



Address

**by Dr. Dimitrij Rupel, OSCE Chairman-in-Office
at the Center for Strategic and International Studies
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Thank you Robin!

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

It is a pleasure to be here and an honour to address this prestigious audience. Coming to Washington and visiting CSIS is always invigorating, and this time I hope to set the pace for my official visit to Washington with a good exchange of ideas amongst friends.

When Slovenia agreed to take on the challenge of Chairing the OSCE, we knew it wouldn't be easy, but I must say, it's been more than a test. Steering the OSCE through these turbulent waters requires the best of diplomacy.

But a challenge is also an opportunity; and this is exactly how I see this Chairmanship.

Let us look to successes such as the Ukraine election, the spread of stability and prosperity throughout Europe, OSCE missions in the Balkans – which have been doing a good job. The OSCE is in a state of change. Like many other international systems started after WW II (EU, NATO, UN), the OSCE is under reconstruction. Together we will reform the organization, and equip it with the mechanisms to tackle the challenges of the 21st Century effectively. I'm open to ideas and new ways of looking at the OSCE, including as I said last Friday at the UN Security Council, considering ways by which OSCE know-how could also be used effectively in out-of-area operations.

Let me highlight a few challenges or, rather, opportunities, where through the OSCE, I foresee significant progress this year.

Just yesterday Moldova held an important parliamentary election, which was a vital step forward in the democratic development of Moldova. I am encouraged by the election results, and I trust that the new government will work to push reforms and democracy further. I am traveling to Moldova next week, where I will meet with the newly elected representatives of the government.

Election monitoring has become the trademark of the OSCE. OSCE monitors, for example, contributed to the democratic process and important changes in Ukraine. I have met with President Yuschenko twice, and together we reviewed the role of the OSCE in the Ukraine election, and agreed to continue fostering close cooperation between the OSCE and the Ukrainian government.

But election monitoring is not our only business.

The OSCE's work is divided into three dimensions, or baskets: the so-called human dimension (comprising human rights, democratization, and rule of law), an economic and environmental dimension, and a politico-military dimension. The philosophy is that security is more than military security and that the various elements that make up peaceful, stable, and democratic societies are inter-linked.

The OSCE has unique institutions with strong mandates dealing with national minorities, freedom of the media, and democratic institutions and human rights. The OSCE has already developed capabilities to deal with new threats to security including anti-trafficking, counter-terrorism, border management and policing. The OSCE is something of a stealth organization. It pursues quiet diplomacy and co-operative security.

The key is to prevent conflicts from arising in the first place through effective action on the basis of early warning. And it is vital to provide States with the necessary resources and support not only to keep the peace, but to sustain it over the long term.

In an inter-dependent world, security is indivisible. This is particularly evident in some of the most salient threats to security that respect no borders: terrorism, organized crime, trafficking

and pollution. States need to work together to find collective solutions to common problems. And organizations like the OSCE provide a means to do this.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us work together to help Moldova make an irreversible move towards democracy and stability, and help resolve the conflict in Transnistria. Let's keep working with our Serbian and Albanian friends in Kosovo in order to promote ethnic dialogue and reconciliation there, as well as between Belgrade and Pristina. Lasting stability in the Balkans will remain elusive as long as minority rights are not better protected. The OSCE is working with the local leaders to help them develop pilot-projects for integrating and protecting minorities.

Dear friends,

It is now two months into Slovenia's Chairmanship, yet we still do not have an ordinary budget. I understand the frustrations some member states feel with some formal difficulties in the organization. I also sympathize with those who are pushing for reforms of the OSCE. Absolutely, the organization has to transform – it seems illogically to expect structures to survive in today's highly interconnected and dynamic environment by clinging on to institutional rigidity. For this reason, I've appointed a panel of seven "eminent personalities" tasked with proposing ways to reform the organization. The Panel already met in Ljubljana – on February 17th – and will meet again in Vienna in a few days time.

I also agree with those who urge that the institution be rebalanced – that equal attention should be paid to all three dimensions of OSCE activities. For this reason I support a seminar on energy security, and another one on military doctrines. Further, the organization cannot succeed without streamlining some of its activities; without improving its flexibility in the way it responds to needs and does crisis-prevention; and without improving the institutional capabilities in terms of decision-making. The reform panel which I have selected is a very capable group, and I'm convinced they will provide us with useful food for thought and material for action. I intend to lobby actively in order to get their recommendations approved.

But we also have to be realistic. Reforming an organization is above all a process and not an event. Therefore, not all is possible in a year. I will do my best to push reform as far as

possible. However, we are only as good and creative as our weakest link. An organization cannot succeed without a budget, and reforms will not work if there is a perception by some states that reforms have been unilaterally imposed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The recent election in Moldova has put the country back on the map. Quoted in last week's Wall Street Journal, my colleague Salome Zurabishvili, the Georgian Foreign Minister said, Moldova is experiencing a kind of revolution in reverse, a revolution that is being carried out by the Communist leadership. While I'm not exactly sure that it is a revolution we are dealing with in Moldova, it is certainly change – change I hope for the better.

Over the years, Moldova's ills have manifested into chronic poverty coupled with widespread corruption and the unresolved status over Transnistria. The new government must be helped to address this explosive combination. Unaddressed, this nexus represents a serious source of instability not only for Moldova, but also for Ukraine and Romania – the latter soon-to-be an EU member.

There are a few things that the OSCE can do for Moldova in the future, namely:

1. Help the new government implement democratic commitments, by helping the authorities correct certain deficiencies, and helping political parties evolve.
2. Through its economic dimension, and in cooperation with the EU Commission, the OSCE can help Moldova begin the process of necessary economic and legal reforms which will help increase the flow of foreign investment and provide technical assistance for the liberalization of the economy.
3. The OSCE can help Moldova and Ukraine update their border management and border protection mechanisms – similar to what the OSCE will be doing in Georgia (i.e. help train border guards) – in order to improve control over trafficking, corruption and crime.
4. I have been in touch with President Yuschenko about renewing efforts to resolve the Transnistria problem. With a new orientation in Chisinau, and a healthy dose of pragmatism from Moscow, I think progress is possible. I am willing to moderate the dialogue between the sides, and work with all the parties to the conflict in confidence

building measures. However, progress will be impossible unless all sides negotiate in good faith and with the same objective in mind; an integrated, peaceful, and prosperous Moldovan state.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This no doubt will be a major year for the future of Kosovo and stability in the Balkan region. The international community will review progress made in Kosovo on standards, and it is widely expected that status discussion will start shortly after. In fact, in our discussions last Friday, with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan we assumed that a process to discuss final status will have to be in place by the time the review process is concluded – which I expect could be as soon as September.

It goes without saying that expectations on the Albanian side are high; but equally big are fears on the side of the Kosovo Serbs. This is a problem. It goes to show that we must still do more to protect minorities, and ensure the promotion of law, order and economic development. In my speech last year here at CSIS – during a conference on the Western Balkans that we co-organized with CSIS and ESI – I stressed that “international complacency and disinterest are rarely rewarded. To this effect, the Western Balkans stabilization processes -- and with this our job -- will not be completed until all the states in this region join the Euro-Atlantic Community.” I have to say that we have made some progress since then – most notable is Croatia’s near EU accession status – but I think more is possible and necessary.

Protection of minorities is a standard we in the international community cannot negotiate on. It is only right to hold the regional governments responsible for protecting their minorities. Reconciliation in the Balkans depends on it. The status of minorities is also to a large extent an indication of how far the region has moved from radical nationalism that thrives on the politics of exclusion and redrawing of borders. It is also an indication of self-perception of the various groups – the problem is that the Kosovo Serbs do not consider themselves as a minority, but rather, as a majority. I have to say, I remain worried.

In order to attain a positive review in July, progress on integrating Kosovo Serbs into Kosovo’s social and political life is necessary. Therefore we all need to move fast and think

out of the box. For starters, the pilot-projects on minorities are a step in the right direction, and it is encouraging to see the authorities in Pristina taking steps to implement these projects.

Second, the local Serbs should participate in the Kosovo political process. No one benefits by sitting on the sidelines.

Finally, the level of trust between the Kosovo Serbs and Albanians must be improved – on all levels. Here, the OSCE can do a lot by providing facilitation, good offices, and a hospitable environment for the two sides to interact. The OSCE has ample experience in this field. Dialogue facilitation will be a key component of successful final status negotiations.

The bottom line is that progress in the Balkans, and Kosovo in particular, will be impossible unless significant progress is made on the question of minorities. Interestingly enough, the issue of integrating minorities is also closely linked to cooperation with the ICTY – both processes are in a way linked to the interpretation of the past and the ability to look towards the future. The OSCE has been actively engaged in all Western Balkans states, helping them move proactively towards reform, progress and stability, thus towards the Euro-Atlantic community.

Friends,

Let me try to conclude on a positive note. When President Bush visited Brussels two weeks ago there was a lot of positive talk in support of the OSCE. I found it very encouraging. Likewise, when I visited Moscow, I got a feeling that Russia is seriously pondering ways in which to reform and improve the organization for the tasks ahead.

So again, Slovenia will use this year to push and promote the reform of the organization. In my speech at the Permanent Council in Vienna, I outlined the Triple R Agenda – *reform, revitalize, and rebalance*. I intend to do just that.

To match the demands of the 21st Century, the OSCE has to adopt to the realities and the nature of the security challenges facing us, and as I said earlier, these are now international, interconnected, and above all, multi-faceted; which means, focusing only on operations and projects within the OSCE area may no longer be sufficient to promote and encourage security

within the OSCE area. The technological revolution and the relative expansion of the role and power of non-state actors are making it increasingly necessary for all of us, including, maybe, the OSCE to contemplate at least some out-of-area engagement. EU and NATO are also placing increased importance on engagement in *distant theatres*. As we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, we should welcome the OSCE's engagements in Afghanistan for example, and look for other ways to use the OSCE to help states on the outskirts of Europe to harness the winds of change, and embrace freedom, democracy, and prosperity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are all following the events in Lebanon with great interest. Perhaps, this is an area where the OSCE could offer its elections expertise. I am considering raising this with our Lebanese friends – of course, after having consulted the participating states.

We have all pledged to support the democratic transition in the Middle East, and this may be a chance to again reaffirm this commitment.

Thank you!