

Annual Security Review Conference, 1-2 July 2008, Vienna
Working Session III:
Early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management and post-
conflict rehabilitation, including the use of the relevant OSCE tools

Speaking Points of the Chairman-in-Office Special Envoy,
Ambassador Heikki Talvitie

Introduction

- Conflict prevention, crisis management and conflict settlement are matters of central importance for the Finnish Chairmanship.
- A variety of reasons make 2008 a challenging year for conflict resolution efforts. While recognizing this, the Finnish Chairmanship will make every effort to ensure progress is made.

Transnistrian settlement

- The resumption of fully-fledged negotiations between Chisinau and Tiraspol, in the 5+2 format, is the main goal of the Finnish chairmanship.
- The Chairmanship has taken the following steps aimed at re-energizing the settlement process: the CiO visited the region on 16-17 January 2008, I visited the region on 27-28 February 2008, two 3+2 meetings were held on 13 March and on 10 June, and an informal 5+2 meeting was held on 14 April. In addition I have also visited Brussels, Moscow, Kiev and Washington for consultations with colleagues who are involved in the process. The next event planned is a joint visit of mediators and observers to the region, tentatively scheduled to take place in late July.
- The Finnish Chairmanship has chosen a pragmatic approach, opting to move forward step by step in areas acceptable to all parties involved. So far, confidence- and security-building measures have been one such area. The recent meeting between President Voronin and Transnistrian leader Smirnov was important in this regard.
- We feel that concrete results in CBMs, in particular in the working group, would pave the way to restarting the political 5+2 negotiations on status-related issues.

South Ossetia

- We are seriously concerned about the current situation in the Georgian breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The United Nations has a lead role in the peacemaking efforts in Abkhazia, Georgia, and the OSCE's role is to concentrate on resolving the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

- The existing negotiating format in the South Ossetian conflict has not been conducive to resolution of the conflict. The Chairmanship is ready to explore possibilities for a new negotiating format acceptable to the parties to the conflict.
- In the meantime, in order to avoid any further escalation, it is important that all parties refrain from unilateral measures and threats of military action. Dialogue and confidence-building measures are the way forward. The best confidence-building measure is the resumption of peace negotiations.
- The OSCE fully supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

Nagorno-Karabakh

- The Finnish Chairmanship fully supports the work of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and PRIO Andrzej Kasprzyk. I would like to thank them for their valuable work.
- I encourage Armenia and Azerbaijan to make full use of the services offered by the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and to give serious consideration to the proposal containing basic principles for resolving the conflict. There is no alternative to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Concluding remarks

- The Chairmanship is seeking to use every opportunity to make progress on the protracted conflicts and on regional issues, in close consultation with all parties.
- Conflict settlement requires strong political will and genuinely multilateral political engagement. The OSCE is still the right forum for this to happen in, but it cannot make it happen. For this, I appeal to the parties involved.