



EMBASSY OF GEORGIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA
PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE OSCE AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

OPENING STATEMENT

*Delivered By the Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia
Mr. Alexander Nalbandov
At the Annual Security Review Conference 2009*

Madam Chairperson,
Mr. Minister,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and a great honour to address the distinguished audience of the eighth Annual Security Review Conference, which remains an important venue for enhanced dialogue on security issues among the OSCE participating states.

We take a special interest in this conference as it provides the OSCE participant states with the opportunity to have a comprehensive review of the organization's annual work, discuss most acute security concerns, evaluate the implementation of our commitments and explore new ideas for reinvigorated and more efficient cooperation for the security and stability in the OSCE area.

Besides, it is an especially interesting opportunity for me to pose questions to the Foreign Minister of the country, which occupies 20 per cent of my homeland, which is responsible for the atrocious acts of ethnic cleansing on the occupied territories, and which has forced the closure of crucial international missions – those of the OSCE and the UN in Georgia.

Madam Chair,

Georgia believes that the existing set of OSCE commitments and measures more or less adequately address the current challenges, though there is still a room and scope for improvements. Undeniably, a number of new threats have occurred in the OSCE area, like the last year's Russian-Georgian war. Inter-state armed conflicts, terrorism, emergence of "black hole" territories, radicalisation of the non-state actors, as well as issues related to energy

security came forward as new challenges in the OSCE area, which could not have been foreseen when we were designing the fundamentals of this Organisation and the current European Security system.

Among others, one of such challenges is the situation in North Caucasus, which already for several years raises serious security concerns not only in Georgia, but also in other countries of the region and beyond. Statistical data reflecting violence and other crimes be it in republics of Chechnya, Dagestan or Ingushetia are horrendous. These potential flash points may have spill over impact if not addressed duly. Regretfully, during the latest years, the North Caucasus region is being unjustly left without attention in the OSCE. Considering the importance of the issue, Georgian Delegation will address this issue in a separate statement at the upcoming Working Session I.

We believe all these challenges might serve as good indicators as of towards which direction, the new discussions on improving European security might be focused on, on the basis and within a broader framework of ensuring compliance to the existing commitments.

Having said all that, we are still strongly convinced that the so-called “failure” of the current security system, first and foremost is a fault of one state, which has unilaterally decided to establish new rules of conduct in the international arena.

Dear colleagues,

No one should have illusions that any new security framework will provide a chance to maintain its illegal military presence in the neighbouring countries, or allow the right of veto over the sovereign right of any state to choose its allies. Nor will the OSCE community allow the complete destruction of the Helsinki principles on the way of accommodating one of its member’s geostrategic ambitions.

It is more than enough to point out obvious contradiction between one of the five principles proposed by the Russian President to refuse increasing security of one state at the expense of another’s security and, on the other hand, one of the key elements of so called ‘new architecture’, as declared by Minister Lavrov, to introduce “spheres of privileged interest”, which in translation means exactly the opposite, that is, increasing Russia’s security at the expense of others’ security, including that of Georgia.

In reality, the key to strengthening the European security is the unequivocal adherence to already undertaken commitments. No new arrangement can wipe away the need for fulfilling the existing obligations, especially the ones, which are based on fundamental principles of international law, as enshrined in the Charter of Paris and the Helsinki Final Act.

Distinguished colleagues,

It is indeed ironic, that the very state which is responsible for the brazen violations of almost every single principle and norms of international law, as well as her own international commitments, including through attempts to forcefully change the borders of a neighbouring sovereign country, is now preaching us about the need to elaborate a new security architecture in Europe, which, as communicated so far, contains nothing, but an idea of eventually dismantling the existing security framework, including the second and third dimensions of the OSCE, and discarding the current international commitments.

In this regard, I can't refrain from posing several questions to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia. In particular:

- Where, from Russian perspective, is in the European security system the place for fundamental principle of the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty?
- How the actions of Russia to force closure of OSCE and UN Missions in Georgia are consistent with its international obligation to keep security and stability in the OSCE area and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of those, who will suffer even further as a result of complete lack of international transparency in the occupied Georgian regions?
- Is Russia, in general, against the presence of international police involvement in the Caucasus region to help establishing law and order, accountability and transparency? On what principles, if not these, should then any effective security architecture be based?
- What is Russia doing today to prevent Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia from developing into the black holes without any transparency with regard to the Human Dimension related issues?
- What is the Russia's Foreign Minister's position on the HCNM/ODIHR's Report published by the end of last year, and how Russia is going to proceed with implementation of the recommendations contained therein?
- Does the Minister consider that the Human Dimension is a minor, negligible component that may be avoided in the real, solid security framework?
- Finally, what are, in Russia's view, the prospects for the new security architecture without one of the main building blocks of European security, the CFE?

Mr. Minister,

This is by far not the exhaustive list of questions, adequate answers to which could prove the readiness of the Russian Federation to the serious dialogue. But most probably, they will remain unanswered today as well, as it was the case on many occasions before in Vienna, Geneva, New York and elsewhere.

And it would be quite deplorable indeed, because Georgia genuinely supports Russia's dialogue and productive engagement with the democratic international community. The democratic transformation of Russia itself could be the most solid cornerstone for the European security, allowing other partners to perceive Moscow's ideas and proposals rather seriously. And Georgia indeed would be the first country among all others to stand by its northern neighbor in this process.

Thank you