

**Remarks of The Secretary of State  
Colin L. Powell  
as delivered at the  
11th Ministerial Council  
of the  
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe  
Maastricht, The Netherlands, December 2, 2003**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my Distinguished Colleagues: I join the other speakers present in thanking Foreign Minister de Hoop Scheffer for his service as our Chairman in Office and to his government for so graciously hosting us all. This has been a most a successful term as Chairman-in-Office for Hoop and for the government of the Netherlands and I wish Hoop all the best as he moves on to NATO and I look forward to working with him in his new position as the Secretary General of NATO.

The United States looks forward also to close cooperation with next year's Chairman-in-Office, Bulgaria. And I am delighted that we have been joined here in Maastricht by the acting President of Georgia.

Allow me my colleagues to share my government's views on some key issues that are before the OSCE. I would ask, Mr. Chairman, that a longer version of my remarks be circulated to all members present.

Almost three decades have passed since North American and European leaders met in Helsinki, Finland to sign the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Ever since, the Helsinki process and the organization that grew from it have been rallying cries for freedom and instruments of peaceful, democratic change.

The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 enshrines a concept of security that remains essential to a Europe that is whole and free. The Final Act tells us that lasting security requires not just respect for the sovereignty of states, but also respect for the integrity of human beings.

By taking practical steps against terrorism, anti-Semitism, racism and trafficking in persons as set forth in the documents we expect to adopt today, OSCE can be an example of the effective multilateralism which President Bush and Prime Minister Blair called for in the statement that they issued in their London summit meeting last week.

My government also welcomes the adoption of strategies to address 21<sup>st</sup> century threats to security and stability as well as decisions on MANPADS and ammunition.

Future OSCE work in the economic and environmental dimension was also agreed upon and I am very please to note that. The strategies are guides for how OSCE can apply its practical experience to real world problems.

OSCE will be judged by actions, not words, results, not intentions. Here I wish to commend the concrete contributions of the OSCE's field missions in the Balkans, Central

Asia and the Caucasus. They deserve our strong support and cooperation for working to put lofty Helsinki principles into daily practice that benefits so many individuals.

Even as we take on the challenges of terrorism, intolerance and trafficking, OSCE must continue its vitally important efforts in many other areas affecting the security of Europe. The promise of Helsinki has yet to be fully realized.

Last week, we witnessed the “Revolution of the Roses” in Georgia. Tens of thousands of citizens protested peacefully in the streets, demanding their democratic rights and a legitimate, representative government free of corruption. My government looks forward to working with the interim Georgian government to ensure that new elections take place in accordance with the constitution. The international community should do everything possible to support Georgia’s territorial integrity throughout and beyond the election process. No support should be given to breakaway elements seeking to weaken Georgia’s territorial integrity.

We expect the upcoming elections to be free and fair. OSCE must take an active role in supporting and observing the elections to help ensure that the Georgian people have the opportunity to choose their leaders honestly.

The United States is prepared to make a substantial contribution and welcome the indications we have received that others are also willing to do the same.

In some OSCE regions, long-standing disputes have yet to be resolved. In the days prior to our meeting, many parties intensified their efforts to encourage a political settlement to the Transnistria problem. Negotiations should continue within the mediation structure coordinated among the OSCE, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine to best help the parties search for settlement that will be viable, stable and promote the security and well-being of Moldova and of the region as a whole.

Whatever the current status of various mediation efforts, it is the people of Moldova who must ultimately choose the constitutional and other arrangements best suited for their country. The OSCE must stay fully engaged to ensure that the process of making that choice is democratic and transparent to the citizens of Moldova. OSCE also must play a vital role in creating a genuinely international stabilization force, which is essential to a lasting settlement. The internationally mandated force should be multilateral in character and limited in scope and duration.

I had hoped today to welcome Russia’s fulfillment of its 1999 Istanbul commitments to completely withdraw its forces from Moldova. It appears that Russia will not meet the already extended December 31 deadline. This is a setback, though some progress has been made. I also urge Russia and Georgia to resolve the remaining issues relating to the Russian military presence in Georgia. I call once again for the earliest possible fulfillment of the Istanbul commitments on Moldova and Georgia. And I must express my regret that it is not impossible to reach consensus on Ministerial statements addressing these important issues.

The United States stands by the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty. Russia's fulfillment of the Istanbul commitments is a prerequisite for us to move forward on ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty, which all of us want to see enter into force.

This year, in a number of OSCE states in the Caucasus and elsewhere, key elections were seriously flawed. And today, in some member countries, human rights and democratic freedoms are under siege.

Belarus is conducting a systematic campaign against the independent media and against non-governmental organizations. Turkmenistan's persecution of political opponents and religious minorities violates the letter and the spirit of the Helsinki Act.

Credible reports of abuses by government as well as rebel forces in Chechnya remind us that Russia must ensure respect for human rights even as it combats terrorism and upholds its territorial integrity.

The links OSCE recognizes between freedom, prosperity and security are not unique to Europe. I hope that we will add solid content to our long-standing formal partnerships with Asian and Mediterranean states. The OSCE should give meaning to our new partnership with Afghanistan by finding a way to help the Afghan Government.

President Bush recently spoke of the historic challenge facing the leaders and peoples of the Middle East to reform their political and economic systems. They might look to the Helsinki experience and consider how they could draw upon it and adapt it to their own circumstances. I am traveling today to the Mahgreb and hope to have discussions there on this and other issues.

Mr. Chairman, what was true when the Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975 is just as true today. Respect for fundamental freedoms is an essential factor for peace, justice and well-being. May we now recommit ourselves to advancing those freedoms within the OSCE community, for the sake of our own citizens and as an inspiration to others.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman