



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

S T A T E M E N T

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Madam Chairperson,

I would like to welcome Deputy Minister Grushko at this joint FSC-PC meeting and thank him for the presentation. I have listened to a number of questions posed here by various delegations, and I feel that these questions are extremely relevant and important.

As a representative of a small and occupied country, I am particularly interested in details of the Russian proposed security architecture, especially since we have not yet been persuaded why current security architecture is ineffective and what added value would the new system have. It would be fair enough to say that the so-called "failure" of the current security system is not a fault of the inherent systemic problems, but of a decision of one particular state to unilaterally breach its international obligations and unilaterally introduce the "rules of the game".

Mr. Minister,

For last one month, the Georgian delegation has been raising questions, which are tightly connected with today's discussions. The Russian side has preferred to respond to questions with silence, therefore I sincerely hope that you will be able to break the silence and respond more eloquently.

Several months ago President Medvedev named as one of the pillars of the proposed security architecture "respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of states, and respect for all of the other principles set out in the truly fundamental document that is the United Nations Charter". How the proposed security architecture will prevent a defector state, like Russia, which decides to forcefully change the borders of the neighbouring state and occupy its territories, from doing so?

While the whole international community calls for the respect of the principle of Georgia's territorial integrity, Russia openly challenges it. How will such confrontation between Russia and the rest of the civilized world be placed in the context of the proposed security architecture?

One of the key elements of the proposed security architecture is, as Minister Lavrov openly declared just recently, the introduction of the "privileged spheres of interest". I wonder how this statement fits with fundamental international documents such as the Charter of Paris and its principle of abandoning the spheres of influence. It is indeed deplorable, that Russian political thinking has fell back to the years of the cold war period. We believe that the security architecture of Europe based on this notion of privileged interests fundamentally violates the values and assumptions of liberal democracy that binds Euro-Atlantic space together.

Madam Chairperson,

Speaking of the values, I want to ask our distinguished guest, does Russia intend to get rid of such important bodies as ODIHR and HCNM in their attempt to reshuffle the existing security architecture? Is this an attempt to undermine the election observation and human rights protection arm of the OSCE? Unfortunately we have all the reasons to believe so. We have seen how Russia has been discrediting these organizations over last few years not allowing them to observe Russian elections. We have witnessed how Russia has been disregarding the report issued by the ODIHR and HCNM at the end of last year regarding the situation in the occupied Tskhinvali Region. We want to once again repeat the question – Does Russia agree with the recommendations set forth in this report? Does Russia share the findings of this report about massive violations of human rights and facts of “ethnic cleansing”?

Mr. Minister,

We believe that the essential and inalienable part of any security architecture should be the obligation of the participant states to keep its international commitments. Current international system has been undermined by the Russian actions over the last few years, as their attempts to unilaterally withdraw from its international commitments ended up “successfully”. Nowadays, as we speak, Russia continues to be in breach of the August 12 cease-fire agreement. Russia has seriously increased its military presence on the occupied territories of Georgia in contradiction of its international obligations to withdraw military forces.

Russia has installed new military bases and openly militarized the two Georgian regions, by turning them into strongholds and closed zones. Russia is violating every paragraph of the cease-fire agreement: just yesterday Russian representatives fundamentally disagreed to the notion of free access of humanitarian aid to the population in need in the Tskhinvali Region, whereas the point 3 of the agreement calls precisely for that. Russia continues to refuse the access of international monitors to the occupied territories, thus also breaching its international commitments. Therefore I would like to ask you, Mr. Minister, is this the way Russia wants to modify the European security system? So that in this system Russia can break its obligations, particularly in its “near abroad” and remain unchallenged and unchecked for such actions?

Today Russia is at odds with the civilized world on the aforementioned issues, and Russia is alone in its claims. We believe that the rhetoric on the “new” security architecture is just a mean to justify the illegal actions that Russia has committed over recent years, starting with the breach of its Istanbul commitments, continuing with the breach of most fundamental documents such as Helsinki Final Act, and ending with the breach of its obligations under the cease-fire agreement.

Madam Chairperson,
Mr. Minister,

We have been hearing recently how Russia accuses Georgia of building its military capabilities around the occupied territories. OSCE and the EU have strongly rejected these claims. Russia has been once again defied, but it still continues the military propaganda, probably for preparing another military operation. And this should be particularly worrisome not only for Georgia, whose statehood may be at stake, but for the whole OSCE community as well. In this context, I would be grateful to hear, how will proposed security architecture prevent polarization of the OSCE community, as it is currently, when Russia stands on the one side of the barrier and all other states on the other?

We fully share position of our partners that the institutions we already have – the OSCE, CoE, NATO, and the EU are functional and capable to maintain and, where possible, enhance the comprehensive concept of security that includes the human and economic dimensions, as well as the political-military aspects. Furthermore, we also share the view that any discussions on improving pan-European/Euro-Atlantic security should be based on the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris.

We do agree, though, that the current security architecture needs to be expanded, for instance through the reestablishment of the arms control regime. But this regime should be based on the similar principles, on which CFE treaty is based. In the end Russia should have no illusions, that in new revised security architecture it will be allowed to maintain its illegal military presence in its neighbouring countries.

Madam Chairperson,

No matter how much we would like the current security architecture to be revised and improved, we have to pay attention to the credibility of the state that is proposing the revision. Russia has openly challenged the fundamental principles on which the OSCE rests and has constantly broken its international commitments. It is unable to establish security and prosperity within its own borders, proof of which is the situation in the Northern Caucasus. We have been asking Russian Federation for last month to elaborate more on the obviously deteriorating security situation in the Northern Caucasus, but have not received any answer as of today. Hopefully Minister Grushko will be able to explain to us what is happening in this troublesome region.

Thank you.