

Chairmanship: Latvia

## 688th PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM

1. Date: Wednesday, 18 July 2012

Opened: 10.10 a.m.

Closed: 12.20 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador G. Apals

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Forum, welcomed the new Permanent Representative of Germany to the OSCE, Ambassador R. Lüdeking.

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: GENERAL STATEMENTS

*Compliance issues with regard to commitments vis-à-vis the annual exchange of military information:* Russian Federation, Chairperson

Agenda item 2: SECURITY DIALOGUE

(a) *Address by Ambassador A. Hovakimian, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia:* Chairperson, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Cyprus-European Union (with the acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/98/12), Russian Federation, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Ireland, United States of America

(b) *Presentation entitled European Security Perspectives by Major General M. O. Schissler, Director, Plans and Policy, Headquarters, U.S. European Command:* Chairperson, Major General M. Schissler

(FSC.DEL/100/12 OSCE+), United Kingdom (Annex), France,  
Russian Federation

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Briefing on the capacity development programme for the management of stockpiles of conventional ammunition in Serbia*: FSC Co-ordinator for Projects on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (Hungary)
- (b) *Update by the Chairperson of the OSCE Communications Group*: Representative of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Chairperson
- (c) *Project on removing stockpiles of mélange in eastern Ukraine*: Representative of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Ukraine
- (d) *Announcement of temporary technical problems with the functioning of the national segment of the OSCE Communications Network (FSC.EMI/384/12 Restr.)*: Belarus
- (e) *Matters of protocol*: Hungary, Chairperson, France, Denmark

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 25 July 2012, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal



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**688th Plenary Meeting**

FSC Journal No. 694, Agenda item 2(b)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

General, I thank you for your presentation. To a military man such as me, who has served 11 years in North Germany, the changes you describe are indeed interesting.

Mr. Chairperson,

Military transparency and confidence are at the core of what the FSC does; in part they are derived from being open and proactive in revealing our military structures, now and into the future.

To remain relevant, armed forces must be prepared to adapt to the strategic environment and economic reality. Often this is evolutionary in nature but occasionally a more fundamental transformation is necessary. This leads me to complement General Schissler's presentation with a short summary of a recent announcement about a parallel process concerning the British Army.

Participating States may recall a statement that the United Kingdom made at the 625th FSC in October 2010, on the subject of our Government's Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). The greater part of the impact upon the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force were announced at that time, but the changes to the army were dealt with in two stages; the second and more profound stage was made public on 5 July 2012. In summary, this includes the following:

- A further reduction of our regular army strength to 82,000, with a corresponding increase of the reserve to 30,000 – a total of 112,000 trained personnel;
- A change in structure that provides three force types:
  - (a) Reaction forces: these comprise three armoured infantry brigades, and one air assault brigade plus supporting and command elements;

- (b) Adaptable forces: these consist of a pool of regular and reserve forces organised around seven infantry brigades, plus supporting and command elements;
  - (c) Force troops: these are groupings of combat support and combat service support troops that can be called upon to support both the reaction and adaptable forces;
- By 2020 these forces will be predominantly UK-based;
  - Our defence spending will continue to be above 2 per cent of GDP;
  - The composition, organization and concept of operations of the British Army 2020 is the biggest change for 50 years and represents genuine transformation that will take up to eight years to complete. But the aim is to remain an adaptable and deployable force for good, into the future.

Mr. Chairperson,

I offer this brief account of the changes facing the British Army, so soon after its announcement, as another small transparency measure. But I should also note that this new structure will require changes in the way we report on and account for the Armed Forces in terms of existing arms control and CSBM regimes. As we go through this comprehensive physical and structural transition, we will need to adapt our arms control and CSBM activity in parallel, whilst remaining fully compliant with our obligations. And, despite the scale of the challenges ahead, the United Kingdom will seek to play an active role in the modernization and improvement of the Vienna Document 2011 in this forum. Naturally we would urge all participating States to do likewise.

Mr. Chairperson,

I have given only a few details of Army 2020 today, but am happy to provide further information to interested delegations. I request that you attach this statement to the journal of the meeting.