POLICY PERSPECTIVES AND PROPOSALS

Editors' note: Dr. Adrian Severin, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has delivered a speech at the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Vienna on 27 November 2000. The text of his speech is printed below.

ADDRESS BY DR. ADRIAN SEVERIN, PRESIDENT OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY AT THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING, VIENNA, 27 NOVEMBER 2000

Madam Chairperson, Ministers and Heads of Delegations, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a pleasure for me to appear before you today and address for the first time the Ministerial Council from the position that I hold as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. I have addressed the Council in the past, but then I was speaking as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania. As the first President of the Assembly coming from the former Soviet block, I have a special respect for the values of a free and open society which were refused to my people for almost half a century.

Today the world is confronted with a post-Cold War uncertainty and with the risk that this uncertainty transforms itself into insecurity. Accordingly, the great challenge for the OSCE is to define a new system of European and Euro-Atlantic collective security. From this perspective, the disappearance of the bipolar world has to bring about the integration of the former enemies into new cooperative structures, as well as their conversion into true partners.

The fall of the Iron Curtain eliminated one ideological demarcation line, but replaced it with many others. The Berlin Wall was replaced by walls of gold and poverty, walls of cultural intolerance and selfishness, walls of entry visas and trade barriers, walls of arrogance and bureaucracy. I believe the Cold War had no winners and no losers. It was only the logic of bipolar confrontation and the balance of terror which were defeated while the values of pluralistic democracy, rule of law, and human rights, might indeed claim the victory. That is why it is wrong to speak today about 'enlargements', since our goals must be reconciliation and unification. And consequently, it is wrong for any of us to behave like judges or teachers since we must be architects of a new order governed by cooperative security.

The OSCE no longer serves as a link between two opposing camps, instead it should work to build security through cooperation in a Europe united by shared values.

I am afraid we are far from such a situation, and that while the Berlin Wall
crumbled, the walls of our mentalities are still alive in our minds and souls. That is why a number of participants feel more and more frustrated and alienated, since they are less and less convinced that our organization could really help them find solutions to their problems and fulfill their legitimate aspirations.

In order to overcome these Perceptions, which jeopardize the very future of the OSCE and the aim of our cooperative security, we must be less hypocritical by recognizing that none of us is beyond reproach in terms of meeting our shared values and standards.

We must be more courageous in approaching our real targets and shortcomings. The OSCE — particularly the Permanent Council — needs to be more open, more transparent and more accountable.

The new concept of security must start from recognition of the fact that the Northern Hemisphere, which is our area of vital interest and jurisdiction, is faced with new challenges stopping migration, bridging economic disparities, overcoming cultural identity crises and new threats terrorism, religious fundamentalism, organized crime, illegal trafficking, but it also enjoys new opportunities, such as Europe’s reconciliation and unification. It is also clear that our security concept has widened, going beyond strictly military issues. In this context, the OSCE should address the human, social, economic, ecological, cultural, political and military dimensions as a whole.

The great challenge for this Organization today is to ensure the full implementation by participating States of their OSCE commitments, in particular those related to human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. We cannot, and we should not, compromise on those principles and values.

Nonetheless the OSCE has to approach today the human dimension from the perspective of security and stability guarantees. Our duty here is to be pragmatic and not ideological. What is important for us is not to protest but to change; not to assess but to improve; not to impose ready made models of development but to assist the participating States in building our common European house using their own ‘national bricks’.

European security is dependent on stability and security in Central Asia as well as in the Mediterranean area. It will be vital for us to convince our participating States and our cooperation partners of those areas that the OSCE is a meaningful frame for consolidating their security through cooperation, integration, development, transparency and dialogue.

And we need to pay more attention to institutional development within the OSCE.