3.5. "What can the OSCE do to Manage Crises in Europe"

Speech at Urho Kalevi Kekkonen-Seminar
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"Our world is marked by change and by the great number (of countries). Small countries also have their weight in the big (power) play; they can also be a power in their way, and they can help themselves and others." Willy Brandt said this in Oslo in l97l after having received the Nobel Peace Prize. I am sure that he had the Scandinavian States in mind, and perhaps Finland in particular. As you commemorate President Kekkonen's 95th birthday and as we are about to discuss crisis management, it is worth noting at the outset that the means of international crisis management depend critically on the readiness of **all** partners of the international community to make **their** contribution.

I.

The tragedy of Bosnia dominates our reflections about crisis management and European security. Overwhelmingly, international efforts there are simply equated with failure. But as Carl Bildt, the European Union's peace mediator in the former Yugoslavia, has put it: "There is no such thing as absolute failure or absolute success in the brutal realities of war in the Balkans. In our digital world, we often expect quick and clean solutions... (but) there are no easy options in Bosnia."

The Balkan war elicits understandable feelings of scepticism and frustration. It casts a shadow on the turn of the century. The twentieth century had its bloody cradle in Sarajevo – but we must not allow it to be buried there.

Following the end of the Cold War, other new conflicts apart from the wars in Former Yugoslavia have mushroomed, some degenerating into local wars. This has made conflict prevention and crisis management a priority task.

All of our elaborate crisis management manuals, conceived under the conditions of East-West confrontation, are nearly useless. We need new instruments and mechanisms, new approaches to perform this new task well. But we also need a comprehensive and thorough examination of the new challenges and risks. Bosnia and conflicts elsewhere are of immediate concern and call for urgent responses. They do not, however, constitute the essence of the fundamental changes that are occurring; rather, they are disturbing and tragic, but an attendant phenomenon. To find comprehensive solutions and not just "quick fixes", we must look beyond these immediate needs.

The end of the second millennium has been marked by historic upheavals. We have witnessed the collapse of a huge political entity, often called an empire. First came the liberation of the so-called Soviet bloc in Central and Eastern Europe, followed by the

disintegration of the Soviet Union. This has all happened essentially without bloodshed. Historically, wars and conflicts which erupted in the wake of this process will possibly be regarded as marginal against the magnitude of this peaceful transformation. Central and Eastern European nations which lived under the empire are working hard to regain a safe place in an emerging security environment that meets their expectations. Nations of the former Soviet Union, re-established or transformed into independent states, are developing their old and sometimes new identities as well as new relationships among themselves.

Russia is overcoming the "lost Empire" trauma. It has boldly embarked on the path toward a truly democratic system, its first after centuries of authoritarian rule. It has started to define its new place in European as well as in global politics.

Not without difficulties, the overall political process in the OSCE-area continues "towards a genuine partnership in a new era", as the OSCE 1994 Budapest Document put it. Although the "honeymoon" is over, I strongly believe that "divorce" is not a possibility.

The revolution in the late 1980's occurred in the geo-political and economic systems, but it started in the minds of the people. The demise of the communist ideology brought the restoration of spiritual freedom for millions of people. But it left also a vacuum which various forms of nationalism and chauvinism have tried to fill.

The abolition of repressive systems was a historic achievement. The insecurities of transition are, however, exploited and aggravated through drug trafficking and several other forms of organized crime.

But upheavals do not affect only the former East. All OSCE States are in a major transition. In the traditional Western societies, an all-embracing transformation from the industrial to the information age, with its profound implications for the economy, social structures and the mentality of people, is taking place. New technology, the globalization of financial markets, structural unemployment and the shake-up of established social structures are facets of this process. This brings understandable tensions also into these societies. Several negative phenomena, including xenophobia, accompany them.

On the international level, Western nations too are faced with the challenge of defining their place in a rapidly changing world. They are asking themselves questions about the limits of political integration, the new meaning of alliances, and the validity of such concepts as "neutrality".

Most of the local conflicts of our time, and our difficulties in coping with them, are expressions of these upheavals of transformation. This transformation is far from coming to an end. As we underestimated the depth and breadth of these fundamental changes, we tend also to underestimate the time necessary for transition.

The present crises as we know them are transitional phenomena, but there will always be tensions and conflicts of interests. There is no end to history. Disagreements and disputes are not only natural but necessary and useful elements in international

relations. We will never be able – and should not try – to eliminate tensions from any internal or external order. But we must improve our ability to deal with the underlying problems.

That is why conflict prevention and crisis management are important. But they can be successful only as part of a broader strategy of building new stability. This new stability will provide us with a solid foundation and better chances for defusing tensions and settling conflicts in a civilized, non-violent manner.

This is a strategic objective of the OSCE. I think that such a strategy should include, at the end of the spectrum of crisis management, conditions and rules for the use of military force. Under the OSCE umbrella, however, this is limited to clear-cut cases of real peace-keeping.

II.

For the OSCE, conflict prevention and crisis management are relatively new tasks, assumed in the period of the last three years. They are a feature in the OSCE's identity, symbolized by the new name it acquired at the 1994 Budapest Summit.
The entire international community was caught unaware by the conflicts that emerged in the last few years. The 1990 Charter of Paris stated that, "although the threat of conflict in Europe has diminished, other changes threaten the stability of our societies". No one, however, was prepared for the suddenness and intensity of local conflicts and wars. New problems emerged, but we had yet to build the structures necessary to deal with them. The process of developing and adapting the appropriate instruments and institutions is still going on. As the UN works on its Secretary-General's "Agenda for Peace", as NATO works on its Partnership for Peace, the OSCE is no exception: we are trying to find our role, seeing what the OSCE must contribute to managing crises and to creating new stability, based on civil societies everywhere in the OSCE area and on structures of co-operative and comprehensive security.

The Budapest Summit underlined the role of the OSCE as "a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management in the region". The OSCE puts emphasis on preventive diplomacy, where its comparative advantages pay off particularly well.

The OSCE offers a unique platform for early consultation which can be an effective preventive instrument. It is the only organization that embraces all the States of Europe, North America and Central Asia. Participating on an equal basis, all States can voice their concerns and discuss them in a frank and candid way. The central place for such political consultations is the Permanent Council in Vienna, chaired by a representative of the Chairman-in-Office. In its weekly plenary meetings, participating States are getting used to raising problems of concern, expressing views on current events and engaging in a political dialogue. The Permanent Council provides an opportunity to address and discuss in a multilateral environment and at an early stage all situations that have the potential of degenerating into crisis or even violence. This dialogue helps to spread the understanding of problems and to mobilize concerted action. Thus, the OSCE can play an important role in making the international

community aware of new problems and in translating the principle of indivisible security into concrete measures of early action.

An OSCE institution particularly important in the field of conflict prevention and early warning is the High Commissioner on National Minorities. Most of the existing or potential conflicts in the OSCE area have a strong ethnic root. The High Commissioner assesses and, to the extent possible, defuses at the earliest possible stage tensions involving national minority issues that have the potential of developing into a conflict in the OSCE area. Through advice and recommendations, he encourages the parties to pursue non-confrontational policies. His is a method of discreet, co-operative, non-coercive diplomacy. Since its operational establishment in early l993, the High Commissioner's portfolio of involvement has grown significantly: he remains engaged in various countries, from the Baltics to the Balkans, from Ukraine to Central Asia. With his expertise and his commitment, the first High Commissioner, Mr. Max van der Stoel, has gained the confidence of the States as well as the minorities concerned. The long-term promotion of stability through the High Commissioner, however, is a great challenge. By now we know: there are no quick and easy solutions to minority problems. A key element of the High Commissioner's success so far has been that behind his discreet activities stands the continued, unequivocal and visible support of the OSCE participating States, including the key actors on the OSCE scene. It is important that the parties concerned feel the full political weight of the OSCE community as a whole and of each and every participating State behind the High Commissioner's involvement.

The Human Dimension, comprising human rights, democracy and the rule of law, is at the heart of the OSCE. It is also a vital element of conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation. The OSCE's concept of comprehensive security recognizes the tight links of the Human Dimension with all other aspects of security: political, economic and military. Human Dimension deficiencies are early warning indicators, and the Human Dimension provides a solid ground for advice and support for rehabilitation efforts. In order to help implement Human Dimension commitments, the OSCE applies co-operative methods. The efficiency of such methods has its limits, but it is often seriously underestimated. The high degree of interdependence between the OSCE States creates strong incentives to co-operate. On this basis, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw conducts an impressive range of activities, especially in respect to OSCE States still lacking experience with democracy and the rule of law. It assists in the preparation, conduct and monitoring of elections, organizes seminars on Human Dimension issues, co-operates with and supports NGOs, and offers expertise necessary for the development of legal structures.

Of paramount importance for early action is the recognized OSCE rule that "commitments undertaken in the field of the Human Dimension of the CSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the States concerned". This provision provides the basis allowing for a constructive engagement of the OSCE when Human Dimensions issues are at stake in a situation of crisis or conflict in a participating State. By accepting the active involvement of the OSCE in the Chechnyan conflict, Russia has set an example, the importance of which can hardly be overestimated.

Chechnya has demonstrated the efficiency of another OSCE instrument of early action: executive initiative of the Chairman-in-Office. The Budapest Summit has considerably strengthened this means. In a number of well-considered steps and based on solid support from OSCE States, the Hungarian Chairmanship clearly addressed the violation of OSCE commitments and secured the co-operation of the leadership of the Russian Federation. Consensus was then reached in the Permanent Council to establish a continuous OSCE presence in this conflict area. On this basis, the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya has been deployed since April this year. Acting through the Head of the Assistance Group, Hungarian Foreign Minister, László Kovács, has used the Group's potential to make essential contributions toward a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Working virtually under the roof of the Assistance Group, the parties have agreed to the cessation of hostilities and are ready to work for a lasting political solution. For the first time, a permanent and peaceful solution has been addressed clearly and in detail. Many problems remain, however, and the OSCE will be engaged in post-conflict confidence-building, including monitoring elections in Chechnya.

In other regional conflicts or crises, OSCE long-term Missions have a central place in OSCE efforts to contribute to solving the underlying problems. They facilitate political processes aimed at the prevention or settlement of conflicts, and they keep the OSCE community informed about developments in their respective areas. Currently, the total number of active resident Missions is eight. They have been invited to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Moldova, Estonia, Latvia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The mandates and composition of the Missions are increasingly divergent, underlining the great flexibility of this instrument. But they are all small in size, the largest Mission still consisting of fewer than twenty members. Many Missions have a military component, but Human Dimension issues, democracy and rule-of-law building are always an essential element of their tasks. All Missions are co-operating with international organizations active in the same area, in particular with the UN, the Council of Europe, the UNHCR, as well as with a number of NGOs. Of course, they also closely co-operate with all OSCE institutions, in particular with the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

The biggest challenge for the OSCE in the field of crisis management so far has been the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. The human suffering related with this long-standing crisis and its political importance in an area that attracts the interest of many states have been largely underestimated. Efforts of the OSCE to settle this conflict started already in early 1992, when the so-called Minsk Group was established. The Group, now consisting of thirteen participating States, has continuously worked towards a political solution. A cease-fire in the region, brokered by the Russian Federation, has been in place for more than a year now. Step by step, the negotiations are advancing on a path that might still be long and certainly difficult. Finland has assumed a particularly important role in the Minsk process by taking over from Sweden the Co-Chairmanship of the Minsk Conference in April this year, while Russia continues to serve as the other Co-chair. The readiness of participating States, such as Finland, to become actively involved and shoulder heavy political burdens in conflict management activities is crucial for the development of peace and stability in the OSCE area. We

have a number of examples of very skillful diplomacy by such states, which should be inspiring for others.

The Minsk peace process is targeted at preparing the ground for sending the first OSCE peace-keeping force. The necessary logistical preparations are already being made by the OSCE High Level Planning Group. General Heikki Vilén, Head of the High Level Planning Group, will speak on this subject in greater detail later.

Confidence-building has a specific potential for early warning and conflict prevention by creating increased transparency and predictability of military activities. Today, confidence-and security-building measures – CSBMs, as we call them – form an elaborate system within the OSCE area. Among others, they relate to defense planning, information on armed forces, military contacts, notification and observation of military activities, verification and evaluation. CSBMs have helped to minimize the danger of surprise attacks, and they provide for the time necessary to develop political solutions.

The OSCE has also developed several specific instruments for the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Convention on Conciliation and Arbitration, signed by thirty-three States and ratified by sixteen States already, entered into force on 5 December 1994. The OSCE Court of Conciliation and Arbitration is operational. The task is now to make good use of it, so that it can contribute to the peaceful settlement of disputes in the OSCE area.

In its efforts at conflict prevention and crisis management, the OSCE is, of course, not alone. This is a shared responsibility among many organizations and many individual States.
What we need is the mutually reinforcing co-operation of the different organizations and the co-ordinated efforts of the States within these organizational structures. This includes a better understanding of the comparative advantages of international organizations.

A fundamental question remains: what is the role of international organizations in conflict management? To answer this question, we must be clear as to what they can do but also what they cannot do. We must also bear in mind that some longstanding conflicts, in the Near East and Northern Ireland, for example, are advancing towards solutions without a key role being played by international organizations.

Today there is much talk about the “failure” of international organizations. They are blamed for alleged or actual shortcomings in conflict management. Such a view ignores an essential fact of international politics: power in international relations derives from States. They are the principal actors, and they hold the key to solutions – if there is a key. International organizations are (only) as strong as the support they receive from their member States. Therefore, international organizations should not be made the scapegoat when States fall short of solving pending problems; nor should they be used as a smoke screen to hide the unwillingness of States and their societies to make the necessary efforts, including the unavoidable sacrifices, for crisis management.

International organizations have a specific contribution to offer. They can provide a framework for the efforts of States and their citizens to solve problems in a co-operative and co-ordinated fashion or, if necessary, by military means. This framework, however, must be filled with the political will and the contribution, in particular personnel and financing, of the States.

III.

The process of building long-term stability must proceed despite the often paralyzing frustration provoked by violent conflicts. All local conflicts and wars indicate that more investment in stability-building is of crucial importance for our future.

Stability building will be more effective when it has a strategic perspective. One such perspective is now being opened by the discussion on a common and comprehensive security model for the 21st century, based on OSCE principles and commitments.
The Budapest Summit of the OSCE was marked by diverging views on future security arrangements for Europe. President Yeltsin's fears about a "Cold Peace" replacing the Cold War was a serious signal. There was clearly a communication gap on main security issues, and the Russian idea to discuss a security model in a broad, multilateral framework was a timely initiative to start bridging it.

The OSCE has been actively pursuing this discussion since the beginning of l995. Once again the OSCE has proven its capacity to offer a platform for articulating concerns and views on controversial issues. It was and is important that many small and medium-sized States are making good use of this opportunity, but we can also observe how difficult it is for some OSCE States to freely address their security concerns and speak about their proposals.

In two weeks a seminar on this topic will be held in Vienna. The Foreign Ministers, at their Council meeting in Budapest in December, will most likely devote much of their attention to the Model issue. Eventually, the Swiss Chairman-in-Office will report on the outcome to the next OSCE Summit in Lisbon in 1996.

In developing the OSCE's potential for crisis management and in the discussion of the Security Model, we must be both realistic and imaginative. We don't have immediate answers to the many new questions with which we are faced. And there is no international organization, either global or regional, whose efficiency can be compared to that of States.

Realism and imagination seemed to have been very much implanted in President Kekkonen's political philosophy. As he stated twenty years ago at the ceremony of signing the Helsinki Final Act: "Our Conference indicates convincingly that the recognition of existing facts does not mean submission to the weaknesses of the present situation." Many things have changed in the CSCE/OSCE, but this quest for a realistic assessment of the possibilities remains very much the OSCE's approach to one of its new tasks: Conflict prevention and crisis management in the OSCE-area.