

OSCE Annual Security Review Conference**Opening Session****Keynote Address by Eric Rubin****Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs****U.S. Department of State****Vienna, June 19, 2013***As prepared for delivery*

Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting me to speak as part of this distinguished panel of luminaries, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrii Olefirov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Alexey Meshkov, Deputy Secretary General of the European Union's External Action Service Maciej Popowski and OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier. The U.S. remains deeply committed to the OSCE's comprehensive security concept and the principles of the Helsinki Final Act that are the cornerstone of this organization. In an increasingly globalized and interlinked world, respect for human rights within states is related to security and cooperation among states. We believe the OSCE has a unique role to play in establishing an indivisible Trans-Atlantic security community for the future, one that includes partners from Vancouver to Vladivostok and provides an example of cooperation for regions beyond our membership.

The Helsinki +40 theme of this year's ASRC reflects the desire of participating States to examine how the OSCE can advance the goals of the Helsinki Final Act in today's global security environment. Achieving results that we can celebrate two-and-a-half years from now requires productive work in all three dimensions. The obstacles to our effective cooperation as a security community have become progressively more evident in the years since the Astana Summit. We need to change that.

In the next two years we need to find new ways of working together to achieve concrete results on the tough security issues, not least the protracted conflicts, we face in the OSCE region. My modest proposal is that at this meeting we should not only consider what the organization will look like at the 40-year anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, but also how we will ensure respect for the Helsinki commitments and the continued relevance of this organization on its 50-year anniversary and beyond.

How can we develop the OSCE's full potential to promote a true security community as envisioned in Astana? The answer to this question lies almost entirely in the willingness of all participating States to use the unique tools of the OSCE to address modern security challenges.

Today I'd like to offer a few ideas on how we might use the Helsinki + 40 process to strengthen our organization and our community to meet these challenges.

Current Threats/Challenges

The members of the OSCE today face security challenges that are in some ways radically different from those of ten or twenty or forty years ago. The Cold War is over, but we are still far from achieving an indivisible security community. We have less military transparency than we did a decade ago. Protracted conflicts continue to threaten the security of all and limit the potential of the populations most directly affected. We have states both

East and West of Vienna whose commitment to democratic principles of governance have come into question. We see backsliding on commitments to fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly, association and religion; threats to the safety of journalists; serious shortcomings with regard to the rule of law; and intolerance and discrimination against ethnic, religious and other minorities. In many participating States, civil society is under growing pressure and restrictions. All of these problems impede the ability of governments and citizens to effectively address pressing problems that have implications for stability and security.

At last year's ASRC, many speakers argued that this community is not equally responsive to, or even equally aware of, the security needs of all of its participating States. In last year's opening panel discussion, two distinguished diplomats who do not always agree – Alexander Grushko and Bulent Meric – made exactly the same point: that within our OSCE community there are profound security gaps, regions where there is less military security, less economic security, less human security than elsewhere in our space. This fact – and I do accept it as a fact – should be of serious concern to this organization and its 57 members. The United States shares the view that indivisible security is one of the key concepts OSCE is built upon, and that is a principle that we must work harder to make a reality. A status quo in which some in the OSCE space are less secure than others is unacceptable.

There are real sources of insecurity that disproportionately affect some parts of this community. Europe's protracted conflicts inhibit political, economic, and social development throughout their neighborhoods and have undermined the aspirations of entire populations. We cannot allow that status quo to become permanent.

Some other threats come from outside the OSCE region: countries in the Middle East and North Africa are experiencing tectonic political, social and economic changes. Tension between democratic values of human rights, tolerance and pluralism and threats to those principles including extremism and persecution of minorities is growing. The threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a global concern. Ethnic, political, religious and social divisions persist not only in the OSCE space; indeed they are rife beyond it, with tragic consequences in many partner states.

We must address these issues; we must clean our own house and provide a model community to others.

The OSCE's Value Added

The OSCE provides important tools for building a unified security community whose members enjoy equal potential in all three dimensions. It is easy to see that the OSCE's comprehensive security concept, which directly links political-military security to economics, the environment, and human rights and fundamental freedoms, makes it a unique mechanism for advancing shared interests in Europe and Central Asia. Right now, the OSCE is supporting people to people contacts for youth from Central Asia and Afghanistan at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. OSCE is also training senior border officials from Central Asia, Afghanistan and throughout the OSCE area at the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe.

Clearly the OSCE has unique value to add: few other organizations boast the inclusive list of participating States, or the value for our money that the OSCE can deliver.

In a time of constrained resources, the structures and capacities of the OSCE can provide tremendous return on investment. But not if we fail to take seriously the need to allocate resources wisely. And reallocate. We need to make the decision to shift resources from regions where much has already been achieved – such as the Balkans – to regions and issues where there are new needs, and urgent needs. I understand how budgets work – a cut in an oversized mission in the Balkans does not automatically translate into more resources for Central Asia, as well as for Mongolia. But in this age of budget stringency, there is no justification for maintaining large missions where they are not needed.

Helsinki+40

The Helsinki+40 process is a rare opportunity for self-reflection and to explore ways to use this organization and advance our concept of a security community. I would offer four areas of focus for our future work, and one example of what we should aim to achieve via the Helsinki+40 process.

- First, while we should try to innovate, new approaches cannot replace the good faith implementation of existing OSCE commitments. What steps can we put in place to encourage full implementation? Commitments in the political-military and human dimensions are the very core of the Helsinki Final Act. Implementation of those commitments is our highest obligation as members.
- Second, the Helsinki process should identify and promote how we can apply these principles in a changing world, taking into account new technologies, growing interdependence, cross-border linkages of civil society, and new and emerging threats to our common security.
- Third, Helsinki + 40 should promote trust and mutual confidence in the political military realm, and revitalize conventional arms control as well as confidence- and security-building regimes. Security afforded to OSCE participating States is often uneven, particularly in the so-called gray zones of Europe. We should aim to rebuild an environment at the OSCE where military transparency is the norm, creating a more stable security environment for all.
- Fourth, civil society must have a voice and prominent role in Helsinki +40 discussions. The OSCE's processes and procedures should be enhanced to take into greater account the role and input of civil society. The inclusion of civil society in events like our annual Human Dimension Meeting in Warsaw is a unique hallmark of the OSCE, and we need to find ways to expand this sort of engagement throughout the year and across all dimensions. The Security Days event prior to the ASRC is another good example. But I think a case can be made that our outreach to civil society should look beyond the OSCE space as well. I would single out in particular the first dimension, where Europe's deep history of security cooperation should be an example to other regions. Even as we strive to revitalize work on arms control and confidence building and improve our own implementation of first dimension commitments, the OSCE can and should reach out to other regions to build awareness of the evils of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of unconstrained conventional military competition.

Helsinki+40 and the Conflicts

With those four priorities on the table, let me turn briefly to an example of an area where Helsinki + 40 must make a difference, if we are to build a better future and an indivisible community of nations.

Nowhere is the unequal level of security in the OSCE space more vividly demonstrated than in regions with protracted conflicts. These conflicts represent one of the greatest threats to security in the Euro-Atlantic area, and the status quo is a serious and undeniable threat to the OSCE. The Helsinki+40 process must address the conflicts in Georgia, Moldova, and Nagorno-Karabakh, not only because of the general threat they present to physical security, but also because those conflicts stand counter to many of the basic Helsinki principles that we seek to uphold, including respect for sovereignty, refraining from the threat or use of force, territorial integrity of states, and self-determination of peoples. The difficulty of addressing the conflicts cannot dissuade us from dialogue or undercut our determination to make concrete progress. The value of this organization lies in the readiness of its members to join together to respond to crisis situations, to deter and defuse potential and actual conflicts, and to promote conflict settlement and reconciliation.

We do not expect the Helsinki+40 process to solve the conflicts, but between now and 2015 we need to make progress, identify and take steps in each dimension that the international community can actively support to build the prospect of settlements to these conflicts.

It is our obligation to make clear that the international community believes that the status quo is unacceptable, and that we are willing to expend real energy and resources to change it.

What kinds of steps are possible? These could include new steps to promote communication and interaction between peoples; to improve the economic and environmental conditions of those affected by the conflicts; to reduce the potential for military confrontation and to demilitarize the conflicts.

In Moldova, we should build upon the efforts of the OSCE Mission to develop practical steps to build confidence on both sides of the Dniester River. The OSCE has been at the forefront of advocating for progress both in the context of the 5+2 talks and through its robust field mission in country. Steps to promote demilitarization of the conflict, such as reducing the number of checkpoints or eliminating excess military materiel, including withdrawal of remaining Russian munitions at Kolbasna, are achievable. We have resources in place to support those efforts where needed.

It is also clear that we should be doing more as an organization to improve the situation on the ground in Georgia. As a frequent participant in the Geneva International Discussions, I have seen firsthand both the challenges and opportunities associated with developing steps to improve the confidence and security situation on the ground. It is a hard situation. What can the OSCE do? If we empower such a mission, this organization can facilitate people-to-people contacts, support humanitarian relief, and develop civil society engagement projects. We could find a way to allow observers – including the EUMM – on both sides of the Administrative Boundary Line. Georgian authorities have made clear their openness to an enhanced OSCE focus on these issues; our failure to respond as a community is to the detriment of the OSCE and to the principles we espouse. The OSCE can and should do more to support and expand activities in Georgia.

The OSCE role in Nagorno-Karabakh is largely defined by the Minsk Group. As one of the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group, the United States remains committed at the highest levels to this process. Certainly one of our goals in the Helsinki+40 process should be to reaffirm our desire to reach a lasting and peaceful settlement and to support the work of the Co-chairs in developing CBMs. We are also interested in further developing the role of civil society in the conflict resolution process. The OSCE can help to promote dialogue among these communities, reinforcing the work of the Minsk Group on a parallel track.

Conclusion

I have talked for a long while, but there is a lot to say. The challenges before us – including efforts to make progress on the protracted conflicts – are great but not insurmountable. In Helsinki+40 we need to keep our eye on the future: what do we want this community (and this organization) to look like at the Helsinki+50 anniversary? We should ask ourselves how the OSCE can – and I believe must – be strengthened and adapted even as we reaffirm its enduring work and principles.

In the last decade representatives of some participating States have questioned the value or even the very existence of the OSCE. It is clear to me that the vacuum that would be left without this organization is one that none of us could accept. A Europe without accountability on human rights, military activities, or good governance would threaten every single one of us. It is time to recall and reaffirm the OSCE's vital role. Within a 57-nation community we will not always agree on every facet of every issue, but we all should and must be prepared to act in order to meet real and pressing concerns of our members. And finally, we should aspire to spread the achievements of this organization, and this community, to the world beyond the OSCE space.