

Chairmanship: Armenia

975th PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM

1. Date: Wednesday, 12 May 2021 (via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.
Suspended: 1 p.m.
Resumed: 3 p.m.
Closed: 3.10 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador A. Papikyan

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson offered condolences to the Russian Federation and to the families of the victims in connection with the shooting at a school in Kazan on 11 May 2021.

The Chairperson reminded the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) of the technical modalities for the conduct of FSC meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic, as outlined in FSC.GAL/31/21 OSCE+.

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: SECURITY DIALOGUE: CHALLENGES OF THE NEW
GENERATION WARFARE

- *Presentation by Ms. S. M. Grand Clement, Security and Technology Programme and Conventional Arms Programme, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research*
- *Presentation by Colonel Z. Amirkhanyan, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia*
- *Presentation by Mr. T. Vestner, head of the Security and Law Programme, Geneva Centre for Security Policy*

Chairperson, Ms. S. M. Grand Clement (FSC.DEL/169/21),
Colonel Z. Amirkhanyan (FSC.DEL/170/21), Mr. T. Vestner
(FSC.DEL/171/21), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries

Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/173/21), Switzerland (FSC.DEL/164/21 OSCE+), United States of America (Annex 1), Canada, Russian Federation (Annex 2), Turkey (FSC.DEL/176/21 OSCE+), Azerbaijan (FSC.DEL/165/21 OSCE+), Armenia (Annex 3)

Agenda item 2: GENERAL STATEMENTS

Situation in and around Ukraine: Ukraine (FSC.DEL/166/21) (FSC.DEL/166/21/Add.1), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/174/21), United States of America (FSC.DEL/163/21 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Canada, Russian Federation

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Request to keep information on national Points of Contact on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) up to date*: United States of America (FSC.DEL/172/21 OSCE+)
- (b) *Briefing on the meeting of the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition held via video teleconference on 6 May 2021*: Chairperson of the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (Latvia) (Annex 4)

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 19 May 2021, at 10 a.m., via video teleconference



975th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 981, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

The United States thanks the Armenian Chairmanship for convening this discussion today. We particularly appreciate the topic of this Security Dialogue because it is both timely and relevant. As noted in the recent Interim National Security Strategy, the Biden Administration is committed to working alongside our allies and partners to establish the new rules and practices that will allow us to:

- (i) Seize the opportunities that advances in technology present;
- (ii) Design and establish norms for emerging technology that put rights and democratic values at the centre;
- (iii) Foster co-operation;
- (iv) Establish guardrails against misuse or malign action; and
- (v) Reduce uncertainty and manage the risk that competition will lead to conflict.

The United States is strongly committed to deploying these new tools in a manner consistent with international law, including the law of armed conflict. To that end, we have transparently developed Department of Defense instructions on Autonomy in Weapon Systems, Ethical Principles for Artificial Intelligence, and the Department of Defense Policy of Reviewing the Legality of Weapons to ensure the acquisition and procurement of weapons, including emerging technologies, is consistent with international humanitarian law.

The United States has been constructively engaged in the dialogue of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons' Group of Government Experts on Emerging Technology in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, and we highlight their 2019 Guiding Principles, which specifically reiterate that international humanitarian law continues to fully apply to all weapons systems, including the potential development and use of emerging technologies. These principles make clear, in the study, development, acquisition, or adoption of a new weapon, means, or method of warfare, that States always have the obligation to determine whether its employment would, in some or all circumstances, be prohibited by international law.

The character of warfare and the tools that may be used in conflict are changing. The tools we have available to prevent conflict, including confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), do not change at quite the same pace.

To respond directly to the Chairmanship's guiding questions, technological advances in the field of conventional weapons neither deter nor provoke conflict in and of themselves. There is an understandable impulse to subject such potentially destabilizing technology to international agreements or arrangements. However, international efforts to control and manage novel weapons and technologies face several practical difficulties. As a general point, it seems fair to say that many of the same characteristics that make new technologies worrisome are precisely those that make them hard to deal with in arms control and transparency regimes. Small size is one obvious issue: it's easy to hide a small drone. To be useful in building confidence, CSBMs must be effective. That is, they must yield information that is accurate and contributes to transparency. Constraints on new technologies that cannot be verified with any expectation of accuracy are not suited to traditional arms control methods. Some technologies might be suited to other types of confidence-building: briefings or demonstrations of the technology might be considered. The OSCE is not the only forum for these discussions, and certain technological developments that implicate strategic stability may be better addressed bilaterally or in another multilateral forum.

Regardless of changes in technology, meaningful dialogue is still the best transparency measure for dispelling concerns over threat perceptions. Although it is not novel or technologically advanced, dialogue is the most effective way to assess intent and inform threat perceptions. We are disappointed that the Russian Federation failed to have meaningful dialogue following Ukraine's invocation of Vienna Document Chapter III, paragraph 16. We call on the Russian Federation to engage in meaningful dialogue and call on all States to use the Vienna Document modernization proposal as a basis for negotiation before the end of 2021.

CSBMs can and should be updated under the same spirit of multilateral consensus that created them. Forty-five participating States called for action at the Tirana ministerial, recognizing that the Vienna Document should be updated. It is important that this occur without unnecessary delay.

More troubling than the resistance to updating this foundational document, though, is the decision of certain participating States to increasingly flout and selectively implement their existing CSBM commitments in the Vienna Document. The deterioration in the security situation within the OSCE area over the past decades is indisputable. The causes, however, are not always clear-cut. Opaque tactics such as disinformation operations, malicious cyberactivities, the use of proxy actors, and clandestine military actions have certainly contributed to this erosion.

It is far better to defuse tensions before they break out into open conflict. Commitment to and full implementation of established CSBMs, to include the Vienna Document, becomes that much more important. If used as designed and fully implemented in a spirit of co-operation, existing CSBMs can calm tensions, reduce the risk of miscalculation, and minimize the potential for armed conflict by transparently revealing significant military capabilities and military intent.

Even the best CSBMs – those that yield transparency which then gives confidence to neighbours – count for little if they are ignored. That is why all participating States should fully implement their existing commitments and obligations, such as by responding to requests for transparency on unusual military activities and submitting annual military data. These are basic, foundational steps.

Fully implementing and modernizing these CSBMs, starting with the bedrock set of CSBMs to which all OSCE participating States have politically committed – the Vienna Document – is essential. Although this very modest step would not solve the thorny challenges of new generation warfare, it would enhance military transparency and mitigate concerns about military activities and incidents, even as the participating States explore further modernization proposals. The character and tools of warfare may have changed, but the need for participating States to fulfil their existing commitments has not.

Sadly, certain participating States are failing to adhere to our existing CSBMs, despite their commitments to do so. The net consequence has been a deterioration of collective security in the OSCE area. When States use low-level conflict as a routine and normative means to achieve political objectives, while also ignoring their commitments to transparency, then there are fewer barriers to escalation. This intentional erosion could, over time, risk leading to military miscalculation and more widespread armed conflict.

We look forward to continuing this crucial discussion. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Please attach this statement to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/981
12 May 2021
Annex 2

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

975th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 981, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, we should like to express our gratitude to our esteemed colleagues for their words of sympathy and condolence in connection with the terrible events that occurred on 11 May this year at Secondary School No. 175 in the city of Kazan. An investigation is currently under way and all the necessary measures are being taken to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

We should like to thank the Armenian Chairmanship for organizing today's Security Dialogue. Challenges of the new generation warfare is a relevant theme and one that merits the attention of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). We note the insightful presentations by the keynote speakers, which provide an important contribution to the wide-ranging discussion of this topic at various levels and on different platforms.

The present stage in the development of military capability is characterized by the high speed at which weapons systems are being upgraded and improved. Moreover, the activities of troops (forces) have a clearly marked inter-service component.

Contactless or hybrid activities, meaning media control, economic sanctions, support for domestic unrest, cyberattacks and also the use of special units and specialists to engage in diversion and sabotage, are becoming increasingly widespread. It is well known that, in this day and age, successful hybrid activities require global and pervasive media, superiority in information and telecommunications technology, a concentration of leverage over the global financial system, along with experience in using special forces in other countries and regions.

I will not go into details as to who possesses such tools and makes active use of them in their foreign policy. Suffice it to say that the active involvement of hybrid mechanisms in solving geopolitical and economic problems, along with the use of disinformation to create the image of an "enemy" in the form of other States, inevitably weakens international security.

Obviously, scientific and technological progress accelerates the development of weapons and military equipment. Innovative weapon types, such as self-propelled robotic

systems, multifunctional systems and weapons based on new physical principles, along with hypersonic interceptors and weapons, are significantly increasing the combat effectiveness of weapons. A case in point was the use of robotic and unmanned systems during the operation of the Russian armed forces against terrorist organizations in Syria, which increased the combat effectiveness of key weapons systems and minimized losses among personnel.

As already noted today, a high-tech arms race, one that includes hypersonic weapons, is without a doubt already under way. There is nothing new in this – the competitive evolution of weapons systems goes back many hundreds of years. What is new is that some OSCE participating States are currently trying to exacerbate such competition, building on the idea of a “great power rivalry”, including in the technological sphere. This is fraught with unpredictable consequences.

At least a dozen countries are already developing hypersonic weapons. High-precision weapons and, above all, various types of hypersonic systems form the mainstay of our non-nuclear deterrent forces. Russian hypersonic weapons were first unveiled by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, in his address to the Federal Assembly on 1 March 2018. I am referring to the Avangard missile system and the Kinzhal air-launched missile system. The Zircon sea-launched hypersonic cruise missile was announced later. I emphasize that, for Russia, the need to possess such systems was dictated exclusively by its considerations in terms of maintaining strategic stability in the light of the withdrawal of the United States of America from the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems and the unrestricted build-up by the United States of its strategic anti-missile capability.

As for hypersonic arms control, there is a precedent for this, and it was established by our country. We included the world’s first strategic hypersonic weapons system, the Avangard, within the scope of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. I should point out that this was done in a spirit of goodwill. In general, we are open to the discussion of this issue in multilateral formats as well.

Mr. Chairperson,

Over the past decade, the world has seen an acceleration in the emergence of technologies that can give conventional weapons the unique capabilities of combat robots. The term lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) has been defined for these systems, which cover weapons capable of engaging targets without human intervention. Our country works on the premise that States and individuals are at all times responsible under international law and national legislation for their decisions to create and use LAWS.

We firmly believe that international law, including international humanitarian law, is fully applicable to advanced weapons and equipment with a high degree of autonomy. We consider maintaining human control over machines to be a key condition, with the specific forms and methods being left to the States themselves.

In our view, the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on lethal autonomous weapons systems established by the High Contracting Parties to the Inhumane Weapons Convention remains the ideal platform for discussing such weapons systems, including the moral and ethical aspects and the applicability of international humanitarian law. We note

that the August 2019 session of the GGE resulted in a consensus report that sets out 11 guiding principles for these systems.

In conclusion, I should like to stress that the ongoing development of participating States' armies and navies must take place in parallel with multilateral efforts to stabilize the situation at the global and regional level. Our priority remains the enhancement of mutually beneficial co-operation with the armed forces of foreign States on the basis of mutually respectful and equal dialogue in the interests of strengthening arms control regimes and with a view to ensuring overall stability and security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the FSC meeting.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/981
12 May 2021
Annex 3

Original: ENGLISH

975th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 981, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, let me thank our keynote speakers for shaping today's discussion with interesting presentations on this important topic. Security, peace and stability in the OSCE area are being challenged as never before through the recent use of force in our region, which has revealed rapid changes in the methods and means of warfare. My delegation believes that these changes, given their security implications, should remain high on the agenda of the Forum for Security Co-operation.

The war unleashed last year by Azerbaijan against Artsakh is a clear illustration of the challenges of the new generation warfare. During the 44-day war, Azerbaijan used a wide range of heavy weaponry against Artsakh and its population, such as tanks, armoured combat vehicles, multiple-launch rocket systems including Grad, Smerch, Uragan and the heavy flamethrower system TOS, and aviation. The people of Artsakh also suffered greatly from attacks with LORA high-precision ballistic missiles and combat unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

Mr. Chairperson,

In the past five years, the accumulation of weapons has twice resulted in the use of force in our region – in 2016 and 2020. The absence of targeted reactions by the international community and of condemnation of the use of force by Azerbaijan against Artsakh in 2016 contributed significantly to creating an atmosphere of impunity and served as an encouragement for renewed aggression. And the scale of last year's war and the weapons used indeed confirmed its pre-planned nature.

The reality speaks for itself. In recent years Azerbaijan has imported a large number of items of heavy weaponry, including the 301-mm Polonez and 302-mm Kasirga multiple-launch rocket systems. Furthermore, Azerbaijan has purchased four LORA ballistic missiles and a large number of combat UAVs such as the Bayraktar TB2, Harop, Orbiter-1K, Orbiter-3 and Skystriker, all in the years 2016–2020.

Dear colleagues,

The war crimes and atrocities committed by Azerbaijan during the war are well documented and have been presented to you by my delegation. The tragic consequences of last year's Karabakh war should serve as a constant reminder to the participating States of the inadmissibility of the use of force and the importance of ensuring functional and effective arms control mechanisms through respect for our common commitments.

I thank you and kindly ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/981
12 May 2021
Annex 4

Original: ENGLISH

975th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 981, Agenda item 3(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE INFORMAL GROUP OF FRIENDS ON
SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS AND STOCKPILES OF
CONVENTIONAL AMMUNITION (LATVIA)**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.
Dear colleagues,

In my capacity as Chairperson of the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA), I should like to take this opportunity to inform you about the most recent meeting of the Informal Group of Friends (IGoF), which took place on 6 May 2021 via video conference.

The meeting was attended by 67 participants from 35 OSCE participating States and by representatives of the OSCE Secretariat. Of the total number of participants, 16 were women.

The OSCE participating States used the meeting to deliver briefings on progress achieved in updating the existing OSCE Best Practice Guides (BPGs) on SALW and Conventional Ammunition (CA), and updates on developments of new ones. The participants were briefed on the OSCE Documents on SALW and on SCA and their place in broader international framework regulating SALW controls. Furthermore, the meeting provided a platform for the delegations and their subject-matter experts from capitals to discuss information exchanges on SALW and conventional arms transfers (CAT).

The participating States leading the updating of the existing OSCE BPGs on SALW and CA – namely, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, Sweden and France – provided information on the progress made in this process.

I am pleased to note that work on updating the OSCE Best Practice Guides on SALW and CA continues apace. Nine of the 17 existing BPGs are currently being reviewed and updated including an annex to the BPG proposed to become a standalone BPG. While the update of one BPG was adopted in September 2020, a further five draft updates of BPGs have been put forward for consideration at the FSC's Working Group A.

However, we should not rest on the laurels of progress achieved thus far and I encourage the participating States that originally authored or sponsored the remaining eight BPGs to initiate the update processes for these, or at least to lead the discussions aimed at assessing whether they are still up to date or need to be updated.

With regard to the development of the new OSCE BPGs and improving of the implementation of the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA, at the IGoF meeting Austria provided updates on two initiatives on its part: firstly, on further operationalizing SALW- and CA-related norms, principles and measures on preventing, combating and investigating illicit trafficking of SALW/CA, and, secondly, on the Food-for-Thought Paper on the Assistance Mechanism under the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA. Moreover, Spain briefed the Informal Group of Friends on the draft BPG on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of SALW and/or Ammunition by Sea and Inland Waterways, which has already been put forward for consideration in Working Group A.

It is important to stress that the IGoF on SALW and SCA meetings is an efficiently functioning platform where participating States can exchange information on wide range of SALW and SCA normative matters. A briefing of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) on upcoming SALW and CAT information exchanges provided an overview and guidance on templates and on the matter of public versus non-public information. Furthermore, the CPC delivered a presentation on the OSCE normative framework, including BPGs, in the context of a larger international framework regulating SALW/SCA controls. In particular, it was underlined that the OSCE normative framework on SALW and SCA is politically binding, as are the OSCE BPGs.

A perception paper reflecting the discussions held at the Informal Group of Friends meeting of 6 May will be issued soon, together with the presentations given at the meeting.

I should like to thank all the participants and all the distinguished delegations of OSCE participating States that supported this meeting and contributed to its success.

I also wish to extend my gratitude to the FSC Support Unit for providing invaluable subject-matter expertise and technical support.

Thank you very much for your attention.

I kindly ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.