

Chairman's Summary

The first meeting of the Senior Council was opened by the Chairman-in-Office, Mr. László Kovács. (The statement of the Chairman-in-Office was distributed as REF.SC/3/95/Rev.) In his remarks on the situation in the OSCE area the Chairman-in-Office noted that OSCE participating States continue to confront challenges to OSCE principles, including the preservation of territorial integrity and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In the discussion that followed delegations discussed these challenges as they apply in specific areas. Particular attention was paid to the situation in Chechnya and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Delegations expressed their concern over continuing warfare and widespread violation of human rights in Chechnya. There was a shared sense of urgency for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, increased efforts aimed at a lasting negotiated political settlement, and increased and unimpeded humanitarian assistance to all in need. Such a settlement should be based on OSCE principles and with respect for the constitution of the Russian Federation and Russia's territorial integrity. Delegations welcomed the readiness of the Russian Federation to agree to the establishment by mid-April of an OSCE Assistance Group, enjoying all possible freedom of movement in the region, with the following tasks:

- promote respect for human rights;
- foster the development of democratic institutions;
- assist in the preparation of new constitutional agreements and in the holding of elections;
- facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid;
- promote dialogue and negotiations aimed at the establishment of a lasting ceasefire and a political settlement of the crisis.

Delegations expressed their expectation that the Permanent Council would take the necessary decision at its next meeting.

Delegations were concerned about the situation of "neither war nor peace" in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and underlined the importance of strengthening the ceasefire. Delegations were disappointed by the lack of progress in negotiations on the conflict. The Chairman-in-Office confirms previous OSCE decisions on the status of the parties, i.e. the participation of the two State parties to the conflict and of the other conflicting party (Nagorno-Karabakh) in the whole negotiation process, including in the Minsk Conference. In addition, interested parties may be invited to the Minsk Conference and its preparatory work for consultations. Delegations urged the parties to re-engage in political negotiation without preconditions and to agree without further delay to an OSCE presence in the region.

Parties were strongly urged to respond to appeals for the release of prisoners of war and hostages. Many delegations expressed concern that the momentum generated by the Budapest decision would be lost if this was not done immediately. Simultaneously, preparation for a peacekeeping operation should be intensified to enable the OSCE to take

key decisions. The Chairman-in-Office called upon the participating States to make concrete commitments of personnel and financial resources and to ascertain the financing of the operation.

Delegations explored principles that should serve as a basis for further discussion of a common and comprehensive security model for Europe for the twenty-first century. There was broad agreement that these include:

- the model should be based on OSCE's comprehensive approach to security;
- it should reflect the OSCE's concept that security is indivisible;
- it should contribute to our efforts to create a common space of security, stability and co-operation;
- all participating States should make an active contribution to the study.

Many delegations raised other aspects of security that they would like to see factored into this exercise, such as the evolution of existing institutions, their complementarity, and the role of NGOs and private individuals in this exercise. They had a wide-ranging exchange of views on the different arrangements that can contribute to European security.

Delegations mapped out a work programme for the coming months. Early discussions in Vienna will concentrate on the underlying principles of common security, the various challenges to security in the OSCE area and the appropriate tools and approaches for addressing them. Discussions in Vienna will be taken forward in an ad hoc group meeting at least once a month. The Chairman-in-Office, assisted by the Secretariat, will keep an inventory of contributions made by delegations, including those made at the Senior Council, for future reference. This inventory will be made available to participating States in advance of the seminar in September 1995, prior to the Senior Council.

Participating States noted that the OSCE, while not currently playing a major role in resolving the conflict in former Yugoslavia, is fulfilling a useful and unique function. Its present, limited activities should be laying the foundation for broad, future work in post-conflict rehabilitation.

Within the OSCE area regional approaches were welcomed and their further development was encouraged. One positive example in this regard is the recently concluded Pact on Stability in Europe. Delegations stressed the importance of OSCE's role as repository of the Pact.

One of OSCE's new tasks has become that of facilitating the implementation of bilateral agreements. Delegations welcomed this role.

Stronger OSCE involvement was recommended to address tensions stemming from unresolved constitutional issues between central and local governments in certain regions. Solutions should be found on the basis of respect for territorial integrity and all other OSCE principles, bearing in mind that all OSCE principles are of primary significance and must be equally and unreservedly applied, each of them being interpreted taking into account the others.

Delegations stressed the importance of viewing OSCE as a co-operative undertaking. Its tools and mechanisms can only be helpful if they are seen as such.

Some delegations underlined the importance of continuing work on issues relating to further institutional development of the OSCE.

A number of delegations noted the importance of the credibility of OSCE action and support for OSCE activities, and the willingness of participating States to contribute resources. Participating States were urged to ensure that their resource commitments allow the OSCE to fulfil the role and functions set forth by Heads of State or Government in Budapest. This is an issue to which the Senior Council and officials in capitals must return.

It is the view of the Chairman that the many important statements by high-level officials from OSCE participating States at the first meeting of the OSCE Senior Council contributed to our security dialogue. Of particular importance was the first substantive discussion on the security model.