

PC.DEL/478/09
22 June 2009

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

**KEYNOTE PRESENTATION BY
AMBASSADOR KLAUS-PETER GOTTWALD, COMMISSIONER OF
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY FOR
DISARMAMENT AND ARMS CONTROL, AT WORKING SESSION II
OF THE 2009 ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Vienna, 24 June 2009

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Just about two weeks ago I chaired the high-level meeting of experts in Berlin on the future of conventional arms control. More than 160 participants from 45 OSCE participating States accepted Minister Steinmeier's invitation. I should like to take this opportunity today to thank the delegations most sincerely for their active involvement in that meeting.

As you know, our goal was and still is to make a constructive contribution towards overcoming the crisis surrounding conventional arms control. We believe that we lived up to this challenge. I was pleased to hear that the meeting in Germany has prompted further discussions here in Vienna – both at formal meetings and in informal settings. Today we again have an opportunity to discuss this subject and point to the way forward. Let me once again put forward a number of assertions.

1. The concept of comprehensive co-operative security is indispensable since its aim is to ensure a broad-based balance of interests of all States in Europe. Arms control, disarmament and confidence-building are the key to an integrated security policy in the Euro-Atlantic area.

I say this quite consciously against the background of the frequently voiced criticism of the effectiveness of conventional arms control. Is it still in keeping with the times? Is it not far more a superfluous remnant of the Cold War? Can it even still help to prevent crises and conflicts?

One thing is for certain and that is that the challenges we are dealing with today and will be in the future are even more diverse. At the same time, they are increasingly of a non-military nature as well. If they are to be contained and controlled, we need a comprehensive set of tools consisting of State and non-State instruments.

However, I would also say that in the future we shall have to deal with military risks as well, which may threaten our very existence. The attempt to limit armaments and to

prevent an arms build-up is therefore part of a responsible and preventive security policy in the same way as efforts to remove the causes of tension.

2. There is a broad consensus to the effect that the – essentially successful – European arms control architecture must be maintained and, where necessary, adapted to the changing framework conditions. The most important elements of this architecture are the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), the Vienna Document and the Treaty on Open Skies. As a result of insufficient flexibility in adapting them and in the face of regional political crises, both the CFE Treaty and the Vienna Document have suffered considerable damage in recent years. Our task now is to strengthen these arms control instruments in such a way that they can fulfil their original objectives and in addition play an appropriate role in overcoming regional and subregional crises – naturally, without having to bear the entire burden of conflict resolution. Arms control instruments are not created for that purpose.

The contribution of these instruments to crisis prevention and crisis management must continue to be guided by the indivisibility of security in the Euro-Atlantic area and other key norms such as the Helsinki principles.

3. Our greatest source of concern when speaking of the European arms control architecture is specifically the CFE Treaty. That Treaty remains an absolutely essential pillar of European security. The reaffirmation of this fact was one of our objectives at the Berlin conference, something that the discussions in Berlin once again made quite clear. As we see it, however, it is now high time for us all to admit that this pillar is showing quite a few cracks, which are weakening it substantially in its role as a supporting structure. The need now is to engage in a committed discussion as to how this pillar can be re-strengthened: whether – keeping our figure of speech – this be through repairs, not only on the surface but also in the form of a basic reinforcement using new structural elements such as those contained in the 1999 Agreement on Adaptation, or by placing further instruments alongside this pillar so that they can together support the common overarching roof of European security.

4. What I would like to see is for the discussion to take up an aspect that for quite some time now has been pushed into the background. I am speaking here of the relationship between conventional and nuclear arms control. In our view, nuclear and conventional disarmament and arms control are two sides of the same coin. The substantial progress expected, initially from the START negotiations, towards the implementation of the commitment as regards total nuclear disarmament set out in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will once again focus attention more on conventional arms control. This, however, will only be possible if all States join in recognizing that compensating for an alleged inferiority in conventional weapons through sub-strategic nuclear weapons is a dead-end street because, all things considered, these systems do more to breed mistrust and insecurity than to create security. There is, however, one way out of this impasse, namely further progress in conventional arms control in Europe giving all the States Parties greater confidence that arms control measures are capable of nipping military conflicts in the bud. If this is true, then the concern over supposed imbalances becomes correspondingly less of a factor.

5. In our efforts to repair the pillar and make it able to reliably support the load it is designed to bear, we must also not forget that technological developments as well as new

aspects in the command and use of armed forces are in the process of radically changing conflict scenarios. As a result, the evaluation of the capabilities of armed forces is shifting away from purely quantitative factors towards a more qualitative assessment. We shall have to deal at the conceptual level with this development in the area of conventional arms control, and this indeed with the realization that we are currently unable to predict the consequences for conventional arms control. We must therefore gain a better understanding of these developments so as to be able to deduce their security-related consequences in Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the beginning of the high-level meeting in Berlin, Minister of State Gernot Erler delivered a keynote speech, which is available to all of you. Let me take things a step further and look to the future.

Conventional disarmament and arms control do not operate in a vacuum. They are to be seen in the context of competing national interests and in this way form an integral part of national security policy and also of the strategic visions held by alliances. Arms control must therefore not lose sight of the political environment in which it functions. At their informal meeting in Corfu next weekend, the Foreign Ministers of the OSCE participating States will discuss fundamental issues concerning the future of European security. We hope that this meeting will also impart a fresh impetus to the continuation of our important work in the area of conventional arms control, possibly even including approaches that might help us to overcome the current crisis surrounding conventional arms control.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have always viewed the Berlin meeting as a step in a process in which we must take as our starting point the realization that, in view of the complexity and multidimensional nature of the subject in question, that process will be with us for a long time.

The complex nature of the challenge we face as we take a fresh look at conventional arms control in Europe ought not however to deter us from playing an active role in this sphere, not only individually but also collectively. Only in this way shall we be able to deal successfully with the urgent tasks still facing conventional arms control. Here, it is less a question of looking backwards or even of levelling reproaches at one another than it is of looking courageously to the future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Germany will continue to make a committed contribution to the cause of conventional arms control. We could, for example, imagine inviting interested parties in the near future to targeted discussions on various problem areas, such as new military capabilities or the development of regional approaches.

Our priority, however, remains the countering of any further erosion of the CFE Treaty and the prevention of a “spillover” affecting other arms control instruments. This requires collective efforts in which we should concentrate on the areas of common ground that became clear in Berlin. One such area has to do with the focus on the Parallel Action Package to overcome the current CFE crisis. Another involves the recognition that, especially under the influence of persistent regional conflicts in Europe, conventional arms control on

the continent continues to have an important role to play for stability and security, a role that should be preserved and expanded.

We should all help to ensure that this subject receives the attention that it deserves and that for so long has been denied it – whether here at the Annual Security Review Conference, at the informal meeting of the Foreign Ministers or during further discussions in the run-up to the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Athens.

I am looking forward to the discussions with you.