

*Perspectives and Challenges for the OSCE and Possible
Implications for the Asian Region*

**Mr. Pertti Torstila, State Secretary,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland**

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Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) and the Japan Institute of International Affairs for hosting this meeting. My gratitude also goes to the Embassy of Finland to Japan for their support.

These are exciting and difficult times for the OSCE. The organisation which has its roots in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Helsinki Process of the 1970s' has again proven its relevance in the midst of the present conflict in the Caucasus. This is particularly significant for Finland, a country which is the father of the Helsinki Process and which happens to be in the Chairman's role during this very year. The CSCE/OSCE has always had a special place in the Finnish foreign policy.

In my presentation today, I will address, first three topical questions that the OSCE currently faces, before exploring the relevance of the CSCE/OSCE experience to other regions, the Asian region in particular..

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The first issue is **Georgia**.

As you know, the OSCE and the Finnish Chairman-in-Office, Minister Alexander Stubb, have been working at the forefront of international efforts to halt the fighting in Georgia that resumed on August 7th.

The Finnish Chairmanship has been driven by two goals:

- 1) to stop the fighting and monitor the withdrawal of Russian and Georgian forces to their permanent positions and
- 2) to consolidate the basis for longer term stability across all of Georgia.

The OSCE's unique position as an inclusive platform for political dialogue and action has proven to be a vital asset through these efforts.

The OSCE's role in fulfilling the first objective of halting hostilities and returning armed forces to positions as before August 6th has been important. On the 19th of August, the 56 OSCE participating States agreed in Vienna to increase the number of OSCE Military Monitoring Officers (MMOs) on the ground by up to a hundred – with the objective of ensuring the full implementation of the six principles included in the agreement signed by the European Union French Presidency and the Russian Presidents.

The OSCE Mission to Georgia originates from the 1990s' and since then eight Military Monitoring Officers have been active on the ground. Following the August 19th decision, additional twenty Monitoring Officers were deployed rapidly. The 56 participating States are negotiating now the deployment modalities for the full complement of up to one hundred. The Finnish Chairmanship considers it vital that the Monitoring Officers are deployed as quickly as possible and in a meaningful manner.

The tasks of the OSCE Monitoring Officers are to support the implementation of the cease-fire agreement, to facilitate the prompt opening of humanitarian corridors to assist the civilian population and to prepare for a return of refugees and internally displaced persons. These are urgent tasks.

The OSCE Monitoring team is now deployed in areas adjacent to South Ossetia but we consider it crucial that they are ensured safe and free movement throughout all of Georgia in order to fulfil these tasks. In this delicate period, the Chairman-in-Office has called on all parties to avoid actions that could exacerbate tensions and set constraints on the scope of future international engagement.

The principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity is one of the ten principles on which the OSCE co-operation has been based since 1975. The decision of the Russian Federation to recognise the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia contravenes with OSCE principles and previous decisions by the UN Security Council, which remain paramount and unambiguously express support to Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The Finnish Chairmanship is working actively now to reach the second objective -- to start building the basis for longer term stability across Georgia. For this we believe that an international platform should be created, on the basis of consolidated UN, EU and OSCE efforts and other actors, to address the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in a comprehensive and inclusive manner, while respecting Georgia's territorial integrity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the top of our agenda there is also **Kosovo**. Situation in the region remains largely under control, but a sustainable peace is not yet there.

An essential pillar of the UNMIK operation under Resolution 1244, the OSCE has the largest civilian operation on the ground so far in Kosovo, including throughout all of Kosovo's municipalities, helping to build strong local institutions rooted in OSCE values.

To ensure regional stability and sustainable peace, the OSCE will continue to be an integral part of the future international presence in Kosovo. This is all the more relevant now, given the current downsizing of UNMIK and reconfiguration underway of the international presence in Kosovo.

In current conditions, the importance of the OSCE Mission's scope of action and access can hardly be overstated. OSCE's work in promoting democratic values at grass root level and for protecting the legitimate interests of all communities in Kosovo remains a vital asset of international efforts.

Despite a challenging political context, the OSCE will continue to help build a society in Kosovo that is structured, multi-ethnic, democratic and tolerant, and one that is committed to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

This matters for the whole region. We have made great progress in resolving the disputes that tore apart the former Yugoslavia in the last decade, but much remains to be done. For this, coordinated and coherent international action is vital, and our Organization has here again an important role to play.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Leadership changes in major participating States of the OSCE are also making the times interesting, not just for the OSCE but for it as well. This is my third point.

From the new leadership in Washington we expect a deep and continuing US engagement with the OSCE. Both Presidential candidates have stressed the

need for sustained multilateral engagement, and for increased solidarity among democratic nations.

The Russian Federation also has a new leadership. President Medvedev's speech in Berlin on June 5th highlighted the importance of European security for Russia and underlined his desire for 'unity between the whole Euro-Atlantic area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.'. We see here a reconfirmation for the work of the OSCE.

Engagement, solidarity and unity are ideas that have driven the CSCE and the OSCE since the earliest days of the Helsinki Process. And if the United States and Russia are willing to approach this process with renewed energy, the states of the European Union, as well as other members of the OSCE community, must rise to this challenge.

As a community of 56 States spread across much of the northern hemisphere – a community brought together by common interests and shared values – the OSCE works on the basis of a comprehensive and dynamic concept of security. We have learned that security starts inside States and within societies and those strong democratic institutions and healthy societies is the best form of conflict prevention.

Since the Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975, the entire OSCE region – "from Vancouver to Vladivostok" - has been transformed. But while the front lines of the Cold War have been erased, we have seen new divisions start to take hold in the OSCE area. Old threats have taken a new shape, longstanding conflicts remain unresolved and new challenges stand before us. To face these challenges, we need to use the OSCE to its full potential. The eruption of hostilities in Georgia is a case in point.

I turn now to **OSCE relations with Asia** and the Asian Partners for Co-operation.

The OSCE has never been there for the European continent alone. Our Organization has always had an Asian dimension, through the participation of the five Central Asian States -- first as part of the Soviet Union and later as independent States. The OSCE embodies an idea of wider Europe that stretches to include parts of Asia. Asia is in our genetic code.

The Madrid Ministerial Council meeting last year confirmed that the OSCE is about wider Europe by agreeing that Kazakhstan will hold the rotating OSCE Chairmanship in 2010. It will be the first Asian country to do so. Kazakhstan will be in a unique position to further enhance the OSCE action in Central-Asia and reach out to our Asian partners. We are very much looking forward to co-operating with Kazakhstan in the OSCE troika next year and during their Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010.

Since the early 1990s, the OSCE has further enlarged its Asian dimension by welcoming Japan as a Partner for Co-operation. This major decision was followed, in chronological order, by the Republic of Korea, Thailand and, more recently, Afghanistan and Mongolia. Japan was the first Asian country to enter into a special relationship with the OSCE at the Helsinki Summit in 1992 -- this reflected recognition of Japan's deep interest in European security matters.

The participation of the Asian Partners for Co-operation has brought to the OSCE unique new perspectives. More importantly, it has allowed the 56 participating States and the Asian Partners for Co-operation to learn from each other's experience.

Regular participation in the weekly meetings of the OSCE Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation, as well as all other major official OSCE meetings during the year, now provides the foundation for almost permanent interaction.

Exchange is also nurtured in the context of the OSCE annual conferences with the Asian Partners. I recall here that Japan has hosted two of these annual

conferences -- in 2000 and 2004, on the themes respectively of comprehensive security in Central Asia and the search for conflict prevention in the new security circumstances.

On other occasions, the annual conferences have addressed such topical issues as trafficking in human beings, transport security and a new security paradigm for North-east Asia. With the participation of the Member States of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the conferences provide the opportunity for a cross-pollination of ideas and concepts between the OSCE and Asia.

OSCE participating States are deeply interested in stability and security in the Asian region. It is for this reason that successive OSCE Chairmanships have taken strong positions on developments linked to North Korea – most recently, in February 2007, welcoming the agreement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to start taking steps toward nuclear disarmament urging the country to adhere to the result reached at the six-party talks.

The Finnish Chairmanship keeps a watchful eye on these developments. In order to contribute to the peace process between the two Koreas, the Finnish Chairmanship will be sponsoring a seminar organised by the Austrian Centre for International Studies on the theme “Multilateral Security Co-operation in Northeast Asia and the Relevance of the OSCE Experience”, to be held in Washington, D.C. on October 14, 2008. We would very much like to see a strong Japanese participation at this seminar.

Afghanistan is an important Asian Partner for Co-operation of the OSCE.

In just two months, Afghanistan will host in Kabul the OSCE annual conference with the Asian Partners – to debate such issues as the need for capacity building in Central Asia and the Partners for Co-operation, as well as the challenges to border management and security and customs modernization.

In line with the OSCE mandate, the conference will also touch on issues of democracy, human rights and free and fair elections. In the context of Afghanistan, these are pressing issues that will require the concerted efforts of the international community. One needs only to think about the sheer volume of illicit narcotics being trafficked toward all of our countries and originating in Afghanistan to understand the extent of the challenge.

Solutions for problems arising from Afghanistan are not easy and cannot be provided by one single actor. A decision to strengthen OSCE engagement with Afghanistan was adopted by the OSCE participating States at the last Ministerial Council in Madrid. The Finnish Chairmanship is now taking the lead in negotiating a package of projects aimed at supporting Afghanistan's capacity building in areas such as police, border management and security, customs modernization and anti-terrorism.

In 2004 and 2005, the participating States deployed small OSCE Election Support Teams to contribute to the presidential and parliamentary elections. These Teams drafted substantive sets of recommendations on how to improve the management and conduct of elections in Afghanistan at all levels. This year, the Finnish Chairmanship is sponsoring a series of exchanges between the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Afghan Central Election Commission on a number of these recommendations.

These projects go beyond mere capacity building. They will provide also an opportunity for Afghan officials to improve their network of contacts and share expertise, best practices and information with colleagues from neighbouring participating States, as well as others who will be supporting in the implementation of the projects.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan plays an especially salient role with the OSCE. Japan's profile is high and beneficial to all 56 participating States.

Over the years, Japan has contributed substantially to OSCE activities in several regions, notably in the Balkans in the post-conflict period. Japan has also seconded several experts to OSCE missions in the field as well as with OSCE election observation missions. Your country has also provided high level speakers and experts to key OSCE meetings, such as the annual OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum and, in 2006, an expert workshop on urban transport security.

Japan and the other Asian Partners recently have started a stimulating debate on human security and its relevance to the OSCE. As a member of the Human Security Network, Finland was happy to join the Asian Partners as a co-sponsor of this debate and to draw on its OSCE Chairmanship in order to promote it further.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I wish to share a few words about the relevance of the OSCE to the Asian Region. This is a question that is often raised in academic settings, and that is not without political relevance.

My thinking on the relevance of the OSCE to other regions has three starting points.

First, we should remain aware that each region has its own specificities, its own history and its particular interplay of interests. The CSCE and the OSCE were the result of a unique combination of factors and interests that came together during very particular historical times in Europe.

Extending the experience of the OSCE, therefore, must involve careful consideration of those features which may be relevant and those which may not be – and adapting these to particular needs.

Second, we should underline the dynamic nature of the Helsinki process.

Over the course of three decades, the CSCE/OSCE has undergone constant evolution. The Organization has shown a remarkable ability to adapt to changes in the European security landscape – from the Cold War to the fall of the Berlin Wall, from the wars in the former Yugoslavia to the terrorist attacks of September 11th. The evolution of the Organization is woven into the history of Europe of the last thirty years.

At each of these junctures, the OSCE participating States have shown flexibility, even imagination, in fashioning a new role for the Organization in a changed landscape. This process of change and adaptation has been gradual, but it has been ceaseless.

The OSCE of 2008 was not born overnight; it is the result of over 30 years long process of continual engagement by States – engagement to a body of commitments and to the notion of permanent dialogue.

The result is a multilayered organization, run by 56 States through the Permanent Council and the Ministerial Council, where commitments are taken forward by multiple and decentralized Institutions, including 19 field operations. It would not be realistic to seek to transpose the OSCE of today directly to other regions.

However, the OSCE past is rich, and it is a usable resource. Much of what we in Europe have experienced can be valuable to consider for lessons on crafting co-operation in other regions.

I would underline the importance of the OSCE's formative period of drafting and agreeing to the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. Even today, the Helsinki Final Act remains the basic rule book guiding the interaction of participating States, acting as a compass of their behaviour in all instances. The participating States and the activities of the OSCE must remain anchored in the common values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The political commitments given by the members are based on these same values and they should be implemented in good faith. The original CSCE architecture, the three pillars or "baskets" of the Helsinki Final Act are today equally important as they were 33 years ago.

I draw your attention also to the OSCE's Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM) regime. The 20th century for Europe was one of devastating wars and fragile peace. In such a region, adopting the principles of transparency on military matters, of promoting exchange of information and mutual evaluation and inspection visits was, indeed, something unimaginable, even to the founding fathers of the CSCE. Knowing what we know about the history of Europe, the result is stunning.

The Helsinki Final Act launched CSBMs, which, as they were developed further, became a regime of codes of conduct, regulating certain types of military activities and ensuring the exchange of information and greater transparency. The result today is an elaborate system of confidence building measures which are vital in today's strained relations.

The OSCE experience highlights three principal lessons:

First, States must agree on a compass – a list of principles -- to guide their interaction and their behaviour, and they should seek to follow this compass. Questions of sovereignty of States, inviolability of borders, territorial integrity, non-use of force, non-interference in internal affairs and peaceful resolution of

conflicts are all issues at the very heart of the Helsinki Decalogue. The OSCE has built on them, even if they remain always a matter of debate.

Second, building security amongst States can only be seen comprehensively – with military, economic and human security being woven together to underpin each other.

Finally, States must agree to a process of permanent engagement amongst themselves – to assist each other in fulfilling commitments and in adapting them to new challenges.

Mr Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE and Asia are interdependent. We have much to learn from each other and so much more to gain from close co-operation. Security is a path that is constantly travelled, and not a destination that can be reached once and for all.

The tragic events in Georgia and other challenges facing the OSCE show that the work of this Organization is far from finished, and that the vision of building a 'Europe whole and free and at peace with itself' remains ahead of us.

Our continued and sustained dialogue is all the more important in this context -
- to learn from each other's best practices and also from each other's setbacks.

Thank you for listening.