

OSCE Annual Security Review Conference

Working Session III:

Revitalizing, updating and modernizing conventional arms control and confidence - and security-building measures (CSBMs) regimes: Challenges and opportunities

Statement by S. Mkrtchian, Director

Arms Control and International Security Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia  
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The ASRC, along the other OSCE specialized meetings, serves as a relevant forum to review and assess the implementation of conventional arms control and confidence and security building measures.

We, like the others, have been continuously emphasizing that the conventional arms control and confidence and security building measures remain as important as ever to dispel the security concerns, mitigate the possible tensions, and moreover, they can serve as powerful catalyzers for conflict prevention and resolution.

All the OSCE basic instruments - the Vienna Document 1999, Global Exchange of the Military Information, Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Code of Conduct, as well as Information with Regard to the OSCE Principles on the Control of Brokering in Small Arms and Light Weapons, Information Exchange with Regard to Sample Formats of the End-User Certificates and Relevant Verification Procedures are keeping their functional value, albeit there is a need for some update.

Armenia also provides relevant information to the United Nations, such as:

- Report on the National Legislation on Transfer of Arms, Military Equipment and Dual-Use Goods and Technology;
- National Report on the implementation of the UN Program of Actions to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects;
- Reports on Conventional Arms (transfer / export / import), etc.

As a sign of good will toward transparency and confidence-building measures, every year Armenia voluntarily provides specific information to the UN and to the OSCE Questionnaires on anti-personnel landmines.

Armenia, on its part, will remain committed to the spirit of the OSCE CSBMs by making contributions to further enhancing the effectiveness of the existing measures, which are crucial for maintaining and reinforcing security and stability in the OSCE area in general and in the South Caucasus region in particular, where insecurity and threat perception, due to the well known factors, are unfortunately higher than in the other parts of the OSCE area. If in a significant part of the OSCE area the security environment has dramatically improved during the last decade or so

and the conventional warfare is almost unimaginable, it is far from being the case in the part of the world we live in.

Therefore, we are strong advocates of changes to both Vienna Document and the CFE treaty that will in the first place provide for their full and unreserved implementation; the arms control obligations and CSBMs should not and could not be implemented randomly or in a selective manner.

We have been closely and with great interest following all the proposals put forward in the framework of ongoing negotiations to refurbish the VD 99 and believe that we should be guided by at least two basic approaches – applicability and affordability. Also realism in regard to what can be attained in the course of this exercise will lead us to the anticipated results, and preferably at the Vilnius Ministerial Meeting.

Armenia was really encouraged by the rather promising start of the talks to modernize the CFE treaty. Again our position was and is that, whatever is going to be the scope of the change to be introduced, the clear outcome should lead us back to the full implementation of the Treaty. It remains the main arms control regime particularly in our region and its strict implementation can really allay the mounting concerns of extremely dangerous trends of uncontrolled military build-up.

It is our strong wish that rather sooner than later we will be able to return to negotiations currently put on hold and guided by constructive attitude move forward.

I was emphasizing the issue of implementation so persistently because non-compliance simply makes void any international agreement. And unfortunately, the provisions of this pivotal agreement have been challenged in our region. Azerbaijan, while being a party to the Treaty, and a participant to the relevant political settlement process under the auspices of the OSCE, nevertheless, for at least the last 4 years according to official information, violates its maximum levels of holdings of the Treaty limited equipment set by the CFE Treaty in the categories of battle tanks and artillery.

The Republic of Azerbaijan has openly and continuously demonstrated its negligent attitude toward the implementation of the CFE Treaty. According to the annual CFE exchange of information for the year 2011, the Republic of Azerbaijan provided the figures that clearly show that it has more armament in at least two out of five categories of the Treaty Limited Equipment – 381 battle tanks and 469 artillery pieces – when the Treaty correspondingly allows 220 and 285. Which is more alarming, is the fact that Azerbaijan incrementally increases its actual holdings in violation of the Treaty from year to year.

The issue of the abovementioned case of non-compliance is being repeatedly raised by Armenia within the OSCE, the UN as well as other international organizations since 2006. This blatant violation of the legally binding Treaty should not be shoved under the carpet and we expect a corresponding reaction to it.