



HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Testimony :: His Excellency Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

Minister of Foreign Affairs Chairman-in-Office - The Netherlands The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Introductory Remarks

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor to be here, and to have this opportunity to address the Helsinki Commission. Its members are opinion formers in the OSCE community. I spoke to some of you in Rotterdam on July 5 at the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE. I commend you for the important work that was done there.

As we meet, just over two thirds of the term of the Dutch Chairmanship of the OSCE lies behind us. A great deal of work is still ahead, and I fully realize that as the CiO I should be modest in appraising the past eight months. Let me highlight a few topics we are currently dealing with. But first let me stress that the talks on the OSCE I have had in the last few days in Washington with representatives of your government have encouraged me to go full steam ahead in the coming months.

Thematic Issues

Given the profound changes in the international security landscape and the emergence of new threats, the Maastricht Ministerial Meeting, early December, will be important in setting the agenda for the future of the OSCE. We shall be discussing threats to security and stability in the twenty-first century knowing that we can only see a few years into the future. So we are grateful to Washington--it was your initiative--for the new mechanism of the Annual Security Review Conference. This conference will allow us to review progress in this field at regular intervals. The potential is there: the first Conference proved to be a valuable way of talking about and evaluating security-related OSCE matters. But there is scope for further improvement. I would suggest that future meetings be held on the basis of prepared reports, surveying the security situation in the OSCE-area.

The new threats confronting the OSCE area are both dynamic and complex. In the last few years, we have come face to face with unprecedented challenges and threats to our security. The most obvious of these is terrorism, a threat that has become highly visible since nine eleven [September 11th], just as more recent attacks also made a deep impression on us all.

The fight against terrorism is--and it should be--a top priority on our agenda. The Bucharest Plan of Action and the follow-up Bishkek conference have helped the participating States to address the threat of terrorism both within and in cooperation with the UN. A series of high-level conferences is taking place this month in Lisbon, New York and The Hague to keep us focussed and prevent complacency. They will all help us to combat terrorism with vigor.

Apart from terrorism, there are other major threats, perhaps less visible and more surreptitious, such as organized crime, trafficking and illegal migration. And the OSCE should also be concerned about undemocratic responses to these new threats, responses such as intolerance, xenophobia, anti-semitism, or curtailment of democratic and human rights. Such responses also pose a challenge to human security and undermine the open character of society. Both the threats and the responses directly affect the security situation within and between nations and peoples. The OSCE's history and mandate place it in a very good position to come up with remedies.

The discussions on the threats will culminate in a new strategy to be adopted at the Maastricht Ministerial. We need to go beyond the repertoire of military action and policing as responses to security problems, and the OSCE can provide an impetus to this effort. No sustainable conflict resolution, let alone peace, can be achieved without due regard for human rights and democratization, for economic and environmental development, and without due regard for the rule of law. These new political realities and the responses to the new threats are the main elements in repositioning the OSCE in the new international security landscape.

Combating trafficking has been an ongoing priority of the Dutch Chairmanship. Just before the summer the OSCE adopted an Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. At the Economic Forum in Prague, last May, I put forward a proposal for a Special Mechanism to strengthen the campaign in the OSCE against trafficking. The main intention is to keep the battle against trafficking in human beings on the political agenda in the coming years. The idea is that the person who will personify the Mechanism should encourage and assist OSCE countries to tackle trafficking, whether they are countries of origin, transfer or destination. I also intend to make it possible to send out roving missions of experts to assist countries in the fight against trafficking and to call them to task if and when necessary. The Mechanism should draw on the expertise and experience of the various OSCE institutions that are involved in the campaign against trafficking, first and foremost ODIHR and OSCE missions. The Mechanism should also play a key role in monitoring progress made by the participating States with the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking. Against this background I feel sure that the organization will be able to make an active, solid contribution to the fight.

We strive to keep the human dimension high on the agenda. This year, our theme is tolerance and non-discrimination. Within this area, we have selected three topics for a discussion at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, due to be held in Warsaw in October:

1. Prevention of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia and Anti-Semitism; 2. National Minorities; and 3. Migrant Workers. Let me also mention the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti in April. The attendance of NGOs was high and their contributions constructive. This helped enormously to make the meeting a success. We hope

that the OSCE will adopt the Roma and Sinti Action Plan at the Ministerial Meeting in Maastricht.

The Anti-Semitism Conference held on June 19th and 20th in Vienna made headlines. This special conference has helped to raise awareness of the need to fight anti-Semitism. Tomorrow and the day after, other forms of intolerance will be the focus of a conference on Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia, also in Vienna. Still ahead of us is the Seminar on Human Rights and Combating Terrorism organized by the Netherlands Helsinki Committee, to be held in The Hague later this month. The results of all these conferences will be discussed further at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and will, no doubt, be on the agenda for Maastricht. Each of the subjects I have mentioned is important in its own right, and they are relevant to all of the participating States, both east and west of Vienna.

Regional Matters

Let me highlight a few regional issues that deserve our special attention.

Moldova: The Dutch Chairmanship attaches great importance to bringing the Moldova/Transdnistria conflict closer to a solution. We are prepared to redouble our efforts over the next few months. In essence, there are three issues: 1. the political process to come to a settlement; 2. the withdrawal of Russian military equipment; 3. preparations for the post-settlement phase. Our efforts are primarily aimed at reaching a political settlement between the two parties. It is essential for Moscow to fulfill the commitments it made in Istanbul and Porto, and transport its weapons, ammunition and other military equipment back to the Russian Federation before the end of the year.

In the meantime, to prepare for the post-settlement situation, the Chairmanship continues to work on a Peace Consolidation Mission for Moldova (PCMM). The two parties are proceeding on the understanding that a peacekeeping operation may be in place during the transitional period. We are currently consulting on this issue. The Chairmanship assumes that the Peace Consolidation Mission will be multinational, composed of troops from participating States. It must, of course, be acceptable to both parties. Given the proximity of Moldova to the new geography of the European Union, I consider EU participation of key importance.

I have also asked your authorities to raise Moldova in their contacts with Moscow. We firmly believe that the USA's continued commitment and assistance are crucial in bringing about progress in solving this conflict.

Chechnya: In spite of the good work of the Assistance Group for Chechnya, Moscow ended the negotiations on the renewal of its mandate, effectively closing it down. Since then, we have been striving to find a new form of cooperation on Chechnya between the OSCE and the Russian Federation. After negotiations in Moscow we agreed to work on a three-dimensional program which should bring tangible benefits to the population at large, while at the same time reflecting the core values of the OSCE. Human rights are part and parcel of these core values. The program is to include activities related to the electoral process, good governance, the

judiciary and public order, the promotion of economic and social development (including the re-integration of internally displaced persons) and media development. However, the ongoing violence in the area and political intransigence make an already complicated issue even more difficult. This makes an early implementation of meaningful activities on the ground uncertain. Yet I believe that the Russian Federation and the OSCE have a common interest in defining such a program, as the human and material costs to the Russian Federation of the conflict in the Chechen Republic are immense.

Central Asia: Central Asia needs extra attention from the OSCE because the social transformation that began after the collapse of the Soviet Union is threatening to stagnate. To emphasize the priority that the Netherlands Chairmanship is giving to Central Asia, I visited the five Central Asian countries earlier this year. We also set aside more resources for Central Asia in the 2003 budget than in 2002. We intend to continue this trend next year. As a further token to my commitment to the region I appointed Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, the former President of Finland as my Personal Envoy for Central Asia, who also engages in useful discussions at the highest levels and plans to visit Central Asian countries again this autumn.

The primary emphasis of the OSCE's involvement is on strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights. Our attention is also focused on the various forms of trafficking, on security (including the fight against terrorism) and on economic transition. The fight against terrorism is a key concern in all five countries. But the authorities vary in their response to pleas for greater respect for human and democratic rights. We are endeavoring to use our influence to raise human rights standards, contribute to due process and the rule of law and to raise individual cases of human rights violations with the authorities.

Georgia: We are deeply involved in various activities in Georgia, such as border monitoring (the border between Georgia and the Russian Federation), monitoring human rights practice and democratization and good governance. Following the visit of former Secretary of State James Baker, we are assisting in the selection procedure for the Chairman of the Central Election Commission. Generally, we intend to invest massively in the observation of the election process. The upcoming elections--to be conducted in a free and fair manner - are crucial for the future of Georgia.

In Conclusion: Multilateralism at Work

Of the numerous themes and regional issues that concern the OSCE, I have only touched upon the main ones. There is so much going on in the organization that I would describe it as multilateralism at work. And the role of the United States continues to be essential to making the OSCE work. That is one of the reasons why, with full candor, I have shared my impressions, convictions and intentions for the coming period with you.

I have also talked to you in the firm conviction that it will take a joint effort by all of us to make the organization work. This is a matter not only for ministers and diplomats, but also for the OSCE institutions and the missions, for parliamentarians and civil society, for academics and think tanks, for other international organizations and NGOs: In short, it takes a joint effort

by the entire OSCE community to make the organization work. Without civil society and NGOs the Helsinki process would never have got under way in the first place. The Dutch chairmanship is involving others as much as possible. For example, we had a fruitful exchange of opinions with international NGOs last May. We have given NGOs an active role in many an OSCE meeting. We need their insights, signals and cooperation. NGOs will also be invited to attend the Maastricht Ministerial.

In preparing for Maastricht we are working towards the adoption of a number of important strategy documents and action plans. I have already mentioned the new strategy based on the threats discussion and the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. A strategy document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension is being negotiated in Vienna, as are reviews of the performance of field missions and of the OSCE's peacekeeping capacity. Essential decisions on these and other issues still have to be taken.

For our part the Chairmanship would like to be judged by its success in leading this Organization into new, concrete forms of action. It is the common OSCE values and principles that unite us, and those common values and principles need to be given new life every day, across all three dimensions, so as to bring human security to all in the OSCE area.

Thank you.