



REMARKS

**by Dr Dimitrij Rupel, Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE
at the Heritage Foundation
Washington, 8 March 2005**

Distinguished Guests, Dear Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here, present among so many lead researchers and policy analysts. Today, The Heritage Foundation quotes as one of the more reputable Washington's think-tanks, and as such, it is increasingly more relevant for us Europeans as well.

The values of individual liberty, democracy, and free enterprise, to which this Institute is committed, also underpin the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the OSCE, which I have the honour to chair this year.

I understand you celebrated your thirtieth anniversary not long ago. This year is the 30th anniversary of the OSCE; it was thirty years ago that we signed the Helsinki Final Act, which helped maintain peace in a deeply polarized world and ultimately made a significant contribution to the peaceful ending of the Cold War.

The Helsinki Act also enshrined the principle that human rights are not the internal matter of one state but are the legitimate concern of all.

This is a particularly important year to be Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, not least, because of the reform challenges ahead. Like all major international organizations of this sort – for example NATO, and also the EU – the OSCE is in a process of reform. We are adopting our organization to better meet the challenges of the 21st Century. We are upgrading the OSCE into a truly comprehensive, multifaceted, and flexible organization, with better decision-making capabilities, a more extensive institutional memory, and a capacity to respond to out-of-area needs.

I have appointed a Panel of Seven Eminent Personalities to study ways in which the OSCE can be adapted to better fit the changing nature of global security in which networks – of various sorts – and non-state actors are becoming increasingly relevant.

Yes, it is true that we have some problems this year, including a budget issue; but I had a very positive meeting with the State Secretary, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, yesterday, and I am sure that we will resolve this problem too. There have been some alarmist proclamations in recent weeks and months that the OSCE is dead. Absolutely false; the OSCE has never been more relevant than today.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Just today, Ramush Haradinaj resigned as Kosovo Prime Minister after being charged with war crimes by the UN tribunal in The Hague. Mr. Haradinaj has pledged to cooperate fully with the Tribunal, and I welcome his commitment. I have to say, this is a fresh departure from the non-cooperative spirit evident throughout the region. But I do remain worried; worried that violence will erupt. While I'm not expecting some kind of an organized campaign from the Albanian side against the international community in Kosovo, I'm concerned about the provocations from those that have most to lose if post-Haradinaj transition in Kosovo is peaceful – here I'm referring to various radical and nationalist forces in Serbia, and to organized crime in Kosovo.

Beyond lack of cooperation with ICTY, let me point out to another problem in the region: I'm worried about the unresolved status issue of Kosovo, and to an extent also, about the future of Serbia-Montenegro Union.

Though much debated just a year ago, it seems now clear that “standards before status” is no longer a sufficient approach and that we do need an additional option. There is a permanent reform paralysis in the region which, I think, is tied directly to the status question. In order to move forward and complete the process of Balkan stabilization, Kosovo final status will have to be discussed in parallel as we review the standards.

I have some thoughts on what we can do.

First, we need both Belgrade and Pristina on board. Only through direct-dialogue and mutual consent will a final status solution be stable in the long run. At the same time, we need a

negotiating framework, and a structure which will sanction the final status agreement, or accords. I discussed this issue yesterday with your Secretary of State. Obviously, the US will have an important and central role to play here. In fact I can assure you that neither Belgrade nor Pristina will take negotiations serious if the US is not at the forefront of the effort.

At the same time, we should agree on what Kosovo final status negotiations should not encompass:

- No return of Kosovo to pre-1999 status.
- No unification of Kosovo with any Albanian populated country or region.
- No partition of Kosovo.
- No redrawing of borders.
- Agreement between Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia on protection of minorities.
- Multilateral agreement regulating the demilitarization of the region (particularly border segment).
- The security for the national, religious and cultural identity of Serbs in Kosovo must be guaranteed.
- No indefinite international presence.
- No immediate pull-out of the international forces and administrative authorities.

Honorable colleagues,

The Western Balkan region belongs in the Euro-Atlantic community, and we must work with regional leaders who embrace and support reforms, and exhibit a cooperative spirit.

As a matter of responding to the developments in the region – in particular in Kosovo – I urge direct consultations between Brussels and Washington on drafting a trans-Atlantic strategy to deal with the final status negotiations, and prepare contingency plans to potential violence. To this effect I welcome the KFOR decision to beef-up its presence in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In one my meetings yesterday, someone made an interesting, but nevertheless a very disturbing remark: that Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs know less about each other than

Palestinians and Israelis. What does this mean? It means the two sides are not communicating. It means we – the international community – can do much more to develop alternative channels of communication, by engaging the two communities on all levels in confidence building measures. The OSCE has the necessary institutional capacity to help in this domain.

I intend to work this year to correct this deficiency. Kosovo's long-term sustainability as an entity depends on its ability to integrate the Serb minority.

It also depends on its ability to enforce law and order. To this effect, the OSCE-run police training school in Kosovo, led by Steve Bennett of the United States, has been a beacon of excellence in a troubled region. It has trained some 6,000 police officers from all sections of a divided community, who patrol the streets together and work together to serve all of their people.

Good policing has a vital role to play in the prevention of conflict, the preservation of social stability during political crises and the post-conflict rehabilitation of societies. Without effective law enforcement and respect for the rule of law, there can be little likelihood of social, political or economic development in any State.

Friends,

Today, we are also trying to resolve conflicts in Moldova/Transdniestria, in Nagorno-Karabakh and in Georgia. In all of our field missions, we assist former communist countries in building stable democratic societies and developing healthy market economies.

This is no easy task and will take many years to bear fruit. But it was the United States which demonstrated to the world through the Marshall Plan almost 60 years ago that the long-term investment in building free and prosperous societies is in all our interests. It pays handsome dividends. We should not be deterred by the unavoidable setbacks. Instead we should charge forward full-steam, keeping in mind our past experiences, reality on the ground, and the tasks ahead.

Thank you!