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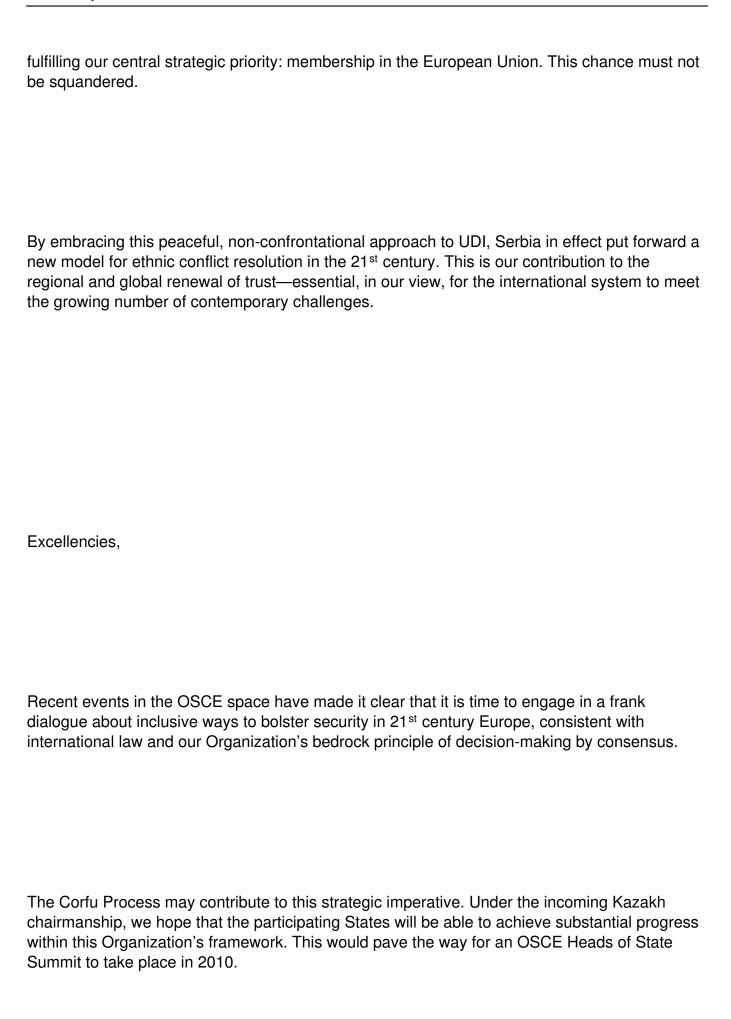
Dear President Papoulias,

Mr. Chairman-in-Office,

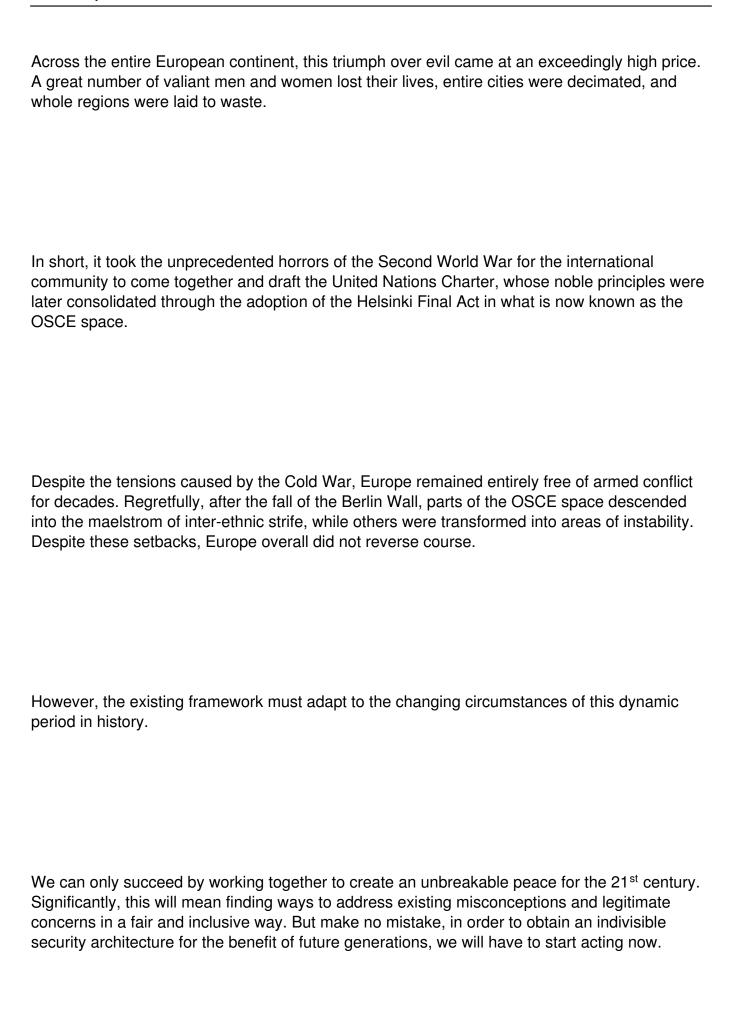
Mr. President of the Parliamentary Assembly,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Let me begin by offering my sincere congratulations to the Hellenic Republic for launching a wide-ranging process of high-level dialogue on European security earlier this year in Corfu.
I also want to extend special thanks to our outgoing chairman-in-office, Foreign Minister Papandreou, for his hospitality and dynamic leadership at a critical moment for the OSCE.
In addition, I take this opportunity to wish all success to our colleague, Foreign Minister Saudabayev, as the Republic of Kazakhstan prepares to assume the chairmanship of our Organization.

Excellencies,  The OSCE—spanning an area from Vladivostok to Vancouver—represents a unique forum in which participating States can coordinate their positions in the context of the broader, common European security agenda.  Regrettably, the level of trust in the OSCE space is not as high as it once was. At present, our founding principles and common values are not always being consistently applied, raising the specter of double standards.  A flagrant example of this is the unilateral declaration of independence by the ethnic-Albanian authorities of our southern province of Kosovo. UDI constitutes a direct challenge to our sovereignty and territorial integrity, and took place in defiance of our democratic constitution,	The OSCE—spanning an area from Vladivostok to Vancouver—represents a unique forum in which participating States can coordinate their positions in the context of the broader, common European security agenda.  Regrettably, the level of trust in the OSCE space is not as high as it once was. At present, our founding principles and common values are not always being consistently applied, raising the specter of double standards.  A flagrant example of this is the unilateral declaration of independence by the ethnic-Albanian authorities of our southern province of Kosovo. UDI constitutes a direct challenge to our		
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Address to the Seventeenth Ministerial Council Meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-opera Wednesday, 02 December 2009.
Excellencies,
Serbia responded to Kosovo's UDI in a way entirely consistent with the essence of Helsinki. At our initiative, an issue of such fundamental importance and complexity—passionately involving all at once identity, boundaries, communal rights, opposing historical narratives—was steered clear of resorting to the force of arms for the first time in the history of the Western Balkans.
To strengthen the rules of the OSCE space and tangibly contribute to regional stability, we chose to turn to the law.
Yesterday, the International Court of Justice—tasked by the UN General Assembly to examine whether UDI conforms to international law—began oral hearings in the Kosovo case.
Once the Court hands down its opinion, an opportunity to come together and reach a compromise on Kosovo's future status will have been created—one that will be acceptable to all stakeholders, consolidate peace and security in the Western Balkans, and play a critical part in



Only by working together—by restoring confidence and rebuilding trust—can we achieve what is needed: the revitalization of the spirit of Helsinki. All initiatives that may bring us closer to achieving that goal should be carefully examined in good faith. In this context, we commend the efforts of the President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev.  Excellencies,  The Republic of Serbia is a co-sponsor of the Draft Ministerial Declaration on the Sixty-Fifth Anniversary of the End of the Second World War.					
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