2.2. Speech at the Seminar on the "Contribution of the OSCE to Security of Smaller States"

Nicosia, 15 January 1996

I.

Introduction

I wish to thank the Government of Cyprus for taking the initiative to hold a Seminar on the Contribution of the OSCE to Security of Smaller States.

We all realize that, since the end of East-West confrontation the overall situation of military security has dramatically changed for the better. But we also realize that security, in particular comprehensive security that goes beyond military aspects, is still a serious problem and a – perhaps unending – challenge.

Some smaller states might view security as a new and particular challenge now. At the same time, smaller States can and must have a more active security policy using the possibilities of the emerging new security structures such as the OSCE.

But smaller States today also have a responsibility to contribute to overall security. Winston Churchill addressed this aspect in 1946 in his famous Zurich speech on European Integration: "Small nations count as much as the large, and they win their respect through their contribution to the common cause".

This contribution to the common cause, I would like to add, can have many forms. At times it will be specific activities; at other times it might be particular, well-considered patience.

In the last instance it is solidarity based on common values that protects smaller States and to which smaller States must make their specific contribution. The OSCE provides a comprehensive structure for this give and take.

There is no precise definition of what constitutes a "smaller" State. What should be taken as the yardstick? Is it territory? Is it population? Is it economic potential or per-capita income? Are political weight or military holdings perhaps decisive indicators?

I do not believe that we should spend time trying to elaborate a definition. It is probably a case where one can have a clear understanding of what is meant without being able to define it precisely.

These States are very heterogeneous. It might be that their feeling of being "smaller" is one of the few things that they share, in addition to common values, commitments and interest stemming from membership in the OSCE.

This Seminar is taking place in a time of unprecedented operational challenge for the OSCE. We are undertaking, one by one, important practical steps in implementing the tasks assigned to the OSCE under the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two sets of negotiations on measures to enhance mutual confidence and reduce the risk of conflict and on measures for sub-regional arms control were opened some days ago in Vienna under OSCE auspices. The first members of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina have started their work, preparing the ground for full-scale deployment. As this Seminar takes place, an important meeting is being held in Sweden to discuss experience in preparing and monitoring elections.

The OSCE tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina require the full mobilization of the political will and resources of the entire OSCE community. Every contribution counts. Smaller States have a vital role to play. The credibility of the OSCE has always been based on the readiness of all its participating States to be directly involved in the implementation of common tasks. Every OSCE member has the possibility to be an active "player" and not just a passive bystander. Broad direct participation in such tasks fosters the sense of shared responsibility for the maintenance of security and stability in the OSCE area.

I thought it would be important to bear in mind this practical aspect when discussing the topic of the Seminar.

I also thought that it would be important to talk not only about the contribution of the OSCE to security of smaller States. Let us also discuss the other side of the coin, namely the contribution of smaller States to the OSCE's work and – in a broader sense – to security in the OSCE area.

II.

The Historic Change in Europe and the Role of Smaller States

The Charter of Paris of 1990 pronounced "the end of the era of confrontation and division. The Summit declared that henceforth the relations among OSCE States "will be based on respect and co-operation".

Indeed, the Cold War period was not particularly conducive to a meaningful role for smaller States. The main, determinant factor in European, and indeed world, politics was the East-West divide. The Soviet dominance over the Central and Eastern European countries restricted the possibilities of their people to express their sovereign will. In the mainstream of European dialogue was group-to-group talk, with the key roles assigned to the superpowers.

When concrete preparations for the Conference on Security and Co-operation started in the early 70s, a platform was established allowing smaller States to articulate their interests and manifest their identity. Neutral and non-aligned States took up the role of

"honest brokers" between East and West. They co-ordinated informal negotiations and as a rule were expected to come up with compromise proposals serving as the basis for agreement. This was a difficult and responsible role. Much of the credit for leading the dialogue between East and West to concrete results and providing dynamism to the CSCE process is owed to the neutral and non-aligned States, most of them smaller States.

East-West détente, of which the CSCE was an integral part, led to a situation allowing several Central and Eastern European States to restore their historical links with Western Europe and express their particular security concerns.

The end of the Cold War brought about a pluralistic structure of international relations. In Helsinki in 1975, 35 countries participated in the CSCE; the OSCE has since grown to 54 members by incorporating new States established after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, and the split-up of Czechoslovakia. All or almost all of them are medium and small States. Central and Eastern Europe regained full sovereignty. These States embarked on the process of building their new identity and strengthening their stability.

In the post-Paris CSCE/OSCE, the NNA countries lost their strategic role as there was no longer a need for an "honest East-West broker". But the new environment offers smaller States other possibilities relevant to their individual and specific interests.

The OSCE does not, of course, have a particular policy or programme addressing the security problems of smaller States. Except for a special programme to foster the integration into the OSCE of the so-called "recently admitted participating States", there are no projects designed to meet concerns of only a group of States. The particular expectations of smaller States are addressed as an integral part of the overall OSCE stabilization strategy.

The OSCE's goal, as confirmed at the 1994 Budapest Summit, is "a community of nations with no divisions, old or new, in which the sovereign equality and the independence of all States are fully respected, there are no spheres of influence and the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, social origin or of belonging to a minority are rigorously protected".

These elements of a security order correspond fully to the aspirations and expectations of smaller States. This should inspire them to participate actively in its full implementation.

The OSCE thus contributes in many practical ways to enhanced security of smaller States by

- fostering dialogue;
- ensuring that the OSCE consultation and decision-making process is open to participation of all its members;
- developing norms of behaviour based on partnership and equality;
- offering possibilities for smaller States to contribute directly to security-building.

III.

The OSCE as a Platform for Fostering Partnership

Smaller States may have different security concerns. Some of them sometimes face dramatic security challenges. Some do not feel threatened and are comfortable with their security environment. But they all share one common desire: they want their security interests and concerns to be known and respected.
The OSCE, as declared in 1994 at Budapest, "will be a forum where concerns of participating States are discussed, their security interests are heard and acted upon". New forms of frank and unbureaucratic dialogue are being developed. The weekly meetings of the Permanent Council in Vienna allow States to raise particular concerns, express views on current issues and seek clarification. Each State has the right to raise at any point any issue relating to the implementation of OSCE commitments, which provides a flexible procedural basis. Active articulation of specific views of smaller States early on is the *conditio sine qua non* that these views will later be taken into account when an OSCE decision is elaborated, determining the substance of normative or operative decisions. Smaller states are therefore reluctant to react positively to proposals that create bodies with restrictive participation.

The OSCE also provides a platform for discussion on strategic, long-term security developments. The ongoing work on a Security Model for the 21st Century affords an opportunity to all States to formulate their security concerns and share their perception of the security situation in the OSCE area. This is of course relevant for all States. But while some States have other fora in which they can address their security concerns, for many of the smaller states the OSCE is the only broad multilateral forum in which they can speak about their security on an equal basis. Now that the Security Model discussion has entered into a more operational phase, concrete ideas, concepts and proposals coming from smaller States will be even more relevant.

It is understandable that smaller States feel more encouraged to speak out when the other States are ready to react to their views and bear them in mind. The OSCE has been able to achieve positive results in this regard. However, to what extent the OSCE is ready to "act upon the security interests" of smaller States remains the key question.

I believe that the OSCE is moving into the right direction. On the one hand, OSCE instruments for conflict prevention and crisis settlement are available and being used. This is true in particular for the Chairman-in-Office, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OSCE Missions in the Balkans, in some Baltic Member States and the Caucasus Countries. On the other hand, realism must prevail. The OSCE cannot provide the security guarantees of an alliance, and OSCE action cannot be the answer to all the old and the many and different new security and stability problems of its member States.

But it is also clear that the potential of multilateral co-operative action to strengthen co-operative security is far from exhausted.

The Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security adopted in 1994 is a case in point. In it, the OSCE States declared that "they are determined to act in solidarity if CSCE norms and commitments are violated and to facilitate concerted responses to security challenges that they may face as a result. They will consult promptly, in conformity with their CSCE responsibilities, with a participating State seeking assistance in realizing its individual or collective self-defence. They will consider jointly the nature of the threat and actions that may be required in defence of their common values".

The dialogue within the OSCE also provides smaller States with an important source of information and evaluation. They receive first-hand information on developments in real and potential conflict areas through the reports of the OSCE Missions and findings of the Chairman-in-Office representatives, and on other conflict prevention efforts such as the activities of the High Commissioner on National Minorities. The ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly reports on elections also contain such "eye-witness" information. In many instances, this information concerns countries and regions where many smaller States either do not have permanent diplomatic representation or do not have resources to undertake information-gathering on their own.

The dialogue in the Permanent Council and other OSCE structures allows States to get acquainted with the views of their partners. They can take these views into consideration when elaborating their own policies and thus avoid problems and confrontation. Again, this is important for all States, but particularly for smaller ones.

Smaller States, for understandable reasons, cherish the notion of partnership and equality among States. The OSCE is well-suited to foster it by virtue of its consultation and decision-making procedures. For some, especially those not having seen the OSCE at work, decision making by consensus is the OSCE's handicap. For many, not least those coming from smaller States which are not part of the European Union, consensus is an asset. It is a guarantee that they will be treated like partners. On issues constituting a matter of national priorities, their views will have to be taken into account.

The consensus rule fosters a sense of responsibility among all States for maintaining security in the OSCE area. It makes States look beyond their own interests and share the broader responsibility for overall security.

The right to block any decision is a powerful form of leverage. The OSCE "institutional culture" teaches us to use it in a responsible way. Sometimes it may be tempting to use the "veto" to demonstrate dissatisfaction or even despair with a bilateral problem or other matter of concern not directly related to the issue at hand. But a common, although unwritten, understanding exists that a single State may block decision-making only when vital interests related to the issue justify it.

It remains a challenge to organize the consultation process in such a way that also involves smaller States. But with urgency accompanying some of the decisions, it becomes difficult for practical reasons for the Chairman-in-Office and the Troika, as the co-ordinators of decision-making, to involve all States fully in preparing and

drafting all the texts. It is a very narrow path on which the Chairmanship tries to ensure adequate involvement of all.

The OSCE contribution to the enhanced security of smaller States consists also of developing standards and norms of behaviour strengthening equality and partnership among States. These norms of behaviour took root with the Helsinki Final Act. The 1975 Decalogue contained a commitment to respect and put into practice its principles by all States "irrespective of ...their size, geographical location or level of economic development". The participating States committed themselves "to respect each other's sovereign equality and individuality, as well as all the rights inherent in and encompassed by its sovereignty, including in particular the right of every State to juridical equality, to territorial integrity and to freedom and political independence". The Charter of Paris further strengthened these norms. The States declared that they were striving "for a new equality in [our] security relations while fully respecting each other's freedom of choice in that respect". In the 1994 Code of Conduct, the OSCE States declared that they "will base their mutual security relations upon a co-operative approach". The Code stated that "Each participating State, bearing in mind the legitimate security concerns of other States, is free to determine its security interests itself on the basis of sovereign equality and has the right freely to choose its own security arrangements in accordance with international law and with international law and with commitments to OSCE principle and objectives." These norms of behaviour form a new culture of relations based on partnership and mutual respect, where free will and fulfilment of obligations guide the behaviour of States and "nothing about them is decided without them".

IV.

Enhancing Security through Direct Participation

The OSCE is a political framework based on the direct participation of its members, not only in policy-making but also in operational activities. This direct participation makes it possible for all States to assert their identity and to raise their international prestige.

It is through common action with other States that the notion of partnership is strengthened and substantiated. The fact that the OSCE makes each member State part of its operational system is also a kind of additional guarantee that their security interests are looked after. All OSCE States are full-status subjects of action, not just objects of OSCE decisions.

The OSCE offers its members direct involvement in political management. They have proven their leadership and co-ordination skills. It is remarkable how successful medium and smaller States have been in fulfilling the task of the Chairman-in Office. Czechoslovakia, Sweden and Hungary reached the highest degrees of achievement, politically managing the OSCE's work in the most difficult periods of the transition. If, to quote Foreign Minister Kovacs, "the Chairmanship was a maturity test", it was passed by them with excellence.

The Swiss Chairmanship has already started to bring new elements to these patterns of active leadership.

The OSCE's conflict prevention and crisis management activities are in particular dependent on the active participation of its members. Let me only mention the role played by Finland in co-chairing the Minsk Group and Minsk Conference, the contributions of Bulgaria, Norway, Switzerland and many other countries who in the past have provided the OSCE with experienced and skillful diplomats as Heads of OSCE field missions. Twenty-five countries provide representatives to serve on the staff of our nine missions, among them experts from Austria, Armenia, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Ireland, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland and Slovakia.

I would also like to stress the importance of the contribution made by those OSCE States which host OSCE institutions and volunteer to organize OSCE Seminars and related events. Last year we marked the 20th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. Medium and smaller States were more active in the preparations than those who would not like to be mentioned in this category.

The OSCE lives through the creativity of its members. The richer the inventory of ideas, the better the chances for a good policy choice. Medium and smaller States have throughout CSCE/OSCE history made many innovative proposals which had a tangible impact on the development of the organization. Let me mention, for example, the persistence of the Netherlands in promoting its proposal to establish the post of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, sometimes despite serious skepticism of other partners. Malta, continuing its long standing tradition, has recently advocated with success a new status description for Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. Poland made several important contributions to the CSCE/OSCE work on arms control and confidence-building. Spain was at the origins of the OSCE instrument of CiO Personal Representatives. Sweden launched the idea of establishing a special programme for recently admitted participating States. This list is long and difficult to exhaust. It shows that good ideas are born in all States, regardless of their size. This list also demonstrates that the OSCE consultation and decision-making procedure is well suited to judge ideas and proposals by their true merit rather than their source.

This all confirms fully what the late Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Jörgen Holst said sometime ago, underlining that the CSCE enables the smaller and in particular the middle powers to play a role.

V.

Conclusions

This Seminar is expected primarily to help formulate views, needs and concerns of medium and smaller States in view of the ongoing Security Model discussion.

The topics envisaged for discussion, especially in working sessions, touch upon some of the key aspects of the Security Model discussion. Considering them will help us to find the right answers to the most fundamental questions facing the OSCE:

- how to make the security environment in the OSCE meet the hopes and expectations of **all** OSCE members;
- how to make the OSCE members identify themselves more closely with the OSCE and how to mobilize their support for the common cause and common action;
- how to make better use of these contributions and enhance the effectiveness of the OSCE.

We are still living in a time of transition. Our chances are by far greater than the considerable risks. I continue to believe that we were perhaps never before so well placed to achieve our ultimate goal: a lasting and peaceful order throughout the OSCE area. This peaceful order cannot leave unresolved the key problems of its member States, be these States large or small.