# "The Helsinki Final Act After 30 Years: Addressing the Future of European and Global Security"

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Mr. Foreign Minister, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted to have been invited to Helsinki to address this distinguished audience on this important occasion, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. I speak to you today, not as a participant in these events, but as a research scholar who has followed closely the Helsinki process over the past 30 years. I will try to bring some insights as a social scientist to help us to appreciate the accomplishments of the OSCE over the past 30 years and its potential for promoting security and cooperation in the future.

The OSCE has become a unique multilateral institution during the 30 years since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in this hall in 1975. Several special features have set it apart from other similar international institutions.

First, social scientists have recently found a great deal of evidence to support the belief that international institutions can play a major role in creating broadly shared norms and in facilitating their international diffusion. The OSCE is a prime example of

an organization that stresses values, norms, and principles, while also engaging in practical activities on the ground in building security and cooperation. Its principles have generally set goals to which its participating States may aspire, even if few of them can be expected to realize those values fully at the outset. The Helsinki Decalogue set forth principles of interstate relations within the CSCE region that ranged from non-use of force to resolve conflicts of interest, to respect for human rights and the right of self determination of peoples. Although many States fell far short of meeting the Helsinki norms when they were signed in 1975, the effort to realize them in all 35 of the original participating States was in part responsible for one of the most sweeping global changes in all of modern history, as the Cold War came to an end just 15 short years after the signature of the Helsinki Final Act.

Inspired by these results, the newly enlarged CSCE created new and more ambitious principles at Copenhagen and Paris in 1990, Moscow in 1991, Helsinki in 1992, and Budapest in 1994. Cumulatively this new normative framework encouraged all participating States to seek democratic governance, in which government serves at the will of its citizens and in which the rights of individuals and persons belonging to minorities are respected through the entire region. A major innovation was that the participating States declared "categorically and irrevocably" in Moscow in 1991 that "commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the CSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do <u>not</u> belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned." This explicit limitation of absolute sovereignty represents a major innovation introduced into contemporary international relations by the OSCE.

The second unique feature of the CSCE is the way in which it linked human security, national security, and international security in a tight web of relationships. Protection of human rights and good governance within States was inextricably linked to the promotion of peace and common security within the entire OSCE region. Confidence and security-building measures, regional arms control, and active promotion of conflict prevention, management, and resolution were all tied directly, not only to the relations among States, but to the internal workings of governance within States. Protection of the rights of individuals and persons belonging to minorities – good governance – and free and open media – are not only good for their own sake, but because they are tightly linked to the peace and security of the entire region.

The 18th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant proposed in his famous treatise *On Perpetual Peace* that a region of peace could be founded among a group of contiguous democratic states where governance reflected the will of its citizens. Within democratic states conflicts of interest must always be settled non-violently, through a well-established process of resolving those differences in search of the common good. This does not necessarily mean that every individual can "win" on every issue, but over time most citizens of democratic societies recognize that working within the democratic system will enable them to realize their long-term interests, especially by assuring a stable process of peaceful political change. Similarly, Kant believed that over time democratic states would also learn to settle their differences with one another through a nonviolent process within an institutional framework of a "pacific union of states." Systematic research by many social scientists over the past several decades has consistently supported Kant's basic argument: at least since 1815 – and perhaps even

long before – seldom or never have two established democracies gone to war with one another. Furthermore, although democratic states may enter into militarized disputes with one another, they do so less often and with far less severe consequences than in their relations with authoritarian states.

No other international institution has so clearly embodied Kant's democratic peace theory, buttressed now by decades of rigorous social science research, than the OSCE. The wisdom of those who crafted the Helsinki Final Act and brought together these normative principles of good governance as the most essential foundation of international peace and security, seems to have been clearly confirmed. Indeed, with the end of the Cold War, the CSCE wisely seized the opportunity to strengthen this vital linkage by creating such institutions as the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Conflict Prevention Center. Collectively these institutional structures, along with more recent innovations such as the High Representative on the Freedom of the Media, have established a new set of norms which, if fully realized, can usher in a new era of peace and security within the OSCE region.

Like the original principles of the Helsinki Final Act, these new post-Cold War norms are not likely to be implemented over night throughout the entire OSCE regions. Nowhere in this region do we find a perfect democracy, not even in those countries, like my own. The United States has struggled for more than two centuries in the effort to implement fully the democratic principles set down by the Founders at the end of the 18th century and has made great progress along this road, but even our democracy still has its

shortcomings. Many other States within the OSCE region have much further to go to realize these goals.

If democratic governance is to provide a foundation for international security and cooperation, it cannot be imposed as an alien value in cultures where the normative foundations have not been laid, nor can it be imposed by force from outside. Democratic values must grow organically from within society and take root in the hearts and minds of the citizens who live throughout the vast and diverse OSCE region. The normative principles of the Helsinki Final Act first took root in the ideas generated, not by governments, but (as Foreign Minister Rupel has emphasized) by countless individuals and non-governmental organizations through Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe who struggled to get those principles implemented within their own countries. The result, of course, was the collapse of authoritarian governments throughout the region, which brought with it an end of the Cold War that had divided Europe so cruelly at the time of the Helsinki Summit 30 years ago.

Above all those who govern and those whom they govern must learn that democracy is a process of resolving social differences in a coherent and peaceful fashion, seeking consensus to achieve the collective good for all citizens over the long term. And in this task, the OSCE, with its often frustrating and difficult consensus principle, is itself a good model of the process of seeking the collective wisdom of the assembled community of participating States to resolve common problems together peacefully.

Consequently the “human dimension” of the OSCE should not be considered as a series of laws to be enforced, but rather as a series of normative goals to be pursued and perfected over time. Rather than accusing those States that fall short of these norms as

being violators of the rules, we should stress that the role of OSCE should be to assist participating States to implement these principles more fully, because over the long run this is in the collective interest of all participating States. When we truly realize within all participating States a political order that recognizes the rights of individuals and that protects human security, then we will move ever closer to an international order that protects the rights of all States – large and small, powerful and less powerful – and that assures their security against threats coming from within this "zone of peace."

In order to achieve a regime of peace and security within the OSCE region, the participating States must not let up in their efforts to strengthen the capacity of the OSCE. This requires a vigorous effort to promote individual human rights and good, representative governance in every participating State. It also requires renewed efforts to strengthen the OSCE's capacity in conflict prevention, management, and resolution. In particular, we must make every effort to protect and extend the capacity of the OSCE to work cooperatively "on the ground" with host governments in regions that have experienced tensions and violence – a unique feature of the OSCE. Where the OSCE has been most successful, it has been in thousands of small efforts throughout the entire region to promote cooperative, peaceful solutions to the problems faced by individuals, national minorities, and governments. The OSCE achieves its greatest successes bit by bit, with thousands of small efforts that seldom make headlines or the history books. But the cumulative efforts of thousands of OSCE people "on the ground" have contributed immeasurably to the security of this region in ways largely unrecognized by most people and even by many governments.

The security-building tasks begun with Basket One of the Helsinki Final Act also need to be updated and expanded. We need to ratify the Adapted CFE Treaty and then move rapidly to update the Vienna CSBMs regime to make it more compatible with the Adapted CFE Treaty. We need to expand significantly the role of the OSCE in promoting border security throughout the entire region, consistent with the Helsinki Basket 3 principles of the free movement of peoples, goods, and ideas across those borders. But the so-called "dark side" of globalization also threatens the security of all of us: trafficking across national borders of terrorists, materials for building weapons of mass destruction, small arms and light weapons, drugs, human beings (especially vulnerable women and children), and money laundering should be a serious source of concern to all participating States.

Surely a new consensus can be found to enhance the capacity of OSCE Missions and other field activities to go beyond mere declarations of principles and to embark upon major collective efforts to curtail these activities that provide a threat to security and cooperation throughout our region. Furthermore, the OSCE could create thematic missions directed at regional challenges in specific issues areas, rather than in individual countries. For example, this might strengthen the OSCE efforts to control trafficking in human beings by giving this effort adequate resources and a coherent presence "on the ground" as well as in Vienna. Similarly, we need to do a better job of identifying and responding to severe economic conditions, poverty, mass unemployment, and environmental degradation that together alienate peoples from their governments and thereby threaten peace and security throughout the OSCE region.

Some of these recommendations are elaborated in a report on "Managing Change in Europe: Evaluating the OSCE and Its Future Role," prepared by the Centre for OSCE as a complement to the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons. With the generous initiative and support of the Government of Finland, I have had the privilege of working with independent experts on the OSCE from Germany, Switzerland, Russia, and the United Kingdom to produce this report, which I believe elaborates some valuable suggestions for reforming and strengthening the OSCE.

In conclusion, I believe that the most fundamental challenge to the security of Europe stretching "from Vancouver to Vladivostok" does not come from outside our region, but from within it. Above all, the greatest threat to the security of Europe emanates from Europe's own tragic past, a past which has produced sacrifice and suffering on my side as well as on this side of the Atlantic. If we allow the vast OSCE region to slip back into an international system governed by competition among nominally sovereign and independent States, each seeking its own security in a "self help" world based on so-called "realist" mechanisms such as the balance of power, then we will likely find ourselves swept up in the kinds of disastrous wars experienced on this continent twice in the first half of the 20th century.

The OSCE, with all of its limitations and faults, represents the only institution in this region that truly embodies Kant's belief in a peaceful union of representative democracies as an alternative to Thomas Hobbes' classical world of a "war of all against all." Just as Kant linked good governance, economic interdependence, and cooperative international institutions as the foundation of a peaceful world order, so the OSCE since 1975 has linked human security, economic and environmental wellbeing, and institutional

structures to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts cooperatively. Our challenge, therefore, is to grasp at this 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act just how precious this institution really is. We need to enable it to function even more effectively in the decades ahead as an institutional foundation for peace and security, initially throughout the OSCE region, and hopefully in the future as a model for other regions, and eventually perhaps for a new structure of global security.

The OSCE links values with action, security with human dignity, good governance within States with peaceful resolution of differences among States. This unique contribution that sprang from the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 is too valuable, too essential to our future, for us to give way in our efforts to reform and revitalize it. We must not allow ourselves to diminish its role, but to strengthen its capacity to perform even better the unique and essential functions that the OSCE has performed so well, with such modest resources and so little international recognition, for the past 30 years.

Thank you for your kind attention.