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CSCE EVOLUTION; INCREASED STABILITY OR CHANGE?

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

This Belgrade seminar reminds us all of the Follow-up meeting, which was held here, in this impressive congress center exactly 30 years ago. The Jugoslave authorities put a lot of energy in this exercise, not least in completing this building project in less than a year. We followed with great admiration this performance and were ready to join all other 34 participating states in considering the progress made in the CSCE after Helsinki 1975. The Belgrade Follow-up meeting was first of its kind. Expectations were high in different categories. Plenty of CSCE “veterans” met in Belgrade once again. But we had also many newcomers. We saw new things and new working methods.

We were living historic and challenging times. Détente was the overriding characterization of the working atmosphere. But détente was more. It was substance as well as a new approach to cooperation. Some key players wanted to make détente a precondition to further progress in the CSCE. Some others wanted to delete the word from their vocabulary soon after Helsinki summit was over. Détente as a notion became more a source of dispute than a helpful argument for constructive solutions. The Finnish CSCE Ambassador Jaakko Iloniemi tried to emphasize, that the Belgrade meeting should not become a test of détente, but a contribution to it.

It is interesting to face the debate today. Cold war was not over in 1975 although détente was at the peak of its characters. Cold war was left to continue behind the scene, less visibly and with milder slogans.

The 35 participating states were ready to engage in a new process of cooperation covering new areas. Cooperation in the field of human contacts and information was opening new ways. At the same time the participating states were formulating “packages”, complex compromises. Consensus was the key word to make them and achieve a solution, which was acceptable to all.

When we speak about security in the context of CSCE, we must address the mechanism of making decisions at the same time. Consensus rule was one type of safeguard, security check. Everybody wanted to have it in order to protect her own national interests. Consensus was present all the time. Procedural and substantive issues lost

their differences. Everything was part of substance. Piece meal approach was possible on a provisional basis; nothing was accepted unless everything was accepted.

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Security meant in other words protection. Everybody`s interests were protected. It was at the same time a guarantee, which helped all participants to open new avenues, unknown in the past. Consensus and multifaceted documents were gradually opening the ways to the future. The future was bringing surprises to everybody.

We must ask ourselves, what was the main driving force in the CSCE process? To guarantee the achievements, which were identified in 1945? Or to formulate a new pattern of behavior, which could satisfy the needs and aspirations of the European people in the 1970s and 1980s? The requirements of security in the traditional sense were competing with the daily life and needs of the citizens.

The Helsinki summit was the first high level political gathering after the second world war. It was de facto a peace conference without legal formalities. The main purpose was to overcome “the confrontation stemming from the character of their past relations and to better mutual understanding”.

If we study the statements made by the political leaders of Europe, United States and Canada in summer 1973 and 1975 in Helsinki, we can see a very colorful picture of their interpretations of the Final Act. As was evident, the emphasis was changing from the state to state level cooperation to the identification of the individual and personal rights and needs of citizens. The main tone was, to some extent, hesitation to believe, that much could be done. On the other hand, the agenda was broad and demanding. While détente was still the main atmosphere, expectations were there to be fulfilled. No time table was set to that task. Everything was up to each participating state to do it on a voluntary basis.

Perhaps the most concrete obligation was to publish the entire text of the Final Act. The soviet news paper Pravda did it also on the 1. August 1975. On the following day it was difficult to find it any more. Perhaps that fact was telling a new feature in the soviet society; there existed a demand to something, which was understood to be interesting!

Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko said in Helsinki 3. July 1973, in the first meeting, that Soviet Union did not have the intention to introduce changes in social or political systems, or ideological views. The main point was to agree on principles “which should form the basis for security in Europe, to respect and observe the principles in their relations.” Territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers were the two principles he identified as the most important ones.

The US Foreign minister William Rogers indicated a different understanding what he expected from the negotiations. The Final Recommendations was a carefully drafted work programme “designed to promote peaceful evolution in Europe for years ahead”.

He quoted president Kekkonen, who said in his opening remarks that “security is not gained by erecting fences; security is gained by opening gates”. Foreign minister Rogers did not rule out the possibility of peaceful changes of frontiers if that would be based on popular will and mutual agreement. Universal respect of principle of human rights and fundamental freedoms was to the American minister one of the most important aspects of joint commitments made.

Leonid Brezhnev addressed the World Conference of Peace movement in Moscow on the 26th October 1974. In the section on peaceful coexistence he referred to the “psychological warfare”, which he saw as a transformation from the original cold war rhetoric. The main arsenal, he said, was to teach the socialist countries how to defend human rights. He referred to some statements of the western campaigners,

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who had expressed the opinion, “that détente was not possible, without changes in the domestic order of the socialist countries”. Real meaning of détente was meant to mean more or less the weakening, or even the end of the socialist system, Brezhnev said!

On the basis of these arguments it is easier to believe, that the internal fight continued in Moscow during the Geneva negotiations. It highlighted the personal commitment of Mr Brezhnev to the CSCE idea. On the other hand, the arguments against too far reaching compromises were also valid. As Foreign Minister Shevardnadze points out in his memoirs from 1991, the expertise and knowledge of the real content of the Final Act, and the obligations to implement its provisions, was very limited in Moscow.

In the traditional discussion on security, the CSCE and the Final Act was elaborating first time a broad meaning to security. In the statements and speeches of Finnish politicians, it was emphasized, that security was not only a concept of military security. It covered a broader cooperation in the field of economics and trade, environment and the personal safety of an individual. It was more a qualitative notion than a quantitative parameter for armaments and weaponry.

The Final recommendations from 1973 contained as the first chapter questions relating to security in Europe. The premise was, that strengthening security in Europe is not directed against any state or continent, and should constitute an important contribution to world peace and security. A special reference was made to the relationship which existed between security in Europe and in the Mediterranean area. The ten principles identified in the recommendations were under closer study during the two years negotiations in Geneva 1973-1975.

CSCE was the birth place to the notion “confidence building measure”. In the Final Act a prior notification, 21 days in advance of major military manoeuvres, 25.000 troops, was resting upon a voluntary basis. Detente and disarmament were considered to be complementary issues. The ultimate goal was defined as in the Non-proliferation treaty, NPT, “general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control”.

In the CSCE context security meant closer cooperation, better mutual understanding, and over all, a more civilized behavior. The IX principle on cooperation among states declared, that all measures and steps should promote conditions favourable to making benefits available to all and so narrowing of differences in the levels of economic development.

We have real difficulties to find a notion of “change” in the Final Act. When trying to identify the main arguments which guided the soviet behavior in the CSCE negotiations, one comes very often to the conclusion, that the defence of the post II world war positions and achievements was one of the main arguments. Stability and status quo where synonyms and ultimate goals for the Soviet Union.

The notion “change” was present in the western internal considerations. Key western delegations and capitals had the expectation, that with the help of détente, common endeavours and commitments could have an impact on the socialist societies. At the closing stage of the negotiations, in summer 1975, many key formulations in the III basket were assessed in this light. The last additions concerning family reunification and information exchanges were considered to be some sort of guarantees, that the administrative procedures in the socialist countries would be modified and changed. Not perhaps immediately, but step by step.

Even in the Finnish governmental practice the understanding was that not much should or could be changed. In the bilateral discussions with the soviet authorities, an often repeated saying was, that “in our bilateral relations we have made already more than the Final Act is actually asking us to do”. This was an indirect and polite remark indicating, that at least the Finns were not expecting the impossible from our soviet friends.

The follow - up to the conference was first tested here in Belgrade 1977 – 1978. The idea of a continued conference was one of the priorities of the N + N in Geneva negotiations. The CSCE was not a one- time event. The follow-up became more of a mechanism of continued dialogue between the experts, diplomats and politicians. CSCE was a reflection of world politics, bilateral governmental relations and a parameter of the current international atmosphere.

In the follow-up section of the Final Act, the tasks of the follow up meeting were twofold; first to exchange views on the implementation of the provisions of the FA. In the preparatory meeting in Belgrade the allocation of time to this was one of the most disputed questions. The second task was to exchange views “on the deepening of mutual relations, the improvement of security and the development of cooperation in Europe”. One can interpret these formulations quasi requiring to certain extent changes, development and at least, further efforts.

It has been said, that the CSCE was facing twice a break-down point. First time here in Belgrade in early 1978, and second time in Madrid after the martial law was declared in Warsaw 13. December 1981. But it survived. One key to this success was the formulation which gave the follow up meeting the obligation to agree on a concluding document before the meeting could be closed, irrespective of the time frame.

In Belgrade the tone of the dialogue was different than in Geneva and Helsinki. The 36th player had entered the forum; the dissidents and Helsinki groups in the socialist countries, in particular in the Soviet Union and Tszechoslovakia. Their concerns were from now on “a common property” of the CSCE community.

During the Belgrade follow-up meeting the N+N cooperation was put under a new test. The possibilities to help work out a package of compromises, or a comprehensive concluding document, were slim. Nothing was self evident or automatic. The tone of the discussion between Moscou and Washington was strained. Naming names became a new point of dispute in particular concerning the protection of internal affairs.

The preparations to Madrid follow-up meeting among the N+N countries included in particular confidence building measures. For Finland the nuclear weapon free zone in the Nordic area was one of the main priorities. Disarmament had a topical place as well. Finnish government elaborated an idea called “A European disarmament programme” and presented this to the Madrid conference. It became obvious very soon, that more concrete measures were needed. The French proposal to convene a European disarmament conference became the main topic in the substantive concluding document in Madrid. The main task was to ask the soviets to open their military activities for foreign inspections up to the Urals.

For Finland the Madrid meeting was the first when the original host of the CSCE, president Kekkonen was not any more in active duty. President Koivisto had a very different backround and expertise. Never the less, foreign minister Väyrynen used in his opening statement first time the notion of “change”. He said,

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that a faithfull implementation of the provisions of the Final Act means change. One could draw the conclusion, that Finland had now for the first time taken position on the side of the majority of the participating states. CSCE continued to play a key role in the Finnish foreign policy. President Koivisto made himself an initiative in spring 1983 in order to help expedite the final negotiations in Madrid.

As was said already during the Geneva talks, the neutral four countries were actually not neutral in the questions of III basket, human contacts and information. They all were western type democracies. For those reasons Finland associated herself very often with the other Nordic countries when addressing the III basket questions and the principles of human rights.

Belgrade meeting 1977-1978 was visibly a transition from the creative phase from Geneva and Helsinki to a more routine type follow up process in the CSCE. The importance of the provisions and obligations signed in the Final Act were discussed and interpreted once again. As was agreed in the concluding document from Belgrade, "divergent views were expressed as to the implementation of the provisions of the Final

Act." The struggle between status quo and change, between controlled stability and dynamic progress continued.

For Finland the Belgrade meeting meant a qualitative change in her role in the CSCE. Finland was not any more the privileged host country. She became now a normal participating state while feeling still special responsibilities to help the conference to achieve political compromises. Times had changed and possibilities for compromises with them.

The next follow up meeting in Madrid 1980-1983 showed, that the CSCE was able to create new commitments and open new avenues irrespective of a worsened international situation.