

OSCE Annual Security Review Conference

Working Session II:

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

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The Annual Security Review Conference as usual offers a good chance for discussion on the key security challenges and ongoing developments.

We all perfectly understand that in particular parts of the OSCE area the conflicts still remain a major concern. Not only because the delay in solving those conflicts hampers the cooperation and considerably limits the opportunities for development, but also because they continue to pose a serious security risk if one day from a dormant condition they erupt into an active one. Therefore, it's not a hollow rhetoric that every effort should be put to prevent that from happening.

The OSCE through its Field Missions and other structures has developed rather broad instruments to deal with all cycles of conflict situations. But the effectiveness of application clearly needs a thorough review.

The early warning and conflict prevention are intricately linked because any evolving situation requires a prompt political - diplomatic action to put a safety valve and prevent the situation from further deterioration. And it is crucially important to generate the necessary political will to deploy the right resources, to be unrelenting in actions. We believe that it is not a void notion - better to prevent than to manage and find a solution. The act of prevention already has the elements of solution since from the very beginning one tries to address the causes of the problem.

Therefore, if we learn to prevent the conflicts we will be living in a much secure and predictable environment. Unfortunately, not always our good intentions materialize and, very often under the circumstances beyond our control, we get involved in conflict management and conflict resolution. Probably, at this stage it is more difficult to reconcile the entrenched positions, to overcome the inherent internal political limitations.

Each and every conflict situation is different. There is no "one size fits all" recipe. The main criteria, with due respect to and equal application of international norms and principles, should be to what degree a particular solution is viable, durable and sustainable. Necessarily the new realities should be taken into account. The history sometimes repeats itself, but to reverse the course of the history is not possible. The question is – do we want a solution or we want a return to status quo ante and the repeat of all again.

Though the conflicts are different but the environment that leads to their solution has a lot in common. First and foremost it relates to the issue of building trust between the conflicting parties. Without that essential trust it will not be possible to implement any agreement no matter how well balanced and reasoned is it. The trust can be gained only through cooperation, interaction, involvement and engagement. We would like to suggest a kind of new or, maybe not that new, idea – pre-post-conflict rehabilitation. If we manage to be even moderately successful in

promoting this idea and turn it into practical deeds then we will tremendously help the both processes – the negotiation of a settlement and the implementation of the reached agreement.

Let me now say a couple of words on a real conflict – the one in Nagorno Karabagh. We all are well cognizant how much of dedicated effort has been put by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs. They have been and remain the only internationally mandated format that will eventually pave the way to a negotiated solution acceptable to all sides. But first and foremost, the parties must commit themselves to the peaceful settlement of the problem through negotiations, based on updated “Madrid Principles”.

There were high expectations from the trilateral meeting at the level of Presidents of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan held in Kazan on June 25th. The strong endorsement of the latest version of the document also by the Presidents Obama and Sarkozy and their blessing for the signing made us all to hope for a real breakthrough. Unfortunately, the recalcitrant position of Azerbaijan and attempts to introduce unexpected significant changes at the last moment didn't make it possible.

What is really worrying and disappointing that only two days after the Kazan meeting - during a military parade - the President of Azerbaijan again resorted to harsh, aggressive, bellicose rhetoric that puts under question the seriousness of Baku in regard to peace process.

We are hopeful that a necessary level of political will from Azerbaijan and the clear denunciation of the war as an option, as well as rejection of incitement of hatred towards Armenia and Armenians will eventually be demonstrated in order to bring the process to its successful completion. In this regard I would like to recall the Joint Statement by Presidents of the United States, France and Russia at the Deauville Summit of the Eight in May 2011, which reads as follows: “Only a negotiated settlement can lead to peace, stability, and reconciliation, opening opportunities for regional development and cooperation. The use of force created the current situation of confrontation and instability. Its use again would only bring more suffering and devastation, and would be condemned by the international community. We strongly urge the leaders of the sides to prepare their populations for peace, not war.”

We fully approve this approach but the other side clearly fails to do so and here lies the problem.