



United States Mission to the OSCE

Annual Security Review Conference Working Session II: On Early Warning, Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management, Conflict Resolution Rehabilitation: *Lessons Learned and the Way Ahead*

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 27, 2012

Thank you Mr. Moderator,

My colleague spoke at length yesterday on key issues related to the conflicts, and I want to leave to others most of the short time we have available for discussion today. However, I did not want to miss this opportunity to comment on some of the points made by others the last two days.

Let me say first that I found disturbing some of Mr. Nikitin's characterizations—I would say mischaracterizations—of NATO's past and recent missions. However, rather than trying to rebut those comments here, I will reserve the right to return to this subject after consulting with others.

Let me also say that the United States fully subscribes to the principle that security is indivisible. Are there multiple security communities in Europe today? That answer to that very likely depends on your national perspective. However, as several speakers observed at the opening session of this conference, the fact is that actual security conditions differ markedly in parts of Eurasia. That is a reality that we must recognize and respond to. This organization can only be considered effective and relevant if it is able to do that swiftly and effectively.

That is why I subscribe fully to Helga Schmid's point that we need to relook at the OSCE tool box as we prepare for the Dublin Ministerial and, eventually, Helsinki + 40.

All of us have noted that the OSCE's conflict response tools need enhancement. The OSCE must be able to gather comprehensive, first hand information on a situation of tension or conflict; the Participating States must be able to convene as an international community to review that information; and we must have the courage – and the ability – to respond to that situation immediately.

A swift and effective OSCE response is no panacea; but it is better than watching conflict or humanitarian disaster unfold on the television monitors in the coffee bar outside this meeting room.

We should decide, also, that when a Participating State seeks an OSCE presence on its territory in order to help address or gather information on a developing crisis or conflict, we will respond positively to that request.

I take very seriously the point made by Bulent Meric that existing formats for addressing the conflicts cannot be treated as an end in themselves: those formats need to produce results and they need to be susceptible to improvement and engagement.

We need to work together if we are to respond effectively to situations of crisis and conflict. Years ago we agreed within the OSCE community that the indivisibility of security meant that there could be no “spheres of influence” where one nation or group of nations could dictate outcomes. Such a course is not compatible with the Helsinki Principles whose anniversary we will celebrate in 2015.

Nor should we accept the persistence of “gray areas” to which the international community has no access. Solutions to the protracted conflicts – and to all situations of crisis and tension – require a comprehensive approach, encompassing human, economic, and political-military aspects.

There have been many references in the past 24 hours to the prospect of a Helsinki plus 40 anniversary. Let us make it an article of faith here today that we will redouble our efforts to ensure that by 2015 we have together transformed the protracted conflicts so that our community is indeed one family, whole, and at peace.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.