

**Due to time constraints, the annexed Statement of the Special Representative of the Parliamentary Assembly, Ambassador Nothelle, was only partially delivered to the closing session of the ASRC. Italicized text indicates it was not read in the closing session.**

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to congratulate not only the Chair and the initiators, the delegations of the Russian Federation and the U.S., but also all participants, for having established and implemented this conference. In particular, I want to congratulate the keynote speakers who made a stimulating and substantial contribution to the discussion. I would also like to extend to you the most cordial greetings from the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Bruce George.

Let me dwell for a moment on the particularities of this Parliamentary Assembly:

The main purpose of an international parliamentary forum like the PA is not to make decisions or find the smallest common denominator for a consensus, but rather to exchange the many and often, depending on the political standpoint and nationality of the respective member of parliament, differing views on important issues of international policy.

In many instances, discussions in the PA are the first and only opportunity for Parliamentarians to find out about the diversity of opinions of their colleagues from other countries and about the ways in which they exercise parliamentary oversight over foreign and security policy. The OSCE is a large International Organization of predominantly diplomatic character, so the PA, which gathers the directly elected and accountable representatives of Civil Society, is unique. The inclusion of the parliamentary element into the organization from the beginning was motivated in part by the consideration that such an institution by itself constitutes a confidence building measure.

Unfortunately, as Minister Rotfeld pointed out yesterday when referring to the Court of Conciliation, some of the initial ideas of the founding days of the organization have not yet been put into practice. In the 1992 Budapest declaration, the PA offered to make use of its facilities to enter into an early debate between Parliamentarians from countries that are parties to the conflict. I quote: "When regional tensions arise, multilateral meetings of Parliamentarians of countries concerned should be arranged to foster democratic and peaceful solutions."

We have made some effort by setting up adhoc-Committees for certain areas of conflict, but an involvement at such an early stage is yet to take place. It may well be that time is not ripe for undertakings as described in the Budapest declaration, but it cannot be denied that in times of globalization and a greater share of Civil Society in the shaping of international relations, an early dialogue between potential parties of a conflict would be a contribution to conflict prevention, just as meetings of Parliamentarians in a post-conflict phase has become an important element in post-conflict rehabilitation. I am, of course, aware of the fact that Parliamentarians -

just like the media - can play an ambiguous role in conflicts, from heating it up to finding solutions. But this calls all the more for their inclusion at the earliest possible moment.

It is evident that involvement of Parliamentarians is reasonable in times when, as everybody around the table here is aware, many of the so-called "new threats" result from internal conflicts or are transboundary extensions of problems, which were formerly considered of internal nature, for instance everything connected to organized crime and trafficking. The other obvious point is that after the establishment of the rule of law and a democratic system, legislation by Parliaments plays the crucial role in the implementation of the OSCE objectives.

I am convinced that there can never be sufficient exchange of experience between legislators from different countries to overcome what sometimes is described as the provincialism of national parliaments in a world with an evolving "global home policy". Such an exchange of experience between peers has far better pedagogical impact on legislators and contributes much more to a real transfer of technology than dozens of seminars with external consultants from this growing sector of business. This will be particularly true when we work on the implementation of projects on the parliamentary oversight of the Armed Forces.

Another good example of effective collective learning processes is election-monitoring missions composed of Parliamentarians from different countries. The PA has been active in each of these areas, like in the other dimensions, and will continue its activities to an increasing extent. Among them is a series of activities in the politico-military sector. Together with the CPC, the PA is organizing a series of seminars on the "Democratic Control of the Armed Forces and the Implementation of the Code of Conduct". The latest seminar took place on May 16 and 17.

We are supposed to review OSCE activities critically in his conference, therefore, I must confess that I still see room for greater interaction between the PA and the other parts of the Organization. We are not on opposing sides, grasping for control over one other, instead, we offer different sets of instruments for achieving our common objectives.

I usually urge Parliamentarians to seek a more pro-active approach towards the governmental structures here in Vienna on a far more regular basis. I wish that it would become the everyday work of the structures here in Vienna, as well as elsewhere, to involve the PA in your work at an early stage, even in those areas which do not seem to be of classical cooperation.

*Just one perhaps unusual example: One reason that I found Minister Rotfeld's speech so impressive was that it addressed a number of fundamental issues which usually do not play a role in the Vienna proceedings. On the other hand, Parliamentarians, who face much less constraints in expressing their opinion than representatives of governments, could be the spearhead of a necessary debate.*

I suggest to consider whether you can - on certain issues - make active use of the PA as a sort of an experimental laboratory, *especially in matters of a more principal nature such as potential long-term threats arising from future rivalries between today's friends and allies, or issues such as the ones addressed by Director Grushko in WG "B", or even an open debate on seemingly unsolvable situations, like frozen conflicts. Especially in deadlocks, or when the OSCE tries to determine a real long-term strategy, such debates, initiated by you, could produce valuable, though perhaps unconventional, intellectual input into the Organization.*

*Basically, there does not seem a better framework than the OSCE to discuss fundamental topics which cause concern among parliamentarians, such as what are the places of the big powers, of the U.S., the E.U., and the Russian Federation, in a changing security environment, which will be their long-term relationship with each other and with countries that have to arrange their security concerns between them and/or with them. At present, for obvious reasons, we are witnessing such a discussion on the national level and within NATO and the EU. But the OSCE to which all of these belong, as an organization of 55 formally equal countries, all directly affected by this debate, could add a lot of value to these debates, if it is able to stage the necessary dialogue.*

Or take our cooperation with our partners in Asia and in the Mediterranean: It is a friendly gesture to brief one other on our activities, but would the OSCE not be a good place for an open dialogue on the political issues that affect us directly or indirectly, even if they do not take place in the OSCE region? And if this means too many difficulties on the governmental side, please do not forget that the PA is not bound to avoid out-of-area discussions. Many of you have – for example – witnessed our excellent debate on Iraq during the Winter Session.

These few illustrations do not mean that the same principle could not be applied for less long-term or even visionary items of discussion. Again, what I want to emphasize here is that each time such dialogue takes place between Parliamentarians from different countries on their perceptions and apprehensions, it constitutes another confidence building measure. *Talking to each other is better than screaming at each other through biased media!*

Some of you might be concerned that Parliamentarians could turn out to be what has been described as “unguided missiles”. Yet, I would like to encourage you as well as our Parliamentarians to give it a try. Who knows - the Parliamentary Assembly might eventually turn out to be one of the organization’s major think tanks on comprehensive security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!