

**STATEMENT BY MR. MIKHAIL ULYANOV,
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE VIENNA TALKS ON MILITARY SECURITY AND
ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 2008 OSCE ANNUAL
SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

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As the name of our conference implies, participating States are expected to use it to deliver an assessment of the situation in the area of security. We should say straight away that Russia's assessments on this score are far from positive. Recent years in Europe have witnessed a growing accumulation of alarming trends. This is linked to a whole host of causes, the most important of which in terms of its negative consequences has been the stepped-up expansion of NATO. There are within the OSCE area different points of view regarding that process, but there is no denying the obvious fact that as a result of that expansion the previously existing force balances have been upset beyond repair and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) in its original form has irretrievably lost all relevance to reality. The adapted Treaty, on the other hand, has still not come into force because of artificial linkages with problems that have nothing to do with the question of disarmament. I ask you to consider the matter for yourselves: If we discard the verbal trappings, what emerges is that the viability of an arms control regime in Europe has been deemed to be less valuable by a number of countries than the desire to achieve the withdrawal of one thousand Russian peacekeepers, the relocation of munitions from Transdnistria and the eviction of military pensioners and their family members from the residential area of the former Russian military base at Gudauta. This may sound absurd, especially against the background of the slogans proclaiming the CFE Treaty as the "cornerstone of European security", but such are the facts.

Among the persons taking part in this meeting there are probably some who remember how in this very hall immediately after the end of the Cold War we listened to impassioned arguments to the effect that the best way to ensure security in Europe would be to close down the foreign military bases and return the soldiers to their homeland garrisons. Not that much time has elapsed, but now we observe an entirely different picture. The acceptance on one's territory of foreign military facilities and forces has been declared to be the preferential investment in one's national security. Can this actually represent the ideal of European security? And what are those persons counting on who would convince us of the "negligible military significance" of deploying facilities and bases in the Baltic countries, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic and now also in Hungary, but who at the same time declare those very same peacekeepers in Gudauta and the "left-over" shells at Kolbasna to be a problem of well-nigh universal proportions. It is clear that no unified approach can be devised on the basis of double standards of this kind.

Another cause for the growth in negative trends has been the dismissive attitude of some States to the principle, laid down in the OSCE's fundamental documents, of the inadmissibility of strengthening one's own security at the expense of the security of others. This has come to light most vividly in the plans to create anti-missile defence systems in Eastern Europe. Even if we take at faith the argument about a missile threat from Iran (and for us this hypothetical threat is far from obvious), the fact remains a fact: The architects of the global anti-missile defence system failed, it would appear, up until a particular moment to even give thought to the possible Russian reaction to these actions. The failure to take into account the legitimate concerns of one's partners inevitably leads to a growth of mistrust and tension, factors that can only have the most negative possible effect on the pan-European climate.

Among the destabilizing factors mention should also be made of the emergence of increasing signs of legal nihilism in international affairs. A graphic example of this kind can be seen in the unilateral proclamation of independence by Kosovo in violation of the norms and principles of international law and resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations. One can repeat as often as one likes that the case of Kosovo does not represent a precedent, but try to prove this to the leaders of separatist regimes and movements, whether in Europe or elsewhere in the world. I doubt that they will agree with this argument.

And lastly, we should also mention in this same list the fact that the multilateral forums responsible for maintaining relations of confidence and security on the continent are clearly failing to cope with their responsibilities. Ten years ago the situation in Europe was also not ideal, but at that time intensive work was under way to adapt the CFE Treaty and to update the Vienna Document. These efforts culminated in the summit meeting in Istanbul in November 1999. Following that, however, there ensued a period of many years of nearly total stagnation. The OSCE Forum became mired in the discussion of minor issues, no longer dealing with genuinely important problems of European security. An even more paradoxical situation arose in connection with the CFE Treaty. Having announced in April 2007 the possible introduction of a moratorium on the implementation of that Treaty, the Russian Federation expressed its willingness to engage in honest and serious dialogue with a view to finding a way out of the impasse that had arisen. Regrettably, we have yet to be offered this kind of dialogue. The work of the Joint Consultative Group (JCG) and the Group of Experts of the NATO-Russia Council on the CFE Treaty, rather than being intensified at a time of crisis, has for all practical purposes been totally stalled, and not through any fault of the Russian Government. Many countries, while expressing an altogether understandable concern at the fate of the CFE Treaty, have in fact removed themselves from participation in the efforts to save it. This is an extremely alarming sign since if multilateral formats continue in the future to decline to carry out their mandates, it will be difficult to count on a change for the better in the situation.

Mr. Chairman,

The situation that is emerging provides no basis for any particular sense of optimism, but it is, in our view, by no means hopeless. The inertia of recent years can certainly be overcome through the joint efforts of all States interested in ensuring confidence, stability and predictability in Europe. This is precisely the objective of the recent Russian initiative for the conclusion of a legally binding Treaty on European Security. This proposal should be viewed

as an invitation to engage in the kind of committed dialogue that will enable each OSCE participating State to make its contribution to the formulation of an agreement of this kind.

We reaffirm our readiness to step up efforts to restore the viability of the arms control regime in Europe. We are convinced that if the CFE Treaty crisis is to be overcome, more active use needs to be made of the opportunities afforded by the Vienna negotiating platform, which ten years ago played so important a role in drafting the Agreement on Adaptation. Please regard this as an urgent recommendation to our NATO partners, including above all the United States of America.

At the same time, work needs to be continued for the purpose of overcoming the remaining serious differences of opinion regarding the matter of anti-missile defence. The core of our position remains unchanged: first, a joint analysis of the situation with regard to missile proliferation, followed by the identification of ways to solve the problem, with the accent on politico-diplomatic methods — and only as a last resort the use of military-technical means, including the deployment of anti-missile defence systems. At the same time it is important to ensure equal access to the management of any future anti-missile defence system by all those who organize the system itself. The main advantage of this kind of approach is that it provides for collective work and guarantees that the system to be put into place will take into account the security concerns of all, without at the same time creating any new lines of division in Europe.

In the same context, I should like to say a few words about possible confidence- and transparency-building measures. So far, not a single one of the measures proposed by the United States has been properly framed in concrete terms, and there is a lack of clarity regarding them. There have been many discussions on this subject but no signs of any real progress. We hope that the continuing dialogue will nevertheless ultimately result in tangible results capable of allaying Russian concerns.

Permit me a few words regarding the work of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). We are convinced that this body must focus its attention on improving the pan-European regime of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) and making it more relevant to changing realities. It is impossible, for example, to find a rational explanation for why up to now naval forces, which constitute a major component of the military capabilities of States, remain outside this regime. Today, the Russian delegation is circulating within the OSCE specific proposals to eliminate this gap. What is involved is an exchange of information, prior notification of certain kinds of naval activities, the monitoring of such activities, the exchange of annual plans and finally military contacts. As you can see, there is nothing extraordinary or particularly ambitious here: Russia is proposing that confidence- and security-building measures of a kind that have well proven their worth on land should be extended to the waters that are the scene of naval exercises.

Clearly, our partners will require some time to study the Russian proposals. We suggest that we begin discussing them at the FSC plenary meeting to be held on 23 July and that the subject “CSBMs in the naval area: for and against” be included in the agenda of that meeting.

In conclusion, we should like to once again reaffirm Russia’s willingness to engage in an open dialogue and in joint work with all other States. Fully aware as we are of the existing difficulties, we nevertheless believe in the possibility of strengthening multilateral

approaches for ensuring European security and in the need to do so. We are encouraged in this belief, in particular, by the first signs of a revitalization in the work of the OSCE Forum, by the fact that its agenda has acquired a more balanced character, by the adoption in Madrid of a special ministerial decision on the work of the FSC, by the inclusion of more topical subjects in the “Security Dialogue”, by the intensified process of improving the implementation of the Vienna Document, etc. The main thing, however, is that we are able to observe a growing desire to inquire more deeply into the emerging situation and to find ways of rectifying it. There is evidence of this, incidentally, in the statements delivered by the two keynote speakers at this session, Ms. Alyson Bailes and Mr. Adam Kobieracki, to whom we are grateful for a constructive and unusual contribution to the discussion. We see in this improving attitude the key to the future success of our efforts within the politico-military dimension of our common work.