In

⁴⁰ In the 1996 review document, it is reported that "a number of delegations presented a highly critical account of the Forum's modest achievements since the Budapest Summit." In the 1999 Review Conference Document, it is noted that "one delegation expressed doubts that anything had been achieved for the last two years."

⁴¹ Keith Krause, "Structural and Cultural Challenges to Arms Control in Intra-state and Post-Conflict Environments" (Paper prepared for the 1999 Nobel Symposium), Stockholm, 2 October, 1999, p.4.