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CHAIRPERSON'S FIRST PERCEPTION ON THE OUTCOME OF THE 2007 ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE BASED ON RAPPORTEURS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Vienna, 20 June 2007

Closing Session

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,

We are ending today the fifth edition of our Annual Security Review Conference which, as we anticipated at the start, focused strongly on two questions related to arms control which are of particular interest to the participating States. In the first place, regret was expressed that the Extraordinary Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) held the previous week had ended without agreement on the adoption of a document containing final conclusions; on the other hand, there had been an exchange of views on the arguments, technical approaches and practical effects associated with missile interception systems in the European space.

On the one hand the desire for transparency in these matters was well received. The principle of the indivisibility of security in the OSCE area was also reiterated, and this is associated with any initiative designed to improve conditions of security and stability in the entire geographic area over which our Organization extends. In this context there were numerous appeals for dialogue among the participating States in the most appropriate forums, dialogue both in technical matters and also in relation to the taking of political decisions. It has also been pointed out that these two questions — the CFE regime and the anti-missile defence system — should not be linked.

The proposal to hold a seminar in October on the future prospects of arms control regimes, and also on confidence-building measures, seems to have gained support, to judge from the various statements we heard in the second working session. This could be considered a positive result of our Conference.

In addition to what has been said so far, and in anticipation of reading in greater detail the rapporteurs' reports, there have certainly been other important questions that were taken up in the course of the Conference — questions which I shall endeavour to discuss in this first Chairperson's perception.

There was unanimous agreement that the threats described in the OSCE Strategy continue to be relevant, but speakers likewise stressed that participating States should take a

firm stand on the need to make greater efforts in combating criminal activities — and here I am referring in particular to the struggle against drug trafficking, eradication of hatred and the special attention required to combat challenges in the energy sphere and in economic matters generally. As far as the prevention and combating of terrorism is concerned, it was pointed out that the instability generated in uncontrolled territories can give rise to terrorist activities and organized crime — things which make the resolution of long-term conflicts that much more difficult. We have also heard an analysis of possible gaps in the Strategy, relating in particular to the struggle against terrorism and border security. It was pointed out that in the context of the fight against terrorism it is essential to pay attention not only to land frontiers but also to the sea and sky. Likewise, the need to continue giving special consideration to the victims of terrorism has been recognized, as has the need to work on a definition of that concept. At all events, an appeal has been made to all participating States to sign and apply all conventions and protocols of the United Nations relating to prevention and combating of terrorism and also to respect human rights in this area.

The debate on the politico-military dimension was carried on with special fervour, in addition to the points I have already referred to. The importance for the Forum for Security Co-operation of the dialogue on security was once again stressed and an appeal was made to improve the agenda in this area; what is possibly even more important, it was emphasized that we should step up our discussions on various proposals relating to confidence-building measures which were put on the table but which some feel have become “frozen” recently. Some delegations showed an inclination to discuss improvements in the Vienna Document 1999 and the Code of Conduct since the new challenges confronting us at the present time do not seem to be covered by those political instruments. It was also suggested that it might be appropriate to launch discussions on a new generation of confidence- and security-building measures. This is a matter of particular importance for those participating States which do not belong to organizations such as NATO or other international bodies of a politico-military nature.

In the third and final section of this first analysis of the discussions held during the Conference, I should like to stress the necessity defended by various delegations and speakers of consolidating effective multilateralism within the OSCE and effective synergy in our co-operative relationships with other international organizations as regards early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, and also the rehabilitation phase. In the same context stress has been laid on the need for all interested parties to display the most earnest political will in freeing the OSCE area from such conflicts as still persist. It has become plain that only a coherent focus taking into account the multi-dimensional character of the conflicts can help us to meet the challenge which such conflicts represent for the participating States. Similarly, respect for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity was invoked on various occasions during the third working session.

In conclusion, I may say that this fifth edition of the Annual Security Review Conference took a somewhat different tack from its predecessors; it may have disappointed some, but it may have been useful to others in giving them an opportunity to exchange points of view and information of great importance for security. However, our Chairmanship believes that for all practical purposes we have succeeded in making the true concerns of participating States more transparent. The delegations present here have, on various occasions, spoken of the crucial role of civil society in matters of conflict prevention.

Dear colleagues, without wanting to avoid the legitimate discrepancies that remain in the arms control sphere, we may be sure that, at least during these two days, we have succeeded in developing genuine dialogue among all participating States of the OSCE in an atmosphere of complete equality. As the Spanish Chairmanship said at the beginning of the Conference, when we meet in Madrid we shall be grateful to have removed the most problematic obstacles that cast a shadow on us during these last few years. Thank goodness we have succeeded in ironing out our differences.

Many thanks to you all.