

Insecurity and Common Interests in Security

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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

How to improve security in the immense area of the 57 participating States of the OSCE? This question occupies many minds. I shall try to address it as a policy analyst with some practical experience in foreign security, but I do not speak on behalf of my country. I have received no instruction other than to give my views in about 15 minutes. But my task is less difficult than I thought at first. The Final Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project is full of insights and much of it is an honest account of the events and policies which divide the OSCE countries. Moreover, I agree with the proposals that Dr. Michaelis has just made in his well-worded speech. Not being a diplomat myself, I am going to take the liberty of being a bit less diplomatic, and I hope, Madam Chairperson, not to spoil the atmosphere of co-operation which we all want and need.

It is very regrettable that the basic agreements on which the OSCE rests have been violated. Since the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, tens of millions of people have suffered from war, civil war, hybrid war and the threat of violence, particularly in eastern and south-eastern Europe. This has seriously undermined the prospects for the realization of the idealistic vision harboured in the early 1990s that the OSCE might grow into a viable regional collective security organization for maintaining peace all over Europe, and indeed might become better at this task than the United Nations can be, given the vetoes in the Security Council. Still, thanks to the experience and devotion of the OSCE's leaders, High Representatives and Commissioners, and many professional staff in Vienna and in the field missions, the OSCE has been able to perform many essential tasks in various countries in promoting European security and co-operation in a variety of fields.

Much of what is wrong in our world has a common cause: the abuse of political, economic, military and media power. Full rule of law curbs the perennial inclination of the powerful to abuse the powers entrusted to them. Are governments seeking to serve the well-being of their citizens, or are government leaders seeking less elevated personal goals? Do they restrict or eliminate their critics, upset the international status quo, change borders, or create confrontation, encouraging nationalism to solidify popular support in the short run? The latter approach fuels military expenditure and conflict and harms the long-term interests of countless people.

Many conflicts beg the underlying question of how to serve the true interests of all citizens and avoid abusing the manifest and implicit powers of office. The answer to this question also determines the possibilities for fruitful co-operation in international organizations such as the OSCE.

One of the questions dividing the OSCE is a sad and deep misunderstanding about the end of the Cold War. It is a serious mistake to view this as having been a victory for NATO, which in fact did not win any victory over the Soviet Union or Russia. The winners of the Cold War are not the old NATO members but the peoples who secured self-government and freedom after democratic struggles and reform opportunities during the late 1980s and 1990s.

Some of those peoples joined Western organizations *several years after* the Cold War was over. Their choices were completely voluntary; nobody forced them.

I note that very recently, when the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly met in Vienna for its Winter Meeting, the Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation emphasized how important it is to increase *trust*. I agree with that point and quote: "Trust, the very same trust that was painstakingly pieced together within the OSCE, put an end to the Cold War. Without this trust, the OSCE would not have been created; there would have been no German reunification or many other successes of European and Eurasian integration." That is very true, Madam Chairperson. Quoting from this speech does not mean I subscribe to other remarks in it, but I do find this a very important point.

Several factors undermine trust. Violent behaviour dominates the news. Some stories of violence have lost their daily news value, but the number of victims continues to increase. Also, the annexation of Crimea by another country was a fundamental violation of international law. So is stirring up separatism, arming separatists, and intervening with armed "volunteers" in eastern Ukraine. This flies in the face of the basic rules of international law and the principles of building trust. The dismemberment of Georgia falls into the same category. Threatening the use of nuclear arms when there is no need to counter in self-defence is unacceptable, as is any theoretical threat of attack, and leads to a renewed arms race.

Violence also continues close to the OSCE area in the Middle East and northern Africa. Terrorism, violent religious radicalism and regional rivalries have caused immense suffering, particularly in Syria. The horrible results are being felt all over the region. About a quarter of a million people have been killed and eleven million are refugees. Bombing civilian targets on purpose is the opposite of civilization.

Increased armed action by several OSCE participating States carries a serious risk of military incidents and escalation among OSCE countries. Confidence- and security-building measures are urgently needed. The Ukraine conflict shows that the Vienna Document needs to be improved. This is necessary for crisis prevention and risk reduction.

I cannot mention all serious questions in this short speech, but I have to mention the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which continues to claim victims. It needs a negotiated settlement. I also hope that the "5+2" negotiations on the conflict over Transdniestria will be revived.

The challenges faced by all OSCE States require a restoration of trust and co-operation. Climate change is expected to cause great disruptions in the lives of hundreds of millions of people in the future. There is also the vast population growth in the poorest and most brittle States south of Europe. The rapid growth of cross-border crime has to be tackled. Given the necessity of feeding a world population of over 9 billion people in 35 years' time, action must be taken to solve the problem of the serious lack of fresh water. There is also the urgent task of containing the rapid spread of old and new pandemics.

Military adventures, aggression, hybrid warfare and the destabilization of other countries do not help us to face these common challenges to State and human security. Sabre-rattling and clandestine activities diminish the possibilities for solving these urgent issues, which are vital to the peoples of all the participating States of the OSCE and beyond.

As often in history, States that are satisfied with the status quo are challenged by those who want to change it by military means. Some governments think that expansion of their control over territories and people living in other States will increase their power and prestige. Thinking in spheres of coercive influence is, in my view, an outdated and dysfunctional approach to national security. Hybrid warfare seems new, but it fits into old patterns of power politics which dominated history even long before Machiavelli.

Many countries in Europe, and their electorates, assumed for a long time that the fruits of international co-operation would far outweigh those of confrontation. They turned to one of the most important innovations in international politics that there has ever been: voluntary, peaceful integration, with supranational aspects in some spheres, in which sovereignty is pooled to facilitate better common policies for the well-being of their citizens. While this functionalist approach to foreign affairs works very well, it needs a co-operative attitude to be successful. This requires trust, at least to the extent of all partners seeking their enlightened self-interest in a rational and transparent way. It is based on reason, persuasion and peaceful conflict settlement for mutual benefit. But co-operation falters when open or covert coercive policies enter.

States can seek confrontation and exploit weaknesses and lack of alertness in other States, but such a negative-sum game does not fix their basic problems, and it harms their long-term development. In the last 16 years, some States in the OSCE area have engaged in a vast increase in military build-up while not actually being under any military threat, but at the same time face serious deficits in their rule of law, democracy and economy. This begs the question why so much is being spent on coercive power. It undermines trust and is leading to a new arms race in Europe.

The security interests held in common by States in the OSCE area are best served by peaceful conflict settlement, in accordance with the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter. As long as a number of States do not act in accordance with these basic laws and rules, other States will feel threatened and will have to protect themselves through individual or collective self-defence.

The best means of self-defence is to make it clear in peacetime that aggression will not pay. This principle should be applied to all possible spheres of potential conflict, not only in the conventional context but also in the cyber sphere, in space, and, furthermore, with regard to weapons of mass destruction, in order to avoid their ever being used. The crux of the principle is psychological: persuading potential aggressors beforehand. Prevention of violence requires that boundaries, rules and consequences should be well-defined *before* confrontation.

I would like to draw attention to the wise recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons and add a few personal remarks, in a total of 12 brief points.

1. The reactivation of the NATO-Russia Council would be helpful, as would meetings between military leaders to build understanding and enhance operational safety and emergency communications.
2. The Panel suggested a Treaty on European security. This could be useful after full trust has been restored, in order to ensure that the existing rules of international law are followed in good faith.
3. The Vienna Document needs to be adapted to current challenges and military realities. The obligation to exchange information, the announcement of manoeuvres in advance, and allowing mutual observation will enhance the security of all participating States. Dangerous misperceptions, surprises and escalation need to be prevented. Demilitarization of potential conflict zones should be taken into consideration.
4. As the German Foreign Minister and current OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Frank-Walter Steinmeier has emphasized, we urgently need to revitalize confidence- and security-building and arms control. These measures reduce military risks, for the benefit of all. The OSCE needs to strengthen conventional arms control. Conventional arms kill more people every year than weapons of mass destruction. Conventional arms are weapons of mass destruction in slow but constant motion, killing about half a million people every year. Nor are conventional arms curbed by the UN Arms Trade Treaty, which is rather weak and does not cover ammunition, even though it is the bullets that kill and not usually the weapons themselves. One might consider drawing up a better, Pan-European arms trade treaty as an example to the rest of the world, limiting sales of arms and ammunition to legitimate parties and reporting with precision on individual countries' activities.
5. The provisions of the Open Skies Treaty need to be better implemented.
6. Trade and human exchange should be encouraged. The Panel recommends several trade and investment steps that would be in everybody's interest.
7. The recent OSCE Security Days event in Rome entitled "Focusing on Migration and Security" concluded correctly that migration needs more attention. As

President Ivanov of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia stated, an all-European solution is needed. "The migrant and refugee crisis is a stress test for all the values, principles, institutions, policies and procedures of the European Union and European countries." Refusing assistance to victims of war is a violation of international law and human values. The OSCE urgently needs to make a success of the special meeting of the Permanent Council devoted to migration that is to be held before the summer. The recent report of the Parliamentary Commission on the migration crisis contains very useful recommendations. (By the way, I serve on an advisory commission of my government concerning international affairs. Last Friday it determined its advice to parliament about the Schengen system, namely, not to limit Schengen, but to *properly implement* all agreements on migration and refugees. This requires rapid expansion of the personnel for border control all over Europe, more assistance to countries which cannot handle the large number of migrants, and the equitable sharing of the burden of migration among all European States. I admire particularly the excellent example which Germany and Sweden set last year in dealing with the refugee crisis, and I welcome Canada's commitment to accepting more than 300,000 refugees.)

8. Security requires free and honest reporting by media. Last week, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media was right to deliver a warning about serious violations of freedom of expression and media freedom. All OSCE States need to comply fully with freedom commitments.
9. One powerful way of increasing trust among OSCE participating States would be the correct and prolonged implementation of a ceasefire in Syria, faithful negotiations for a political settlement, and a Security Council mandate to prevent further bloodshed.
10. Another question is the enlargement of NATO. I think NATO members should refrain from making ambiguous promises to non-member countries about joining the alliance. Vague promises can be self-destructive. In my view, some non-aligned countries would be better advised to promote their own safety by strengthening their domestic order and reducing their vulnerability to external pressure. Strong unified governance, rule of law, and economic strength will help much more than sitting in a waiting room for an unclear and uncertain period. Remember the wise policies of Finland, which has emerged from non-alignment as a very strong, advanced and co-operative democracy. This is not to deny the sovereign right of States to choose their own security arrangements, but a plea for a prudent choice of means of self-protection against the kind of destabilization and dismemberment that has already affected some OSCE countries. Many other forms of intensive co-operation are better suited to strengthening non-aligned countries than membership of an alliance.
11. Nor should the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy be mistakenly depicted as a certain precursor to EU membership. Association is not membership, but a framework for peaceful co-operation without any threat to the interests of third parties.

12. I would like to conclude by asking you to pay attention to peace education. The Panel stated that an assessment should be made of how to deal with propaganda, demonization and misinformation. I would like to elaborate on this important point. Many States imbue their population from primary school age onwards with rather distorted views of history and negative views of peoples of other cultures. School books and opinion leaders can foster dangerous nationalism and sow the seeds of confrontation. Improving education at all levels is of great importance to peace in the OSCE area. It should be high on the agenda.

Madam Chairperson, although my brief remarks deserve further elaboration, I hope that they have been clear enough. I gave my personal views. Thank you all for listening.