



United States Mission to the OSCE

Annual Security Review Conference

Working Session II:

Early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation: lessons learned and the way ahead

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I would like to start out by noting our disappointment that the agenda agreed in the Permanent Council for this meeting – this session in particular – could not reflect the desire of participating States to discuss the existing conflicts. While the conflict cycle is certainly an important element of the OSCE's work, discussion on the conflict cycle cannot and must not replace serious dialogue on the protracted conflicts in the OSCE space.

Earlier, you heard me outline four key priorities for the existing protracted conflicts, with a particular focus on how we can best utilize the Helsinki+40 process to take tangible, practical steps on the conflicts, particularly in Georgia and Moldova. Our position is well known: the Helsinki+40 process must address the conflicts in Georgia, Moldova, and Nagorno-Karabakh, not only because of the general threat they present to physical security, but also because those conflicts stand counter to many of the basic Helsinki principles that we seek to uphold, including respect for sovereignty, refraining from the threat or use of force, territorial integrity of states, and self-determination of peoples. The difficulty of addressing the conflicts cannot dissuade us from dialogue or undercut our determination to make concrete progress.

It is our obligation to make clear that the international community believes that the status quo is unacceptable. Period.

As I mentioned earlier, we should use our collective brain power, political will, and resources to develop new steps to promote communication and interaction between peoples; to improve the economic and environmental conditions of those affected by the conflicts; to reduce the potential for military confrontation, and to demilitarize the conflicts.

This does not mean that the OSCE does not also have important work to do on the conflict cycle. We have heard from our panelists and other participating States the importance of the OSCE's work on early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution, and post-conflict rehabilitation. Work on the cycles of conflict must support our efforts to respond effectively to situations of crisis. If we all agree that the international community, via this organization, needs to respond swiftly and effectively to a new OSCE security crisis (in any dimension), then impartial fact finding – including identifying needs where appropriate – ought to be a task that OSCE undertakes on behalf of the international community, like election monitoring or any other field function. It cannot be subject to a veto.

What do we need on the conflict cycle in Helsinki+40? Work on the conflict cycle should support efforts to further develop the OSCE's ability to respond to areas of tension or crisis, in addition to work on conflict prevention, resolution, and mediation. Do we all agree that the international community, via this organization, needs to respond swiftly and effectively if there is a new security crisis (in any dimension) in the OSCE area? And that the response needs to be calibrated to circumstances? It seems pretty clear that impartial fact finding – including identifying needs where appropriate – ought to be a task that the OSCE undertakes on behalf of the international community, like election monitoring or any other field function.

Clearly the organization should also be supportive in other aspects of conflict response, including mediation (where appropriate) and reconciliation. We would be very interested in specific ideas for supporting such efforts, recognizing many entities will have a role to play.

By taking advantage of the full breadth of capabilities and will of the participating States of the OSCE, we can capitalize on the opportunity for reflection that is offered by Helsinki+40 – particularly on the protracted conflicts and the conflict cycle – and retain and advance the important role the OSCE plays in this field.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.