

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY  
AMBASSADOR ALEXANDER GRUSHKO, PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO NATO,  
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**Working session IV: Arms control and confidence- and  
security-building measures: challenges and opportunities**

Mr. Moderator,

The latest Review Conference on the Implementation of the Treaty on Open Skies ended just a few days ago. I am pleased to note that in spite of some problematic moments, its participants confirmed the relevance of the Treaty. They recognized that it retains its importance as a vital instrument for ensuring predictability and building confidence.

At the same time, it must be noted that today this is one of the rare positive moments at a time of profound crisis in the arms control process. The purpose of today's event, amongst other things, is an exchange of ideas on possible ways of rectifying the situation. I firmly believe that it is extremely important in this regard to attempt to understand the fundamental causes of the present state of affairs.

Without claiming to offer a comprehensive analysis, I should like to highlight some aspects that I believe to be of key significance.

It is obvious that arms control does not take place in a vacuum. Many relevant mechanisms have been established under particular politico-military conditions and for specific purposes. In doing so, the parties relied on the forecasts of the time regarding the development of the regional and global situation.

The philosophy behind Russia's actions in this area was based on the principle of achieving the greatest security with the fewest means. It is with this in mind that we participated actively in the arms control process. During the 1980s and 1990s, our country without exaggeration made an unprecedented contribution to dismantling the material legacy of the Cold War. I recall that Russia withdrew troops and arms from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, disbanding large units in Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Baltics, over 800,000 troops in all. Tens of thousands of units were reduced in size and equipment disposed of. The countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States managed to deal with the Soviet military legacy in such a way that not one of the USSR's international obligations was affected and no impediment to the arms control regime

occurred. These days, many people in the West prefer not to remember this. These facts don't tally too well with the myth that is nurtured of "Russian aggression" that "needs to be contained". But in those days, the withdrawal of forces from foreign territories was seen as a defining contribution to European security and the security of the European States themselves.

The end of the Cold War and of bloc confrontation and also the burgeoning process of transforming the European security architecture opened up unprecedented possibilities for overcoming the schism in Europe. The wording of the Code of Conduct made it evident that the OSCE (then CSCE) had the potential to become a collective security organization. Russia adhered strictly to the policy of constructing a common area of peace and stability based on the principles of co-operation among equals and mutual trust without reliance on threats and counter-threats. We consistently called for the demilitarization of relations in Europe and removal of the factor of force or threats to use it from the pan-European security equation.

It was this philosophy that made it possible to conclude the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) in record time, whereas the preceding negotiations, with a more restricted mandate, on reducing forces and arms in Central Europe had lasted 17 years with no outcome. With the progress that was made in arms control, the bloc approaches and dividing lines began to look as if they belonged to the past.

Unfortunately, the hopes for a collective architecture were not destined to be fulfilled. NATO's assault on Yugoslavia undermined the pan-European process and inflicted irreparable damage on the CFE Treaty. It is sufficient to take an attentive look once again at the preamble to the Treaty. It was for that reason that it was created.

The choice by the NATO countries of a "closed security architecture" and the enlargement of the Alliance to the detriment of the development and strengthening of pan-European institutions, above all the OSCE, had no less destructive consequences. This process clearly ran contrary to the interests of collective security with the result that the dividing lines, rather than fading, became more entrenched and shifted eastwards.

Today our opponents conveniently forget how ardently they convinced us that accession to NATO of Eastern European countries would serve to remove the "phantom pain" of the historical legacy, improve relations with Russia and frame the Alliance in a "belt" of States friendly to us. It didn't happen that way. Now there is talk in NATO of the need for their particular protection in view of what amounts to a "front-line situation". The anti-Russian phobias, which by their nature cannot be overcome through the deployment of tanks, are now defining the direction of military planning and taking on physical form. As a result, the enlargement of NATO has laid the political and material foundations for the appearance in Europe of a new "iron curtain".

Under these circumstances, the real reasons for the refusal by NATO countries to fulfil the key obligation of the 1999 Istanbul Summit – the ratification of the Agreement on Adaption of the CFE Treaty at the earliest opportunity – become clearer. In fact, by no stretch of the imagination can anything that NATO is doing today on its "eastern flank" be described as restraint in the military sphere. The breakdown of the Treaty regime and the hindrance to its development have become basic factors in the deterioration of the security situation. In particular, fruitful professional discussion by the military and the regular exchange of assessments and the results of analyses of the capacities of the sides have become a thing of

the past, even though this exchange fulfilled a vital stabilizing function and helped strengthen security. Arms control talks and the joint review of the Treaty operation offered a unique instrument for translating political intentions into clear language specifying defence planning, the amount of military equipment and sites where it was deployed and other indicators defining the state of military security.

Given the increase in military activity, professional discussion between military officers is particularly important. Unfortunately, dialogue of this nature between Russia and NATO, whose relationship has a direct bearing on security in Europe, is being blocked by Brussels. Without exaggeration, the situation resembles the state of affairs at the height of confrontation.

These negative trends have escalated dramatically in the past year or eighteen months. Since the start of the Ukrainian crisis the Alliance has been rapidly building up its military presence close to our borders. This further increases tension, weakens security in Europe and undermines the basis for settling the crisis in Ukraine while encouraging the “war party” in Kyiv to resort to a “military solution”.

The situation in some parts of Europe is deteriorating. The Baltic region, which used to be extremely quiet in terms of classic military threats, is turning thanks to NATO’s efforts into an area of increased military activity. I shall not tire the meeting with needless figures. It is not the figures themselves but the approach, which gives an idea of the strategic intentions. By way of example, I recall that the NATO mission to patrol the airspace over the Baltic countries was established for no real reason in 2004 and has been increased fourfold since then. This is an example of how internal NATO rulings override the interests of regional security.

Military exercises are being conducted ceaselessly at present on the territories of the States of Eastern Europe and in the adjacent airspace and waters. Allied forces and equipment are supposedly constantly rotated, but in reality are permanently stationed, and the network of airfields is being enlarged and modernized. All logistics are tailored to the needs of the military, going as far as a decision on the forward deployment of depots in Eastern European countries with heavy military equipment of the United States Army, and there are calls for even more far-reaching measures. Does this ring any bells? It is the classic scheme from the era of confrontation, albeit in a scaled-down form – “cold war” lite.

These actions by NATO undermine the commitments on military restraint set forth in the Russia-NATO Founding Act on Mutual Relations of 1997, in particular the provision regarding the renouncement of additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces. The destruction of the Founding Act, without exaggeration one of the last pillars of the already weakened European security architecture, could have the most serious consequences. The situation is extremely worrying as it loads the spring for a new arms race.

A few words about other factors in the European security equation. Problems connected with the unilateral establishment of an anti-missile defence system in Europe and the consequences that ensue from it for strategic stability and regional and global security continue to gain momentum. Moreover, the window of opportunity for dealing with the problem through diplomatic channels on the basis of a mutually acceptable compromise is becoming smaller and smaller, if it hasn’t already closed completely.

Unlike Russia, the United States of America has still not returned its non-strategic nuclear weapons to the national territory. The unsound practice of organizing so-called joint nuclear missions with the participation of non-nuclear countries is also continuing in violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, despite the fact that there are no longer any circumstances justifying the basing of these weapons in Europe. The official reason is the need for a flexible response so as to be able to neutralize the conventional superiority of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. Where is this superiority, and where is the Warsaw Treaty Organization? This once again underlines the extent to which the Alliance's approach to safeguarding security and its efforts to achieve indisputable military dominance are genetically engrained.

I should also like to mention one further extremely worrying trend that has emerged recently. I am talking about the glaring discrepancy between the political rhetoric and the specific results of verification measures by arms control instruments. Objective facts are sacrificed for the sake of the propaganda campaign against Russia. This also applies to the reports by the OSCE monitors. They are brought up on other platforms only when it is politically expedient. This practice discredits the very essence of confidence-building measures and nullifies the impetus to develop them further. Why, if they don't have any impact on so-called "realpolitik"?

Russia's military budget, which, I remind you, is 16 to 17 times less than the cumulative defence spending of the NATO countries, has become a further object of mystification. What is the point under these circumstances of Forum for Security Co-operation documents on military transparency, strategies and military budgets?

Through their demands for increasing military spending, the States of Europe are moving close to abandoning the peace dividends which were taken advantage of after the end of the Cold War, mainly thanks to the approach by the Russian Federation.

There are several dimensions to military security. Arms control is only one of them. In recent years the quality of security has been defined increasingly by the capability of States to counter common threats, most of which come from outside the bounds of the OSCE. Even this area, however, where the consolidation of efforts is imperative, has become hostage to politicized approaches. NATO has suspended all co-operation projects within the framework of the Russia-NATO Council, and this weakens our common security even more.

Mr. Chairperson,

All in all, we are observing in the area of arms control in Europe the effect of falling off a bicycle. The constructive momentum has run down and there is no forward movement. A large mass of political, military and military-technical problems has accumulated. The interplay of different factors influencing military security has repeatedly complicated the picture. A new generation of weapons has emerged outside the scope of existing documents. Even when sufficient political will is manifested, it requires incredible efforts to master the situation.

The forthcoming 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act offers a good opportunity to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the new security conditions and the factors influencing them, including the effectiveness of arms control instruments.

It would appear that a political platform based on the principle of the indivisibility of security with a focus on the establishment of a genuinely collective system of security is required to relaunch the process. Attempts to “mechanically” increase arms control commitments will inevitably come up against the barrier of accumulated problems. And at all events, an indispensable condition for normal dialogue is an abandonment of efforts to fuel mistrust vis-à-vis Russia.

Thank you for your attention.