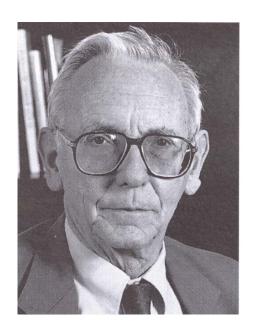# Preventing Ethnic Conflict
and
Building Cohesive States

Memorable Words of Max van der Stoel
First OSCE High Commissioner
on National Minorities
from His Speeches 1992–2001

Compiled and edited by M. Merrick Yamamoto

Visual Tutor Company
2007, 2016

Background of the OSCE and HCNM Max van der Stoel

The OSCE. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was a security organization composed of over fifty States in Europe, Central Asia, and North America. Through the OSCE, the participating States worked to increase their security based on the concept that security depends on the development and implementation of principles guiding three areas: how States deal with each other and resolve problems; the protection and promotion of individual rights within States; and the processes and mechanisms to review and advance values, principles, and commitments. The three groups:

— *Principles Guiding Relations Between OSCE States.* These principles addressed respect for the sovereign rights of States, with agreed-upon limits on these rights; mutual State involvement, accountability, and assistance regarding OSCE commitments; a comprehensive, cooperative, and common security approach; and the use of peaceful and preventive methods to prevent and reduce tensions and resolve disputes and conflicts.

— *Principles Guiding the Protection and Promotion of Individual Rights within States.* The principles addressed three areas: first, government responsibility to establish and maintain the conditions in which all members of the State could exercise their rights and freedoms—the means to be used were democracy, the rule of law, and the market economy; second, rights and responsibilities pertaining to national minorities; and third, the requirement for respect among all parties.

— *Principles Guiding Implementation, Review, and Development Processes.* These principles addressed good faith, full, equal, and continuous efforts to implement OSCE principles and commitments; the development and advancement of shared values; and processes and mechanisms.

The OSCE States articulated these principles and commitments in a series of documents, in particular the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, the 1990 Charter of Paris, the 1990 Copenhagen Document, the 1991 Moscow Document, and the 1992 Helsinki Document. The core of OSCE principles regarding the protection and promotion of rights, in terms of security, is that respect for individual rights is inherently stabilizing, and thereby contributes to both national and international security.

Max van der Stoel. Max van der Stoel's involvement with the OSCE began in 1973 as one of the thirty-five foreign ministers who negotiated the OSCE's founding document, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. The promotion of peace and security, and the protection of human rights, were constant themes in Van der Stoel's long career that included serving as a member of the Dutch Parliament and the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe (to which he was the Rapporteur on Greece 1968–1970); Foreign Minister of the Netherlands (1973–1977 and 1981–1982); Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations (1983–1986); head of the Netherlands delegation to the three-meeting Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE (Paris 1989, Copenhagen 1990, and Moscow 1991) that resulted in the landmark 1990 Copenhagen Document and 1991 Moscow Document; Special Rapporteur on Iraq for the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (1991–1999); and OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (1993–2001).

The OSCE States created the position of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) in December 1992 in response to the reemergence of ethnic tensions as a source of conflict in Europe as the Cold War ended. The opening of the Iron Curtain was a great advance for peace and security in the world; however, new security threats also emerged—ethnic conflict in particular, and rising interethnic tensions elsewhere that threatened to erupt. As HCNM, Max Van der Stoel helped OSCE States through the difficult post–Cold War period, and thereby increased security between and within States.

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SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY
CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL &
SECURITY STUDIES AT MARYLAND

Contents

Preface

In this book Max van der Stoel shares his knowledge and experience with you on how to promote interethnic harmony, prevent ethnic conflict, and build cohesive States. The thoughts in this book, drawn from his speeches while serving as the first OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) 1993–2001, reflect his experience helping States and communities apply OSCE principles to difficult minority situations, and build the processes and institutions needed to deal with often contentious interethnic issues on their own.

Chapters 1 and 2 address the problem of interethnic tensions, and solutions found through practical experience. Chapter 3 addresses how the international community can help reduce interethnic tensions. Chapter 4 discusses the OSCE principles on which Max Van der Stoel based his work, and includes a particular focus on the OSCE's "human dimension," which consists of the OSCE States' commitment to ensure full respect for individual rights and fundamental freedoms; abide by the rule of law; promote the principles of democracy; and build, strengthen, and protect democratic institutions. Chapter 5 concludes with his thoughts for the future.

The thoughts of Max van der Stoel are an invaluable legacy that governments and communities at all levels can use to help deal positively with interethnic issues and increase national unity. We hope this book will help you build on the wisdom and experience of this statesman.

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Special thanks to Dr. John Steinbruner and Dr. Margaret Scheffelin for their invaluable and untiring help in the study of the OSCE, OSCE principles, and the work of HCNM Max van der Stoel; Edward J. Scheffelin and the Visual Tutor Company for generous support; and Clifford Yamamoto.

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Notes: In some cases minor editorial changes have been made to the texts of speeches, and for the sake of readability most ellipses were omitted. Also for readability and simplicity, "OSCE" may include the CSCE (in 1995 the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) became the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)).

I. The Problem of Ethnic Conflict

1. The Danger of Ethnic Conflict

No stable order is possible without solving the problems of minorities and excessive nationalism. Minority issues will always exist—one can never "eliminate" nationalities problems. These questions are of great importance for developments within many European States and for the stability of Europe as a whole. We have seen regimes in the 20th century which think that a Final Solution is possible, through ethnic cleansing. But this is abhorrent and untenable. Moreover, attempts to eliminate ethnic issues through forced assimilation or brute force usually arouse, rather than diminish, national consciousness—and can provoke violent resistance. The decade since the dramatic changes of 1989/90 has witnessed interethnic violence on a scale not seen since the Second World War. These conflicts have again demonstrated that without stable and harmonious interethnic relations there can be no peace, justice, stability, and democracy in the OSCE area.[1]

The greatest threats to peace and stability arise from relations between communities, that is, mainly interethnic relations within the State and across State frontiers, rather than from conflicts immediately between countries. These violent conflicts have shown us this danger all too clearly. The short-term costs have been considerable. Thousands of lives have been lost. Millions of people have been forced to flee their homes, thus burdening the fragile economies of other countries and the scarce resources of the international community.

But the long-term costs may even be greater. These conflicts are not just internal disputes. They generally involve neighboring and nearby countries as well. Not merely "domestic" affairs, these conflicts disrupt regional stability and cause enormous damage to commerce and economic development in the region.

Building peace and preventing conflict are essential to the future of our continent. I do not think that Europe can afford more of the bloody conflicts that devastate some of her regions. If we do not invest enough now and work in advance, we will be presented with a much larger bill in the near future.[2]

We are all aware of the historical experience of the very bloody 20th century. Whatever the motivations for the extreme violence which has shattered so many societies, destroyed so much of what careful and creative work has built, and literally brought mankind to the brink of annihilation, we have been forced to react in order to protect and maintain civilized life. It is our self-interest as individuals and as a species which drives us to find solutions to the perils which we face. In my opinion, this self-interest informs and drives international relations. The great projects of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, and similar (if weaker) organizations and regimes in other regions of the world are the product of combined interests. In this regard, international commitments to human rights, based on liberal philosophy, should be viewed through the prism of *realpolitik*. If it was not sufficiently evident, or popularly believed, after the Second World War that mankind inhabits a common planet with limited resources and interrelated interests, then surely the contemporary perils of regional or global environmental decay, economic decline, social unrest or, still, military threat should be enough to lead us to the conclusion that our security and prosperity are indivisible.[3]

In an era of a free flow of ideas and capital, lowering trade barriers, and the opening of borders, several divisions still remain. These are divisions based on hate, suspicion, intolerance, and prejudice spawned by racism, chauvinism, xenophobia, and aggressive nationalism. Most of these barriers are invisible, but are all too real for the people who confront them on an almost daily basis. Aside from the disrespect to the individuals and communities concerned, failure to respond to their concerns and interests causes frustration, breeds resentment, and leads to alienation. It is my experience that alienated communities will not accept this over the long term. Rather, they will search for other ways to realize their ends. There will be increasing tensions leading to conflicts. We still see this throughout Europe. We know the cost in terms of human and material loss.[4]

2. Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict

We must ask why the forces of extreme nationalism have such resonance. Given the considerable uncertainty and insecurity affecting so many people on our continent, the apparently simple solutions of extreme nationalists appear attractive to many people who seek explanations and solutions for their problems. People's reactions are usually based on perceptions, particularly in relation to things which are dear to them. These can be manipulated through xenophobic and chauvinistic slogans—both of which ring of incitement to hatred. In situations where people feel insecure and vulnerable, unscrupulous individuals are all too ready to exploit these weaknesses.

During such times, leaders, both elected and unelected, may see the potential for popular support by pursuing or advocating policies aimed at the restitution or enhancement of an ethnic or national identity. The

process of reinvigorating this identity may single out neighboring groups as the culprits in a long history of victimhood, of which the last decades may only be the most recent period of injustice. These voices may define their group aspirations by excluding the aspirations of neighboring groups, thus justifying disengagement from, if not retribution against or expulsion of, neighboring groups. In an increasingly polarized environment, extremists can more easily gain support, and moderates may be forced aside or may have to reinvent themselves in more extremist terms. Irresponsible use of the media often exacerbates tensions at this stage. All sides may soon see the need for armed action, either to realize nationalistic goals or to defend themselves against such attacks. And thus the threat of violent conflict may quickly grow. Such is the tragic pattern that we have already observed in the former Yugoslavia, Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and elsewhere.[5]

Since the collapse of communism we have seen an increasing emphasis on national identity and on ethnic self-determination. There are many strong manifestations of nationalism, sometimes even excessive nationalism. Perhaps it is not so difficult to explain why this has happened. The period of communism was the period of proletarian internationalism, a concept which is basically hostile towards the full expression of the national identity and towards ethnic diversity. Now the years of proletarian internationalism are behind us, and it is quite understandable, as national identity and ethnic diversity have been neglected for so long, that various population groups are even more attached to it than in the pre-communist years. No doubt other factors have also contributed to this, but the denial of national self-expression in the communist years is certainly the main reason for the strong revival of the sense of national identity in the post–communist period.[6]

We have seen how fast the ethnic card, once played, can create an atmosphere of suspicion, hatred, and fear. We have seen how difficult it is to withdraw once played. And we have seen how some are quite prepared to play it to its most bloody and horrific end. We have also seen how people who once lived together as neighbors and joined their families through intermarriages have been driven to inhuman acts against one another. Extreme nationalism profits from the division of societies through the demonization of "the other" and it attributes guilt by association such that even the most innocent are forced to withdraw to the security of their purported "nation" notwithstanding the absence of strong ties. We know this story in the former Yugoslavia, and we have observed the tendency elsewhere. Responsibility lies with irresponsible leadership, with hate speech, with incitement to racism and acts of violence.[7]

Wars in the former Yugoslavia are clear warnings about the repercussions of intolerance in multiethnic societies. The central characteristic of such wars is that they often stem from the blatant and persistent disregard of the rights of people who are of a different ethnicity. Such conflicts feature the systematic exclusion and suppression of one or several groups by another, typically the majority who achieve their ends by force of numbers.

Many interethnic disputes also feature competing interests over resources, power, or prestige. They almost always indicate a failure of one or all sides to realize and value shared interests. Sometimes this lack of understanding is intentionally fueled by elites. It is my experience that threats to identity—whether real or imagined—are often accentuated in order to promote narrow interests. Furthermore, in the contemporary world, facts can be manipulated—exacerbating insecurities—where information, especially the media, is controlled and public education may not be high. No doubt, when there exists a general situation of economic and social insecurity, as is generally the case in transitional societies of the former communist world, the scope for manipulation is all the easier.

The tendency to seed and manipulate popular feelings serves political interests. To gain and maintain power holds great attraction for many throughout the world, and exploiting popularly held fears and biases can offer an easy route to power. There are situations in which irresponsible governments deliberately use their power to exacerbate existing differences—to group their followers more tightly around them, for example, perhaps with a view to a forthcoming election. In the worst case it is then not much farther to a situation in which minorities are, so to speak, pictured as a common enemy against whom the people must unite for purposes of self-defense. Excessive nationalism poses a grave danger to the rights of individuals and to the security of States. We should not be surprised that extreme nationalism has in recent years reared its ugly head in so many places throughout the world since there is also increasing insecurity upon which it may prey.[8]

I have confronted nationalism in many forms during my terms as High Commissioner and have on several occasions spoken against the dangers of "aggressive" or "extreme nationalism." I still hold this view strongly. But, perhaps there is something deeper we need to address. On reflection, I am increasingly worried about

nationalism *per se*, that is as a political project, with a specific agenda and program (if not always clearly articulated), which aims to elevate some over others. This is at odds with our commitment to full respect for the equal dignity and rights of all human beings. Moreover, if you are not among those to be elevated, or, worse, such elevation would occur at your expense, then I can hardly see that people will long suffer such politics. Indeed, this seems a recipe for conflict creation.

I am not arguing against the ideas of loving one's country, one's language, one's community, for these are normal, healthy sentiments which might be captured in the notion of patriotism. On these and other bases, we even expect people dutifully to defend their community and country. Nor am I speaking about the need or interest of people to protect and promote their culture, language, or the general welfare of their community— which surely applies to all of us.[9]

Excessive nationalism is often at the expense of minorities, either because they are perceived as a threat, an historical enemy, or a soft target. Of course, malign nationalism is not a one-way street. Nationalism can be found in all quarters, with governments and minorities alike. To give an example: some minority leaders argue that to preserve the identity of the minority, they not only need their own schools, theaters, or churches, but also a whole range of institutions, in parallel of State institutions. This approach will always lead to a strong and negative reaction from the State concerned and will fuel latent feelings of resentment on both sides. Tensions will escalate and potential conflict is imminent. Nationalism among minority groups is often perceived as a threat by the majority population. The reactive national consciousness, suspicion, and fears that are aroused can fuel interethnic tensions. History is littered with examples. So is contemporary Europe.[10]

Some people, particularly extreme nationalists, argue that communities with sizeable minority populations are unstable and that only nationstates can be strong. Many of these extremists then take steps to make this a self-fulfilling prophecy. I have noted that even among some liberal commentators there is a growing sense of fatalism surrounding the future of multiethnic States.

But if we were to follow such logic, where would we land up? If we are to have a Europe where every nation has "its own" State, we would have an endless redrawing of boundaries, a steady stream of population transfers, and people living in culturally exclusive environments. This is neither viable nor desirable. Very few national minorities live in compact groups, and even where they do there is no reason to suppose that they should either assimilate to the majority or separate from the State.

Sometimes people say that minorities should simply go home. What does that mean? Although minorities may sometimes have relations with a kinstate, they feel at home where they are. I think very few people would voluntarily move for the sake of ethnic homogeneity. Nor is it in the best interests of a State. Diversity enriches a State—the pursuit of ethnic purity can impoverish it.[11]

3. Ethnic Conflict and Economic Factors

Conflicts between different groups are often the result of difficulties which, in essence, are not of an interethnic nature. If people are unemployed, if they have little or no possibilities for education, if no decent housing is available, if the prospects for their children's future are gloomy, it is no wonder that they are dissatisfied. In many countries in the OSCE area this situation is exacerbated by the fundamental changes societies are going through. Frequently, people in these countries are faced with huge problems in their day-to-day lives— without it always being clear what the future has in store for them. Past ideologies have failed them and new ideologies with tailor-made answers are not at hand. This is a condition of general insecurity. Unfortunately, history has shown that human nature is such that in a situation of discontent and insecurity easy answers are sought and scapegoats are readily found. Nationalism then becomes the panacea for all problems. This has to be avoided. Rather, specific solutions to concrete problems need to be found.[12]

Economic factors make up an important element of the context in which minority tensions arise and evolve, often exacerbating matters. An economic downturn in a country will in all likelihood lead to social tensions and divisions, and some people will be looking for a scapegoat, a minority being a likely candidate for that role. More in general, a worsening economic situation or the absence of an improvement in the economic situation can make people more open to authoritarian and even xenophobic influences. At the same time, bad economic conditions are one of the factors causing migration flows, which in themselves lead to tensions which could in turn lead to conflict.

To give you one example, one could imagine a situation in which the persons belonging to a minority are largely employed in a sector of the economy which is particularly hard hit by the economic transformation process. This may lead to a sharp rise in unemployment among those persons and increased social tension. Even

though this rise is not the intended result of government policy, these persons may see that it affects almost exclusively them and they may very well perceive their hardship as resulting from willful discrimination on ethnic grounds.[13]

4. Conclusion

Nationalism is alive and well. Just when we think someone like Milosevic is moving into the shadows, someone like Vadim Tudor steals the spotlight.[*] While the media focuses on one conflict, another one brews below the surface. A century marred by interethnic conflict and excessive nationalism is only just behind us, but its legacy lingers on. What lessons can we take from the past and what are the prospects for facing ethnic conflicts in the future?

Although our world is changing rapidly, some of the fundamental issues that we are facing today are those that theorists and practitioners have been struggling with over the past one hundred and fifty years. These include protecting and promoting minority rights and identities within multiethnic States, and reconciling claims for self-determination with the interest in preserving the territorial integrity of States. These issues plagued the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. Indeed, one could argue that the collapse of those empires was due in part to their failure to reconcile competing national and State interests. During the Inter-War period the Great Powers and later the League of Nations tried to satisfy the desire of some nations for self-determination and to protect minorities that lived in multiethnic States. However, there were few international standards to meet these challenges and those that existed were often undermined by power politics. Minority rights and self-determination were therefore open to abuse, as demonstrated by Hitler's justification for his expansionist plans.

Communist countries also had difficulties coping with so-called "nationalities problems." Indeed, nationalism was a contributing factor to the break up of the Soviet Union and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The immediate post–communist period was characterized by an explosion of nationalism. While euphoria welcomed the birth or rebirth of States, the accentuation and revival of national identity was often accompanied by a complete disrespect for the rights of others. Violent conflicts raged in a number of former communist bloc countries and interethnic tensions threatened to erupt in others.

In short, one of the defining characteristics of the 20th century was the impact of excessive nationalism and the clash between the principles of sovereignty and self-determination. Wars were fought in defense of these principles; States have been created and broken up in their name; ideologies have been driven by them; and millions of people have been expelled or killed either fighting for, or being victimized by, nationalistic or ethnically based ideals.[14]

I would caution against any complacency about the reduced threat of ethnic conflict. There is a certain wishful linear logic that we are all progressing in the same direction according to the good intentions of high-level international documents. That certainly is the goal, but reality sometimes has a nasty way of interfering. There is no guarantee that we will continue moving in the right direction. We must therefore keep an eye on any backsliding on minority rights protection and continue to assist and monitor the process of implementing legal and political reform. We must also follow-up early warning with early action. We cannot simply hope that when there are clouds on the horizon they will disperse. I do not want to sound like a Cassandra, but I want to warn against the view that excessive nationalism is a by-product of post–communist transition and as we move out of that phase, nationalism will fade away. If that is true, how does one explain the rise of xenophobia and racism in many European countries? Or persistent separatist movements in some countries? Or the assertive tendency of some countries to defend the interests of their kin abroad while neglecting the role that international organizations can play in this regard? Or the continued suspicion among certain ethnic communities that their neighbors cannot be trusted? There is no end of nationalism as there is no end of history.

Extreme nationalism persists because certain groups defend narrow interests which are then packaged as "ethnic" issues. Because national identity is so emotive and affects people directly (because of language, culture, symbolism, and so on), if they feel, or are led to believe, that this identity is threatened, they react in a hostile way. This is dangerous because, as we have seen so often, extreme nationalism usually manifests itself by one group trampling on the rights of others whom they perceive as different. Driven by feelings of superiority and hatred towards other ethnic groups, they often block the road to constructive solutions for interethnic problems. Worse still, they are directly responsible for the bloody conflicts which erupted in the 1990s. Extreme nationalism is one of the greatest threats to global stability.[15]

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[*] Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. Vadim Tudor led the extreme-right "Greater Romania" nationalist party.

II. Tools to Prevent Ethnic Conflict and Build Cohesive States

There is nothing inevitable about interethnic conflict, in the Balkans or anywhere else. It is man-made and can be prevented by mankind.[16]

1. The Need to Integrate Diversity

The best way to create a harmonious, prosperous, and dynamic society is to realize the merits of pluralism and seek to integrate diversity. Almost all States in the modern world are multiethnic or multinational, made up of different cultures: therefore multicultural. The goal must be to find ways for people to express and enjoy their uniqueness while being conscious of, and contributing to, a greater collective, common understanding. This process is not static. Cultures change, societies evolve, demographics shift. As a result, the configuration of a State, and relations within it, are constantly changing. Because society is dynamic, there can be no "model" of multiculturalism. One does not achieve multiculturalism; one adapts one's societal frameworks to accommodate it. Those frameworks allow pluralism to flourish while maintaining the integrity of the State.[17]

The human being is a social being. We derive our sense of ourselves from our relations with others. First, we have our family from which we acquire basic values in the home. This is enhanced through our extended family—from our lineage and heritage. Our individual identity is further enhanced through our community with which we share traditions, customs, and larger values, even a worldview. Certainly I am no sociologist, but I am convinced that this is an essential aspect of the human experience, and I know that it is asserted every day throughout the world. I would even say that human beings should not be conceived of or treated in an atomistic fashion, for then they risk becoming alienated, isolated, and frustrated. We must not fail to respect the essential social nature of human existence. Human beings require community. This is the basis of our identity. For most of us, our mother-tongue, name, values, symbols, and culture largely define who we are and our sense of ourselves. It is critical for human dignity to respond adequately to the human desire to maintain and develop one's identity. Identity is often expressed in national, ethnic, linguistic, or religious terms. While these may not be exclusive and may well be multiple, they remain essentially important.[18]

What is a minority? I do not pretend to improve on the work of many experts who over the years have not yet been able to agree on a definition, so I won't offer you one of my own. I would note, however, that the existence of a minority is a question of fact and not of definition. In this connection I would like to quote the Copenhagen Document of 1990, which is of fundamental importance to minority issues within the OSCE. It states that "to belong to a national minority is a matter of a person's individual choice." Even though I may not have a definition of what constitutes a minority, I would dare to say that I know a minority when I see one. My view has always been that a minority is a collection of individuals who share linguistic, ethnic, or cultural characteristics which distinguish them from the majority. These individuals, acting alone or together, usually not only seek to maintain their identity, but also try to give a stronger expression to those ethno-cultural and linguistic characteristics that give them a sense of individual and collective identity.[19]

Integrating diversity is a fundamental aspect of both conflict prevention and civil society. Integration is quite different from assimilation, in which case a minority is absorbed by the majority, loses its identity, and disappears as a recognizable group. Integration assumes instead that the distinctive identity of the minority will be maintained, be it ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, or a combination thereof, but that persons of the minority are encouraged to be part of the society at large. Members of minorities should feel that they belong not only to their particular ethnic or linguistic community, but also that they share and value an important sense of belonging to the wider society. Individuals concerned should feel that they are equal members of the society as a whole and that they can contribute their skills and talents to its further development. The basic logic of integrating diversity is that everybody's opinion matters and that all members of society are equal. Integration means that members of the majority and persons belonging to minorities find ways to work together, motivated by the knowledge that they have many common interests, including a common future. Living within the borders of one State, they have a common interest to ensure that it will be secure and stable, that there is an effective democratic system, an independent judiciary and full respect for human rights, and that the country will enjoy prosperity.[20]

Ethnic diversity is not something that can be solved in the sense of being eradicated—unless one engages in a never-ending process of war, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and expulsion. Not only are these options morally reprehensible, the 20th century has clearly demonstrated that they are untenable. Surely we do not need any more evidence of the need for strengthening the foundations

of democratic, pluralistic civil society, accommodating and integrating diversity and protecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. Surely it is time to realize that the pursuit of the mono-ethnic State is a dead-end street. Ethnically pure territorial units are a myth, and efforts to achieve them are conflict-causing and fraught with serious violations of human rights. It is no solution to deny the existence of minorities or to "solve the problem" by pursuing policies of forced assimilation, deportation, or even "ethnic cleansing," as it is euphemistically called. Through the conflict in former Yugoslavia, we can see daily [1993] the horrors to which it can lead.[21]

2. Ways to Integrate Diversity

2-1. Minority Participation in Public Life

Effective participation by national minorities in public life is an essential component of a peaceful and democratic society and should take place across a wide range of areas. The essence of participation is involvement, both in terms of the opportunity to make substantive contributions to decisionmaking processes and in terms of the effect of those contributions. Participation requires arrangements that enable minorities to maintain their own identity and characteristics while including them in the overall life of the State. Democracy is tremendously flexible, offering many forms of structures, parliaments, special arrangements, and so forth. The aim is to bring the decisionmaking closer to those most affected, to involve them in the process and, thereby, to achieve better policy and law. The more inclusive a political system, the more representative it is. This is not only a question of implementing international standards. It is good governance.[22]

Participation in decisionmaking should be at all levels of government. This could include special arrangements for minority representation in the legislative process; mechanisms to ensure that minority interests are considered within relevant ministries; special measures for minority participation in the civil service as well as the provision of public services in the language of the national minority. The electoral system should also facilitate minority representation and influence. These are some of the recommendations made by international experts in The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life.

The Lund Recommendations aim to facilitate the inclusion of minorities within the State and enable minorities to maintain their own identity and characteristics, thereby promoting the good governance

and integrity of the State. I believe that these Recommendations can open up new horizons for looking at ways of allowing minorities to have a greater say over decisions that affect them, without breaking up States. They raise and explore interesting and relatively untested possibilities, particularly in regards to non-territorial autonomy, that can promote the good governance and territorial integrity of the State. I think that the Lund Recommendations give useful "food for thought" and many alternatives for policy that can work towards this end.

Across the OSCE area, finding accommodation between governments and minorities is a challenge that must be addressed at an early stage before positions become polarized and questions of identity and rights become interethnic conflicts. I regard the Recommendations as a useful toolbox for finding a balance between the maintenance of the territorial integrity of States and the aim of national minorities to fully enjoy their rights and identity. This dilemma is one of the most central and pressing questions of our time.[23]

Aside from the normal democratic processes, there must be means by which minority concerns and interests may be taken into account and, so far as possible, accommodated within public policy and law. According to paragraph 35 of the Copenhagen Document, OSCE participating States "will respect the right of persons belonging to national minorities to effective participation in public affairs, including participation in the affairs relating to the protection and promotion of the identity of such minorities." Paragraph 35 of the Copenhagen Document goes on to "note the efforts undertaken to protect and create conditions for the promotion of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity of certain national minorities by establishing, as one of the possible means to achieve these aims, appropriate local or autonomous administrations corresponding to the specific historical and territorial circumstances of such minorities and in accordance with the policies of the State concerned."

In interpreting and applying this standard, we must be consistent with the logic of democratic governance, including respect for human rights, and we must remember that our aim is to achieve peace, justice, and prosperity for all. Democracy is not only for some or for the majority alone. We affirm that democracy is the best system for the *whole* population.[24]

Through effective participation in decisionmaking processes and bodies, representatives of minorities have the possibility to present their views to the authorities, which can help the authorities to understand minorities' concerns. At the same time the authorities are offered a

platform to explain their policies and intentions. This can contribute to a more cooperative and less confrontational situation. It can increase the minority's sense of belonging, and reduce the fears and prejudices of the majority.

Experience has shown that integration through participation is an important element in forging links of mutual understanding and loyalty between the majority and minority communities within the State, and in giving minorities input to processes that directly affect them. It also improves overall governance. If minorities feel that they have a stake in society, if they have input into discussion and decisionmaking bodies, if they have avenues of appeal, and if they feel that their identities are being protected and promoted, the chances of interethnic tensions arising will be significantly reduced.

It is only when the members of a minority feel that they are represented in the political bodies of the State at all levels and can be heard there that they will identify with the State and regard it as theirs. In turn, the exclusion of a minority by the majority and/or decisions made by governmental bodies will lead to a breach between the two sides. That cannot be in the well-understood self-interest of a State, however, because nothing could be more dangerous over the long term than a cohesive group of dissatisfied citizens held together by their common ethnic origin who see no point in showing loyalty—in itself a perfectly natural thing—to a State which they feel is foreign to them.

At the same time, members of the majority will come to see them as fellow citizens sharing fully in the responsibilities and benefits of citizenship. This will foster a sense of cohesion and cooperation within the State that will benefit the whole of society and, by extension, will increase regional stability and prosperity. This is in the interest of all citizens, not only minorities. The importance of ensuring the effective participation of minorities in public life—or more broadly speaking integrating diversity—is to look at what happens when this is not done. Tensions can arise that can destabilize internal stability and bilateral relations. This is in nobody's best interests.[25]

A basic concept should be an emphasis on civic rather than ethnic identity. The development of human rights instruments in the last fifty years has strengthened the concept of the State as a community of individuals subject to common rights and privileges rather than as a community united by common descent, language, or blood. This civic identity unites individuals regardless of their ethnicity and bases their relationship to the State on a civic contract of rights and obligations.

If minorities feel that their voices are being heard through the democratic process, they will be unlikely to resort to less acceptable means for representing their interests. Participation also has a broader connotation, namely that minorities feel that they are active and equal members of the State. If they feel that they "belong," that the State is "theirs," the civic identity will transcend the ethnic one.[26]

Sometimes minorities have concrete difficulties in integrating into a wider society—even if they have the wish to do so. For instance, in some countries, where stateless residents have to pass language and other tests in order to become citizens, many of them sincerely wish to do so. The problem is that there are inadequate facilities for language training or that the expenses required are too great. This leads to a situation where they cannot realize what they want to achieve or enjoy the full rights of citizens. This is not an insoluble problem as a number of governments and international organizations have begun to realize. A program of international support can help to solve the problem and thus stimulate the integration process.[27]

2-2. Dialogue and Mechanisms for Dialogue

Dialogue can be a catalyst for change. Interethnic tensions often stem from a lack of communication. Dialogue is an important process for dispelling misperceptions and building confidence between the parties. It is the first step in getting the parties to communicate directly, to articulate their concerns, and to seek cooperative and constructive solutions to their problems. Through dialogue, all participants can form a greater understanding of each other's interests and concerns. Through dialogue, they can find common ground and reconcile possibly conflicting positions. Sometimes it takes a third party to help to initiate this process and/or move it along. But ultimately it is up to the parties to eventually find ways of facilitating their own means of communication on a permanent basis. Dialogue should not only occur during crisis situations but be part of the normal discourse.[28]

Government authorities and minorities should pursue an inclusive, transparent, and accountable process of consultation in order to maintain a climate of confidence. For their part, the political representatives of national minorities must articulate specific, concrete concerns with government policy. Specificity in representing its interests demonstrates the ethnic group's genuine commitment to improve State policy. General criticisms, on the other hand, are often understood as attacks on the State itself. Neither side should resort to alarmist, provocative generalities that only inflame passions further.

It is important to move from formal guarantees of representation to arrangements which ensure effective participation. The legislative framework is important, but equally important is the spirit of reception among the wider society. Cooperation lies at the heart of the exercise of our common responsibility, or as it is sometimes called, the cooperative implementation of OSCE commitments. Durable solutions are only possible if there is a sufficient measure of good will and consent on the part of the parties directly involved.[29]

In order to address problems one must understand what the "root causes" are. While being sensitive to questions of culture, history, and symbolism, one must carefully strip away romanticized notions to get down to the questions of substance. This is why I urge the conflicting parties to be specific. Nationalism feeds off stereotypes and vague generalizations. If one can put these aside and look at the underlying considerations, one can begin pragmatically to tackle concrete—and usually solvable—issues. In the process, the parties might even discover that their respective positions are not as far removed from each other as they may have thought. And if they are, they often welcome outside assistance in finding common ground and building consensus. This is not the case when parties or individuals have no interest in compromise. Extreme nationalists often stick to their guns (sometimes literally) because compromise would undermine vested interests which often have nothing to do with ethnicity. National or ethnic arguments often mask interests of power, prestige, and resources. In such cases, we have to be careful to make a distinction between populists, demagogues, extremists, and their followers on one hand and the silent majority on the other. Efforts to condemn all members of an ethnic or religious group because of the actions of a few may not only infringe on their rights, but may create the very conditions that extremists thrive on.[30]

Disputes involving minorities frequently arise because of insufficient mechanisms for dialogue at the national level. This dialogue can be of a structural nature, such as the Council on National Minorities in Romania, the Presidential Round Tables in Latvia and Estonia, or the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan and the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan, where representatives of majority and minorities gather regularly to discuss issues of mutual interest. The important thing is that representatives of minorities get the possibility to present their views to the authorities, which can help the authorities to understand minorities' concerns and take these into account when developing policies. Conclusions reached at such meetings can be submitted to the authorities, in the form of recommendations, and can thus, with time, become an integral part of policymaking in these countries.

The development of these institutions and processes of dialogue will demonstrate on the one hand that the authorities are willing to listen to minorities' concerns and on the other hand that minorities are willing to participate in the political life of the country in which they live. Even if such a dialogue does not lead to full agreement on the issues at hand, the exchange of views in itself can help to create a better understanding of the problems and concerns of the other side and to lower walls of mutual suspicion. It is especially important that draft legislation relating to minorities is discussed in such a dialogue before being presented to parliament. The same applies to government plans for new policies of special relevance for minorities.

But for instruments of dialogue to be successful, it is of essential importance that, once structures for dialogue are put into place, both the authorities and the minorities remain committed to making dialogue a success. If the Assemblies or Round Tables are neglected, their usefulness will soon come to an end. Without constant proof of this commitment, the structures will not play a helpful role and will get the odium of window-dressing. This will make minorities even more suspicious about the authorities' intentions. Although to some this might seem a small step, such an approach can lay the foundation for full participation of all groups of the population in development of the social fabric of the country in which they live.[31]

2-3. Analysis

To confront the root causes of excessive nationalism, one has to break down "nationalist" issues to their core elements. Analysis and research are indispensable if one wants to grasp the sometimes not so apparent root causes of ethnic strife. More often than not, these concern political participation, education, language, culture, or resource allocation. Debates on these issues are often complicated by historic, symbolic, and/or demographic factors. In many cases that I have encountered, political debates become issues of identity as either the minority or majority community feels that their way of life is threatened by "the other." Nationalism, xenophobia, racism, and the portrayal of "others" as the enemy, are certainly not the answers to, but indeed part of, the problem.[32]

The situation of minorities varies considerably from State to State. What might be a useful solution for the position of minorities in the context of one State, can be totally inappropriate in the context of another.

Therefore, in drawing conclusions from comparative studies, the specific situation in each participating State should clearly be taken into account. There is not one magical human dimension recipe for minority issues. There are many different situations where minorities are concerned and each case has to be assessed in light of its particular aspects and circumstances. There are no easy answers or simplistic solutions to preventing ethnic conflict. Rather, there are a variety of instruments and techniques that can be applied to different situations. They are not a panacea, but they can be regarded as tools which, when skillfully used, can help to fix broken trust, build confidence, and construct long-term frameworks for harmonious interethnic societies.[33]

2-4. Respect for International Standards

Nationalist debates often revolve around questions of "identity." Identity is such an abstract notion that one must break down its component parts in order to look at what is really at issue. While being sensitive to questions of culture, history, and symbolism, one must try to get down to the core of issues in dispute. This is why I try to get the conflicting parties to be specific. Nationalism feeds off stereotypes and vague generalizations. If one can put these aside and look at the underlying considerations, one can begin to pragmatically tackle concrete—and usual solvable— issues which, if left unaddressed, could blow up into emotive "nationalistic" debates.

In this context, it is important for all parties to realize that while certain basic standards must be maintained, political solutions require compromise. Change takes time. Parties that take a maximalist approach often meet maximum opposition. One must always bear in mind that there are usually at least two sides to every issue. Long-term solutions are best achieved through a pragmatic step-by-step approach grounded in politically possible objectives. The trick is to find common ground and follow a step-by-step approach directed towards shared objectives.

However, in such discussions one cannot compromise on international standards, in particular human rights. They are the bedrock of minority protection. If these rights are respected in a democratic political framework based on the rule of law, then all citizens, regardless of ethnicity, language, or religion, will have the opportunity and the equal right to freely express and pursue their legitimate interests and aspirations. This is true of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but also of more specific minority-related standards like the OSCE's 1990 Copenhagen Document and the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1994. These are minimum standards. We must stick to these standards—indeed insist on them—and not allow for obligations and commitments to be interpreted in a restrictive manner.

That being said, experience has taught me that we cannot look at standards in terms of pure law. One must be sensitive to the context in which one is working in order that the parties will see the logic and possibility of applying, or one could say "domesticating," the relevant norms and standards. The key is to move from the abstract to the concrete, to get governments to take measures—legal and political—to create the types of conditions foreseen in the standards concerning minorities. This is the message that I try to convey through my recommendations and during my visits to OSCE participating States.[34]

2-5. Balanced and Equitable Policies

Since very few populations are ethnically homogeneous, it is almost inevitable that every State will have at least one minority. Depending on the size of the minority or minorities, this can affect questions like use of language, education, culture, and participation in government. Fair and practical standards to protect minorities are therefore essential. A balanced and equitable approach reconciles the interests of the minority and the majority on the one hand and the interests of human beings (individually or collectively) and the State on the other. Such a policy often entails a combination of three elements.

First, the State should ensure equal protection and nondiscrimination on grounds of belonging to a certain ethnic group. Second, the State should make efforts to promote tolerance, mutual acceptance, and nondiscrimination in society. For both of these elements, "equality in fact" should accompany "equality in law." Third, persons belonging to minorities should be able to avail themselves of appropriate means to preserve and develop their language, culture, religion, and traditions without discriminating against persons belonging to the majority.

An ethnic group must be able to perceive that there are legitimate opportunities for developing its distinctive identity and for participating in the economic, social, and political life of the country. At the same time, special attention for minorities should not be at the expense of other groups in society, who might also be in a difficult position. These groups also deserve attention: it should be avoided that they feel discriminated against by the special measures for minorities. If this feeling would appear, the extra attention for minorities would be counterproductive, since it would augment rather than diminish ethnic tensions. What is important from the point of view of integration is to ensure legal,

administrative, and practical equality for all in their opportunities and access to what the State is offering.[35]

Identity is a highly personal and subjective matter. It is also intimately linked to dignity, since our sense of self—who we are, where we come from and where we are going—is a defining element of the human spirit. This cannot be dictated by others. Nor can it be ignored or dismissed by public regimes merely because the identity of a few does not coincide with the identity of the many. In a completely neutral world, this probably would not matter. But we do not live in such a world. We live in a world of diversity and inequality which requires structure.

The organization of society requires government and administration. In order to be representative and at all efficient, democratic government and administration require structures and modes of societal interaction that satisfy the needs of the population. Of course, since the population is not uniform, there will be differences between majority and minorities. For example, the choice of language of government and public administration, presumably that of the majority, carries necessary implications for persons who do not speak the chosen language. As a result, even the best-intentioned government and administration is no longer neutral for minority-language speakers. Equal concern for their needs and interests, therefore, requires some response to their disadvantaged situation. There must be assurances than an ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious national minority is not constantly outvoted on the basis of a purely mathematical majority.

Majority rule is a fundamental tool for democratic decisionmaking. It has its own justice: one vote per person. But simple majority rule risks injustice by its failure to accommodate special needs and interests. Minorities could thus be disadvantaged by the majority rule. The imperative of justice, therefore, requires an effort to respond to the special needs and interests of minorities. Good governance requires this. However they may be democratically elected, it is the pledge of all democratic governments to serve the whole population—not just the narrow interests of their own electors, not just the majority. An effort must also be made on behalf of minorities. The best approach is to integrate their concerns and interests into overall policy and law. It is thus a procedural question as to how to do this.[36]

2-6. Respect and Appreciation for Others

Recognition is vital. People on all sides of an issue have to acknowledge each other, respect the opinion of their counterparts, and recognize the equal rights and value of all individuals. This goes beyond putting up with or "tolerating" one's neighbor. It means appreciating the fact that there are other cultures and that people belonging to different ethnic or religious backgrounds should be allowed to protect and promote their identities as long as it is not to the detriment of the rights and identities of others. The media and education have important roles to play in this regard. So too do political representatives and community leaders who can lead by example.[37]

Many communities harbor antipathy and even hatred toward neighboring communities of a different origin. Stereotypes abound, and popular memories may readily revive long-past, and even not-so-distant atrocities committed by one side or the other. But even so, such communities often coexist in relative harmony, interacting, interrelating, and often intermingling. In fact, during my recent visits to so-called ethnic "hot spots," I have been repeatedly struck by the depth and extent of this relative harmony at the interpersonal and intergroup level. At the political level, however, government-minority relations are usually more strained, particularly during periods of transition, when there may be pervasive uncertainty about the functioning of basic societal structures such as the economy and the political system.[38]

We have to look at ethnic diversity in a positive light. We have to consider minorities as a strength rather than as a potential source of trouble. Beyond our commitment not to discriminate, the idea of equal dignity implies that we must tolerate differences of view, belief, taste, and behavior within the limits of law and respect for the rights and freedoms of others. Whatever we may think or believe of others, our commitment to tolerance directs us to conform our actual behavior to a minimum of mutual respect—even if grudgingly paid. Again, this is a baseline—a minimum. Tolerance and understanding are fundamental in a multicultural society with a variety of ethnic groups, which live together in the spirit of mutual respect, understanding, and enrichment. Because most modern States are multicultural, we all have to learn to value and accommodate pluralism. To do this, one must realize that minority and majority interests are not mutually exclusive. The protection and promotion of one identity does not have to come at the expense of another. Indeed, diversity is mutually enriching.[39]

2-7. Education

Education can and must go beyond merely equipping students to survive in an increasingly competitive

world—and it must teach more than just how to "get along," avoid conflicts, and respect the minimum of law and order. Certainly, education must do all of this. But, good education can and must aim higher, seeking to shape future generations for responsible citizenship. Our common project is to build a better world where individual talents and skills may be developed, where interests, aspirations, and dreams may be pursued and fulfilled. Such a project can and must recognize and build upon the richness of our collective cultural wealth, not only as a matter of mutual respect, but foremost as a matter of developing our civilization, preserving and even increasing the diversity we enjoy and drawing more from it. As such, education must do more than just introduce us to basic knowledge. It must direct us in our attitudes and experiences, teaching us to learn, and thereby to understand and even to enjoy. In my view, this implies not only multicultural education in terms of content, but also intercultural education in terms of approach and process.

The media is another important tool for fostering interethnic understanding. In many cases, issues of nationalism and identity are fueled by perceptions and symbolism. We have all seen how often facts and images can be manipulated through the media, exacerbating insecurities and perpetuating negative stereotyping. Conversely, the media can play an important public education role and can be a useful confidence-building tool. I think this deserves closer attention.

Sensitivity training on interethnic issues is vital for public officials, particularly police, so that they can better cope with potential conflictual situations rather than being considered part of the problem. Public officials should also be better trained in human rights law concerning racial and ethnic discrimination. At the same time, recruitment of minorities into the public service would make State institutions more representative.[40]

2-8. Nonviolence

Violence can never be a solution, neither for groups in a State nor for the State itself. The 1992 Helsinki Document states quite clearly that the participating States "will address national minority issues in a constructive manner, by peaceful means and through dialogue among all parties concerned." Of course, the implied non-recourse to violence should be respected by all parties concerned. A proper legal framework is necessary for protecting persons against discrimination and racially motivated attacks. There must, however, also be clear political will—from the highest to the lowest levels of the State structure—to combat these

phenomena. Backed by an unequivocal public commitment from officials at all levels, such an approach involves a combination of measures.

In its policies, the State itself should scrupulously observe nondiscrimination. In all sectors of society, efforts should be made to promote greater mutual understanding and acceptance between different groups through education and other means. Social welfare agencies, including nongovernmental organizations, should be actively involved in addressing community-level problems proactively, including through training community leaders in communication skills and conflict resolution techniques. Police and local authorities must be given proper training for calming situations of imminent or recently initiated violence. Lawyers, prosecutors, and court officials must be given full support in investigating and trying cases against suspected assailants promptly and fairly.

If democratic mechanisms are absent, the likelihood of violence increases, as does the cost of containing and resolving the conflict. The use of violence and terror by so-called vigilantes will only continue to erode the administration of justice based on the law. If a crime has been committed, then law-enforcement officials—and not the community at large—are responsible for apprehending and prosecuting alleged wrongdoers. When public authorities are unable to bring perpetrators of racially motivated crimes to justice, popular confidence in the institutions of law and order is greatly damaged, and needless to say, the country's international image is seriously harmed.

Preventing racially motivated violence is of course far better than responding to its aftermath. Allow me to stress, however, that in cases when prevention was not possible, the only remedy for such violence is a prompt and thorough investigation of the causes of the attack and a prompt and fair trial of suspected wrongdoers. This course of action will bring justice to the victims and help restore popular and international confidence in the public authorities.[41]

2-9. Protecting and Promoting Identity

--Identity

It is a matter of dignity that human beings must be free to define themselves and their identity. Indeed, this is the essence of human rights. The value of the freedoms of thought, expression, association, assembly, the free use of language, and enjoyment of culture are all matters of dignity. For persons belonging to the majority in a democratic society, this is not so much of a problem—it comes in the course of things. But for persons belonging to minorities, it is a problem.

Because we are all unique, we need to be allowed the freedom to express ourselves and to protect and promote our identities. On the basis of our sad European history during which minorities have been subjected to all manner of denial of rights, abuse, and even attempted extermination, we have at the end of this century finally understood that persons belonging to minorities must not only be protected, but also supported.

The OSCE was the first to realize this. The OSCE participating States have articulated this in the standards of the fourth chapter of the Copenhagen Document on the Human Dimension. Paragraph 33 of the 1990 Copenhagen Document says: "[OSCE] participating States will protect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities on their territory and create conditions for the promotion of that identity."

The Copenhagen Document contains perhaps the most extensive commitments by governments on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities within the context of any multilateral arrangement. The essence of the Copenhagen Document is that persons belonging to minorities have equally legitimate needs and desires to maintain and develop their identity, that they are not only to be free in this regard, but that they enjoy a legitimate right to certain facilities within the State, in particular in relation to language, education, and culture.

This groundbreaking document, agreed even before the [1990] Paris Charter, marks a watershed in European history. It has spurred the Council of Europe to elaborate the first-ever binding multilateral treaty for the protection of national minorities, and it even encouraged the rather weaker United Nations Declaration on Minorities. The Copenhagen Meeting resulted specifically in clear commitments on how governments should formulate policy toward minorities.[42]

The protection of persons belonging to national minorities has to be seen as essentially in the interest of the State and of the majority. Harmonious interethnic relations strengthen the stability and the cohesion of the State. In other words: a State which helps to protect and even to promote the preservation and the deepening of the identity of the minorities living within its borders, is essentially acting in self-interest.

The message that I try to convey to governments is that they should implement their commitments not because they have to, but because it makes sense. Minorities are not going to go away. Minorities can be ignored or marginalized, but that merely strengthens their sense of isolation and makes them feel as though the State does not represent their interests. Governments may try to assimilate them, but this often causes a backlash. It also impoverishes society. Conversely, if minorities are given the opportunity to be full and equal members of society and do not feel that their identities are threatened, then the chances of interethnic tension will be greatly reduced. If ethnicity is depoliticized and politics is de-ethnized, then one's ethnic identity will not be an issue. Instead, people from all communities will concentrate on common interests and common concerns.[43]

--Identity and Language

Language is not only a vehicle of communication, but also an important aspect of culture. As such, language has both functional and cultural significance—even spiritual significance—for its users. The choice of language in and of education, together with cultural content, is also a main point of concern. This is because education is the means by which a language and culture is transmitted from one generation to the next. There should be no doubt that the use of language, and the content of education, must not run contrary to the legitimate public interests of public order, public health or morals, respect for the rights of others, or national security. In addition, the use of a minority language and its teaching need not be at the expense of, or instead of, the use or teaching of a State language. Both are possible. Indeed, the State can only assure equal opportunity for all its citizenry if it prescribes a language for public administration, the courts, democratic institutions, and general education. Minority language use and education are, therefore, to be additional to the use and teaching of the State language. But, within these limitations, there is a great deal of room for the free use, in public and in private and in education, of minority languages. There is abundant European experience in how to get the mix right in varying situations. What is clear is that opportunities should exist and that denial is unacceptable.[44]

Language issues are often a source of interethnic conflict. Majorities feel that too much protection for minority languages will create a Tower of Babel in their midst, while minorities fear that strengthening the State language will lead to linguistic assimilation. The 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document insists on the need to ensure for members of minorities adequate opportunities for instruction of their mother tongue or in their mother tongue, but it also stresses the need to learn the official language or languages of the State concerned.

States can organize themselves around, and protect, an official State language (which is typically that of the majority) while at the same time respecting the linguistic rights of minorities. This is important not only to ensure opportunities for the maintenance and development of cultural identities, but also to ensure the

free space and openness which is necessary for a well-functioning market economy.

An effective language policy is one that concentrates on protecting the State language without limiting opportunities for use of minority languages. This is especially the case in education. On the one hand, the right of persons belonging to national minorities to maintain their identity can only be fully realized if they acquire a proper knowledge of their mother tongue during the educational process. At the same time, persons belonging to national minorities have a responsibility to integrate into the wider national society through the acquisition of a proper knowledge of the State language. This knowledge improves their economic prospects and their possibilities to exercise civic and political rights. Common knowledge of the State language ensures equal opportunity for all. Minority and majority interests can therefore be seen as complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

One can strengthen the use of the State language through positive means like training rather than through negative means designed to restrict minority languages. That is why in a number of countries like Estonia, Latvia, and Moldova I supported programs to increase minority knowledge of the State language, while, at the same time insisting on the need to enact legislation that protects the use of minority languages. I have also stressed, for example in Romania and Slovakia, that in regions and localities where persons belonging to a national minority are present in significant numbers and where the desire for it has been expressed, minorities should have adequate possibilities to use their language in official communications, public documents, public services, and local government. Similar provisions should be enacted in relation to names, signs, and the use of minority languages in the media.[45]

My office published a report on the linguistic rights of persons belonging to national minorities in the OSCE area. It is the result of a two-year comparative study based on official replies to a questionnaire sent to all OSCE States. Even though the report indicates that more progress is necessary, overall it confirms a positive trend in terms of compliance with OSCE standards and reveals a wide breadth of policies and laws among OSCE participating States. I hope that this report will help policy—and lawmakers—to learn from the variety of practices currently adopted in OSCE States with a view to developing the most appropriate and effective policy for their own situation.[46]

There are many ways to accommodate the use of various languages within the same State, even in public administration and the courts. There is, of course, a long history in Europe of having alternatives for education in terms of curriculum, school administration, public and private institutions, and at all levels. There are many international standards applicable in these fields. In my work as High Commissioner, I encouraged two groups of internationally recognized independent experts to elaborate specific recommendations on the best way to implement the international standards. These are The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities, and the Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities. I wish to stress that none of these standards, recommendations, or alternatives affect the cohesion of the State, but they do create more opportunities for the realization of a plurality of interests and aspirations within the State. Indeed, they offer routes to greater satisfaction for all and, therefore, strengthen the State.[47]

--Identity and Education

It is clear that education is an extremely important element for the preservation and the deepening of the identity of persons belonging to national minorities. Therefore, I came to the conclusion that it would be useful to invite some internationally recognized experts to make recommendations on an appropriate and coherent application of minority education rights in the OSCE region. Accordingly, the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations brought together such a group of experts who, in turn, agreed upon The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities. Soon thereafter, the Foundation organized a Seminar on Minority Education Issues, held in Vienna at the end of November 1996 under my chairmanship, which enjoyed the participation of Ministers of Education and minority representatives from a number of States where the issues are especially preoccupying. On that occasion, The Hague Recommendations were well received by relevant parties as a practical and balanced guide for the resolution of many specific issues. To the extent that the Recommendations may usefully guide governments in elaborating more appropriate and acceptable laws and policies with regard to minority education, they will serve to resolve or at least diminish an important source of interethnic tension. Several States have already referred to The Hague Recommendations in the context of current national discussions.[48]

2-10. "Internal Self-Determination"

Self-determination—in practice the aspiration of various ethnic groups to create their own State—cannot solve the problem of national minorities. It is impossible

because the creation of new States leads to the creation of new minorities. In the creation of a new State, inevitably the minority of yesterday becomes a majority in the new State, and must thus face the problem of the new minority within its own borders. According to the same logic, these new minorities may pursue their own external self-determination—self-determination breeds self-determination: what's good for one minority is good for another. And so, like a Matriyoshka doll opened one stage at a time, there is the prospect of a never-ending reductionism which cannot be reconciled with the requirements for the viability of a State. Instead of greater security, we would have a Europe which is less stable and safe. For all these reasons, we must seek to realize the right of self-determination through internal alternatives. In other words, we require an integrative rather than a disintegrative approach.

There are ways to meet the needs and interests of minorities in public decisionmaking especially in matters that concern them through devolution, through electoral processes as well as special mechanisms for structured dialogue, consultation, and advice. States can establish various forms of autonomy, especially on a cultural or functional basis. States can ensure the freedom and opportunities for the use of language and enjoyment of culture of minorities in conditions of equality. States can provide educational regimes which respond to the genuine needs and desires of minorities for the maintenance and development of their identity. By allowing national minorities to have a measure of control over affairs which directly affect them, they will be able to protect and promote their interests and identities without jeopardizing the stability and integrity of the State in which they live. This so-called "internal self-determination" can balance the seemingly antithetical concepts of self-determination and the maintenance of frontiers.[49]

In the Helsinki Decalogue, both the principles relating to maintenance of frontiers and territorial integrity of States and the principle of self-determination are included. It is sometimes argued that these principles are irreconcilable. I strongly disagree. One can only come to that conclusion on the assumption that the vital interests of minorities can only be safeguarded by external self-determination, that is, secession. The essential aim of self-determination is to ensure that the vital interests of people can be safeguarded. In my opinion, the contemporary State has a great deal of instruments at its disposal to accommodate these interests.

"External" self-determination through secession is fraught with the potential for conflict. It is also usually a violent affair: we have witnessed very few "velvet divorces." Wherever a border is drawn, there will almost

always be different ethnic groups living together. They will have to learn to live harmoniously with one another.[50]

Minorities often have a marked preference for territorial autonomy. They clearly see this as the best way to protect their interests and their identity. On the other hand, I have not yet encountered a government faced with minority problems which is prepared to cede even a small part of its territory as an element of a solution. The very mentioning of such an option leads to a greater rigidity in the attitude of such a government vis-à-vis the minority in question. When relations with the minority are bad and the region selected for the territorial expression of the identity of the minority borders on the kinstate, the government concerned quite often suspects that the insistence of the minority on territorial autonomy is only part of a hidden agenda which ultimately aims at unification with the kinstate. Minorities will probably argue that this suspicion is completely unfounded but, as so often in politics, perceptions play a key role even if they are incorrect.[51]

Territorial self-governance should not be equated with secession. It simply means the shifting or decentralization of certain functions and competences from the center to regional, community, or local level. In such arrangements, the central government usually exercises control over major matters of national interest, such as defense, foreign affairs, immigration and customs, macroeconomic policy, and monetary affairs, while the minority or territorial administration assumes primary or significant authority over education, culture, forms of public administration (including use of minority language), environment, local planning, and so on. Shared functions could include such matters as taxation, administration of justice, tourism, and transport. The division of these competences is not hard and fast, nor are these types of arrangements applicable in all cases where there are significant minority communities. Furthermore, functions may be allocated asymmetrically to respond to different minority situations within the same State.[52]

Few things within the State require absolute uniformity. We can say this of the regulation of the highways, where everyone's security and access requires strict uniformity in respect of the rules. We cannot accommodate choice with regard to which side of the road drivers may choose. But aside from such domains, much in the regulation and administration of the State is capable of variety without endangering the cohesion of the State. It is obviously possible to accommodate the use of more than one language. And the free space for cultural

development can accommodate an untold diversity. We now view this increasingly in terms of the richness of cultures and of society as a whole, as we should. The key to finding appropriate accommodations is the political will to do so within the framework of responsible governance.[53]

Unnecessarily centralized systems do not—in fact, cannot—respond adequately to the diverse demands of plural societies. Overly centralized States tend to serve specific interests in a disproportionate and inflexible manner as uniform policies are forced upon the wider society even when not necessary. Excluded or marginalized groups often react strongly against such policies. Experience shows that alternative approaches which are inclusive and decentralized may well contribute to better overall governance with "win-win" solutions for competing interests, by increasing the productive resources, and prosperity of the overall society, of multiplying opportunities and creating greater freedom for all. The key is to strike a balance between functions to be undertaken by the central authorities and those to be carried out by regional or autonomous authorities.[54]

The 20th century has given us plenty of evidence that efforts to forge mono-ethnic States are conflict ridden and doomed to failure. More must therefore be done to move away from the archaic notion of the nationstate towards a more modern view that reflects the multinational reality of most contemporary States. There is a vast range of possibilities between assimilation on the one hand and secession on the other. International law, political science, and practitioners must explore this space more vigorously. States must also be willing to look at creative solutions concerning "internal" self-determination. Otherwise majorities and minorities will continue to strive for a mythical paradigm in which the nation and State overlap.[55]

2-11. Kinstate Relations

In the context of the problem of minorities there is one specific element to which, in my view, we have to give proper attention: that is the relation between what we sometimes call the "kinstate" or "mother-country (mère-patrie)" and the minority which lives in the neighboring country. When studying minority issues, one cannot fail to note the intense interest with which the kinstate almost invariably follows the fate of the related minority on the other side of the border. In my view it is quite logical that a kinstate shows interest for the fate of its ethnic kin living in another State and wants to maintain close contacts with that minority. I also think it is

understandable that the kinstate expresses its concern if the government of the other State does not respect its international obligations concerning the rights of members of the minority. On the other hand, the kinstate has also the duty to see to it that such expressions of concern do not develop into a sort of system of interference into the affairs of the other State. This is a fine line that is not always easy to draw. One conclusion is evident, however. To try to solve the problem by trying to change borders is tantamount to playing with fire. No State in Europe is presently willing to give up voluntarily parts of its territory, and to try to impose a change of borders leads therefore to a great risk of war.

Sometimes bilateral treaties with neighboring countries confirming the existing borders and guaranteeing the protection of minorities can be helpful. Such treaties can promote a more relaxed attitude on the part of the government of a State with a minority, while at the same time providing reassurances to the kinstate of the minority in question. A bilateral treaty may also help establish regular government-to-government dialogue on minority issues.

One example is the Treaty between the Republic of Hungary and Romania on Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighbourliness, concluded in Timisoara on September 16, 1996, in which these two countries laid down a number of important principles regarding the position of minorities. In particular, they recognized "that national minorities constitute an integral part of the society of the State where they live" and they committed themselves to "promote a climate of tolerance and understanding among their citizens of different ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic origin"; to "condemn xenophobia and all kinds of manifestations based on racial, ethnic, or religious hatred, discrimination and prejudice"; and to apply international standards for the protection of persons belonging to national minorities and the development of their identities. Great importance is to be attached to this because it stresses the duty of the State to protect and even to promote the preservation and the deepening of the identity of the minority, while at the same time rejecting the notion that the minority can only maintain its identity by isolating itself as much as possible from the society surrounding it. Thus, harmonious interethnic relations among the populations of neighboring States can develop only on this basis. The fact that this is laid down in a treaty between two States is a positive development.

However, as attractive as they might seem, these treaties are also no cure-all, and indeed, three factors ought not to be forgotten. First, where relations between neighboring States are already difficult, efforts to conclude a bilateral treaty may only serve to underline their differences. Second, even in cases where bilateral

treaties might be within reach, any attempt to force the tempo of negotiations may actually disrupt the process of rapprochement because usually some very sensitive issues have to be dealt with. Such treaties can only be the end product of a process of reconciliation and rapprochement, and not an instrument. They should not be used to "force the issue," so to speak. International treaties can never be a substitute for solutions within States. Third, and most importantly, the most essential contribution to the elimination of minority problems as a source of instability in Europe is the promotion of a better and more harmonious relationship between majority and minority in the State itself.[56]

2-12. The Fulfillment of Responsibilities

The aim of the international instruments in the field of human rights protection is generally to secure human dignity. Since there is a subjective character to dignity, international instruments promote and protect freedom. Freedom may be exercised by the individual alone and in community with others. The interest in doing so follows from the fact that the human experience is both individual and social. But freedom for all requires at the same time respect for others, for their specific identities. This raises the fundamental issue of responsibility. For everyone to enjoy freedom, society confers rights but also duties.

Responsible behavior on the part of persons belonging to minorities and their representatives is required as of others within the State. Persons belonging to the minority have to choose to be part of the society and make an effort at integration, for instance by learning the language of the majority, participating with the members of other communities in taking responsibilities for public affairs, and to be loyal citizens. If persons belonging to minorities refuse to recognize that they share a common destiny with the majority in the State within which they live, if they constantly seek to isolate themselves from the rest of society and insist on institutional arrangements which would promote such isolation, the reaction on the other side will be increasingly suspicious and negative. This is anything but integrative. Rather, a process of polarization can develop, which can ultimately lead to confrontation and conflict.

On the other hand, the minority can try to follow a policy, which combines efforts to safeguard its identity with the recognition that living together on one territory—and consequently sharing many common interests—inevitably requires a certain degree of integration into the wider society. By rejecting isolation, by recognizing that the fates of minority and majority are linked, the minority will also be able to create more

understanding for the vital need it feels to maintain its own identity.[57]

When integrating groups within society we must pursue equality, not in terms of sameness, but in terms of meaningful opportunities. This requires an attitude of mutual respect on the part of both the majority and minorities. It also requires a rejection of any policies which protect and promote the interests of one group over those of another. This is a two-way street. Governments should create the conditions where minorities have an opportunity to be full and active members of society. Minorities should take advantage of these opportunities in a way that allows them to fully enjoy their rights while honoring their obligations as members of the State. In this way, people will be able to enjoy their individual interests while contributing to the common good.[58]

Members of minorities have to understand that they have on the one hand the right to reject any effort at assimilation and to insist on the right to express their identity in various fields, but also that they live in a State where the majority also has its rights. For their part, minorities have also to make an effort to ensure harmonious relations. In this respect it is of special importance that they do not try to completely isolate themselves from the majority but that they also take part in an effort to ensure a certain degree of integration. For instance, the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document insists on the need to ensure for members of minorities adequate opportunities for instruction of their mother tongue or in their mother tongue, but it also stresses the need to learn the official language or languages of the State concerned. This is also in the interest of the young generation of those belonging to minorities. They will have better job opportunities if they have a full knowledge of the language of the majority.[59]

The State has to realize that its interests are better served by following a generous policy towards minorities than by sticking to a minimalist approach. Societies as a whole will profit from special attention given to the position of minorities. The benefits of the State come from the combined efforts of the wider society. Integration, with benefits for all, is quite possible. The majority group must see that no dangers, but instead only benefits, arise from the expression of cultural differences and the full participation of all citizens in society, governance, and the economy. Of course, with equal rights come equal obligations. Minorities must be good citizens and not pursue their interests to the detriment of the human and civic rights of others. The key is the good will to create the conditions for the

pursuit of particular interests within the context of the unified State.[60]

2-13. The Avoidance of Extreme Nationalism

There can be no compromise with the forces of excessive nationalism. There can be no compromise because their external aim is to sweep aside the standards and values that form the essence of OSCE policies. The OSCE bases itself on the principle of equality of all ethnic groups and respect for their identity. Excessive nationalism is inspired by feelings of racial superiority and does not hesitate to trample on the rights of other groups whenever this is considered desirable. Such nationalism manifests itself by the forceful imposition of the will of one group of people onto another and the failure to respect international standards. This is a breach of human rights and, moreover, can lead to internal instability and even regional insecurity. Excessive nationalism opts for conflict instead of compromise; it opts for subservience of other groups instead of integration.

Not speaking out against excessive nationalism is tantamount to complicity. We know from a wealth of tragic history—particularly during the last century—that keeping silent in the face of malign and aggressive nationalism comes at the expense of the rights of national minorities. Governments are called upon to do their utmost to counter such tendencies. At its meeting in Rome in December 1993, the OSCE Council of Ministers declared that aggressive nationalism, racism, chauvinism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism create tensions within and between States. In the framework of the United Nations as well as that of the OSCE, States have adopted binding commitments which oblige them to insure individuals adequate protection against discrimination on racial, ethnic, and religious grounds, including against acts of violence.

It is our responsibility to recognize these threats at their origin and to root them out as soon as possible. We must treat the threat as extremely serious and we must not tolerate its manifestation. In this regard, we must guard against a false and misguided sense of liberalism leading us to create the conditions for extreme nationalists to exploit various situations. Surely, we have learned this much from the harsh reality of European experience.[61]

There is a tendency to make generalizations about people on the basis of their religion or ethnicity. We often talk about minorities as if they were a collective group—"the Hungarians," "the Albanians," "the Croats," "the Roma," and so on. The same is true in terms of religious categorizations, for example "the Muslims." Although it may be convenient or politically expedient to make such general classifications, we must remember that these groups are made up of individuals and that no group is truly homogenous.

This has two ramifications in terms of addressing interethnic conflict. The first is that when looking at issues in dispute, one must strip away the stereotypes and the nationalist rhetoric and look at the underlying issues. What often emerges is that the points of contention have very little to do with ethnicity, but are blown up by one side or the other into "national" issues.

The second consideration is that one should seek a middle ground by marginalizing or neutralizing extremists, particularly those who resort to violence. It is often these ethnic entrepreneurs who claim to speak on behalf of the entire nation—and will use any means to reach their aims. Achieving understanding among people of different faiths or nationalities is very difficult if the process of confidence-building is disrupted by those who have no interest in peace, or refuse to compromise. It is usually only a small group of people who resort to extremism, but they poison relations to the point that fear and suspicion grip all sides. This is fertile ground for the growth of extreme nationalist or sectarian violence.[62]

Above all we must be aware of the strength of the destructive forces of excessive nationalism. It is this nationalism which lay at the root of the bloody conflicts which erupted during the 1990s. We must fight against extreme nationalism in all its manifestations, whether political or popular. At the political level, we must forthrightly reject the arguments and language invoked by the irresponsible and dangerous leaders who invoke it. At the popular level, we must establish regimes to protect against it, including strengthening the rule of law but also building tolerant and understanding societies. I know this may sound obvious to many. But to achieve this aim requires a major shift in thinking, supported with sufficient resources and political will. This century, even this past decade, has provided us with enough examples of what happens if we do not prevent interethnic conflict. A stable and peaceful Europe can only be built when the forces of excessive nationalism have been decisively beaten.[63]

2-14. Leadership

Political leadership is important for setting the tone and creating an environment that can both stimulate and maintain interethnic understanding. In various ways parliaments have a unique role to play in addressing minority issues. Parliaments themselves are a reflection of a country's diversity and a significant means for

intergroup contact. As democratically elected legislators, parliamentarians can play an invaluable role in strengthening human rights protections, the rule of law, and popular participation in the processes of governance. These elements are indispensable in ensuring the effective functioning of democracy, an essential precondition for constructively addressing problems in the relations between a country's different ethnic groups. In addition, parliaments have at their disposal very significant powers for identifying, analyzing, and resolving societal problems, including those relating to ethnic issues. As lawmakers, parliaments can of course legislate improvements in the legal protections for minority rights, and various international documents, including OSCE texts, would serve as excellent guides.

But parliamentary action could also address ethnic issues through other, potentially innovative means. Appropriate committees, for example, could review current governmental agencies for dealing with ethnic issues and identify possibilities for improvements before the escalation of interethnic tensions exceeds institutional capacities for containment and resolution. The establishment of additional institutions, such as a human rights ombudsman, a special commissioner on ethnic issues, or even a consultative or advisory body for national minorities, can help considerably in identifying, analyzing, and resolving problems related to national minorities. In addition, committees or special all-party parliamentary groups could undertake impartial and objective inquiries into specific problems related to national minorities and make concrete recommendations for improvements in policy or practice. The potential severity of interethnic strife demands that political authorities take responsible, preventive action on these issues. In doing so, the stature and effectiveness of parliaments are enhanced, and the important role of parliamentarians is even more widely acknowledged.

Parliamentarians more than anybody else will have to convince voters that quick fixes for social, economic, and political problems do not exist, that extremism is never an answer, and that conflict prevention is a cause worth investing in. The enjoyment of opportunities within the State inspires social integration, confidence and, indeed, loyalty towards the State. Parliamentarians can lead us to that future of peace, stability, and prosperity for all.[64]

We need to establish a bulwark against the forces of discrimination and intolerance. These are not passive forces. In fact, some of them are aggressive and extreme, proceeding on the basis of chauvinist and racist views. These hate-mongers, whether extreme nationalists, religious extremists, or others, must be held

in check. Simply, we must be intolerant of such intolerance. We must do this through clear and dedicated action at the community level, in particular through responsible journalism, and above all through responsible leadership. Implementing the spirit of international standards requires leadership and education: leadership from political, religious, and community leaders, and education through schooling and the media. The message should not only be one of tolerance, but of appreciation for the culturally diverse world that we live in. We live in a world of diversity. In the same way that biodiversity enriches our environment, cultural diversity strengthens the fibers of society.[65]

3. Conclusion

Questions involving minorities are in most cases of an essentially political nature, requiring a primarily political approach in which human rights and legal considerations must be embedded. Often they are intimately connected to issues which go to the heart of the existence of States, touching upon the relationship between regions and the center, borders, and the territorial integrity of States. Also, they often have to do with the self-awareness and common histories of groups of people.

Building on our common interests and shared values, we can find a new way to accommodate varying and often multiple identities in our multiethnic States and world. We must change our notion of the State from the antiquated idea of the nationstate protecting the so-called "State-forming nation" into a new system and ideal where States, individually and collectively, protect and facilitate the diverse interests of all citizens on the basis of equality. At the foundation of this new system and ideal must be respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. Realizing this goal requires more inventive thinking. Our world is being rapidly transformed in terms of the way that we conduct trade, communicate, and move capital. Sovereignty still counts, but it is more porous. We spend a great deal of time analyzing how external, international, or global forces are transforming the role of States. But we should also look more at the internal dynamics. This is particularly the case when it comes to looking at ways of accommodating the needs and aspirations of minorities while maintaining the cohesiveness of States.[66]

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III. The International Community and Conflict Prevention

1. International Involvement

We are used to thinking of security in terms of protection against aggression from outside. But today we have to take account of the fact that violent conflict within a State can lead to a major threat to peace and security. The world may be burdened not only with widespread suffering, or even with massive refugee flows, but also with disastrous regional wars. In the 20th century, which is now coming to a close, the enormous advances in science and technology have made wars incomparably more costly in terms of losses of human life, human suffering, and material destruction.

It is evident from the experience of Bosnia, Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh, and other conflicts, that once a conflict has erupted it is extremely difficult to bring it to an end. In the meantime precious lives have been lost, new waves of hatred have been created, and enormous damage has been inflicted. This all testifies to the fact that the international community needs to concentrate more on conflict prevention.

To provide effective response to such looming crises, the international community needs to develop and strengthen mechanisms for the prevention of ethnic conflicts. It is easier, more cost-effective, and more constructive for the international community to address escalating tensions before the conflict erupts. Bargaining positions have generally not yet hardened, and the parties may still have considerable interest in peaceful solutions, particularly at the earliest stages of friction. The cycle of violence and revenge has also not yet taken hold. Early on, there may still be numerous possibilities for resolving specific differences. More importantly, there may still be possibilities for creating processes and mechanisms for managing interethnic relations peacefully. Outsiders who are independent and impartial may play a crucial role in this pre-conflict stage.[67]

International engagement is necessary for two purposes: to understand the unique nature and dynamics of interethnic relations in each situation, and to help check the influence of the small groups of extreme nationalists who might wish to capitalize on the opportunities of this transition period. International goodwill is then necessary to support the constructive approaches of moderate, democratically oriented leaders who do exist in each situation. This whole process requires time, resources, and above all the vigilant and constructive engagement of the international community. The alternative would only embolden the forces of extremism and intolerance, leading to greater insecurity.[68]

What causes ineffective responses to clearly visible threats to peace and security? I am convinced that this is not because the relevant data are not available. In our Internet and media-driven world of rapid communications there is no shortage of information. But attention spans are short, and sometimes longer-term trends are not properly analyzed. As a result, warning signs are often overlooked. Decisionmakers at the highest levels are often unable—or simply fail—to draw the logical conclusions from the facts. In the foreign ministries in Europe, the main problem seems to be that the ministers responsible are so fully preoccupied by current crises that they have not enough time to face the crises of tomorrow, at any rate in an organized international framework.

When warning signs are clear, there is too often a paralysis. Action is usually only in reaction to what is on the screen in front of us and by then it is too late. In that respect, one of the saddest aspects of the Kosovo crisis is that it developed in slow motion. Despite the stated intention of the international community to learn from the lessons of Bosnia, the problem did not move to the top of the international agenda until it was too late. We are now pouring millions of EURO into South-East Europe by way of post–conflict rehabilitation. Would not a fraction of these resources and efforts, invested at an earlier stage, have helped to prevent the *malaise* that we now find ourselves in? I raise the Kosovo conflict to illustrate the paradox of preventive diplomacy and political will, namely that by the time that a crisis gets most people's attention, it is very difficult to avert. But unless a crisis has people's attention, they won't address it. We tend to think about issues like these only when they have a direct impact on our lives, for example when people affected by crises start arriving in our countries as refugees. But by then the crisis is already well advanced, and very difficult to resolve. The international community will have to learn to anticipate conflicts if it really wants to work towards a safer and more stable world. In the face of so many threats to stability and security because of internal crises, we simply cannot afford to make the same errors again and again.

Once we act, we should remain committed to working with the parties to bring an issue to a satisfactory resolution. Building confidence between communities and ensuring legal and political frameworks for protecting minority rights cannot be achieved overnight. It requires a steady, continuous, and constructive engagement. We should not take our eyes off an issue just because it is no longer in the news. Rather, we should reinforce fragile relationships and strengthen processes precisely so that they avoid making headlines.[69]

We frequently say to each other that the world is constantly getting smaller and more interdependent. But we must also draw the logical conclusion from this: the problems of others are increasingly becoming our problems. Since the position of national minorities is of concern to us all, we are in my view under the obligation to cooperate with those participating States who have to face minority-related problems, in order to assist them in finding lasting solutions. Criticism might be justified and should be brought forward in a direct and open way—on the occasion of an [OSCE] implementation meeting, but criticism can never be an end in itself and should always be accompanied by an offer to help, in line with the OSCE's cooperative and inclusive nature. As a community of values, the OSCE has the obligation to offer assistance to all of its members who are in the process of applying the full scope of these common values to their societies.[70]

2. Conflict Prevention and Preventive Diplomacy

2-1. Conflict Prevention

Conflict prevention is a many-faceted affair in light of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. This concept relates peace, security, and prosperity directly to the observance of human rights and democratic freedoms and the existence of a market economy. Conflict prevention requires a comprehensive approach which combines the various tension-generating factors—both short-term and long-term—in an overall strategy. What is called for is an approach which brings together and integrates the various dimensions of the problem at hand.

Short-term conflict prevention aims at the prevention or containment of an immediate development towards escalation. This preventive action may also involve heading off or immediately correcting flagrant violations of human rights commitments, violations which may cause an escalation of tensions.

Short-term conflict prevention should be seen and pursued in the perspective of long-term conflict prevention. Long-term conflict prevention is really about building a viable democracy and its institutions, about creating confidence between the government and the population and groups within the population, about structuring the protection and promotion of human rights, and about fostering tolerance, understanding, and mutual acceptance in society. This almost always takes a long time, and support and encouragement by the OSCE community will often be needed.

However, these long-term aspects cannot be separated from short-term conflict prevention. Efforts at laying the groundwork for a real democracy are vain if in the meantime tensions escalate into bloody civil war or international conflict.

The OSCE should also deal with conflict prevention through peace-building in post–conflict situations. Even if violence has come to an end, very often the underlying causes which led to the conflict have not been removed. In situations in which the threshold between nonviolence and violence has been crossed before, renewed sharp tensions and armed clashes are not unlikely. Such "post–conflict conflict prevention" will of course have to be fully integrated in and coordinated with a more general strategy of peace-building which is required in post–conflict societies. Strategies appropriate to pre-conflict peace-building can also be applied in post–conflict situations, but social rehabilitation and economic restructuring will be much heavier and complex tasks than if the country and the people concerned had not been shattered by warfare.[71]

The challenge for conflict prevention is four-fold: (1) understanding the nature of so-called ethnic conflicts; (2) developing effective democratic institutions to resolve underlying intercommunal differences; (3) conceptualizing an appropriate role for outside parties in facilitating the resolution of interethnic tensions;, and (4) bringing sufficient, and properly coordinated, resources to bear on these problems.[72]

With a view to conflict prevention, a concerted effort is needed to maximize the effectiveness of our involvement in a concrete situation, and that applies to all its aspects, to the human dimension as well as to financial and economic aspects, more so in view of the number and variety of OSCE activities. Ideally, coordination should be such that a duplication of efforts and concomitant waste of resources is avoided. This might even entail a conscious decision by a particular organization or body to refrain from addressing a certain situation which it might otherwise have engaged in. If concurrent activities for whatever reason do take place, they should reinforce each other and not work at cross-purposes or be played off against each other. Clashes of competencies, inadequate flows of information, and openly diverging assessments of situations may in fact render these efforts less effective and send the wrong message to the State concerned. It is cooperation which lies at the heart of the exercise of our common responsibility, or as it is sometimes called, the cooperative implementation of OSCE commitments. Interlocking institutions do really interlock so that their efforts are mutually reinforcing.[73]

Effective conflict prevention is not possible if insufficient attention is given to minority issues. To

resolve these problems, continuous attention is required over a long period of time. But in order to be fully effective, a policy of conflict prevention cannot restrict itself to efforts to stop disputes from developing into conflicts; it also has to try to remove the causes of dangerous frictions. It is your and my task, indeed it is the OSCE's task, to do everything possible to make conflict prevention a success and thus create the necessary conditions for lasting peace and stability in Europe. In its broadest sense, conflict prevention requires a stable and pluralist civil society that guarantees full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It should be part of a comprehensive view of security wherein the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, along with economic and environmental cooperation, are considered to be just as important as the politico-military aspects of maintaining peace and stability. These are the bases on which the OSCE was founded nearly twenty-five years ago, and it is the inspiration for the way that I have carried out my activities over the past years.[74]

Economic factors are important to conflict prevention. The economic dimension of the OSCE has gained substantially in importance, based on the principles of a free market economy. The participating States have recognized that free market systems, environmentally sustainable economic growth, and prosperity go hand-in-hand with individual freedom and political pluralism. In the economic field, international assistance can help diminish the enormous time pressure under which reformers have to operate by stimulating external stabilization and integration in the world economy. It can be instrumental in softening the social pain which transformation processes unavoidably entail and thus help avoid rising social tensions. Popular anxiety about economic issues, often the fertile ground for ethno-nationalistic agitation, is greatly reduced by sustainable growth in which all citizens can enjoy the fruits of honest toil. The international community must be willing to support genuine economic development in countries making the difficult transitions.[75]

Capital invested in conflict prevention is capital well invested. In humanitarian, financial, and political terms, conflict prevention is much cheaper than peacekeeping or rebuilding societies after a violent conflict. Trying to prevent conflict is a process requiring considerable investment over a long period of time; however, such investment has to be seen in its proper perspective. Annually, considerably less than one percent of what OSCE States spend each year for defense and security would be more than enough to set up a wide range of conflict prevention programs. They might not completely eliminate the risk of new armed conflict, but they would considerably reduce it. The chances of building a stable and secure Europe will depend to a large degree on our determination to realize what we have neglected for much too long: a comprehensive policy of conflict prevention.[76]

2-2. Preventive Diplomacy

Preventive diplomacy relies on diplomatic and similar methods, such as negotiation, enquiry, mediation, and conciliation. Preventive diplomacy would encompass, initially, fact-finding; discussions of the issue at hand; promotion of dialogue, confidence, and cooperation between the parties; and subsequently, further contacts and closer consultations with the parties concerned with a view to possible solutions. If a situation worsens, the first and foremost task is to prevent it from worsening further and then to try to make an opening towards the eventual solution of the problem.

The Australian Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, has written an interesting book called *Co-operating for Peace*, in which he distinguishes between early and late preventive diplomacy. "Early preventive diplomacy" involves the provision of skilled assistance through good offices, mediation, and the like in order to resolve disputes well before eruption into armed conflict appears likely. The objective of early preventive diplomacy is to encourage and support efforts by contenders to seek accommodation. "Late preventive diplomacy" is to persuade parties to abstain from violence when eruptions seem imminent. Obviously our prime task should to be to engage in the earliest possible preventive diplomacy, so that ideally we need never cry out an early warning of imminent conflict, let alone have to engage in conflict management. Preventive diplomacy adds a new element to the classic methods of diplomacy; it opens new possibilities for creativity and imagination. Preventive diplomacy is an important contribution to the elaboration of policies which are essential in foreign relations not only in the 1990s, but also well into the next century.[77]

Investing in preventive diplomacy and minority integration pays huge dividends. A society at peace with itself is a society that can concentrate on issues of common interest, which benefit all citizens. Conversely, a divided society will be bogged down in the politics of difference rather than integrating diversity. If those differences lead to conflict, the price is high—economically, in terms of human lives, and in terms of long-term stability. We are quick to offer assistance to people in need, either during or after a crisis. But we

have to do more to prevent crises from getting to that stage at all. That requires political will, but also investment.

The success of preventive diplomacy ultimately depends on the concrete political and other support States are prepared to invest in it. Without international political, economic, and moral support, the efforts of many individual States have only limited chances of being successful. Undeniably, it is the individual participating States themselves which carry primary responsibility for the implementation of the OSCE commitments on their territory. Nevertheless, some governments may not be in a position to solve such issues on their own, especially in the light of the economic difficulties facing them. Other States and international organizations must then be prepared to give concrete support. By declaring the legitimacy of international concern for human rights and minority questions, the OSCE community has assumed the responsibility of supporting individual OSCE States which cannot by themselves solve the problems which are confronting them. It is not enough to monitor developments and admonish States when they are not doing well—a positive commitment is also called for. In addition to being a community of values, the OSCE is also a community of responsibility.

In an article in *Foreign Affairs* entitled "A Call for Sacrifice: The Co-Responsibility of the West," Czech President Václav Havel made some very relevant comments with regard to this. Referring to the responsibilities of the West, he wrote the following and I quote: "I do not think at all that the main role of the democratic West is to solve all the problems of the 'postcommunist world.' Our countries...must deal with their own immense problems themselves. The...West, however, should not look on as though it were a mere visitor at a zoo or the audience at a horror movie, on edge to know how it will turn out. It should perceive these processes at the very least as something that intrinsically concerns it, and that somehow decides its own fate, that demands its own active involvement and challenges it to make sacrifices in the interests of a bearable future for us all."

Such instruments as the High Commissioner may be able to help encourage conciliation and understanding between disputing parties. In other cases government authorities and minority leaders have actually reached agreement on some preliminary steps to be taken. Too often, however, the capacity for implementing these modest ideas is missing. Without implementation, this goodwill and cooperation cannot be properly developed. The international community can provide immeasurable support here, even through extremely minor expenditures. I am thinking, for example, of assistance for an accurate census in one country, or perhaps language education for integrating a minority in another. This money is well spent, because with quite modest amounts possible causes of serious tensions can be removed and interethnic harmony promoted.[78]

It is hard to quantify successful preventive diplomacy because if it works nothing happens. But it is certainly easy to spot failure. *No News is Good News.* Preventive diplomacy is seldom discussed in the popular press. If a crisis is averted—especially at an early stage—nothing "newsworthy" has occurred. And yet, for the people involved this is the best possible outcome. The logic of preventive diplomacy is simple. Timely and effective action can help to avert a costly crisis. Instead of hindsight that says that "we should have seen it coming" and post–conflict rehabilitation that pours billions of dollars into reconstruction and rehabilitation, we should act with foresight and make the necessary investments when it comes to preventing conflicts. More often than not the warning signs are there. The problem is to act on them in time.[79]

3. International Will

Regarding involvement, the international community should meet the requirements of timeliness, graduated responsiveness, and effective affordability.

Timely responsiveness means simply involvement at the time best calculated to secure optimal outcomes. Usually the earlier a problem is identified and an appropriate response applied, the more likely it is that the problem will be solved effectively and peacefully. An external third party should become involved at the earliest possible stage of an impending conflict in order to prevent things from getting worse and to establish personal contacts in case things do get worse.

Graduated responsiveness means seeking to resolve disputes and respond to a crisis beginning with the cooperative approach and only moving towards more intrusive measures when the more conciliatory approaches fail. What is needed, at least initially, are low-profile discussions and cooperational mechanisms. Generally, cooperative implementation of commitments and recommendations will in the end be more fruitful than enforcement.

The timeliness and graduation principles, if properly applied, should help to reinforce the effectiveness of the international response. The earlier the response, and thus the more manageable the problem, the smaller the likely cost of the necessary response and the more likely it is that it will be affordable. Later in the process of escalation, responses which might have worked at an earlier stage could be reduced to affordable ineffectuality.[80]

III. The International Community and Conflict Prevention

3-1. Early Involvement

It is hard to quantify successful preventive diplomacy because if it works nothing happens. But it is certainly easy to spot failure. Therefore although investment in conflict prevention may not be glamorous and may take years to pay dividends, it is money very well spent. Of course, integration is a long-term process and there may be setbacks along the way. We must therefore be vigilant and committed to preventing any tensions involving national minority issues which have the potential to develop into conflict situations. My philosophy over the past eight years has been that the sooner we head off smoldering disputes, the better the chance that we will prevent them from igniting into full-scale conflicts later on. The longer the fuse burns, the more entrenched positions become and the harder it is to undo the damage. If there are indications that a situation is unraveling, the international community should take early action in order to defuse some of the potentially explosive issues. This may require assistance with legislative reform, financial support, and sometimes even a military deterrent. One can only speculate how conflict could have been avoided in Macedonia if UNPREDEP [United Nations Preventive Deployment Force] had stayed on.

Often early action may simply require creating the impulse for parties to speak to each other. If one can get the parties to articulate their concerns, one can look for ways to resolve their differences. This process should not only take place during a crisis. The discussion of minority-related issues should be part of the normal discourse. And, to be effective, it must be sustained. When things go wrong, there should be domestic mechanisms in place to work out problems. When these fail, the international community should get involved. Collectively, we must do more to act in response to the warning signs.[81]

The best type of early action is building civil societies that protect human rights, including minority rights. In such systems, minorities will feel that they have a stake in the society in which they live—that they are full partners. Under these conditions it will be easier for them to realize that they have obligations and not just rights. This will foster a sense of cohesion and cooperation within the State that will benefit the whole of society, and, by extension, will increase regional stability and prosperity.[82]

Let me reflect briefly on the situation in Macedonia [June 2001]. I think that the international community is guilty of not having focused enough attention or dedicated sufficient resources to heading off this crisis in time. Perhaps this was because there were so many other things that demanded attention in the Balkans and elsewhere. I recall that some people thought that I was a Cassandra when I warned that the situation was fragile in Macedonia. It is also no secret that initially I had difficulties in raising money for the University project (South East European (SEE) University] in Tetovo. Then when the crisis erupted, there was a flurry of activity. Suddenly everybody was interested in Macedonia, and more money for the University became available.

To me this is symptomatic of a recurrent problem, namely that low-level conflicts do not grab adequate international attention. When a crisis becomes acute, everyone wonders what went wrong or what steps should be taken to contain the situation. Things do not need to get to that point. Interethnic conflicts are not natural disasters that can be monitored but not prevented. Interethnic conflicts are not inevitable and they can be made tractable. The key is to understand the roots of the problem at an early stage and seek ways of addressing differences in a peaceful and constructive way. We should also learn the lessons from previous conflicts in order to be more aware of the warning signs of future ones. A difference of opinion should not have to erupt into violence before we do something about it.[83]

3-2. Targeted Resources

Targeted funding for projects can address some of the basic needs and interests of minority communities and contribute to conflict prevention. While foreign ministries seem to be increasingly sensitive to the benefits of relatively limited funding, treasuries are still hesitant to invest in preventing the conflicts of tomorrow. We need to put our money where our mouth is. It makes political and financial sense to put resources into keeping multiethnic States together, rather than bailing them out after they have fallen apart.

Of course, there are occasions when, for one reason or another, conflict prevention is not successful and we have to move on to crisis management. It is hard to identify exactly when that threshold is passed. For example, in Macedonia, part of crisis management consists of efforts to revive interethnic dialogue which is so essential for preventing the crisis from breaking out into full-scale civil war. I think that we have to be flexible and pragmatic when we find ourselves in the gray area between conflict prevention and crisis management.

Crisis management and post–conflict rehabilitation *are* vital. But they would not be so necessary if we invested more in preventing conflicts. After all, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This

means putting more resources into conflict prevention at the national and international level. For example, much can be done in terms of specific tension-reducing projects, institutional capacity-building, or in supporting development projects that can reduce the likelihood of minority disaffection. These investments require only modest sums, but the dividends can be great.

For example, sometimes minority groups feel unhappy because they do not get what they want in the cultural or educational fields. They see that their children have little or no opportunities for schooling which takes into account their mother tongue, which leads to fears that the cultural identity might be lost. Often the conclusion is drawn that this is the result of a policy of assimilation by the majority, but sometimes it is not just unwillingness of the government concerned: it is more a question of the government having little money to spend in these fields. We have often seen in the educational field, that there is as little—or even less—money for schools in the majoritarian language. But still the discontent is there; it can grow and even explode. Here a small injection of capital from outside can help considerably to reduce such a risk.

As an international community, we must do more to give expertise and financial support to such projects. Compared with the enormous financial and human costs of destabilization and conflict, the resources needed are extremely modest indeed. In terms of fostering interethnic harmony and regional security, the return on our investment can be very high.[84]

4. The High Commissioner on National Minorities

The High Commissioner's mandate is described in a separate chapter of the 1992 Helsinki Document. According to paragraphs 2 and 3 of the mandate, the High Commissioner is: "an instrument of conflict prevention at the earliest possible stage" who "will provide 'early warning' and, as appropriate, 'early action' at the earliest possible stage in regard to tensions involving national minority issues which have not yet developed beyond an early warning stage, but, in the judgement of the High Commissioner, have the potential to develop into a conflict within the [O]SCE area, affecting peace, stability or relations between participating States, requiring the attention of and action by the [Senior] Council or the [Permanent Council]."[85]

Most if not all of Europe's current and potential conflicts have, at least in part, an interethnic dimension. My role as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities is to promote measures by governments and the international community, which help ensure that minority questions are no longer a potential source of conflict and thus contribute to making peace and stability extend to and endure throughout all parts of Europe. The High Commissioner is not an instrument for the protection of minorities or a sort of international ombudsman who acts on their behalf. In other words, he is High Commissioner *ON*, and not *FOR* national minorities.

I see my mission as having three main elements. First, to contribute to solutions of particular interethnic problems and, in this way, to contain and de-escalate tensions involving national minority issues. Containing and de-escalating tensions can of course be done in various ways, including the promotion of dialogue, confidence, and cooperation between the parties involved. In itself the presence of missions on the ground may already be of psychological importance for the population and thus in itself already reduce apprehensions and tensions, and perhaps defuse unfortunate or even provoked incidents. Similarly the fact that missions can provide more objective and assumedly correct information can be a deterrent with regard to dispelling unfounded rumors. Often a more active attitude, approaching full-fledged preventive diplomacy, may be called for.

The essence of my task is a preventive one: to try to prevent tensions involving national minorities from getting worse, and, in this connection, to try to find ways to lessen these tensions. My goal is to lower the political temperature and to help the parties find accommodation that is both politically possible and in line with international standards. I employ various methods to try to resolve these issues. Broadly speaking, I try to promote dialogue, confidence, and cooperation between the parties directly involved. This may require defusing specific explosive situations, working with the parties to modify a contentious piece of legislation, or developing longer-term frameworks for dialogue and cooperation.

At the earliest stages of a potential conflict, it is incumbent on the High Commissioner to assist in showing that de-escalation of the tensions and participation in a multilateral mediation process are beneficial for all sides. Fundamentally, the vast majority of people in this world share common interests in economic prosperity, political stability, and the universal enjoyment of basic rights. Political leaders and community representatives, to the extent that they are accountable to their constituencies, will see the value in joining a process that, ultimately, should lead to the enhancement of mutual security and the promotion of general well-being.

Second, to regularly inform and, if necessary, alert OSCE participating States about developments relating to national minority issues in the OSCE area. Early warning should provide the relevant OSCE bodies with

information about escalatory developments, be they slow and gradual or quick and sudden, far enough in advance in order for them to react in a timely and effective manner, if possible still leaving them time to employ preventive diplomacy and other non-coercive and nonmilitary preventive measures. This also includes what I would call the "tripwire function" of early warning and preventive diplomacy, meaning that the OSCE will be alerted whenever developments threaten to escalate beyond a level at which the "preventive diplomat" would still be able to contain them with the means at his disposal. Competences vary of course, the High Commissioner having the widest scope of activities.

On the basis of this information and my assessment of the overall situation, I make recommendations and try to facilitate resolution of matters in dispute. I mainly address the government of the State in which the situation has arisen. But I also address other States and, importantly, representatives of minority groups whose grievances and claims are often at the heart of the matter. I always try to look at the specific issues at stake to try to understand why a situation has developed to the point that it has and to therefore see what issues need to be reconciled, in terms of both substance and the political processes involved.

And third, to work with OSCE participating States to develop long-term frameworks for the protection and promotion of national minorities. Even though the mandate puts the High Commissioner first and foremost in the category of short-term conflict prevention, he cannot pass by the important longer-term aspects to the situations if he wishes to be effective. A long-term perspective is essential if sustainable solutions are to be achieved. Immediate de-escalation of a situation can be only a first step in the process of reconciling the interests of the parties concerned.

My mandate is to provide early warning and to take early action to stop national minority issues from spiraling into conflict. Very often we speak of "firefighting" as an analogy to describe how crises can be solved. In peacekeeping or peace enforcement operations, NATO or the United Nations are referred to as the fire brigade, trying to put out the flames of war. The role of my office is to prevent fires caused by interethnic tensions from breaking out in the first place. If there are signs of smoke, my job is to address the situation and try to put it out or, if that fails, to raise the alarm.[86]

Gathering, assessing, and distributing information—how is this done? To begin with, one needs information. In this, as so often with life, there is no substitute for seeing things with one's own eyes. My advisors and I are constantly collecting, receiving, and analyzing information on various developments that concern national minorities, from virtually any source, including the media, nongovernmental organizations, and individual persons. In practice this means the central government, political parties, representatives of national minorities, cultural organizations, etc. Visits to OSCE participating States, in order to meet with the parties directly involved, are an important element of information gathering. As a result, I travel around 150 days a year. My mandate allows me to go wherever I want (even without the formal consent of the State concerned) and to gather information from any source. The one limitation is that I am not to speak with any group or organization which practices or publicly condones terrorism or violence.

Information, for it to be relevant, should be reliable, detailed, and as much as possible up to date. However, even real-time data are only useful for early warning purposes if they are promptly analyzed and communicated to the appropriate decisionmaking bodies, first the CSO [Committee of Senior Officials] which should then give it the necessary attention and come up with a response.[87]

Impartiality, confidentiality, and cooperation are essential for preventive diplomacy in general if it is to be effective in the longer run. They serve to keep open the channels of communication and guarantee a minimum measure of mental openness of the parties directly involved.

First, impartiality. During my fact-finding missions I listen to all parties concerned and offer all of them my advice, and not just governments. It is essential to the effectiveness of the High Commissioner as a third party that the reputation of his office as impartial be preserved at all times. In view of the sensitive issues with which the HCNM must deal, he cannot afford to be identified with one party or another. Impartiality should guarantee that the conflict prevention activities and recommendations are, if not immediately acceptable to parties, then at least seen as genuine efforts at finding solutions.

Second, confidentiality. Confidentiality serves more than one purpose. Confidentiality is important since often parties directly involved feel they can be more cooperative and forthcoming if they know that the content of their discussions will not be revealed to the outside world. In front of TV cameras, parties tend to stick to maximalist positions; behind closed doors they are more willing to indicate where there might be room for concessions. Electoral politics are such that parties may make much stronger statements in public than in confidential conversations, feeling that they should be

seen as maintaining strong demands, or as trying to exploit outside attention. The risk of escalation of the conflict which is inherent in this can be considerably reduced if a low profile is adopted. My meetings are restricted, I seldom talk to the press, and my recommendations are kept out of the public domain for a considerable length of time. This has been important for building up trust and credibility with my interlocutors, and for avoiding the sensationalization of issues that I have been dealing with. This discretion has also alleviated any feelings of suspicion or stigmatization that governments may feel by having an international figure involved in what they would normally regard as their "internal" affairs. Preventive diplomacy can only have a chance if it is at the same time, to the maximum extent possible, quiet diplomacy.

Third, the cooperative and non-coercive nature of the High Commissioner's involvement is also very important. To maximize the interest of disputing parties in outside involvement, the parties should feel that the High Commissioner's role is non-coercive, exploratory, and low key. The goal is to catalyze a process of exchange and cooperation between the parties, leading to concrete steps to de-escalate tensions and to address underlying issues.

Durable solutions are only possible if there is a sufficient measure of good will and consent on the part of the parties directly involved. The most important ingredient to solving problems in this area is the spirit with which policymakers address the issues. In the first place, there must be recognition of the legitimate interests—recognition of the plurality of communities and interests. This means an official acknowledgement of the existence of minorities, of the fact of diversity within the State. OSCE States have committed themselves in paragraph 32 of the Copenhagen Document to the standard that "to belong to a national minority is a matter of a person's individual choice and no disadvantage may arise from the exercise of such choice." As an impartial third party, it is my aim to propose solutions and to bring parties to a consensus on the basis of convincing arguments. Coercion would certainly never have a lasting positive effect. In other words: if solutions are found, it is essentially because parties themselves want a solution, but require some advice or assistance in getting there.[88]

My goal has been to find common ground among the parties. I try to get governments to stretch the bounds of the politically possible while reminding minorities to keep their demands within the realm of the probable. During my visits and in my recommendations I try to indicate possible compromise formula and explain that

protecting the interests of one group does not have to come at the expense of another.

In trying to perform my tasks, I do make enemies. But I also have to add that these enemies are almost invariably extreme nationalists. I think this is inevitable. I would even feel that I would not be performing my task properly if they did not object to my activities and views. These nationalists are not interested in promoting interethnic harmony—they prefer to stir up interethnic hatred.

I will not hide from you the fact that this job has not always been easy. I recall that former Russian Foreign Minister [Andrei] Kozyrev said to me once (I believe it was the first time that my term was renewed): "You will be criticized on one side by governments who see you as being too sympathetic to minorities, and you will be criticized by minorities for not fully representing their views." Kozyrev was right. I have been vilified by extreme nationalists from majority communities for being a foreign agent, insensitive to majority concerns, or a catalyst for the destruction of the State. Minority extremists have accused me of being a fellow traveler of the government, applying double standards, and selling short the minority case. And these minorities and majorities are often in the same country, talking about my approach to the same issue. I have had to repeat again and again that I am the High Commissioner "on" rather than "for" national minorities. This is a vital distinction and I have constantly emphasized it because of the importance that I attach to even-handedness.[89]

The High Commissioner has to include human dimension considerations in his assessments and recommendations. He has not been defined as an instrument of the human dimension, nor as a spokesperson or ombudsman for minorities or persons belonging to them. Nevertheless, I would note that all situations with which I have had to deal naturally contain many human dimension aspects. However, I should stress that there is not one human dimension recipe for minority issues. There are many different situations where minorities are concerned and each case has to be assessed in light of its particular aspects and circumstances. At the same time, preventing ethnic conflict requires that the net be thrown wider than the human dimension. Minority questions are so intimately connected to issues which go to the heart of the existence of States that an approach based exclusively on the human rights aspects would be incomplete and therefore insufficient.[90]

My mandate puts me first and foremost in the category of short-term conflict prevention. At the same time,

however, to be effective I cannot pass by the important longer-term aspects of the situations with which I have to deal. A longer-term perspective is necessary if sustainable solutions are to be achieved. Immediate de-escalation of a situation can only be a first step in the process of reconciling the interests of the parties concerned. The goal is to start, maintain and enhance a process of exchanges of views and cooperation between the parties, leading to concrete steps which would de-escalate tensions and, if possible, address underlying issues. It is in particular from the longer-term perspective that the intimate relationship between conflict prevention and the human dimension becomes apparent, but I would submit that human dimension concerns are often a critical component of conflict prevention in the short term as well.[91]

When it comes to the work of the High Commissioner, the obvious question arises: what can one international official really do to promote positive steps? It is important to note three factors here. First, my experience as High Commissioner has shown me repeatedly that in most cases, parties to these ethnic tensions are themselves interested in peaceful solutions. An impartial and independent outsider with an international mandate can act as a useful catalyst or even facilitator for more direct contact between the parties. Second, I have noticed that High Commissioner recommendations to governments are often reiterated by other international actors, thus reinforcing the importance of constructive measures by the governments. Third and most important, the High Commissioner is in fact an instrument of the OSCE, a collectivity of all of the States in the region. Without their support, the High Commissioner would politically not be effective or even credible in his efforts at preventing conflict.

More and more, the weight of consensus among 50-plus governments is strengthening the impact of the High Commissioner's functioning. For example, during the summer the High Commissioner was requested to give on-the-spot comments on a controversial aliens' law in Estonia on behalf of the entire OSCE. These suggestions resulted in noteworthy amendments to the law.[92]

It is not up to me to give an assessment of what my office has achieved in the past years. However, I have been encouraged by frequent expressions of appreciation for my work. Some of the specific issues that I would highlight are: preventing an escalation of tensions regarding the Greek minority in Albania in 1994; improving interethnic relations in Latvia and Estonia, especially by widening the opportunities for naturalization of the Russian-speaking population; acting as a catalyst in the Hungarian-Romanian Treaty

of 1996; initiating a solution to the problem of the status of Crimea within Ukraine; guarding against the rolling back of the rights of Hungarians in Slovakia during the Meciar era; and helping to find a compromise solution to the delicate issue of minority education in Romania. I also think that we have made contributions to further the development of international standards regarding the educational and linguistic rights of minorities which are relevant to the solution of ethnic problems—the Lund Recommendations, Oslo Recommendations, and Hague Recommendations, for example, can help governments looking for new ways to cope with minority problems.[*] In short, in these years it proved to be possible to build up an institution which, small as it is, does play a useful and according to some observers, even an innovative role in the field of conflict prevention.[93]

5. Conclusion

Most conflict, including ethnic conflict, is not an unavoidable natural disaster but can be prevented provided we give sufficient attention to this task both nationally and internationally. The international community has essentially two choices: crisis management or conflict prevention. A full-blown conflict generally takes years to resolve, and much damage is likely to be done in the meantime. As we have seen with tragic clarity in the former Yugoslavia, outside intervention only seems to become more difficult, more costly, and perhaps less effective the longer the fighting persists. We cannot predict the crises of the future. But we can be more sensitive to the warning signs and more responsive to the root causes. We must continue, indeed strengthen, our commitment to preventing conflict in the OSCE area. It is essential for peace within States, cooperation between States, and for the security of Europe as a whole.

In the final analysis, it is the OSCE community as a whole which determines the success of all OSCE efforts at building peace and preventing conflict. If the States continue to provide the OSCE, its organs and officials with their political and operational support, if they are prepared to look ahead and give attention to what is in the future as well as to what is happening now, and if they are willing to tackle the challenges that confront Europe—then we will be much better placed to prevent more conflicts from breaking out.[94]

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[*] The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities, 1996; The Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities, 1998; and The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life, 1999.

IV. OSCE Principles and the Human Dimension

1. OSCE Principles

Our commitment to peace, justice, and prosperity is intended for the benefit of all. This is so both in terms of relations between peoples and States, and in terms of relations within the State. This has been clear for all OSCE participating States since the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act. The principles of this Accord are contained in the well-known Decalogue. At the level of interstate relations OSCE States are committed to respect the principles of: sovereign equality; nonuse or threat of force; inviolability of frontiers; territorial integrity; peaceful settlement of disputes; nonintervention in internal affairs; respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; self-determination of peoples; cooperation among States; and fulfilment in good faith of obligations under international law. All OSCE participating States are expected to respect these political commitments both in general and in terms of their specification through subsequently elaborated OSCE standards. It is also intended that these principles are to be respected as a whole and with the appropriate balance. These principles taken together form a strong fabric which is an indispensable component in building a stable and peaceful Europe. They contain the core of the individual and collective responsibility of the participating States towards all individuals in the OSCE area: each and every State has the responsibility to implement these principles on its territory.

The aim of our commitment to these principles is ultimately to achieve human security and prosperity that is to benefit the millions of people whom we represent and are bound to serve. *The OSCE principles tell us how to do this. For not only do they declare values and standards which are each valid in themselves, but together they reflect an underlying logic. Based on European history, this logic declares that prosperity is only possible when there is peace and stability, and such peace and stability is only really achievable through a just order between and within States.* This is a lesson not only of the Cold War, but equally of the two World Wars which caused such misery on our continent in the first half of the 20th century. We learned then what is perhaps the most vital part of the puzzle—that justice is only really achievable on the basis of respect for human rights. The logic affirms that human rights must be respected not only because of the inherent worth and dignity of every human being, but because peace and security depend upon it.[95]

The OSCE has been regarded as a community of values, and rightly so. The OSCE is the embodiment of what the States of the Euro-Atlantic region have defined as their common political-ethical philosophy and their common standards of behavior. They have established these foundations not only among themselves but also in their relationship with their peoples. The basis from which we operate are the values we have in common. These values apply to all those who want to be part of the OSCE community: they are indivisible, nonnegotiable, and universal. They comprise the rule of law, democracy, human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, pluriform society, and the existence of the market economy. These values are the core of the Helsinki process, which has taught us that lasting peace and security are only possible in an environment where these values are shared. Thus, the observance of these values is no longer a matter of choice, but a political necessity.[96]

2. Comprehensive Security

The Helsinki process starts from a comprehensive concept of security which relates peace, security, and prosperity directly to the observance of human rights and democratic freedoms and the existence of a market economy, encompassing both long-term and short-term aspects. *The modern security concept goes beyond the classic, purely military dimension and considers the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, economic and environmental cooperation, and the politico-military aspects of maintaining peace and stability as equally important.*

I have been actively involved in the Helsinki process since its very inception. Then, as now, we were driven by the simple idea of building a better world where, in our common interest, we would, in the first place, achieve some minimum security and then build upon this with a view to developing stable and prosperous societies. From the beginning we took an inclusive approach, respecting the sovereign equality of all participating States, in particular through constant respect for the principle of consensus decisionmaking. As to the content of our discussions, we also immediately recognized that we could not discuss or pursue our common security objective through a narrow definition. Rather, through the notion of "comprehensive security," we recognized that all of the dimensions we discussed are inter-linked and interdependent—that we can neither achieve security nor develop peace and prosperity in the absence of attention to economic and environmental matters, or human rights and humanitarian concerns.

There is no real or lasting security in political or military terms unless there is security in economic terms and, above all, in terms of fundamental rights. We know that each of us values not only our physical security, but also our social and economic development. In particular,

it was long ago observed that man does not live by bread alone: human dignity is at least as important, and sometimes more important, than mere existence or even material wealth. We also know, with increasingly emphatic expressions in contemporary European experience, that it is critical for human dignity to respond adequately to the human desire to maintain and develop one's identity.[97]

3. The Human Dimension: Human Rights, Democracy, and the Rule of Law

The OSCE Human Dimension includes politically binding commitments of all participating States to promote, protect, and develop human rights, democracy and the rule of law. These commitments are enshrined in fundamental OSCE Documents: the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter, Document of the Copenhagen Human Dimension Meeting, and Document of the Moscow Human Dimension Meeting. I have always believed that the human dimension lies at the heart of the matter, and would like to underline three principles which are fundamental to the concept of the OSCE human dimension and without which the human dimension would be deprived of its significance, and thus the OSCE as a community of values robbed of its heart.

First, the commitments and responsibilities undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the OSCE apply in their entirety and equally in each and all of the participating States. The human dimension is indivisible: there can be no zones of lesser humanity.

Second, the human dimension commitments are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned. The argument of non-interference in internal affairs with regard to the human dimension is not valid; it never has been.

Third, the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the strengthening of democratic institutions are a vital basis for the comprehensive security of the OSCE States. OSCE efforts at conflict prevention cannot ignore the human dimension or else they will founder.

These three principles are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Taken together, they give life and substance to what we call the OSCE community of values. Applied in isolation, they will lose their compelling power and the OSCE will be greatly reduced in its capacity to build a lasting order that is peaceful and just. These principles evoke the individual and collective responsibility of the participating States, as part of the collective conscience of the OSCE community, towards all people in the OSCE area.[98]

The reciprocal relationship between human rights and democracy is evident: respect for human rights is an essential condition for a functioning democracy, and a democratically constituted society provides room for the development, promotion, and, if necessary, enforcement of human rights. The last-mentioned aspect, which refers to the enforcement of rights by legal means, emphasizes the nature of human rights as the right of citizens to defend themselves against the State. Citizens are protected by rights which derive from the human dignity inherent in every individual and whose granting does not lie in the discretion of State authorities.[99]

3-1. Human Rights

Paramount within the concept of human rights is respect for the value of the individual. This is not merely a philosophical point. Every individual has talents and skills in addition to needs and interests. Moreover, groups, nations, and States are all composed of individuals. No matter how we may construct collectivities, and no matter how real and motivating these constructions may be, they all derive from and work effectively to the extent that they genuinely reflect the composite feelings and interests of the individuals concerned.

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." On this basis, there is a human right not to suffer discrimination, in other words, not to be treated in an arbitrary fashion which does not respect the equality of human beings in dignity and rights. The composite of rights and freedoms have been spelled out in many instruments, and even incorporated in most constitutions of OSCE participating States. This is a baseline, in the sense that there should be no deviation from this.

Let me quote the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights: "All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural, and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic, and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms." This means rejection of cultural relativism, which has often tried to justify violations of human rights by reference to some special religious, cultural, or historical imperatives. This notion clearly indicates how important human rights protection can be for the integration of diversities.[100]

--Human Rights and Security

The philosophy and law of human rights is the belief that security, stability, and ultimately prosperity turn on the establishment and maintenance of a just order within and among States, where respect for human rights and democratic governance ensures benefits for everyone. The dedication of the United Nations after the Second World War to a new global regime based on respect for human rights was founded on the belief that war is fueled by injustice, and injustice is fueled by the nonrespect of human rights, in particular by discriminatory regimes which seek to privilege one group and to suppress others. A fundamental post–war premise of human rights is also that, in the absence of a just order, there can be no peace and, in the absence of peace, there can be no meaningful development in the sense of social and economic progress. Within Europe, we capture these last ideas in the mantra of "peace, stability and prosperity" which is reflected in our insistence on democratic governance, respect for human rights, and the free market.

  Peace and justice can only be achieved through open and inclusive policies respecting the diversity of views and interests which exist in all societies. This has led me to believe that attention to minorities is at the crux of both conflict prevention and the development of successful democracies in the complex and interdependent societies of the contemporary world.[101]

Respect for human rights, including minority rights, is the basis of peace and security. It should be no surprise, then, that the blatant and persistent disregard for the rights of persons belonging to minorities has led to so many wars both within and between States. Often labeled "interethnic" tensions, disputes, or wars, such conflicts feature the systematic exclusion and suppression of one or several groups by another, typically the majority who achieve their ends by force of numbers. It is human nature that no individual will tolerate for long his or her humiliation, exclusion, suppression, or alienation. We all know the problems that can result when these tendencies manifest themselves in reactive and confrontational ways, even among a few individuals in our own local communities. When such sentiments are shared by entire communities, then the risks of explosive reaction mount. The seed for such tensions is often discrimination. Of course, the systematic elevation or devaluation of groups is only ever arbitrary since it is based on generalizations which do not reflect the range of talents, skills, needs, and interests of individuals within each group. We should realize that such arbitrariness inevitably poses a danger for all of us. None of us can be secure or confident to pursue our own interests and

development unless we can rely upon a rational regime, consistently applied, which ensures a minimum of equal respect for everyone. Respect for human rights, therefore, is in all of our interests.[102]

Respect for human rights is essential because they alone can safeguard values like human dignity, creativity, and diversity. But let us also not forget that there is a close link between human rights and the chances of ultimately creating a peaceful world order. Peace and stability can never be ensured when human rights continue to be violated on a massive scale in many parts of the world. Violations of human rights and the resulting injustice cause tensions, which in turn will lead to conflict, often violent conflict. The 1986 Declaration of the member States of the European Community summarizes this in very clear terms: "lasting peace and security are unattainable without universal enjoyment of human rights." And the Charter of Paris, signed in November 1990 by the Heads of State and Government of all European and North American States, said essentially the same by stating that the observance and full exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms are the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace. Human rights protection can influence efforts to develop modern, democratic, integrated societies where diversity is seen as an asset and not a liability, and where diversities are harmonized in such a way that they serve the development of society and the country as a whole.[103]

--Human Rights and Minorities

Full respect for human rights, a working democracy, and the existence of the rule of law, are the best guarantees for a positive situation for national minorities. As the Copenhagen Document notes, "questions relating to national minorities can only be satisfactorily resolved in a democratic political framework based on the rule of law, with a functioning independent judiciary."

  Minority rights form an essential part of human rights. They serve to add to fundamental protections some important additional rights for persons belonging to minorities in matters connected with their identity. They aim to achieve equal respect for everyone's identity— that is, everyone's dignity. The catalogue of minority rights is expressed in a variety of international instruments, such as the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the OSCE's Copenhagen Document on the Human Dimension, and the Central European Initiative's Minority Rights Instrument.

  The European Union has also stipulated in its 1993 Copenhagen Criteria that candidates for membership

must achieve "stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities." These international standards respond to issues such as the use of language before public authorities, educational curricula and administration, political participation, and so forth. No State has been forced to accept these standards. Rather, they have been elaborated and accepted with the full participation and free consent of participating States. Overall, they constitute an expression of the fundamental values of European morality and are pillars of the contemporary European social and political order. Human rights are the bedrock of minority protection. There are synergies between human rights, the prevention of conflict, and the international protection of minorities.[104]

The conventional wisdom used to be that particular concerns and interests of persons belonging to minorities could be served merely through the general regime of human rights as articulated, for example, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Certainly, universal human rights go a long way to protecting persons belonging to minorities, in particular through the principles of equality and nondiscrimination. If basic human rights are respected in a democratic political framework based on the rule of law, then all persons, regardless of ethnicity, language, or religion, will have the equal right and effective opportunity freely to express and pursue their legitimate interests and aspirations. However, in quite a number of cases, additional rights are clearly necessary. These rights act as a safety net in cases when minorities are vulnerable to majority decisions that affect their interests, concerns, and desires. These rights do not privilege persons belonging to minorities, but act to ensure equal respect for their dignity, in particular their identity. They serve to bring all members of society to at least a minimum level of equality in the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and freedoms.[105]

An important lesson of the 20th century is that the way we treat minorities is a barometer of our approach to human rights standards and a measure of the overall civility of our societies. Furthermore, the way one handles one's internal relations has a strong bearing on how one can be expected to act in interstate relations. For both of these reasons, the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is part of the European Union's criteria of admission for new members.[106]

I want to stress the relationship between my work and the question of respect for human rights. Even though I am not a High Commissioner on Human Rights or for Human Rights, it is, of course, extremely relevant for my work that human rights are being respected in the countries where I am active. If there is no functioning system of respect for human rights, if democratic values are not respected, if there is no independent judiciary, you can be sure that the minority is in trouble.

Experience has taught us that the blatant and persistent disregard of the rights of people who are of a different ethnicity is an almost inevitable precursor to interethnic tension and, all too often, violent conflict. In order to avoid conflicts, the root causes of the underlying tensions have to be addressed. One of the causes, sometimes even the main cause, is the suppression in various ways of fundamental freedoms and human rights of the population, or part of the population. The respect for human rights and the maintenance of peace and security can no longer be considered as separate items on the world's agenda of crucial questions: they are inextricably linked.[107]

--Human Rights and Sovereignty

In 1991 the OSCE participating States agreed in Moscow that "commitments undertaken in the human dimension of the [O]SCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the affairs of the State concerned." No State can shun its responsibility in this area by using the argument of noninterference in internal affairs. In many cases internal problems can lead to international disputes, and grave, consistent, and massive violations of human rights can cause explosions which threaten international peace and security. This understanding lies at the heart of the Helsinki process. It is the reason why OSCE member States have recognized the mutual right to follow the internal developments in the respective States. It is also the reason why the OSCE has the task to follow and influence developments in all our countries, as a benevolent third party, with at heart the interests of the State concerned, of its population, and of the international community.[108]

Unfortunately, defense of human rights as a matter of real political interest has a tendency to come too late and with hesitation. Indeed, it is almost always in reaction to immediate events, rather than with foresight and calm consideration of trends and challenges. I will not here expound a critique on what I view to be the typical shortsightedness of States which jealously protect what they perceive to be their sovereignty. Let me just query the content of "sovereignty" in our increasingly complex and interdependent world: did Chernobyl respect the territorial integrity of European States? Can global

financial transactions, markets, or currency valuations really be controlled by "independent" States? Perhaps more simply put, is the Westphalian paradigm capable of responding to the challenges of the Internet or satellite technology? Human rights *are* everybody's business. This is true from a moral, legal, and security point of view. In this modern world, no State can hide behind its borders and abuse the rights of its people: the consequences affect us all.[109]

3-2. Democracy

Democracy, based on the rule of law, is the fundamental framework for protecting human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. A constitution that reflects the true character of society and includes guarantees for the rights of all citizens, regardless of ethnicity, is a cornerstone. So too is legislation that protects the rights, interests, and identities of all, not only the members of the majority. Democracy and the rule of law within a State create conditions for using diversities within a society to the benefit of all individuals and the society as a whole.

As stressed in the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights, "democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing." That means that the absence of the democratic rule in a State is in itself a violation of the human rights of its population.

Democracy, simply put, is paramount to the protection of basic rights. Too often it is the tyrants and dictators who are also virulent nationalists. In contrast, the democratic functioning of effective public institutions can increase popular trust in government and lessen the basis for ethnic conflict. The development of democratic institutions, not to mention the avoidance of interethnic tensions, can also be aided at the grassroots level by the strengthening of responsible and independent actors in civil society, namely nongovernmental organizations and the media.[110]

In an ever-more interdependent world, the triumph of democracy elsewhere is an additional defense of democracy in our own countries. Conversely, every success of authoritarian forces is not just a loss to the citizens of the State concerned but will have its negative consequences for the rest of us as well. Bitter experience shows that authoritarian regimes are always a threat to peace and security. It is authoritarian States, not democracies, which are often prone to aggressive policies. A regime that does not obey the rule of law with regard to its own population will not obey the international norms on nonaggression and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is seen as a reflection of a country's willingness and ability to live up to its international commitments. The way that a country acts towards its own people is a good indicator of how it will act with its neighbors and in the international community. This point is kept in mind by the European Commission when considering accession, and by the Council of Europe which is constantly insisting upon respect for human rights among member and prospective member countries. If a State is not prepared to treat minorities with respect, to give them a say in their own affairs, and to accord them fully the rights which citizens belonging to the majority also have, then one can have doubts about its overall preparedness to strengthen democracy. Moreover, tensions will arise which may have unforeseeable consequences.

Conversely, governments of democratic States as a rule do feel themselves bound by rules of law, national and international, and are much more inclined to look for compromises rather than coercion and violence. Their political systems provide guarantees against intrastate conflicts, and they are more likely to look for peaceful, constructive relations with neighboring States. Democratic States are more likely to treat their citizens with dignity and respect. A democratic framework as described in the OSCE documents provides the vital basis for the prevention of human dimension violations, or, when they occur, for their redress. States which fully respect their OSCE commitments to democracy and human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, are thus contributing to peace and stability.

Pluralist democracy is the essential foundation on which our societies are built and which provides the basic values and guidelines with which to order our relations, both at the national and the international levels. One cannot overestimate the importance of effective democratic institutions in this regard. They are the key to guaranteeing and organizing the participation in public life of all, and to channeling and resolving the conflicts of interest which are normal to all societies. The development of effective democratic institutions is an invaluable step towards preventing political polarization along ethnic lines and thus averting the threat of violent conflict. Effective democratic institutions can prevent populists from playing the ethnic card and from exploiting and exacerbating existing differences and tensions.[111]

The democratic States have to show maximum solidarity with those who struggle against oppression. They deserve our support because the struggle for freedom and human rights is indivisible. In our increasingly

interdependent world, a victory for democracy anywhere can promote the cause of those who are struggling for freedom elsewhere. But the opposite is also true—a dictator who meets no internal or external resistance when he tries to impose his will on a country can encourage other anti-democratic forces elsewhere to follow his example and his methods.

But we must also show solidarity because we cannot allow ourselves to forget that those who oppose dictatorship could have stayed out of trouble if they had chosen to obey autocratic rule instead of sticking their necks out. They have recognized that the cause of freedom is a cause worth suffering for. It is of course not enough to show our support by words alone—the least the democratic States can do to help them is to try to work out a well-coordinated strategy to undermine the dictatorship. Only then our solidarity can have real significance.

Solidarity between democratic forces in the world also requires that the more prosperous States offer a helping hand when the new democracies are in danger of being overwhelmed by the problems they are facing. The United States understood this after the Second World War when it started the Marshall Plan which offered Western Europe indispensable aid to ensure its recovery. So far, Western Europe and the United States, even though offering various forms of aid, have failed to make an effort on a similar scale to help the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. No one disputes that the methods to be used ought not to be similar to those employed in implementing the Marshall Plan. The problems which these States have to overcome are different. But the basic aim would be the same: to help ensure that democratic governments are successful in meeting the challenges they are facing, and in this way to help to build stable democratic systems.

Let us not forget the lessons from the 1930s. Lack of solidarity led to the collapse of one democratic State after the other. As we approach the end of the 20th century the threats of Nazism and communism have disappeared. But now we are facing dangers of a quite different nature: chaos and disintegration spreading over Europe. It is my firm conviction that there is only one way to cope with these threats: the democratic States of Europe have to practice solidarity to a far greater degree than has been the case so far. Only then can we lay the foundations of the peaceful, stable, democratic, and united Europe we are all dreaming of.[112]

Democracy and the market economy are not ends in themselves. Rather, they are means to an end. That end, to which all are now committed, is a peaceful, just, and prosperous life. Democracy and the market economy are fundamental processes through which we seek to achieve our desired end. These processes of political decisionmaking and production and distribution of goods require the establishment and functioning of institutions and regulations. Essentially, they require the rule of law with respect for human rights in order to limit arbitrariness and to realize a minimum of social and political justice.[113]

3-3. The Rule of Law

In the vernacular, "peace" connotes tranquility, ease, and harmony. It also conveys a sense of balance in nature, with all things in their right place and in relation to each other. For Plato, this last condition is called "justice": there are inherent qualities in all things and that each be in its rightful position to fulfill its proper function would be the very balance, indeed essence, of justice. In this ideal, there would be no clashes since each would have its place and only its place. So, justice means peace.

I am afraid we live in a world far removed from the Platonic ideal. For most of recorded history, interests have collided violently in competition for the same place or position. The notion of peace has more accurately been [associated] with the absence of war, and there has been precious little of it from a global perspective. Unless we were to use a Darwinian interpretation of history, as some Elitist philosophers do, we would probably also have to admit that there has accordingly been little justice for most people as the necessities of war have so often in the past driven civilization. We are, therefore, left to speak of peace and justice in relative terms. That is, the relativity of their values and their interrelationship.

Faced with the knowledge of the terrible destruction of the last great wars and even of contemporary conflicts, we cannot look too disparagingly at the value of stopping war. To put the matter the other way around, life itself is universally considered to be among the highest values, if not the highest. Certainly, any development of civilization presumes the existence of life. So, to protect and preserve life is imperative. But life is not the only value. Indeed, what distinguishes the human condition from the rest of the animal kingdom is believed to be additional values manifested in the processes and fruits of civilization. The free development of the individual human spirit is the paramount consideration from this perspective since it is the cumulative effect of individual talents and skills which drives civilization. To suppress the human spirit is to place a roadblock before the development of civilization and thus to undermine the distinguishing characteristic of human life. So, the mere absence of war is an insufficient value. It must facilitate something greater. It is as such no more than part of any solution.

The absence of war may be said to have facilitated the construction of civilizations. I say this in the plural because there was historically no universal accord over the substance or legitimacy of any particular civilization. To the contrary, history features never-ending clashes between civilizations in a competition for supremacy. From the myopic perspective of individual princes and kings, it was only just that the strongest should prevail: might was right. Elitist philosophers agreed and conquest was legitimized.

But with not all things being in their "right" place, it was in fact opposing interpretations of justice which generated conflict as the competing claims of princes and kings were settled through the force of arms. The belief of princes and kings that justice meant their personal supremacy eventually gave way to the similar belief of nations. This competition effectively between ideologies pitted one version of truth against another in a bloody and economically costly spiral of violence. The transposition of this conflict from a contest of princes to nations, empires, and finally global alliances gave rise to the horrors of two world wars in the first half of the 20th century.

It was the particular size and nature of the Second World War which stimulated the revolutionary consensus articulated in the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations. Precisely "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," the international community resolved "to maintain international peace and security," "to develop friendly relations among nations," and "to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion." This heralded a new paradigm for international relations and the development of the global community. It was revolutionary because not only did it reject the supremacy of one ideology or version of truth over all others, but it entrenched a new and universally applicable concept of justice: the free development of every human being in dignity. The beauty of this system of justice founded on respect for human rights is that, while universally applicable, it is compatible with tremendous diversity.

One may ask, where exactly is the justice in human rights? First, it is located in the premise of equality: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." But what follows from this is a rational set of standards, progressively more detailed, which pertain to most areas of life. It is this rationality which is the core of justice, because it responds to the arbitrariness which is at the heart of abuse of power. To assure rationality, we turn to the rule of law. We do so in the knowledge that life is not a perfectly calculable venture, nor are all human beings motivated by good objectives. If justice is that all human beings who are born equal in dignity and rights should be equally free to develop as they wish, then to ensure that justice is achieved requires regulation. More particularly, to protect against abuse, aggressive use of force must be outlawed while, at the same time, there must be some legally sanctioned use of force both defensive and in the collective interest. This is not only true in relations between States where sovereign equality is to prevail, but also in relations between the State and individual human beings where the use of force must be regulated by the rule of law. Thus we come to the issue of power.

The exercise of power in the animal kingdom is clear and simple. There is only one effective principle: might is right. We like to claim that humans have moved beyond this brutishness. Some may counter that even legally sanctioned use of force ultimately relies on might if it is to prevail over illegal uses of force, which is why it is important to maintain public forces. It is of course true that force might be necessary to repel aggression, but force alone is not enough. Justice is the vital ingredient in this distinction, with "justice" in international relations meaning the rule of law as articulated in the UN Charter, including respect for human rights. Accordingly, the only legitimate use of force is that which is legally sanctioned. The principle, then, is that might may be employed only for just purposes, or, in other terms, authority is the legal use of power.

This principle finds expression throughout the Charter of the United Nations, beginning with the Preamble and the explicit prohibition in Article 2(4) of the aggressive use of force to the sanctioning of collective use of force pursuant to Chapter VII and making allowance in Article 51 for the use of force in self-defense until the Security Council takes effective action. Thus, the only legal uses of power are for collective purposes or in self-defense.

As already inferred, the new paradigm heralded by the foundation of the United Nations was clear and explicit about its rationale. In the first paragraph of the Preamble of the UN Charter, the objective of peace, the reaffirmation of respect for human rights, the importance of justice, and the ultimate goal of development are declared in a linear fashion. This peace and human rights and justice and development continuum is the product of a lesson learned with the greatest of difficulty, and it instructs us how to avoid repeating the errors of history.

This clearly does not mean passivity in the face of gross violations and threats to the peace. I know that

some may prefer inaction in the name of neutrality. But this is a misplaced notion and it dangerously underestimates the stakes to the international community. I say it is misplaced because seeking respect for human rights has to be considered indispensable for lasting stability and maintenance of the peace is of vital interest for the entire world community. In other words, neutrality implies impartiality, but we have long ago declared ourselves decidedly partial to respect for human rights and maintenance of peace, so we cannot remain "neutral" in the face of serious violations. For to do so is also dangerous because it is a step on a slippery slope of nonrespect of international obligations, thus inviting others to similarly ignore or flaunt the law. We, therefore, require resolute action in favor of the principles of the Charter—in favor of peace and justice.

On a regional level, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has followed the same essential thinking as expressed in the UN Charter. Indeed, from the beginning, the then-CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe] declared itself to be acting in conformity with, and furtherance of, the purposes and principles of the United Nations. This was stated explicitly in the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. Both the Preamble and Decalogue of the Helsinki Final Act make it clear through their language and specific content that the interrelationship between peace, human rights, justice, and development also premises and drives the work of the now expanded OSCE. It does so through the dynamic and intimate relationship between its three "baskets" of concerns: I, Questions relating to security; II, Cooperation in the fields of economics, science and technology, and the environment; and III, Cooperation in humanitarian and other fields, the "Human Dimension." Their interrelationship has been constantly reaffirmed and has become ever more entrenched in the progressive development of the OSCE's concept of "comprehensive security." Moreover, the OSCE has developed its institutions and fora in order to take account of misbehavior and to facilitate evaluations and regular discourse.

"Security" ultimately means a sense of well-being with some degree of predictability on the basis of which people may plan their lives. Of course, we must first and foremost be concerned about security in the sense of the protection of human life. This applies both in terms of peaceful relations between States and in terms of peaceful and just relations between State authorities and individual human beings. Accordingly, we must be concerned about personal security within the State in time of peace, not to mention other forms of security. There is an inter-linkage between these concerns which cannot be denied. Focusing our attentions on this inter-

linkage returns us again to a consideration of justice in terms of ensuring the rule of law. For history has taught us another valuable lesson: where there is injustice, there is insecurity and this in time gives rise to instability and ultimately threats to the peace. Certainly, history also shows that injustice can be maintained for a very long time. When there was little interrelationship between the internal affairs of States, this was not too troubling to those who did not so suffer. But in an era of increasing interdependence, not to say integration, this is no longer the case. Injustice and instability in one State is increasingly of concern to neighboring and third States.

What applies between States, then, applies within States, i.e., the notion of justice is not only interstate but universal in terms of its applicability within each State. That is to say, the rule of law must apply within each State in order to ensure that the equal dignity and rights of every human being will be respected. This means that the use of force within the State must be restricted only to legitimate authorities. Legitimacy, in turn, is to be determined by the will of the people, i.e., democratic rule.

While consensus was reached at San Francisco in terms of applicable principles, hundreds of wars and bloody conflicts since then have betrayed our difficulty in bringing practice into conformity with theory. Indeed, there have been and continue to be challenges to the very concepts of the UN Charter. We have nevertheless achieved some progress if viewed from the perspective of ensuring that the will of the people be the basis of authority in the State and that force is used only according to the rule of law. We have seen the fall of a great number of dictatorial regimes and the end of communism in Europe. We may also observe the growing tendency of an increasing number of governments to oppose gross violations of human rights. And we may say that we have managed so far to avoid a Third World War. Despite this progress, we are still fundamentally struggling to realize for the peoples of the world the full benefits of the consensus on peace and justice….

If there is no perception of justice and no justice in fact, then peace will only be interim. We may certainly consider, as some have argued, that the absence of war is an opportunity to construct lasting peace on the foundation of justice. But in the end, some sense of justice must prevail or peace will be lost….

The absence of war without justice is an insufficient end and contains the seeds of new wars. Moreover, we know it is unacceptable because some people will fight for more than mere existence, and we know it is unsustainable in the long term because it becomes ultimately unstable even under the harshest of regimes.

Even Elitist philosophers know this to be true. But we also know that perfect and complete justice is unattainable: it is simply impossible to correct or undo every wrong. So, we must seek sustainable peace through imperfect justice. We recognize, of course, that we are not speaking about absolute values, for example, "peace at any cost." We have already seen the real cost of seeking to placate injustice in the name of preserving such a peace: Munich will forever ring true to this lesson. Similarly, neither should the pursuit of justice be held as an absolute value, for in the pursuit of "justice at any cost" we may turn minor offenders into fanatical defenders of their masters and their causes. Thus, there is a balance to be found. It is a question of degree. We know this to be true for there are in fact and in law different degrees of responsibility. The balance we seek, therefore, is to sustain peace through such a justice as will respond to the major wrongdoers, to those with the most reprehensible and incorrigible attitudes who, if not brought to justice, facilitate and incite further wrongdoing. Thus, we seek to establish the rule of law—to limit arbitrariness and ultimately instability. This in turn sustains peace and transforms its character into much more than the mere absence of war….

We should not forget that history has taught us another lesson: some things are worth dying for. Justice is among these. We believe it is in all our interests. But surely we cannot ignore the specific determination of the persons most concerned, i.e., the victims. First and foremost, we cannot deny them their inherent right to self-defense. Yet, is it sufficient to accept this in principle, while remaining essentially passive? Must we not come to their assistance? There are, of course, degrees of assistance: moral and political assistance, technical advice, provision of arms, and finally the provision of armed forces. There will always be a tendency of governments to try to reduce the risks to themselves, their own States, and to try to avoid casualties. This might be comprehensible. But is this not then to decide on the relative value of lives? The calculations are most difficult. Still, if the victims are prepared to lay down their own lives to fight against aggression or in the interest of justice, should we not at least support those who do so through every other means? If we are not prepared to fight, we should at least do our utmost to bring maximum political and economic pressures to bear upon those opposed to justice.

Faced with the injustices spawned of National Socialism, the free world eventually responded with more than political and legal pressure. At long last, it felt compelled to respond with arms. Political scientists tell us that this was a necessary response to a genuine threat to our own authority. But military victory was accompanied by the attempt to construct a new international political order and by an endeavor to do some justice at Nuremberg and Tokyo. In a sense, these were interrelated, for the building of a new order required a clear identification of wrongdoing and major wrongdoers. It was perhaps also cathartic for the defeated nations—a sort of line being drawn in the sand releasing them to embark upon new horizons. It thus facilitated both internal and international reconciliation. And its memory still significantly propels European politics….

We should now remain stubborn in the pursuit of justice. Should we choose to shy away from the task, we will risk undermining both the fragile peace and the international order. Those responsible for aggression will be able to continue their evil practices and pursuits. Disillusioned surviving victims will be tempted to retaliate indiscriminately, thus prolonging vendettas rooted in general injustice. If we abandon the rule of law, they will be left only with options of self-help and to reconcile matters for themselves. Such a situation is fertile ground for the development of new support for aggressive forces….

Certainly, the pursuit of justice is difficult and obtaining it is even more elusive. But the difficulty of the task is no reason for its avoidance. Indeed, the task is imperative so the means must be found, beginning with the political and moral courage. The overall lesson is clear: in the long run, there will be no sustainable peace without at least some justice.[114]

4. The OSCE

The Helsinki Final Act was an act of hope in a divided Europe. Since the early 1970s the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) [now the OSCE], has been an important means for multilateral engagement in the region which extends from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Indeed, the OSCE comprises the United States, Canada, all States on the territory of the former Soviet Union, and all other European States. Therefore, all of the countries in the region, including the post–Soviet Central Asian States, participate in the OSCE, unlike other regional institutions which have more limited memberships.

Established initially as a forum for East-West dialogue during the Cold War, the CSCE had functioned as a meeting place for East and West. Its Helsinki process contributed to a large extent to building an atmosphere of confidence between the opposing blocs, thus keeping at bay the possibility of an accidental escalation between the nuclear powers. The CSCE was also an essential forum for standard-setting, and instrumental in spreading the values of democracy and

human rights throughout the former communist bloc. Since then the cause of democracy in Europe has made spectacular progress. The principles of Helsinki have contributed to the downfall of totalitarian regimes to a far larger degree than any of the signatories of the Final Act foresaw in 1975. Groups of citizens in the formerly communist countries banded together around the basic human rights enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and a number of subsequent OSCE documents that built on the Final Act. The courageous activism of these Helsinki committees, and movements such as Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia and Solidarity in Poland, contributed incalculably to the eventual fall of communism.

In the early CSCE days, I had the honor to attend those meetings in the capacity of foreign minister of my country. I recall the tentative way in which began what subsequently became known as the "Helsinki process." I also recall the keen sense of necessity and responsibility that many of us felt in that dark period of European history. It took almost twenty years to move beyond that period—to move out of the darkness into the light of a free continent committed to democratic government and the free market economy. Certainly, the signing of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe was a remarkable achievement following the progressive development of the Helsinki process. But it was by no means a foregone conclusion. It came as the result of steady efforts from many quarters, some more apparent than others. Nonetheless, on November 21, 1990, OSCE Heads of States and Governments met for a Summit in Paris. The Berlin Wall had come down, the division of Europe had come to an end, communism had collapsed, and the Cold War had ended with a victory of the democracies, and we essentially closed the door on the Cold War and opened a new era of a Europe united by common values. The way seemed to be open for the creation of a united, peaceful, and democratic Europe. The Paris Charter, which was agreed upon during that OSCE Summit meeting, reflects the atmosphere of euphoria which then prevailed.

Unfortunately, the new era in Europe was more difficult than most anticipated. The decade of the 1990s was a period of uncertainty and instability as we moved through a difficult transition from the old to the new. In the midst of our own European transition, we have all been experiencing a global transformation of relations with serious consequences also for the old democracies. This has resulted in the simultaneous forces of integration and disintegration—each tugging at the fabric of the State.

Governments which were accustomed to think in terms of external conflict now began to realize that the major threat to peace and stability in post–communist Europe emanated from internal conflicts within States. It

took them some time to realize this. They underestimated the aspirations of various ethnic groups which during decades of harsh communist rule had no chance to manifest themselves and which, as a consequence, erupted with increased strength. They underestimated above all the destructive effect of the forces of excessive nationalism, and the danger it constitutes for stability in Europe because it is indirectly based on feelings of racial superiority and disregard for the needs and interests of other ethnic groups.[115]

In this tumultuous period of transition in Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has played a special role. It may be said that the process of political convergence between the participating States had a catalytic endorsement in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe signed by the Heads of State and Government in November 1990. This important political document declared the commitment of all European, Central Asian, and North American States to the shared fundamental values relating not only to relations between States, but also the foundations of social organization within the State, i.e., that they be based upon the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, the rule of law, democracy, and the market economy. Significantly, the Charter of Paris came on the heels of the adoption within the OSCE of the Copenhagen Document of the Conference on the Human Dimension, which spelled out more explicitly a quite impressive new consensus on human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.[116]

5. The OSCE and International Standards

International standards map out the framework in which political compromises can be made. They constitute the minimum level of acceptable behavior concerning specific individuals or, rather, individuals in a specific situation. There are now a number of international standards concerning the protection of persons belonging to national minorities. There are also institutions, like my office, to assist States in implementing those standards, and bodies like the Council of Europe to monitor compliance. What still needs to be done is to achieve a paradigm shift in the way that people look at the State. National law should be designed to protect equally the rights of all inhabitants of the State, not only the so-called "State-forming" nation. International law should provide the overall framework and impulse for such a pluralistic vision and have mechanisms to protect those who would fall through the cracks. Finally, such a shift in thinking would enable people to feel and live together in a common venture with a common future.[117]

As OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities I am considered as an instrument of conflict prevention rather than a norm-setter or minority rights monitor. According to my mandate, my role is to provide early warning and, as appropriate, early action in regard to tensions involving national minority issues that I think could be a threat to peace and stability in the OSCE area. My focus is therefore mainly political, geared towards conflict prevention.

That being said, while my tools may be political, my blueprints are based on international legal standards. These standards map out the framework in which political compromises can be made. They constitute the minimum level of acceptable behavior concerning specific individuals.

I stress *individuals* rather than groups because as yet there are few group rights, and even these must, in the end, be enjoyed by individuals acting in community. That is why in the OSCE we always refer to persons belonging to national minorities as opposed to national minorities *per se.* That is not to deny the existence of groups. Indeed, in my function, because I do not consider individual cases, I am always looking at the situation of particular groups—usually those in a numerically inferior position; in other words a minority. Since very few populations are ethnically homogeneous, it is almost inevitable that every State will have at least one minority. Depending on the size of the minority or minorities, this can affect questions like use of language, education, culture, and participation in government. Fair and practical standards to protect minorities are therefore essential.

But standards will only take us so far. Although they are universal, the situations where they are applied are not. Don't misunderstand me: I am not trying to suggest that pragmatism should supersede principles, nor am I implying that the application of norms and standards is relative. As I noted earlier, international standards are minimum standards. We have to stick to these standards—indeed insist on them—and not allow for obligations and commitments to be interpreted in a restrictive manner. Nevertheless, experience has taught me that we cannot look at standards in terms of pure law. One must be sensitive to the context in which one is working in order that the parties will see the logic and possibility of internalizing and applying the norms under discussion. The key is to move from the abstract to the concrete, to get States to take measures—legal and political—to create the types of conditions foreseen in the standards concerning minorities.[118]

The greatest challenge is to make international standards relevant in people's everyday lives. I have witnessed too many situations where the rule of law is weak or even nonexistent. In such cases, individuals or groups take matters into their own hands. I have also witnessed too many situations where law is abused and twisted by central and local officials. This makes people skeptical about the rule of law and makes them feel that they live in an unjust society. This can have divisive consequences. Let us therefore not lose sight of the reasons why international standards are devised in the first place. And let us continue to ensure that the process of devising legal frameworks keeps up to date with the challenges of our time. We should also continue to look for ways of assisting States in applying the norms that they subscribe to. This will not only prevent conflict, but should encourage the development of fair and civil societies.

The observance of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democratic principles is a precondition for a stable and peaceful Europe. The same also applies to observance of international rules and standards concerning national minorities. Lasting peace and stability on this continent are possible only if the Copenhagen Document, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities, and the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe are fully implemented in the OSCE area. This unmistakable link between safeguarding democratic freedoms on the one hand and the maintenance of peace and security on the other is at the heart of the work being done by the OSCE.[119]

6. Conclusion: Realizing and Defending Freedom

Experience shows that when a people enjoy human rights, there is a strong tendency to consider them as self-evident, as just a part of ordinary daily life. Apparently we only fully realize the true significance of human rights when we have lost them. It then becomes evident to anybody with self-respect that human rights are as indispensable as water or air. We have to draw a lesson from this. Freedom is not self-evident and it is dangerous to view it with complacency as a quiet possession. On the contrary, I would say: It needs to be won again every day, exacting its daily price from us, who have the duty to give form and substance to freedom and to protect and develop it. We must continuously be on our guard to keep our democratic institutions healthy and strong. It is only in this context that human rights can flourish. Let us never forget the famous saying, "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance."[120]

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V. Conclusions and the Future

A number of issues will affect security in the OSCE area for years to come. I am thinking of the clash between self-determination and the territorial integrity of States, the potent mix of economic disparity and ethnic grievance, the role of organized crime in fomenting ethnic violence, the danger of religious extremism, and the threat of nationalist populism. However, ethnic conflict is not inevitable. The Balkans, or anywhere else for that matter, is not somehow predisposed to an endless series of seemingly intractable conflicts. If one can create frameworks where minorities can participate in the life of the State and develop legal systems where their rights are protected, the likelihood of conflict will be reduced. Multiethnic States are the norm, not the exception. We therefore have to find ways of living with each other—to celebrate our diversity without allowing our differences to break us apart.[121]

Our era is one of uncertainty and insecurity not only for States, but also for individuals within the State. In what has been described as this "age of extremes," we have witnessed the Bolshevik Revolution, Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points, the rise of fascism, Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland, the collapse of communism, and the demise of the Soviet Union. Together with the bloody interethnic conflicts of the 1990s, these have all been related, at least in part, to nationalism and the clash between self-determination and efforts to maintain the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. In confronting these challenges, we have essentially two choices: either we can seek to retreat to the past and waste our energies in constructing barriers, which surely will be overwhelmed, or we can take a proactive approach and meet the challenges with enlightened understanding and creative solutions derived and implemented through cooperation.[122]

We must be clear that ethnically pure nationstates are not the norm and efforts to create them usually cause conflict. Bearing that in mind, we must appreciate the fact that multiethnic States are a reality and that cultural diversity can be a source of strength. I agree that keeping multiethnic States together after a conflict has broken out is a Sisyphus task. That is why we must prevent violent conflict from breaking out in the first place. Furthermore, I believe that there *are* ways of preventing the nationalist stone from always rolling back on us.

A major consideration is to create a strong legal framework that protects the rights of everyone, including persons belonging to national minorities. Minorities must be given an opportunity to protect and promote their identities, for example their language, symbols, and culture. Within the framework of a democratic State based on the rule of law, this should not create a threat to the majority.

In some cases self-governance can satisfy the minority's desire for greater control over its own destiny without breaking up States. Through various forms of so-called "internal" self-determination, minorities can decide on and administer those aspects of their lives which concern them alone, or predominantly. This may be achieved through regimes of territorial autonomy where minorities are concentrated. Where minorities are dispersed, regimes of personal autonomy or cultural autonomy may be a solution. Such autonomies should not be confused with separatism, since they rely upon common understandings and shared institutions of the rule of law, respect for human rights, common security, and destiny within the State. These lessons have yet to be satisfactorily learned. Developments in Macedonia, outbreaks of violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, fighting in the Presevo valley, simmering tensions in Kosovo, populist appeals to nationalism, the threat of religious extremism in Central Asia, and terrorism by separatist groups in a number of OSCE States all paint a gloomy picture.

And yet, over the 1990s positive developments *have* been made. We now have a better understanding of why conflicts erupt and how they can be prevented. Standards are in place to protect minority rights and there is a growing "toolbox" of techniques to prevent conflict. Many countries in the OSCE area now have an institutionalized means of dialogue where minorities have a voice; more States are enacting minority rights legislation; and some governments have introduced reforms—for example in public administration and education—that are sensitive to minority interests. Bilateral treaties and dialogue have reduced suspicions among neighboring States that minorities can be a Trojan Horse.

For their part, minorities in many OSCE States have seen the merits of dialogue and participation and realize that compromise can bear more fruits than confrontation. Some of these changes have been the result of international pressure. But I think that there is also an increased understanding by governments, and minority representatives, that addressing minority concerns is simply good governance. We still need to do a lot more in terms of investing in conflict prevention, acting on the signs of early warning, and shoring up the foundations of multiethnic States. In this way we can build peace within States and peace between States.[123]

However different the views about European integration might be, there seems to be a broad consensus among an

overwhelming majority of European States about one principle: the need to build an undivided, democratic Europe, where values such as the rule of law; human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities; pluriform society; and the market economy are shared by all. In my view "good governance" is the totality of measures undertaken by authorities to implement these values. If we are serious about our declared values, then we must act with determination and vigor to realize them through concrete action. This is both a matter of consequential behavior and integrity, according to which others will judge us. More simply, I believe it is simply an imperative which follows from the evident motivations to avoid bloody conflict and create conditions of life for all of us, individually and collectively, to satisfy our basic needs and interests and to pursue our aspirations.[124]

We must keep faith in the multiethnic and multicultural ideal. These characteristics can be a source of strength. The key is to weave the ethnic fibers together to strengthen the fabric of society and to prevent the existing threads from unraveling. That is one of the biggest challenges for the 21st century. In an increasingly interdependent world, we must find ways to improve relations within States and not only between them. This will enable us to enjoy the individual identities that we cherish without threatening the common structures that guarantee law, order, peace, and prosperity. Emerging out of a century marred by exclusion, intolerance, and the fear of "otherness," it should be clear to all of us that integrating diversity is a major imperative of our times. Although the world is getting smaller, the extent of its diversity is becoming more apparent. Let us celebrate that diversity and ensure that it has the freedom to grow.[125]

My work as High Commissioner has made me both optimistic and pessimistic with regard to the issues which my mandate requires me to address. On the one hand, I am optimistic because I have found that in all cases there is a basic willingness among the ordinary people to live side by side with neighbors who belong to other groups. The foundations for tolerance and mutual acceptance are there. It is often radical political forces which exploit nationalistic feeling to stimulate anti-minority feelings in the people. But I have noticed that this does not always work right away because citizens are often much more reasonable than the politicians who claim to represent them. In a number of cases I have had to conclude that problems and tensions were identified at the so-called political level which were not seen as such by ordinary citizens. Anyone who makes the effort

to look beyond the conference table or the shelves of a well-stocked library by traveling to places where minorities actually live will discover, more often than might have been expected, that the members of the so-called majority population and the minority (or minorities) are living together peacefully and with mutual respect. The official view frequently represents only *one* aspect of actual conditions.

On the other hand, I am pessimistic because I see also small groups of radicals trying for whatever reason they may have to exploit and exacerbate existing differences and tensions. It is up to individual governments, to responsible leaders of minorities, and to the OSCE community as a whole to make sure that such radicals do not get the chance to cause new explosions of violence.

At the end of a century characterized by division, leading often to hatred and bloodshed, Europe should concentrate on the realization of our commitment to the ideals of peace, justice, and prosperity. We are a community of values. We have overcome a great deal and we have much to be thankful for. But we also face a tremendous challenge. The security and stability of our continent in the 21st century will depend to a very great extent on success in dealing with the problems [involved with interethnic tensions and integrating diversity]. Our future is not simple, easy, or certain. It is my firm conviction that if there is a basic willingness on the part of all of us to work towards the common goal, much can be achieved which might seem impossible. What is required is responsible leadership with a firm commitment to the realization of our declared values. We must act vigorously and creatively to translate these values into meaningful terms for our various peoples. In this, we must act individually and collectively in the full spirit of cooperation. We share a vision of a peaceful and prosperous OSCE community based on OSCE principles. The challenges we are facing today can only be tackled successfully if we join all our efforts.

Looking back, it must be said that the OSCE participating States have made great strides in ensuring that persons belonging to national minorities have the right to exercise fully and effectively their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law. Domestic legislation and international standards have been developed which have gone a long way in protecting and promoting minority rights. These positive results will also serve to underpin the conviction of those such as I who maintain that such questions can be settled in a peaceful way and that we should therefore do our utmost to do so. It is too important not to try.[126]

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[81] Dec. 14, 2000, 234; June 29, 2001.

[82] July 9, 1999, 169; March 16, 2000, 200–201.

[83] June 22, 2001.

[84] June 22, 2001; June 21, 2001; Oct. 18, 1996; March 16, 2000, 205.

[85] March 18, 1998.

[86] April 10, 1997; June 16, 1997; July 4, 1995; July 9, 1999, 164, 166, 165; Jan. 19, 1994, 63, 62; Dec. 15, 1992, 31; March 6, 1993, 42; June 22, 2001; March 24, 1994 (Internet version).

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[92] Nov. 26, 1993, 58–59.

[93] July 9, 1999, 167; May 28, 1999 (Interview), 27.

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[97] Oct. 2, 1995, 107; March 17, 1997, 132–133; Oct. 19, 1999, 188; June 18, 2001; April 13, 2000, 208.

[98] June 18, 2001; Sep. 28, 1993, 48–49.

[99] March 17, 1997, 132.

[100] Oct. 19, 1999, 185; June 18, 2001; Oct. 8, 1998.

[101] Oct. 19, 1999, 183, 184–185.

[102] Oct. 19, 1999, 186, 185.

[103] Feb. 3, 1993, 35–36; Oct. 8, 1998.

[104] Nov. 20, 1997, 145; July 8, 1993; April 13, 2000, 209–210; Nov. 6, 2000, 224; Oct. 19, 1999, 183.

[105] Sep. 20, 2000, 214.

[106] March 16, 2000, 201.

[107] July 7, 1995, 98–99; Oct. 17, 2000, 221; Feb. 3, 1993, 36.

[108] Nov. 6, 2000, 229; Oct. 2, 1995, 105; Feb. 3, 1993, 36; July 4, 1995.

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[110] Feb. 23, 2001; Oct. 8, 1998; June 25, 1993.

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[114] June 14, 1996, 111–118.

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[118] Sep. 20, 2000, 213, 215

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