VI MOSCOW CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Conference Proceedings

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Greetings from President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin to participants of the VI Moscow Conference on International Security

I greet all taking part in the VI Moscow Conference on International Security, which is taking place under the aegis of the Russian Defence Ministry.

Your meetings have become a tradition, are rich in practical substance, and always stand out for their substantive programme and influential participants, who include representatives of defence ministries, international organisations, research and political analysis circles. On your agenda at this year's event are serious issues that require carefully considered and consolidated approaches, above all, the fight against terrorism as the main threat to global and regional security and stability, and also the political and diplomatic resolution of numerous conflicts, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. You will give particular attention, of course, to responses to other equally important challenges facing the world today.

I am sure that the open and constructive discussion that will take place at this forum will give participants an excellent opportunity for sharing experience and information and broadening professional contacts. This kind of direct and productive dialogue that strengthens our partnerships is absolutely essential today.

I wish you success.

President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin

Message from Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres to the VI Moscow Conference on International Security

I thank the Government of the Russian Federation and in particular the Ministry of Defence for organising and hosting the VI Moscow Conference on International Security.

This meeting is taking place in a global climate of ongoing conflicts, increased insecurity, grave human rights violations, organised crime, military build-ups and terrorist attacks, among many other challenges that threaten peace and stability across all continents. There is growing anxiety that the world is not heading in "the right direction", that states are not fully coming together around shared solutions and that global institutions are not sufficiently equipped to deal effectively with the challenges at hand.

My plea is therefore for all to recommit to the search for joint approaches to tackling common concerns. Dialogue remains indispensable to re-building confidence and trust. Recommitment to multilateral institutions, global norms and principles that value respect for humanity must be our highest priority.

At the United Nations, we are committed to reforming and transforming our capacities to meet the challenges of the 21st century, including terrorism and extremism.

Despite member states' recent efforts, terrorism has become an increasingly transnational and multidimensional threat. The Saint Petersburg bombing earlier this month is among the latest attacks that must move us to strengthen international counter-terrorism cooperation. I wish to express my solidarity with the victims, and I welcome the efforts of Russia and other countries to improve such collaboration.

In order to effectively implement the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, I have proposed to the General Assembly the creation of a new Office for Counter-Terrorism that will further enhance coordination and coherence in the delivery of UN assistance to Member States, and increase our impact on the ground. I hope that all Member States, including those present here today, will support this proposal.

We are also striving to reform the other peace and security pillars of the United Nations, as well as the UN development system and the Organization's management. Conflict prevention must remain a central priority.

Through dialogue and partnership, we have a shared responsibility to transform today's climate of uncertainty and fragmentation into one of mutual respect and solidarity, towards our common goal of peace, stability and prosperity for all. The United Nations stands ready to support your efforts.

I wish you a successful conference.

Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

ARMY GENERAL NIKOLAY PATRUSHEV

Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the VI Moscow Conference on International Security. Holding such meetings on an annual basis has already become a positive tradition.

The agenda of this conference includes a broad range of pressing global challenges and threats, the main one being of course international terrorism.

This evil has no national identity, and requires a collective response. Recruits from countries all over the world are joining terrorist ranks. ISIS and other international terror groups are setting up new bases in many new countries and regions.

In such circumstances, it becomes especially important to pursue effective cooperation between the military, security, and law-enforcement agencies. That cooperation should include information sharing about the movements of foreign militants and the attacks they plot; about the forms and methods of their activities; and about specific individuals of interest. The Russian FSB's International Counter-Terrorism Database is an excellent instrument for such information sharing.

It is also important to make sure that combating the terror threat is not used as a pretext for putting pressure on sovereign states, as currently happens in some parts of the world. Any military intervention in the internal affairs of states that put up effective resistance to terrorism is all the more unacceptable. This is why we need more effective coordination in the framework of the United Nations and other international organisations. We also need to decisively oppose any attempts to de-list terrorists from UN Security Council sanctions regimes.

International terrorism is tightly intertwined with transnational organised crime, including the drugs trade, which remains an important source of revenue for militants.

I am talking especially about heroin of Afghan origin, as well as the new psychoactive substances that are now rapidly spreading all over the world. We need to develop effective mechanisms of putting such substances under national and international controls, and to pursue effective intenational cooperation in countering any attempts at undermining the international drug control legal regime.

Acts of information aggression perpetrated by certain states represent a particular threat to international security. Fabricated reports and false information have become a calling card of those who use such instruments to encroach on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of independent nations. The same powers are also doing all they can to preserve their unilateral advantages in the governance of the global information infrastructure, and opposing efforts to establish an international system of information security under UN auspices — a system that would take the national interests of all states into account.

There is a growing need to ensure equal rights for all states in this area, and to establish an international legal regime for the prevention of conflicts in the information space. It is also necessary to develop a universal code of responsible state conduct under UN auspices.

Certain international entities are already engaged in the provision of cyber-security — entities such as NATO, for example. The difference is that NATO wants to provide cyber-security only for its own members, whereas Russia advocates for equal security for all states.

Clearly, there are also many other international issues that require our close attention.

We are concerned by the situation in Ukraine, where civilians continue to die in their dozens.

Neither can we underestimate the gravity of the situation on the Korean peninsula, where the parties, egged on by external actors, have come to the brink of war.

New division lines are being drawn in the Asia-Pacific region. Conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa show no sign of abating. The situation in Afghanistan also remains very complicated.

Russia wants these problems to be settled by means of diplomacy.

I hope that this conference will help us to achieve a better understanding of the root causes of these conflicts, and strengthen international security.

I am sure that your discussions here will be both constructive and fruitful.

ARMY GENERAL SERGEY SHOYGU

Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation

I am glad to welcome you to the VI Moscow Conference on International Security.

Last year representatives of defence ministries, government officials and experts from across the world came together here to focus on threats posed by international terrorism. Even though this topic dominates discussions on very different levels, we have so far failed to reach an agreement on coordinating our efforts against terrorism or to take the decisions that are necessary for its eradication.

Political differences and lack of confidence hinder the consolidation of all constructive actors in countering this global evil and stand in the way of implementing the initiative to form a broad international coalition against terrorism proposed by Russian President Vladimir Putin at the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2015.

At the same time, activities of terrorist groupings intensify, and thousands of civilians flee areas under their control. Many militants hide among refugees in an effort to penetrate different countries to carry out their criminal plans.

Given that terrorism still remains the main threat to global security, we deemed it important to return to the agenda of the last year's conference.

Syria remains at the front line of the confrontation with ISIS. This is where most of the ISIS strength is concentrated; it is from Syria that ISIS controls its militants elsewhere. That is why Russia's leadership made the decision to provide military assistance to the legitimate government of Syria in its fight with ISIS.

After the liberation of Aleppo the terrorists' capability has been left greatly degraded. Supported by the Russian Aerospace Forces, the Syrian armed forces continue to strike ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra targets. Thanks to the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides, the leaders of some 1,500 towns and villages all over that country have now given up their armed struggle against government forces.

Coordinated efforts by the guarantors of the truce in Syria — Russia, Iran, and Turkey — have helped to launch direct dialogue between the armed opposition and the Syrian government at the Astana Forum. I would like to emphasise that the arrangements that have been reached on ending hostilities in individual parts of the country are overall being observed. Moreover, the joint efforts undertaken by the three states have managed to achieve progress on the issue of separating Jabhat al-Nusra from the constructive opposition on the ground. Let me stress that the year-long negotiations with representatives of the previous US administration had failed to achieve positive results.

The current priorities of our efforts in Syria are political settlement and the country's return to peace. It will be important to avoid the mistakes that were made in Afghanistan and Iraq because the international community did not give the domestic political processes and reconstruction in these countries the attention they required. We need to develop a comprehensive strategy of joint action in the areas liberated from militants. Its key elements should include:

- fighting the spread of ISIS ideology;
- drafting a new constitution for Syria;
- providing for the needs of the Syrian population through humanitarian support and rebuilding the economy;
- mine clearance.

It should be noted that a team sent to Syria by the Russian Humanitarian Mine Action Centre has detected and defused nearly all explosive devices in the ancient city of Palmyra. Previously, Russian and Syrian servicemen cleared more than 1,000 hectares of residential districts in eastern Aleppo.

Nevertheless, there is still a lot of work left in Syria for sappers. We hope that the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) will soon join these efforts.

Our proposal is to form a coalition of interested states to provide support for mine clearance in Syria. We also consider it appropriate to set up a fund in order to pay for the services of specialist commercial mine clearance companies, which will be involved in these efforts.

We believe that coordinated action by international commercial organisations would enable Syrian territory to be cleared of the explosive remnants of war as soon as possible.

We hope that other constructive proposals will also be put forward during this conference.

For our part, we are ready to share with colleagues the experience of organising the use of Russian Aerospace Forces' aviation in Syria taking into account specific features of terrorists' tactics. In adverse conditions, Russian weapons and military equipment proved their

high combat capability. Regarding the humanitarian situation in Syria, in many parts of the country it is nothing short of catastrophic. Russian servicemen deliver and distribute humanitarian supplies on an almost daily basis. We are also grateful to those partners who have answered our call and provided humanitarian assistance for the Syrian Arab Republic. The Russian forces in Syria are cooperating with the regional branches of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of the UN. This enables us to provide assistance without political prejudice to those in need of it across the whole country. The local population is also provided with medical assistance. Russian mobile hospitals have been up and running in Aleppo for more than six months now. More than 12,000 Syrians have received quality medical treatment. These efforts will certainly continue.

For a long time we have been trying to establish cooperation on Syria with the United States and with the US-led coalition. However, we have not achieved full mutual understanding yet. In 2015, we signed a memorandum on preventing incidents in Syrian airspace aimed at avoiding conflict during air operations. As you know, Russia has suspended its implementation after the US cruise missile strike against the Shayrat airfield in Syria. We consider that strike a gross violation of international law, moreover, Washington's actions endangered lives of the Russian military personnel fighting terrorism in Syria. Such steps are forcing us to take additional measures to ensure the safety of troops in the Russian military grouping. Nevertheless, if the United States is genuinely determined to eradicate "Islamic State" in the country, we are prepared to support its efforts.

Today, the spread of ISIS is not limited only to Syria and Iraq. From Libya to West Africa, armed militants are pledging allegiance to "Islamic State". One of the key reasons for these victories scored by terrorists is the lack of progress in stabilising Libya, where national statehood has been destroyed through a collective Western effort. The region now requires close attention and support by constructive political and military actors.

The agenda of the VI Moscow Conference includes European security. It is important to discuss this topic in the context of the fight against international terrorism as well. Through joint efforts by all the interested states, including Russia, we need to develop an effective counter-terrorism strategy. But instead of seeking to pool our strengths, today's Europe fosters anti-Russian phobias and whips up the fear of an alleged threat from the East. This scaremongering and misrepresentation of the facts distort the real situation.

I would like to emphasise that Russian steps to strengthen our own defence capability are a proportionate response to NATO's enlargement, the absorption of the military infrastructure of the states bordering Russia into NATO infrastructure, and the deployment of the NATO forces in those states.

NATO is a military-political bloc, not a stamp collectors' society. It is pursuing a strategy of projecting power near the Russian borders and drawing new states into its orbit. The recent decision to admit Montenegro is just the latest example of that strategy. The country's military capability is negligible. Nevertheless, its geographic location will help NATO to strengthen its control over the Balkans.

A similar expansion of NATO's military infrastructure is also underway in the Arctic. A modern weapons range has been built in northern Norway, in direct proximity to the Russian border. NATO has stationed its forces there, albeit on a rotational basis for the time being.

NATO's activities as part of the air-policing mission of air patrols over the Baltic have essentially become part of an access denial zone that covers Kaliningrad Region and the eastern part of the Baltic Sea. We regard such actions by NATO as an overt pursuit of its own interests by means of force.

In discussions about European security, the issue of the importance of observing the agreements on preventing incidents in the air and at sea has been repeatedly brought up. We believe that these agreements are important now, when the level of mutual confidence is extremely low. We regret that NATO ignored the initiative that would require military aircraft to keep their transponders switched on when flying over the Baltic that was put forward by President of Finland Sauli Niinistö and backed by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Global security continues to suffer from the ramping up of the missile defence capability in Europe. Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Norway are already involved in practical steps to deploy land- and sea-based components of the US missile defence system.

In 2017 it will be 45 years since the signing of the ABM Treaty. Even though Washington has unilaterally pulled out, the treaty still remains relevant. The decision made by the Soviet Union and the United States back at that time to sign that treaty only serves to confirm that deployment of missile defence is a destabilising factor that lowers the threshold for nuclear weapons use.

Meanwhile, the 20th anniversary of the signing of the NATO-Russia Founding Act is another occasion to think about how to revitalise the key idea of that document: "Russia and NATO do not consider each other as adversaries" and they are aimed at "overcoming the vestiges of earlier confrontation and competition".

We have recently noticed a certain shift in Brussels' views on how to build relations with Russia. Europe is increasingly interested in laying the foundation for moving forward and rebuilding mutual confidence. There are growing voices in favour of resuming dialogue; they argue that pressing ahead with sanctions is pointless. We hope for constructive dialogue during this conference.

Concrete proposals on resuming cooperation were voiced by Russian experts in July last year, and these proposals still remain on the agenda. As a first step towards rapprochement, we could undertake an assessment of threats that determine trends in the evolution of military doctrines and military capability-building programmes. We are ready to discuss these issues at the expert level.

The ball is in NATO's court. It is time that people stop using Russia as a bugbear, and start rebuilding our relations.

To conclude, let me thank all the participants in this conference for their interest and their willingness to contribute to its work. We are eager to listen to new ideas, and we are ready to openly discuss all new initiatives that could help to strengthen our common security. One thing is clear: in order to jointly achieve the goal of maintaining peace, we must identify the challenges all of us are facing now, and agree on cooperative measures, drawing on the existing positive experience and taking into account the potential contribution that can be made by each country.

I hope that your work at this conference will be productive and successful.

SERGEY LAVROV
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Over the past five years, the Russian Defence Ministry's Conference on International Security in Moscow has become a major part of the academic and practical events on military-political issues held around the world. The high-level representation of participants, ensuring that there is serious expert dialogue, and the ambitious agenda covering key current issues make it possible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of both risks and threats and mean we can outline solutions to them.

The global situation has neither become more stable nor more predictable. On the contrary, we see tensions growing both globally and regionally, the continued erosion of international law and attempts to use force to promote unilateral interests, strengthen one's security at the expense of others' security and contain the objective development of a polycentric world order at any cost. These actions are damaging our common objective — which is combining our efforts to deal with real rather than imaginary threats.

The upcoming panel discussions at the conference will focus on the struggle against international terrorism, which has grown to an unprecedented scale. For the first time in human history, terrorists want to create their own state, a caliphate with its own territory, population and inhuman ideology. Much is being said at various levels about the need to redouble efforts against this global evil. The Joint Communiqué by the G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting says that "international cooperation remains of paramount importance in the fight against terrorism." It further says, I quote: "Countering terrorism and violent extremism and bringing perpetrators to justice remain top priorities for the international community."

These fine words have been said before, but they have not been turned into reality. However, joint actions and the creation of a broad counter-terrorism front, which President of Russia Vladimir Putin proposed at the UN in September 2015, are still being hindered by political ambitions and double standards.

Russia continues working to rally the international community in the fight against terrorism. We have submitted a draft resolution on combating the terrorist ideology to the UN Security Council. We have urged for the introduction of a comprehensive trade and economic embargo on ISIS-controlled territories pursuant to Article 41 of the UN Charter, with sanctions to be imposed on embargo violators.

Adopting the rules of responsible behaviour for states when utilising information and communication technology (ICT) is another important objective. These rules should make it impossible to use ICT for military purposes or interference in internal affairs. The rules must also prevent international terrorists from using ICT. Within the UN, Russia pushes for devising a universal criminal law convention on countering cyber-crime.

We will never succeed in our fight against terrorism unless multiple conflicts are resolved, primarily in the Middle East and North Africa. The ceasefire in Syria that was facilitated by Russia, Turkey and Iran in late 2016 and the launch of the Astana process contribute to the intra-Syrian inclusive dialogue. On the contrary, the recent missile strike by the United States against the Shayrat airbase in Syria was a blatant violation of international law and an act of aggression against a sovereign state, which only aggravated the existing problems, making the prospect of building a broad counter-terrorist front even more distant and illusive. This begs a comparison with what happened in 2003 in Iraq with the devastating effect on the country and the emergence of ISIS as a direct consequence. I think that there is no need to explain to this audience once more that a repetition of such ill-advised steps could result in a dangerous turn of events, including outside the region.

Provocations like the one that took place in Khan Sheikhoun on 4 April call for a professional investigation under the auspices of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and following a geographically balanced approach. This should be an open and transparent investigation. We are witnessing attempts to block this process, which only confirms our doubts in the good faith of those trying to exploit the 4 April incident in order to shift the agenda, abandon UN Security Council Resolution 2254 and advance with the long-standing idea of regime change in Syria.

Of course, the surge in terrorist activity should not overshadow other dangerous challenges the world is facing today.

The deteriorating situation around the Korean peninsula is a matter of grave concern as Pyongyang continues its nuclear missile programmes, while the US and its regional allies have disproportionately stepped up their military activity under the pretext of the "North Korean threat". The accelerated deployment of US THAAD complexes in the south of the peninsula as part of the US global missile defence shield has an especially destabilising effect. Russia is fully aligned with the consolidated position of the international community regarding Pyongyang's policy, and reaffirms its commitment to all UN Security Council resolutions. However, it is obvious that the recent emergence of the prospect of using force is fraught with catastrophic consequences for the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia in general.

Russia is interested in ensuring security and stability across the Asia-Pacific region. Having all countries in the region follow the generally accepted rules of behaviour is an essential prerequisite for success, including respecting international law, peaceful settlement of disputes, and non-use of force or threat of force. Russia has proposed to its partners and proactively promotes at East Asia summits concrete measures to build a security and cooperation architecture on a non-bloc and inclusive basis. We see that these efforts are highly relevant. China, India and many ASEAN countries share our approaches. By the way, the fruitful dialogue within the SCO clearly demonstrates that international contacts can be effective, when based on the principles of equality, taking into account each other's interests and respecting the right of states to choose their own development model.

If we look at another part of the world, the Euro-Atlantic region, one cannot but feel alarmed over its considerable residual conflict potential, which is largely fuelled by NATO's unilateral actions. Defence Minister Sergey Shoygu has just discussed this in great detail. The unilateral deployment of the US global missile defence system's European segment is an extremely serious obstacle to strengthening strategic stability. This system is aimed at changing the balance of forces in the area of offensive arms. The deployment of an anti-missile umbrella can bolster the illusions of invulnerability and impunity and tempt one to make unilateral moves while addressing global and regional issues, including lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons. The development of non-nuclear strategic weapons and efforts to prevent the conclusion of an agreement on the non-deployment of weapons in space have a negative impact on international security. The unwillingness or inability of the United States and some other countries to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) gives rise to more and more questions.

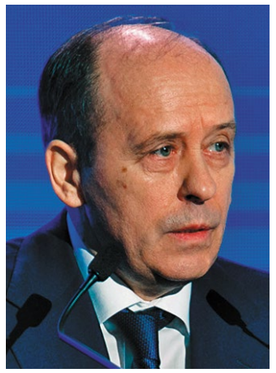
We are convinced that it is vital to establish a zone of equal and indivisible security from Vancouver to Vladivostok, as formalised by the decisions of OSCE summits and those of the Russia-NATO Council. More and more Europeans are advocating resumed dialogue in the interests of effectively addressing numerous issues for the purpose of establishing a European security architecture that would involve the Russian Federation.

The resolution of the intra-Ukrainian crisis by completely and consistently implementing the Minsk Package of Measures should help restore mutual trust. Unfortunately, the "war hawks" are gaining the upper hand in Kiev. Armed provocations continue along the demarcation line, as proved by reports of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. A blockade imposed against Donbass continues to have a negative impact on this region and the whole of Ukraine. We expect our partners, including our Normandy format partners, to more insistently and openly compel the Kiev authorities to honour their obligations assumed in Minsk.

The entirety of world history shows that wars are not unleashed by generals but by politicians, who bear special responsibility for maintaining peace and security. Obviously, it is impossible to accomplish successfully global tasks such as the fight against international terrorism, drug trafficking, organised crime and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction without renouncing the philosophy of hegemony and one's own exceptionalism. It is high time we return to the basic principles of international life formalised in the UN Charter, including the sovereign equality of states, non-interference in domestic affairs and the resolution of disputes by peaceful means.

Russia, jointly with its partners and like-minded countries, will continue to assert solid principles in global affairs and to form the entire new global governance system reflecting 21st century imperatives. We are ready to work together, jointly search for various options to overcome our challenges on the basis of equality, mutual respect and consideration for each other's interests. We urge all our partners to do this. Any other road will inevitably lead us all into a dead end.

Good luck for the rest of your conference.



ARMY GENERAL ALEXANDER BORTNIKOV
Director of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation

On behalf of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, let me welcome you to the VI Moscow Conference on International Security.

This conference has a well-deserved reputation as one of the most respectable venues for exchanging views on pressing international issues, and for discussing measures to neutralise the challenges and threats facing the international system.

These challenges include international terrorism. Its global nature is demonstrated by the fact that, despite all the defensive measures being taken, almost every single part of our planet has suffered terrorist attacks in recent years.

The leaders of the largest terror groups such as "Islamic State", Jabhat al-Nusra, and the remnants of organisations like Al-Qaeda, have come to realise that they are facing total annihilation in the areas they used to dominate. That is why they are now resorting to new tactics. For example, they are sending more militants to Afghanistan, Yemen, and to areas deep inside the African continent, where they have begun to build bases and field stations. In essence, they are trying to establish a large new terror network. Additionally, reports are coming in that ISIS is in talks with other terrorist organisations to discuss possible merger. At the same time, even without a merger, individual terrorist outfits still possess formidable resources to carry on with their attacks.

The fact that international terrorist organisations still retain significant capability suggests that the countries engaged in the struggle against terrorism still lack a coordinated approach. We believe that in order to put an end to such Cold War archaisms and build a truly effective anti-terror front, we need to develop a shared set of standards that would inform the logic of coordinated action. The best framework for such efforts is undoubtedly the United Nations.

The problem of eradicating terrorism has been at the forefront of the political agenda all over the world in recent years. It is discussed at various domestic and international venues. This is now reality, not mere declarations.

But we have to admit that despite numerous calls for a pooling of efforts on the anti-terror front, and some successful operations by individual countries and coalitions, there are few signs of the problem being any closer to resolution. Witness, for example, the recent high-profile attacks in Nice, Berlin, Istanbul, London, Saint Petersburg, Stockholm, and Paris.

We have repeatedly warned at various forums of the threat posed by Islamist terrorist groups and foreign militants to the international community; these predictions have proved accurate.

We see that after being brainwashed and trained in armed conflict zones, having established the necessary contacts, and having acquired the skills needed to disguise criminal activities, militants return to their home countries or settle in new ones, which have never faced the terror threat in previous years.

The terrorists' operations are becoming ever more sophisticated, their propaganda more aggressive, and the targets and methods of their attack more diverse.

All of this makes it necessary for us, despite our remaining differences, to pursue coordinated practical steps in political, military, and secret services dimensions.

Joint work by the intelligence and law-enforcement agencies should aim, first and foremost, to establish a shared pool of information about foreign militants, their supporters, and persons who, according to available evidence, have been involved in terrorist attacks.

Another important component in combating international terrorism is depriving it of various resources. We need to operate on a permanent and in-depth basis within the environment from which international terror groups draw their support.

We have seen in Syria, Iraq, and other parts of the world that many people have become prepared to sacrifice themselves as suicide attackers in the name of terrorist ideas. This has become a clear trend.

The spread of terrorist ideology must be reversed by means of a broad and energetic counter-propaganda campaign aimed at fostering intolerance of terror and preventing potential new recruits from being drawn into the ranks of extremists and terrorists. This approach should be at the foundation of the anti-terror strategy being pursued by the sound part of the humanity.

The Middle East and North Africa remain the key sources of the spread of the terror threat to other parts of the globe. The foreign powers that orchestrated the "Arab Spring" were deliberately aiming for a so-called "democratisation" of several countries in the region and for the creation of chaos there. This has led to severe turmoil in those countries, whose legitimate governments are now waging war against armed terror groups. As a result, millions of refugees have fled their homes in search of safety, food, and shelter. The bulk of these migrants are young people, who for a number of reasons are often unable quickly to adapt to conditions in their host countries.

The secret services must now figure out how to work with this environment — or in this environment — to react in a timely manner to new problems and address the causes that foment protest, radicalisation and incite people to deliberately commit extremist and terrorist deeds.

The situation with refugees and with migration in general requires our close attention. We especially need to provide ideological support for the integration of displaced people. The processes taking place in the communities of migrants and displaced people are often caused by their rejection by the host communities and by their new social environment. Such rejection gives rise to aggression. Violence happens when the authorities cannot cope, or when they neglect the situation.

In such circumstances, the reaction of indigenous communities often involves a surge in right-wing radicals and the neo-Nazi groups that call for action to be taken against migrants. The social climate becomes tense, crime goes up — and that opens up new opportunities for terrorists. There are numerous examples to illustrate this, as evidenced by intelligence gathered by the secret services and the findings of relevant criminal investigations.

The Russian FSB has a wealth of experience of practical multilateral and bilateral cooperation with the secret services of the CIS states, members of the SCO, several Western European states, and the United States. Nevertheless, we believe that we have yet to utilise the full potential of joint efforts in combating the global terror threat. We should set our political disagreements aside and revise our views on the terror problem to make our positions and approaches as close as possible. No one is going to do this job for us.

The Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation is always open to cooperation in this area.

I am confident that the results of this conference will help us to make another step towards a more peaceful world based on the principles of stability, security, and mutual respect.

I hope your work here will be successful and productive.

PLENARY SESSION

Global Security: challenges of the XXI century

Moderator

Lieutenant-General Alexander Fomin
Deputy Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation

ARUN JAITLEY
Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs,
Defence Minister of the Republic of India

It is indeed a pleasure for me to address the VI Moscow Conference on International Security. I am honoured to represent India at this important event and thank Minister Shoygu for his invitation.

At the outset, I congratulate the organisers on the excellent arrangements made and the programme drawn up for this conference.

The participation this year is impressive, with representation from a large number of countries. The Moscow Conference has established itself as one of the most important global forums for discussions on contemporary security matters.

The theme of the current session covers emerging trends in global security. It is appropriate that we discuss this subject in Moscow, which is one of the key centres for decision-making on global security issues in keeping with Russia's significance and influence in world affairs.

As a long-standing friend and strategic partner, India supports an expanded role by Russia in global affairs, especially in our shared neighbourhood.

The fact is that the problems confronting the world today cannot be solved by any one country or group of countries but require an inclusive approach.

I welcome the Russian Defence Minister's opening address to the conference, which underlined Russia's intent to seek new avenues for regional and global stability and a constructive approach towards resolving conflicts.

India and Russia share a special and privileged strategic partnership, which has stood the test of time. Our cooperation in defence and security matters in particular has been robust. Russia is India's foremost defence partner.

I look forward to my meeting with Minister Shoygu later today to discuss how we can together further deepen our defence ties.

Over the past few months, India and Russia have taken steps to further strengthen the engagement between our armed forces. We will shortly negotiate a new armed forces training agreement. Later this year, Indian and Russian armed forces will hold the INDRA tri-services joint military exercises in Russia. This will be an historic occasion as it will be the first time that India and Russia are taking part in joint exercises in such a format with each other or with any other country.

India deeply appreciates Russia's support at difficult periods in our history. This unwavering support from Russia is reflected in the depth of public support in India for building a stronger partnership with Russia.

I am confident that India and Russia can continue to work together on all issues of mutual interest, whether bilaterally or multilaterally in the framework of BRICS, SCO, and other forums.

Ours is an age of rapid and unpredictable change. Nowhere is the pace and direction of these changes faster and more complex than in the geopolitical and strategic arena.

The continued unpredictability in ties between major powers recently has brought new uncertainties to the fore. The implications of these developments are difficult to fully ascertain at this stage.

On the one hand, these reflect a wider diffusion of power in the international system, which by itself is a positive development. However, we need to manage this change effectively for our mutual benefit.

There are also worrying signs of economic protectionism. New barriers to migration and the closing of borders are other elements of such an approach. However, such efforts are unlikely to be able to address the complex issues involved.

The growing role and importance of Asia is a striking aspect of the changed international environment. For the foreseeable future, Asian economies will continue to be the drivers of global growth. Asia could also be emerging as the stage for competition between large and rising powers.

Europe appears pre-occupied with the future of the EU project. We are also witnessing a sharpening of divisions in the European continent not seen since the Cold War.

In West Asia, turmoil thrown up by rapid political changes in the region has yet to be fundamentally resolved. These changes have also led to the rise of groups with extremist, fundamentalist or terrorist ideologies, whose activities have forced open sectarian fissures and violence.

The situation in Afghanistan continues to be challenging. Facile assessments that imply there is a choice between the evil forces at play in that country are endangering the gains made by the brave Afghan people with the support of the international community over the past decade and more. The recent condemnable and dastardly attack on the Afghan national security forces in Mazar-i-Sharif was a sharp reminder of this.

A policy of zero tolerance towards violence and terrorism and continued efforts to consolidate the capacity of the Afghan government to deal with violence as well as promote development are essential.

India believes that a secure, stable, and peaceful Afghanistan is achievable with the continued commitment of the international community. India has provided assistance and support to the friendly people of Afghanistan. We will continue to do as much as we can. We also look forward to working in tandem with all parties that share similar objectives in Afghanistan. We welcome recent efforts by Russia to hold consultations on Afghanistan, in which India had also actively participated.

The scourge of terrorism remains the primary security challenge for all peaceful countries. Russia continues to be a target, with the attack in Saint Petersburg still fresh in our memory.

I wish to convey India's strong solidarity with Russia and our sympathy for the victims and the families affected by of this dastardly attack.

Terrorism is being reinvented in newer and even more dangerous manifestations. The manipulation of young minds by fundamentalist groups using new technologies and social media has already caused long-term damage to our societies. One manifestation of this is the recent string of lone-wolf attacks in many countries.

On the positive side, the territory acquired by ISIS in the Middle East has begun to be effectively challenged by several countries. This is reassuring and should be taken to its logical conclusion.

Cooperation between major powers in this effort can become a template for similar steps elsewhere.

However, even as we work to eliminate the breeding grounds of terrorism in West Asia, the dangers of such elements returning to their home countries has become a major challenge. We need to encourage closer information exchanges and intelligence cooperation to address this threat. We should also resolutely resist opportunistic efforts by some states to support terrorist proxies by training, funding or providing safe havens to such groups for their limited objectives.

Distinctions are still sought to be made between good and bad terrorists, despite all the evidence and experience to the contrary. Terrorism will recoil on those who nurture it.

The global nature of this menace and the need for a coherent and sustained international response to it is now widely acknowledged. Nearly all countries present at this conference are taking proactive steps to counter international terrorism.

India will steadfastly partner all friendly countries confronted with the challenge of terrorism. We have successfully addressed this threat for over three decades. We will continue to strengthen ongoing cooperation in counter-terrorism with our partners.

Another serious challenge facing us today is the resurgence of territorial disputes in the maritime domain.

Maritime territorial disputes are particularly complex and need to be managed effectively, lest they undermine the regional order as well as structures and processes that help maintain peace and stability.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the past decades of peaceful growth have transformed that region into one of the most dynamic engines of the global economy. We need to ensure that the continued prosperity of the region is not put at risk.

India believes that the rights of freedom of navigation and overflight as well as unimpeded commerce should be ensured. These are vital to India's own economic engagement with the Indo-Pacific region.

The recent escalation of tensions in the Korean peninsula is a matter of concern. The linkages between proliferation in that region with the deterioration of India's own security environment are widely known. Addressing the current situation should acknowledge this aspect and address issues from a broader perspective to be fully effective.

Another aspect of the current security scenario is the growing salience of non-traditional threats to security. Effective management of cyberspace has emerged as a key national security challenge for many countries. Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief requirements are also increasing, fuelled both by man-made and natural causes.

India will continue to play its due role in the maintenance of regional and international peace and stability. India's rapid growth over the past two decades has also helped elevate the economic trajectory of our smaller neighbours.

With our renewed emphasis on regional connectivity, the focus on Act East policy, the ongoing effort to engage with Gulf countries, Africa as well as the wider Indian Ocean region, India is now at the centre of a dynamic web of partnerships.

Our economic and diplomatic engagement with the Eurasian region is also a top priority for India. Building on our strong ties with Russia, we also hope to steadily enhance our linkages with Central Asian countries.

Defence and security cooperation is an increasingly important aspect of India's diplomatic engagements. We have been building greater military-to-military ties, sharing best practices, enhancing our training cooperation as well as tie-ups in defence industry and research and development for mutual benefit. These efforts are making significant progress.

I am confident that these partnerships will contribute to a more stable and peaceful environment as well as spur greater economic growth and shared development in India, our region and beyond.

COLONEL-GENERAL SAKEN ZHASUZAKOV
Minister of Defence of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The Moscow Conference on International Security is becoming a traditional and important platform for discussing and assessing the nature of current challenges and threats to regional and international security, as well as for elaborating proposals how to address them using peaceful means. The format of the conference promotes an effective exchange of views and cooperation between our countries on topical issues of international security.

Today, the fight against terrorism and extremism has rightly become a key item on the international agenda. Terrorism has become transnational, with no state protected against the threat of terrorist attacks.

Currently, the main terrorist threat comes from radical militant extremist and terrorist groups, whose activities are not limited to the Middle East only. The leaders of religious extremist organisations are considering the possibility of extending their influence to other regions, including Central Asia. Essentially, emissaries of terrorist organisations export new models of terrorist and extremist activity from the areas of combat operations to the countries within the region, with the number of supporters of nontraditional religious movements increasing. Inaction and ignoring such a threat can lead to negative consequences in the future.

In this regard, Kazakhstan has consistently advocated fostering of conditions that would promote stability and security in the world and in the region. Kazakhstan firmly believes that terrorism can be eradicated only through joint efforts.

Therefore, the initiatives of President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev on the creation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Network under the auspices of the United Nations and the drafting of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism are highly relevant.

Kazakhstan is interested in a politically stable, economically sustainable and safe global development.

We have a regular political dialogue at all levels with our partners for strengthening international and regional security and pursue a policy of combining efforts to jointly address the current challenges and threats to national security.

At the initiative of Head of State Nursultan Nazarbayev, the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, has become a platform for a political dialogue to resolve the Syrian conflict.

The inter-Syrian talks in the capital of Kazakhstan laid the foundation for further dialogue between the opposing forces to normalise relations inside the country. For the first time ever, previously uncompromising opponents had a face-to-face dialogue, demonstrating their intention to establish a political dialogue for resolving the conflict.

The key priority is a sustainable ceasefire and conflict resolution through compromise. It is important to prevent further escalation of the conflict and to continue searching for peaceful ways to overcome disagreements.

In this context, Kazakhstan will continue promoting multilateral consultations to find a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis and fostering further negotiations in all formats and at all levels.

The Republic of Kazakhstan provided humanitarian aid to the Syrian Arab Republic in the form of medicines and food, with a total weight of 500 tonnes. At present, delivering a second consignment of humanitarian cargo is under consideration.

As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2017–2018, the Republic of Kazakhstan regards counter-terrorism to be a priority for concentrating the efforts of the world community.

Kazakhstan intends to use its membership in the UN Security Council to strengthen stability and security in the Central Asian region that is represented in this important body of the international organisation for the first time in the history of the United Nations. The Republic of Kazakhstan intends to raise security issues that are important for the region to turn it into a “zone of peace, cooperation and security”.

Moreover, our country pays special attention to the resolution of the situation in Afghanistan, since sustainable security in Central Asia is impossible without achieving lasting peace and stability in this country.

Kazakhstan also intends to use the Security Council’s platform to promote the international initiatives of the Head of State in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and combating terrorism and extremism, which are set out in the Manifesto “The World. The 21st Century” and are an integral part of the agenda of Kazakhstan within the UN Security Council.

Given Kazakhstan’s knowledge of regional specifics and strong bilateral relations with all stakeholders, Kazakhstan was entrusted to chair the Security Council Committee on Afghanistan/Taliban. In addition, Kazakhstan also chairs the Security Council committees on ISIS (Daesh) and Al-Qaeda and on Somalia and Eritrea.

Taking into account the international recognition of Kazakhstan’s contribution to the resolution of the situation around the Iranian nuclear programme and the need for further development of political and economic ties with Iran, Kazakhstan intends to participate actively in the work of the UN Security Council Committee on Iran. The chairmanship in these sanctions committees will enable us to make more active use of the platform of the UN Security Council to promote counter-terrorism initiatives.

Strongly condemning all forms of terrorism, Kazakhstan will continue contributing to international efforts for de-escalating global tension, addressing the existing problems and ensuring security.

The issues discussed at the conference are certainly relevant in terms of combining the efforts of the military departments of our countries to elaborate effective steps to prevent the existing security challenges and threats. In this regard, the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Kazakhstan will continue its policy of intensifying and expanding international military cooperation in both multilateral and bilateral formats.

I am convinced that an open dialogue at this conference will promote the correct understanding of mutual trust, the integral understanding of security and the common needs for cooperation, make a comprehensive contribution to security and help formulate recommendations for effectively countering the challenges and threats to international security.

BRIGADIER GENERAL HOSSEIN DEHGHAN
Minister of Defence and Armed Forces Logistics of the Islamic Republic of Iran

First of all, I would like to thank His Excellency, the Russian Minister of Defence, General Sergey Shoygu, for his invitation to attend the VI Moscow Conference on International Security. This event is an excellent opportunity for us to discuss global security events, analyse the challenges facing us all, and make an emphasis on effective rules and mechanisms for building a new global security order.

The post-Cold-War international security regime has proved chaotic, uncertain, and unpredictable. It is a transitional security regime, even though it was based on such principles and rules as recognising the nations' right to deciding their own fate, respect for national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, and illegality of the use of force. But, after illegal steps taken by the West — especially the United States — and after their violation of these principles in various parts of the world, this security regime is now facing numerous, complex, and multi-faceted military and security challenges. As the space of insecurity, instability and chaos expands, this regime has come to pose a serious risk for international security. In this context, let me draw your attention to the numerous global security threats posed by:

- The irresponsibility of the new US president's statements, actions, and decisions;

- The ongoing crisis in the Middle East, and especially the failure to meet the demands and historical aspirations of the people of Palestine;

- Growing tensions between the Korean peninsula and the West;

- The continued support by the United States, Israel, United Kingdom, and Saudi Arabia for the Takfiri terrorist movements, and the efforts by these states to maintain a military balance between these movements and the regional governments;

- Growing and strengthening presence in other countries of Takfiri terrorists, who have suffered defeat in Iraq and Syria, and the growing terrorist activity in these regions.

We have all seen double standards being used in dealing with terrorism and terrorists. To our great regret, it has become clear that international legal institutions and the leaders of human rights movements idly stand by while innocents are slaughtered, and while fear and panic spread. Millions are fleeing war-torn countries; those who remain are left without shelter, while the provision of humanitarian aid is limited. The oppressed governments and peoples who have suffered aggression, pillage, and destruction, are not being protected; on the contrary, support and encouragement are provided to terrorists and aggressors.

We urgently need all states to demonstrate their earnest determination to combat terrorism and to eliminate the factors that give rise to terrorist movements. What our world currently needs most is a clear condemnation of terror and violence; ending the provision of political, military, and financial support to terrorists; coming to the aid of the legitimate governments; upholding the demands and the legitimate will of the people; providing humanitarian assistance to the victims of war; helping to achieve stability, security, and peace, and eliminating the various problems faced by the nations. However, in such oppressed states as Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, only the Russian Federation, Iran, and the legitimate government and the people of Syria are waging a genuine war on terror. In Iraq, the war on terror is fought only by Iran, together with the Iraqi people and government.

In this process, the Americans, with the help of their new political doctrine of the "commercialisation of security", are trying to install a new form of global fascism and secure their own pre-eminent role in the international system. This policy has resulted in the creation of false threats, and in the division of labour between the regional and extra-regional allies in instilling xenophobia — especially against such countries as Russia, China, and Iran, in order to justify their presence, the building of their new bases, and an even greater meddling in various regions, especially the West Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia, as well as a return to the Cold War. They are plundering the riches of these regions under the pretext of providing security for their allies. In essence, they are trying to prevent countries around the world from achieving what they need the most, which is peace, security, and sustainable development.

Let me emphasise that the instability, the lack of security, and the violence and terror our world is facing are the result of the conditions that have been created over the past three decades by the United States, and of Washington's aspiration to strengthen its global dominance. The only way out of this crisis is to transition to a new world order based on the principles of multipolarity and rejection of dominance and any regional or global hegemony. A key instrument of establishing such a world order is a sense of partnership between all nations. Such a sense is a valuable and unprecedented opportunity for implementing constructive plans, providing global security, and achieving a sustainable regional and global development.

We believe that this new world order should be built on the following principles:

- Joint international efforts in fighting terrorism, extremism, and the forces that seek violence;

- Respect for national sovereignty and non-interference;

- Mutual respect, constructive negotiations, and choosing reason and dialogue over weapons;

- Building and strengthening intra-regional ties.

In this new world order, the international institutions for protecting peace and security will be able to fulfil their mission irrespective of the will of the great powers. Building this new world order will require the following:

- Ending the militaristic strategies and destructive meddling by the United States;

- Ending the provision of support to terrorists by the United States, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and other sponsors;

- Recognising the historical right of the people of Palestine to return to the occupied territories, and enabling them to decide their own fate;

- Protecting and supporting the continuity of people's sovereignty by the key actors and guarantors of peace and security.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that neither the United States, nor any other state can achieve their political and expansionist goals in the Middle East, North Africa, and the subcontinent by supporting war, terror, and terrorist organisations.

Iran believes that unless armed terrorism in Syria and Iraq is destroyed, all its sponsors, large and small — including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United States — will soon come under terrorist attacks.

Iran believes that the united front formed in Syria by Russia, Iran, and Syria's own legitimate government and the courageous people of that country, will defeat the terrorists, and at the end of that campaign we will achieve a more secure and stable region and planet.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, led by a sense of human and humanitarian responsibility, is determined to continue providing support for the lawful and legitimate governments of Syria and Iraq, for the oppressed people of Yemen, and for the decisive and fateful struggle against the terrorist and Takfiri movements in the entire region.

We firmly believe that the crises in such states as Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and other states in the region do not have a military solution. The only way of resolving them is internal negotiations, without any foreign meddling.

We will continue to pursue our cooperation with a strong Russia in countering the terrorist movements. In this process, we will rationally and soberly plan and execute the necessary steps to counter and neutralise plans and actions by the states that sponsor terrorists on the strategic, political, and operational level.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which has been the greatest victim of chemical weapons, and which has for many years suffered from the most inhumane, illegal, and ruthless sanctions under fabricated charges, opposes any production, possession, and use of chemical weapons. Iran will abide by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — but it will put up determined resistance in the event of any threats from the United States or other states that have been intimidated into submission by the dominant regime. Iran strongly believes that peaceful use of nuclear energy is a natural right of all states, and that no agency can stand in the way of that right. At the same time, we believe that the international community must demonstrate its will to achieve nuclear disarmament. At the very least, in the Middle East we should disarm Israel, stripping it of all its weapons of mass destruction — including chemical and nuclear — to ensure a certain level of security in the region.

The ridiculous and oft-repeated expression "all options are on the table" cannot be an instrument of extracting political or military concessions from other states.

We believe that if the crisis on the Korean peninsula were to move towards military options for resolution that would have devastating global consequences. Global security requires the United States to change its behaviour, relinquish its policy of global meddling and warmongering, and end its support for the decrepit Israeli security scenarios in the region.

Any course of action which is based on steps to prevent Iran from expanding its influence in the region, and which ignores historical facts of how states in the region and the relations between them were formed, is doomed to failure. Successive US defeats in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Afghanistan are evidence of that fact.

To conclude, I would like to thank once again His Excellency General Shoygu. I hope this conference will make an effective step towards mutual understanding and cooperation between the world's nations and peoples in order to achieve a better global and regional order.

KHAWAJA MOHAMMAD ASIF
Federal Minister of Defence of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

At the outset, I would like to thank our hosts on my behalf and on behalf of the Government of Pakistan for inviting and affording me the opportunity to share Pakistan's perspective on the issues of global security and challenges of the 21st century. I would also like to compliment the Defence Ministry of the Russian Federation for hosting this important activity, which provides us a useful platform to interact with policymakers from across the globe. It also allows us to visit the Russian Federation which is home of a great nation with strong traditions, rich history and one of the most important players in the emerging polycentric world order.

The 21st century is viewed as an era of hope and dynamism on the premise of matured globalisation, amazing technological innovations, and the controversial expectation of democratic peace. However, we have witnessed that it continues to be marred by accentuated regional disputes, political instabilities, rising socio-economic challenges, widespread transnational terrorism, and a fragile international system to handle all this. Consequently, multiple actors have gained prominence thereby changing the "balance of power equation" across the globe and causing gradual dissuasion of the so-called unipolar international system. The evolving polycentric world order is characterised by a resurgence of new centres of power, renewed economic interdependencies and realignment of politico-strategic alliances, while it seeks a more consultative and egalitarian approach to manage our shared challenges such as terrorism, socio-economic inequality, climate change, demography, as well as ongoing conflicts in hotspots like Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, and North Africa. Thus, to deliberate and explore the causes and ramifications of these security challenges is in the larger interest of all nations, therefore exploring viable and pragmatic solutions for enduring peace is a need of the hour and I believe this conference is a very important step in this regard.

Extremism and terrorism can be best described as manifestation of "a distracted state of mind" of individuals and groups who possess "self-interpreted set of beliefs and ideologies". The spectre of terrorism has affected the very fabric of the societies and is posing an existential threat to human civilisation in its entirety. Experience shows that regions having deep-rooted socio-economic inequality, political or ideological oppression and polarised societies are breeding grounds for terrorism. Further, states with political instability, whether by design or as a consequence of external interventions, also remain susceptible to spread of transnational terrorist networks. We witnessed Al-Qaeda exploiting instability in Afghanistan while ISIS is also an offshoot of its arrays in parts of the Middle East. While we strive for peace, stability, and prosperity, the sustenance of any success depends not solely on kinetic actions alone but more so on non-kinetic initiatives such as social justice and corrections in ideological overturns, through the stacking of correct narratives. Over the past few years we have witnessed a phenomenal increase in terrorism, which implies that the world community has not been able to address the core political and social issues. Consequently, the terrorist networks have expanded across North Africa, the Middle East and Afghanistan. While religion is being exploited by most of them, analysis shows that socio-economic factors such as youth unemployment, drug trade, corruption, violence, and internal displacement of local populace plays a major role in promoting terrorism. It is thus important to implement policies to address these associated causes.

What we also witness is the changing character of war from the typical state vs state conflicts to the more asymmetrical conflict and to low-intensity armed conflicts between the state and violent transnational non-state actors. Aimed at spreading chaos and confusion through organised media manipulation and propaganda, a sophisticated psychological war is also an essential characteristic of the new concept of war. We have observed that terrorist organisations like ISIS, Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab and their affiliates do not confine themselves to mere acts of terrorism. In fact, they use terror as the main weapon to establish their rule alongside putting in place systems of terror financing, brutal justice dispensation, and creating an environment of fear to run parallel governance. Another interesting phenomenon is the change in the notion of victory in wars. Unlike in previous years, today, wars do not end or are won or bring stability through regime change or territorial gains. The case studies of Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, Egypt, and Libya would all substantiate my assertion. This implies that lasting peace and prosperity can only be achieved through political dialogue and consultations between the stakeholders and not through military interventions alone.

While there have been few tactical gains against ISIS, the world remains deeply concerned with the continuous wars in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen which have created space for the non-state actors. These wars have embroiled regional and extra-regional countries which have aggravated the chaos, refugee influx, and internal destabilisation. It is sad to observe that lessons from the recent past have not been learnt despite failure of similar policies in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. Unfortunately, today we have a combination of sectarian and ethnic violence ravaging the region and brining misery for the people who are forced to seek refuge in other countries. It is our shared responsibility that these refugees are treated humanely and rehabilitated besides making all-out efforts to bring peace and stability in their native countries, which is only possible through a candid political dialogue between the actual stakeholders.

We must also realise that extremist elements garner support and affiliates by exploiting polarisation. So, there is a need to develop stronger counter-narratives based on interfaith harmony, economic equality and cross-cultural mutual respect to ensure that extremists are denied the space which they seek. Concurrently, it is the responsibility of the world community to urgently address some of the long-standing conflicts of the world. From Palestine to Kashmir we have a history of suppression and denial of basic human rights despite their legal as well as legitimate freedom struggles.

Kashmir issue is a strategic flash point in South Asia and if left unresolved, it has potential to threaten the stability and peace of the entire region. Sooner rather than later, resolution of Kashmir issue must be achieved according to the UN resolutions. I must share that all the overtures of peace and sincere efforts made by Pakistan are not being reciprocated. The ongoing human rights violations in Indian Occupied Kashmir are evidence of the aggressive policy to suppress a legitimate struggle by the people of Jammu and Kashmir for their right of self-determination. Unfortunately, India continues to shy away from any plausible diplomatic approach for resolution of the Kashmir issue. It has instead adopted an indirect strategy to distract Pakistan from Kashmir through proxies in Pakistan and ceasefire violations across the Line of Control. We urge international community to take notice of Indian atrocities and human rights violations and play their role in resolving this long-standing issue as per UN resolutions.

Pakistan continues to suffer from perpetual state of conflict between different stakeholders in Afghanistan. Hence, a peaceful and stable Afghanistan is in our interest. We fully support an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process with the assistance of international community. Let me also assure you that Pakistan does not believe in any distinction between terrorist outfits, as has been manifested during Operation Zarb-e-Azab and Operation Raad Al Fassad undertaken by our military and people. Pakistan has conducted large number of anti-terrorist operations in the troubled areas during operation Zarb-e-Azab. Presently remnants of terrorist networks are being cleared under the Operation Raad Al Fassad. Here, I must state that ongoing operations have been extremely successful which has been widely acknowledged by the world community. I can proudly say that Pakistan has fought the menace of terrorism successfully for which we have paid a heavy price to the tune of tens of thousands of precious lives and billions of dollars in the economy.

I would like to share that our military operations concurrently included comprehensive socio-economic uplift strategy in disturbed regions. After a successful completion of kinetic operations, we are consolidating our gains under a comprehensive National Action Plan to deny any space to the terrorists to regroup or re-establish their networks. The hardcore terrorists and perpetrators of violence are also being tried under an effective judicial system. We are making huge efforts to institute an effective border control management system across the Durand line. We expect the Afghan Government to also take more effective measures against the perpetrators responsible for various terror activities in Pakistan. We have remained committed to play our due share and role in achieving elusive peace and stability in Afghanistan and fully support an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process while looking forward for further strengthening our bilateral relations to deny space for the enemies of peace on either side of the border. Our sincerity over Afghanistan can be gauged by the fact that we have been hosting about three million refugees from Afghanistan for the last 37 years.

As a result of our resolute struggle against terrorism and extremism, Pakistan is transforming fast to become net security provider instead of security seeker and is set to achieve economic prosperity by reaping economic benefits from projects like China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as part of the One Belt, One Road initiative which is going to be not only a game changer for Pakistan but for the region and beyond.

In the end I would like to reiterate that classical 20th century approaches to conflict resolution have become obsolete in the context of the complexity, asymmetry and intractability of contemporary nature of conflicts, notably in the Middle East, North Africa region and Afghanistan. Prevailing patterns of major armed conflicts have been transmuting at extraordinary speed, which is animated due to "transnational connectors" that act like veins and arteries in linking local and global aspects with unprecedented rapidity. These are times for introspection, for a dispassionate and objective review of our policies to address the global security challenges. We need to devise policies based on the principles of equality, social justice, and political stability wherein human

rights rather than economic profits are the basis of international relations. Our basic focus should remain on human security by addressing the issues having a cross-cutting impact on our societies. It is only through facing these problems upfront and dealing with them in a just and equitable manner that we can hope for a world of peaceful co-existence.

In the end please allow me to once again thank General Sergei Shoygu, Defence Minister of the Russian Federation and the organisers of this international conference with the hope that such interactions will help the world community in evolving strategies to overcome the security challenges of the 21st century.

RAUL BELENS JUNGMANN PINTO
Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Brazil

It is an honour for me to take part in the VI Moscow Conference on International Security. I would like to start by expressing Brazil's solidarity with the victims of the terrorist attack on the Saint Petersburg metro system. We once again decisively condemn terrorism. It is a duty of every free state to prevent and to combat this perverse phenomenon, inspired by mindless hatred for the most important values of democratic societies. At the same time, as we wage war on terrorism, we should continue to respect human rights and international law.

Leo Tolstoy, one of the greatest figures in world literature, showed in his classic "War and Peace" how strategic rivalry between the great powers affects the lives of ordinary people, families, and entire societies in a most dramatic way. Faced with the changes taking place in the global arena in the early 19th century, Tolstoy pondered on the nature of war, political authority, and History — not from the vantage point of statesmen, but simply describing the Russian people's readiness for sacrifice, their patriotism, and their greatness. The book was truly a monument to peace.

It has been two centuries since the events that inspired Leo Tolstoy's work. Today, the global configuration of power takes on new features of multipolarity, in a far more complex and unstable environment. This environment is characterised by a growing military potential of mass destruction, including the nuclear capability; powerful transnational actors that pursue both positive and hostile goals; and the resurgence of controversies and tensions that many believed had already been put to rest once and for all.

There is an unprecedented level of uncertainty and dangerous fluctuations on the international arena. The world is losing the stability that we all crave with amazing speed.

Difficult situations with a clear potential for conflict are degenerating into genuine crises in the most extraordinary and irresponsible way.

Some aspects that remind us all of the Cold War appear to be stimulating a new arms race. We are witnessing a resurgence of religious and ethnic intolerance, growing nationalist trends, bitter rivalry over spheres of influence, and determined efforts to secure new sources of minerals and energy.

All of this is taking place against the backdrop of the international security system becoming dysfunctional to an unprecedented degree. That system no longer possesses the necessary balance and flexibility that could prevent or at least stop international crises.

Every day we observe, with a vast sense of disappointment, rational approach and dialogue being sidelined in favour of the use of force. Let me therefore outline Brazil's own vision of global security in this environment.

We are a nation that loves peace — but in no way are we a passive or defenceless nation. In our own geographical surrounding, we have built an area of stability that has no precedents in any other part of the globe. We share a border with 10 other countries, and we have been maintaining relations with them based on integration, cooperation, and peace for over 150 years. At the same time, we have no qualms about standing up for our interests, we fulfil all our obligations and we took part in two world wars.

Brazil continues to make efforts to prevent any possible threats — but at the same time it is prepared to neutralise them if such a need arises.

We believe that for developing countries such as ours, multipolarity opens up opportunities for contributing to global governance and stability. It also helps to strengthen the rule of law and to ensure justice. At the same time, key international institutions still remain less than inclusive with regard to the so-called developing nations. A good example is the difficulties with reforming the UN Security Council. That body needs to be brought up to date, to better reflect the new global balance of power, as well as to ensure a greater legitimacy and effectiveness of its own decisions.

Brazil stands ready to participate in global governance, and to contribute to maintaining peace and collective security based on the key principles of international relations reflected in our own Constitution. Those principles include the right to self-determination, human rights, noninterference, equality of all states, upholding peace, peaceful resolution of all differences, condemning terrorism and racism, cooperation to facilitate development and growth, and integration in Latin America.

The latest editions of the National Defence Policy and of the National Defence Strategy now being debated in the National Congress also include other principles, such as multilateralism and respect for international law, respect for sovereign rights to the rational use of natural resources, participation in

peacekeeping operations, and building confidence to prevent conflicts.

Taken together, these principles clearly demonstrate the necessary and close interrelationship between defence, diplomacy, and growth. To maintain peace and security, we need coordinated efforts in all three of these areas, especially in terms of closing the social inequality gap between the various nations.

The Brazilian Defence Policy and Strategy clearly stipulate that our key national interest lies in consolidating our strategic geographic surroundings, and building relations of peace, cooperation, and development in South and Central America and the Caribbean, in the South Atlantic, and in Africa. In that space, Brazil has already built a broad network of bilateral and multilateral mechanisms such as MERCOSUR, UNASUR, and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty.

We are working to make sure South America and the South Atlantic remain zones free from nuclear weapons, international conflicts, and foreign military bases. The peace process in Colombia is bringing to an end the period of internal conflicts on our continent. All we now have to do is strengthen our defences against transnational crime along our 17,000 km of land border and 8,000 km of maritime border, in close cooperation with our neighbours.

With the help of the Union of South American Nations and its Council of South American Defence, we are working to create a South American identity in the area of defence, and gradually to build a regional deterrence capability against any extra-regional threats. Brazil is a very active participant in various pan-American defence mechanisms.

I would like to emphasise the importance of the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone, which is especially relevant for our country, with its almost 8,000 km of coastline and 4.5 million sq. km of territorial waters. This zone is a Brazilian initiative, approved by the UN General Assembly in 1986. Its goal is to protect the South Atlantic from crises and to make sure that the region serves peaceful purposes of cooperation, especially taking into account its natural riches and its importance for international trade. Some 96% of Brazil's foreign trade depends on shipping in the South Atlantic. That maritime region has known piracy, hijacking of ships, illegal fishing, and other illegal activity.

Another important priority is security and defence coordination between Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa in the BRICS framework.

Let me also say a few words on the nuclear weapons problem. The Treaty of Tlatelolco for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean will be 50 years old this year. Incidentally, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will also mark its 50th anniversary in 2018. Being committed to the basic principle of peaceful use of nuclear energy, Brazil is a strong advocate of a world free from nuclear weapons. Witness, for example, the creation in 1991 of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, which is an innovative mechanism for building confidence and applying safeguards. That mechanism has helped both countries to expand their opportunities in terms of peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The latest initiative in this area is the proposal by the UN Conference to launch negotiations on the nuclear weapons ban treaty. That proposal resulted from the three previous conferences on the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, held in 2012–2014. The international community has already introduced a ban on chemical and biological weapons. There is no reason why a similar ban should not be imposed on the only type of weapons that can destroy all life on Earth. Adopting such measures would be a bold step, a step that is necessary to close a dangerous gap in international law and to build a safer world. For Brazil, nuclear disarmament is not just a strategic choice but a moral imperative.

Wars in the 21st century are a combination of various types of conflicts: regular and irregular, conventional and asymmetric, high-tech and improvised, involving the use of decentralised tactics and planning, innovative methods, propaganda and information warfare, as well as cyber-attacks. Boundaries are therefore becoming blurred between political warfare, the economics, geography, combatants and non-combatants, high-tech, and traditional technologies. Conflicts now involve the use of smart weapons, satellites, drones and robots, improvised explosive devices, small arms, and various groups without specific methods or ideology. A combination of the element of surprise, the destructive potential, and the media impact challenges the military might of states and necessitates higher spending on monitoring and intelligence, as well as increasing the cost of military operations in general.

Brazil is engaged in a struggle for peace and balance in our whole world — but it also works to be always ready to defend its sovereignty, its heritage, and its interests in the event of the hypothetical scenario of anarchy in international relations described by Thomas Hobbes.

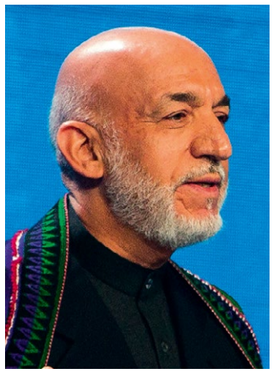
To protect ourselves from possible threats to our natural resources and territory, and from a deterioration in our legal, institutional, or political standing in the international system, Brazil pursues a defence strategy that combines aspects of deterrence and cooperation.

The deterrence aspect includes continued major investment in our defence industry, which accounts for over 3% of Brazilian GDP and enables us to develop national dual-use technologies. We pursue such high-tech projects as a nuclear programme and nuclear-powered submarines in our Navy; a system of monitoring our land borders in the Army; and the development and manufacture of modern aircraft, such as the KC-390 transport and the Gripen NG fighter in the Air Force.

Speaking of cooperation, we are proud that we are not just a peaceful country, but also a country that makes peace and keeps peace. Apart from the mechanisms of consolidation of strategic partnership in our region I have already mentioned, I would like to mention Brazil's major contribution to UN peacekeeping operations. Our servicemen are deployed in that role in such far-flung parts of the world as Haiti, Lebanon, Ivory Coast, Liberia, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Western Sahara, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Cyprus. They are highly professional, well-trained, and empathic towards the local population.

Brazil does not support any coercive action without a special UN Security Council mandate. As we have all seen, in recent years, in what has always been the least stable part of our world, and as a result of violations of international law, there has arisen a strategic imbalance, with government institutions crumbling, tensions flaring, political fragmentation gaining momentum, and terrorist cells spreading far and wide. As for the principle of the rule of law, it is the United Nations that should be the guarantor of global stability.

To conclude, let me emphasise the importance of cooperation and confidence as the fundamental characteristics of Brazil's approach to defence. No military arsenal, no matter how powerful, can provide greater security than a climate of political and economic cooperation. No intelligence service, no matter how well-trained its analysts and how sophisticated its algorithms or cyber-instruments, can deliver more than a climate of mutual and sincere confidence. Peace will be viable and sustainable only when there is justice, respect for international law, and development on the local, regional, and global scale.



HAMID KARZAI
Ex-President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

I come to the ancient city of Moscow with the fervent wish that we overcome the insecurity that grips our world. I say this with a sense of immediacy that comes from the experience of being from a land which is under multifaceted attack.

Just a few days ago, the United States dropped the world's most powerful bomb short of a nuclear weapon on my country. This was the first time the so-called MOAB, also known as the "mother of all bombs", was ever used.

The damage to people, to the soil and to the environment is perhaps unknowable. The American military authorities have barred access to the area.

The official US explanation is that Daesh was targeted. But the emergence of Daesh in Afghanistan is traceable to 2015, when the US military presence was already firmly established in the name of fighting war on terrorism. This war has been fought at immense cost to Afghan lives and property, but those prosecuting it could not check the assertive revival of the Taliban or the mushrooming growth of Daesh.

And within a few days of that the Afghan military base in Mazar-i-Sharif was attacked by the Taliban. Young Afghan soldiers were massacred. This foreign imposed war is taking massive human toll on Afghanistan and adding to our already immense sufferings.

Permit me to record that insecurity has grown in the world, not lessened, in recent years. This is a grim reminder that we must work together as agents of peace. I warn that without equilibrium and cooperation among major stakeholders, our peoples will suffer grievously. But if we put our heads together, we shall be able to navigate the uncertainties and fears that haunt us.

The Afghanistan-Pakistan area offers us a useful illustration. This region — my region — remains in the grip of violent extremists. Matters have grown worse in recent years. This is fundamentally because cooperation among the principal powers that constitute the multipolar world has disappeared in this theatre.

Let me recall that when the United States had clarity of purpose about combating violent radical extremism, Russia, China, India, and Iran cooperated with it on Afghanistan, although these actors were not on the same page everywhere. Russia even supplied weapons and helicopters to Afghanistan purchased through US funds. It also became a vital supply route for the US military in Afghanistan when there were difficulties with the Pakistan route.

The aim of defeating violent radical extremism was shared by all.

However, with the prolongation of the war, radical extremism grew stronger and has expanded its influence. A new malignant force, the Daesh, has also made its entry in the region, threatening Afghanistan, China, Russia, Iran, and India. Today, the consequences are before us, sadly, cooperation has given way to competition and suspicion of the US template has replaced the earlier collaboration that was seen on the ground.

Should we go into the reasons? I do not wish to. I will just stick to the facts. The situation as it stands is taking an enormous toll on my country, where the prospect of stability is being pushed back further.

To win peace for Afghanistan and stability for the region, I propose the following.

An addition to US troop numbers is not the way forward. It will only add to the woes of the Afghan people. More American troops means more attacks on Afghan villages in the name of fighting terrorism, while the sanctuaries of extremism and radicalism are left undisturbed. This has been the story for years.

Instead the United States should dispel the prevalent doubts and pessimism and work with the Afghan people towards a new compact which will ensure peace and stability for Afghanistan. Such a compact may also help in restoring the vitally important cooperation that once existed between the United States and major powers in the region.

In order to rectify the failings of the past and reverse the threat that terrorism poses to our common security, the world's principal powers need to come together and build a new international consensus in the campaign against terrorism. No country should seek only its own absolute well-being and security at the expense of others. It will not do for any power to use extremism to advance its geostrategic goals.

I also call upon the major countries which constitute our multipolar world to convene to find ways to cooperate in fixing the rising insecurity that engulfs us, and show us a vision of the politics of peace and the rejection of war. In our region countries like Russia, China, India, Iran, and hopefully also Pakistan need to develop ideas to deal with the extremism and terrorism that keep hurting our people.

Afghanistan has great desire to improve relations with Pakistan. But our desire can only come true when the establishment in our neighbourly country stops the use of extremist violence as a tool of policy.

Other than the United States, the principal powers that count in global dynamics are clustered in the SCO and the SAARC. A joint session of these forums has the potential to bring us much-needed relief, including in the form of meaningful peace talks with the Taliban. Here I once again call on the Taliban to end the bloodshed in the country and to join the desire and the effort of the Afghan people for peace. What we must aim for is a regional mechanism with international partnership that would once again advance a cooperative and inclusive security paradigm in Afghanistan.

Our loftiest traditional forum in Afghanistan is the Loy Jirga, the grand assembly that embraces all sections of our people. The convening of this mighty assembly of the people of Afghanistan can brook no delay. When the people have spoken, the path to finding peace, and bringing together the coalition to achieve this, will shine in the darkness. It is this peace that will be the guarantor to the securing of our fullest sovereignty. For peace and stability in Afghanistan it is important to flag the value of Russia's political and economic relations with our country by its engagement with Taliban in support of an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process and through its whole some support and investment in Afghanistan in support of our economy and the strengthening of state institutions. This is on account of the direct threat posed by terrorists to regional security as well as Russia's close historic and neighbourhood ties with Afghanistan.

ABDELLATIF LOUDIYI
Minister Delegate to the Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco in charge of the National Defence Administration

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the invitation you have kindly made to the Kingdom of Morocco to participate in the VI Moscow Conference on International Security. It provides a platform for dialogue and exchange on the security issues facing the world.

Before beginning my speech, I would like to commend the excellent relations between the Russian Federation and the Kingdom of Morocco, which have witnessed a strong impulse and evolution at all levels after the official visit of His Majesty King Mohammed VI to Russia in March 2016 and his summit meeting with His Excellency Mr Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation. The meeting brought about the commitment of the two countries to establishing a strategic partnership aimed, in particular, at contributing to regional and international peace and stability, at preserving the territorial integrity of the two countries, at development of bilateral dialogue, and at cooperation in many fields. Among the agreements reached during this visit, I would note the Moroccan-Russian Declaration on Combating International Terrorism, which underlines the two countries' commitment to strengthening their cooperation in areas related to combatting this scourge.

In a disturbed international landscape marked by multiple threats, the Kingdom of Morocco remains strongly committed to making the necessary efforts to combat terrorism, illegal migration, organised crime, and illicit cross-border trafficking of all kinds.

To confront these threats, and under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Kingdom of Morocco has adopted a comprehensive and multidimensional approach that is not limited to the security dimension alone, but is based on several additional levers, of which I shall mention, especially:

- the fight against precariousness and exclusion, and the promotion of sustainable socio-economic development;

- the deployment of a coherent framework for security, legal and operational actions;

- the restructuring of the religious sphere to promote the values of tolerance and openness.

In addition, as an actor in the projection of stability in the region and in the depth of the African continent, the Kingdom of Morocco works within the framework of South-South cooperation promoting socio-economic development, trade relations, and investment flows, as well as wealth and job creation for young people in many African countries, thus contributing, by its pragmatic approach, to the eradication of the hotbeds of terrorism and illegal immigration.

In view of its close cultural and spiritual ties with the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region, Morocco has also developed training programmes for imams from several countries to spread Islamic values of openness and tolerance, advocating the coexistence of religions and the struggle against fanaticism, radicalisation, and extremism.

These actions are supported by a significant budgetary input, combined with the efforts of our defence and security forces, to strengthen the control of our land, air, and sea borders and to meet our obligations to ensure the stability of our country, with a positive impact on our Mediterranean and Sahelo-Saharan neighbourhoods.

On another level, aware of the consequences and the extent of the migration crisis, the Kingdom of Morocco has adopted, since 2013, a comprehensive and innovative migration policy emphasising primarily the preservation of and respect for human rights, the dignity of all migrants, and their economic and social integration.

In this regard, an operational action plan has been set up to deal with the situation of refugees and irregular immigrants, particularly of African and Syrian origin. In its first phase, the plan has helped regularise the status of some 25,000 people. Since December 2016, the second phase has been launched and is expected it will reach around 19,000 migrants.

On another issue, Morocco has contributed, along with the UN representative, to the conclusion of the Skhirat agreement, which acts as a roadmap for an agreed political solution for the restoration of peace and stability in brotherly Libya.

On the humanitarian level, the Kingdom of Morocco has been contributing for more than four years by providing medical services to Syrians in Zaatari camp on the Jordanian-Syrian border through a multidisciplinary field hospital. Thus, more than one million medical services have been provided since 2012, particularly for Syrian women and children.

Finally, I should stress the need to settle the problem of Palestine with full respect for its sovereignty and its borders and within the framework of the United Nations resolutions adopted in this regard.

As you know, the issues of peace and security are transnational by nature. The resolution of today's most crucial security problems goes beyond our borders and requires all of us to be preventively vigilant and act collectively and concertedly.

The terrorism that is rampant all around the world constantly reminds us of our duty and responsibility to strengthen our ranks to fight and eradicate the plague of terrorism, all together, and to resist the rising security threats resulting from the multiplication of the hotbeds of tension.

We still believe that stronger international cooperation is the key to opening up the prospects for a more stable world.

We also remain convinced that there can be no security and peace without socio-economic development or sustainable development without peace and security. We must focus on the structural causes of threats to intervene proactively in crises through comprehensive strategies, based on cooperation and increased flows of development assistance, to help reduce vulnerabilities, which are the root causes of hatred and violence, and to initiate a virtuous cycle that opens up social and economic opportunities for the poor.

Before concluding, I would like to repeat my thanks to His Excellency Mr Sergey Shoygu, Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, for the invitation and the excellent arrangements made to organise this event.

EZZAT SAAD
Executive Director of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs

There is no specific international definition of terrorism, and therefore the definition largely depends on the interests and vision of each state. Even with regards to the concept of terrorism itself, which the world has been suffering from for decades, there are only limited areas of agreement regarding this concept:

- The use of violence, without distinction between civilians and other targets, to achieve certain objectives, regardless of their nature.

- The use of violence as a means of psychological warfare, i.e. as a means to use violence to spread fear and therefore terror. The spread of terrorism has become an ideology that is able to permeate the minds of people across the world through social media, which is labelled as "the concept of globalised terrorism".

- Belief in the resolution of disputes through violence and the use of destructive weapons as instruments, rather than engaging in dialogue, negotiations, or any other peaceful means of dispute resolution.

Apart from the concept and definition of terrorism, the latter can be classified in a variety of forms: domestic terrorism, regional terrorism, and international terrorism. There is also the terrorism of organisations or non-state actors in response to state terrorism.

In addition to the underlying factors that can constitute a domestic environment conducive to terrorism and extremism (such as the lack of socio-economic opportunities, poor governance, lack of social justice, lack of transparency and accountability, widespread corruption, etc.), regional conflicts are a major source for the escalation of terrorism and extremism. This is especially true of the Middle East in the broad geographical sense.
In this regard, we have a long list of conflicts and wars that have provided fertile ground for the growing phenomenon of terrorism and extremism in the region.
The Arab-Israeli conflict remains one of the most important causes of terrorism, not only in the region but also around the world. It is important to emphasise that the main declared goal of Al-Qaeda in its war with the United States is precisely the Palestinian issue and the unlimited American support for Israel. It is also important to emphasise that there are many other terrorist organisations in the region that still use the liberation of Palestine from Israeli occupation as a slogan and overarching theme.
The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, which contributed to the further division of the Arabs, helped Iran's rise as a regional power and led to an increase in anti-American sentiment in Saudi Arabia and other countries in region, providing a climate for Al-Qaeda's rise and violent religious extremism.
The US occupation of Iraq in 2003, which destroyed the Iraqi military capabilities that had been deemed a counterweight to Iran, left Iraq without a stable government and viable economy, and further stimulated violent extremism, sectarian tensions, and bloody confrontations between Sunnis and Shiites, as well as between Arabs and Kurds.
Besides Israel, there is also Iran and Turkey; the policies of these three countries reflect clear imbalances against the interests of the Arab countries, which has helped create an environment of insecurity in the region.
Thus, the dependence of Arabs on importing security from abroad has greatly weakened their role and political influence in the region. We have seen how Turkey and Iran have become guarantors of the ceasefire in Syria in the Astana process.
There is no doubt that dealing with terrorist organisations is a major challenge.
The state's failures to meet popular demands for security, education, and employment will continue to provide fertile ground for violent radicalisation.
Support for illiberal religious and sectarian elements could expand in popularity, reducing historic tolerance for minority groups and preparing the ground for a violent push to create a more homogenous region. Thus, the central challenge for the region is to boost growth and create a political conditions and economic opportunity to engage its young working-age residents.
The use of advanced technology by terrorist organisations has become an unprecedented challenge in the field of counter-terrorism, and involves remote guidance, the use of cruise missiles, and cyber-attacks, among others.
Terrorism must be dealt with through a coherent and comprehensive strategic rather than a tactical approach, such tactical measures for fighting extremism will fail, as we have seen elsewhere.
The existence for decades of security imbalances in the Middle East necessitates the creation of an effective regional collective security system on the one hand, and on the other the adoption of an initiative to declare this region free of weapons of mass destruction, which could save the whole region. In this context, the Iranian nuclear deal may prove to be a firm step on the path of non-proliferation, but the situation would have been much better if this step was taken as part of a comprehensive programme to prevent the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction altogether.
Dealing with the region's numerous problems is the responsibility of its countries in the first place. However, the major powers, having interests in the region's security and stability, should get involved beyond military intervention. Instead, a more comprehensive multidimensional approach, that takes into consideration the long-term challenges, is needed.

PLENARY SESSION

European Security: prospects and trends

Moderator

Lieutenant-General
Alexander Fomin
Deputy Minister of Defence
of the Russian Federation

ARMY GENERAL VALERY GERASIMOV
Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation Armed Forces —
First Deputy Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation

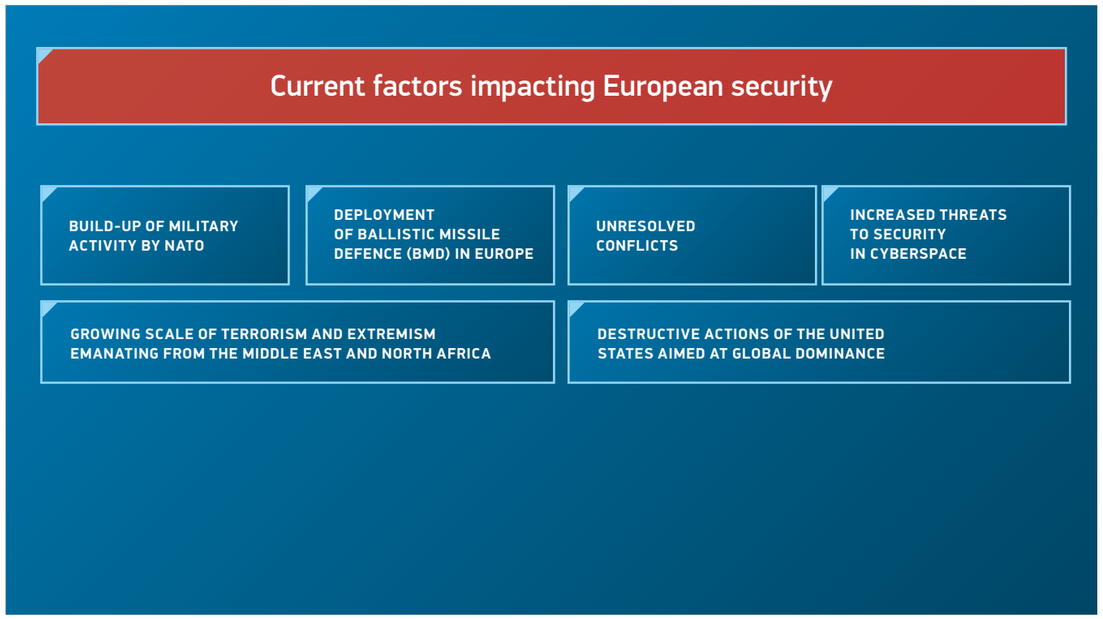
Evaluating European security today, it is possible to draw one clear conclusion: Europe is gradually changing from being the most stable and peaceful region to being one fraught with tensions and confrontation.

This is the result of several factors.

First of all, there are the deteriorating relations between Russia and NATO, which are now at their lowest point since the end of the Cold War. The decisions made at the NATO summits in the United Kingdom and Poland designated Russia as the main source of military threats. Consequently, the scale of NATO military activity on its Eastern flank rose dramatically. There is an increase in rapid-response forces, and foreign military groupings in Eastern Europe. Additional formations and command and control infrastructure are placed in the Baltic states, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria. NATO is increasing its offensive capacity along all lines of contact with Russia. Aerodrome and port capacity is being expanded, warehouse and logistics centres are being established. This enables NATO to rapidly expand its strength by deploying the NATO Response Force to the region. There is an uptick in NATO intelligence-gathering activity near the Russian Federation's borders. The number of NATO operational and combat training exercises in Eastern Europe has nearly doubled over the past two years.

All of these actions by the Alliance are destructive and amount to provocation. By implementing its plans for expansion NATO is violating the balance of forces in the region and increasing the risk of military incidents.

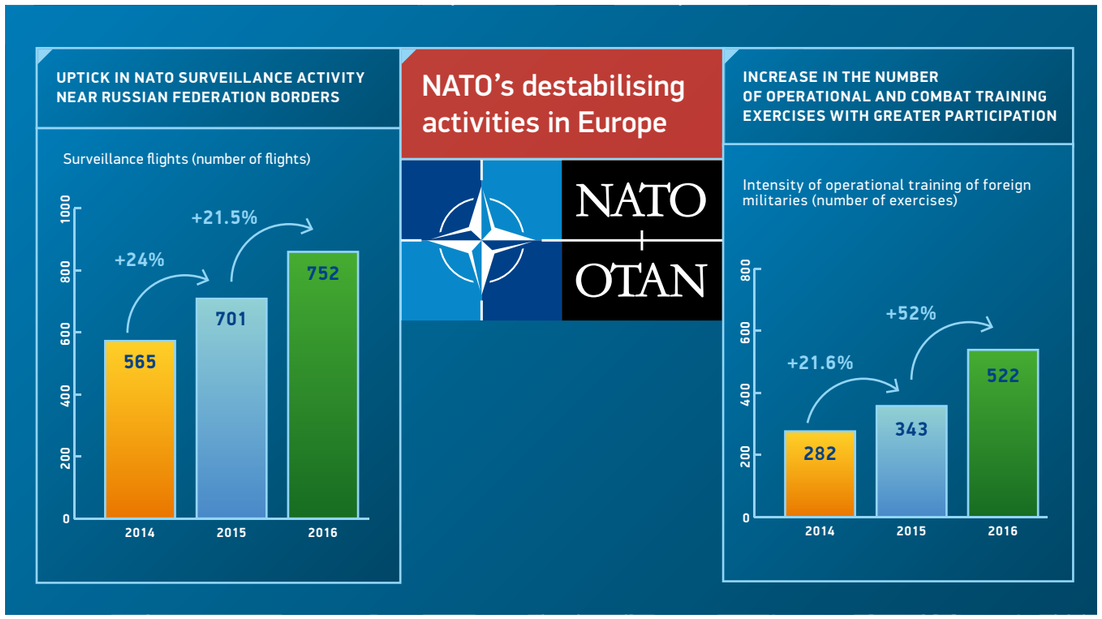
The second factor is related to the deployment of NATO's missile defence system in Europe. Today it has reached initial operational readiness. It includes Aegis Ashore BMD systems in Romania

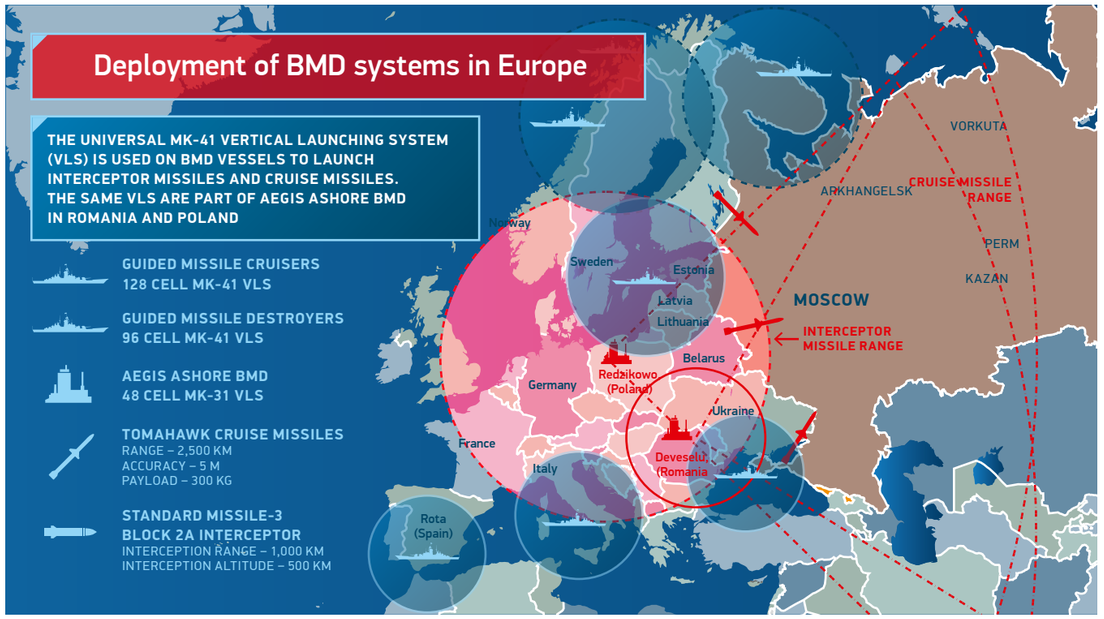


while work is accelerating to deploy US BMD systems in Poland by 2018. The missile defence base in Romania houses universal launch systems that can launch not only interceptor missiles but also Tomahawk cruise missiles. There are plans to deploy these systems in Poland as well. As a result, all the strategic facilities situated in European Russia are within range.

We will undoubtedly take the steps we need to in order to counter these threats. But the most important thing is that Europe does not become any safer due to the deployment of these BMD systems.

The Pentagon's plans to modernise its tactical nuclear weapons arsenal and its storage facilities in Europe also have a negative impact on regional security. This refers to about 200 bombs held in Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, and Turkey.





Pilots from NATO countries that do not have nuclear weapons participate in exercises that simulate nuclear weapons use. This is a direct violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The third destabilising factor is unresolved conflicts. The continuing military confrontation in south-east Ukraine has a particularly negative influence on the situation in Europe. It can only be resolved politically. European countries, however, provide military support to the Kiev regime, thus prolonging the conflict.

The third factor is closely related to the fourth, which is the growing threat of terrorism and radicalism in Europe. It is fuelled by the increase in migration flow into Europe from unstable countries in the Middle East and North Africa region.

The final factor is related to the emergence of new security threats in cyberspace. NATO has started to develop a process by which Article 5 of the Washington Treaty (collective defence) could be invoked over a cyber-attack on technical systems that underpin NATO countries' public administration and military command. Today, however, the real source of this type of attack is virtually impossible to identify. It therefore is possible to launch accusations and use military means without any proof of the target's guilt. This could lead to chaos in international relations.

The necessary conditions that would make it possible to overcome the impact of these destructive factors are currently absent.

Europe's main security problem today is that the level of trust between the West and Russia is critically low. Issues related to the security of the European Union have long been discussed separately from Russian security, even though we are on the same continent and for a long time there have not been any ideological barriers between us, and even though we face growing common threats and challenges. Despite this, the confrontational rhetoric regarding the Russian Federation is only gaining momentum.

The EU and NATO regularly accuse Russia of exacerbating tensions.

A forum where it could be possible to meet and, at least, clarify each other's positions, intentions, and fears, does indeed exist, the Russia–NATO Council, but it lacks the most important feature — dialogue between militaries. Today virtually all contacts along expert military lines have been wound down. All this contributes to the further deterioration of Russia–NATO relations.

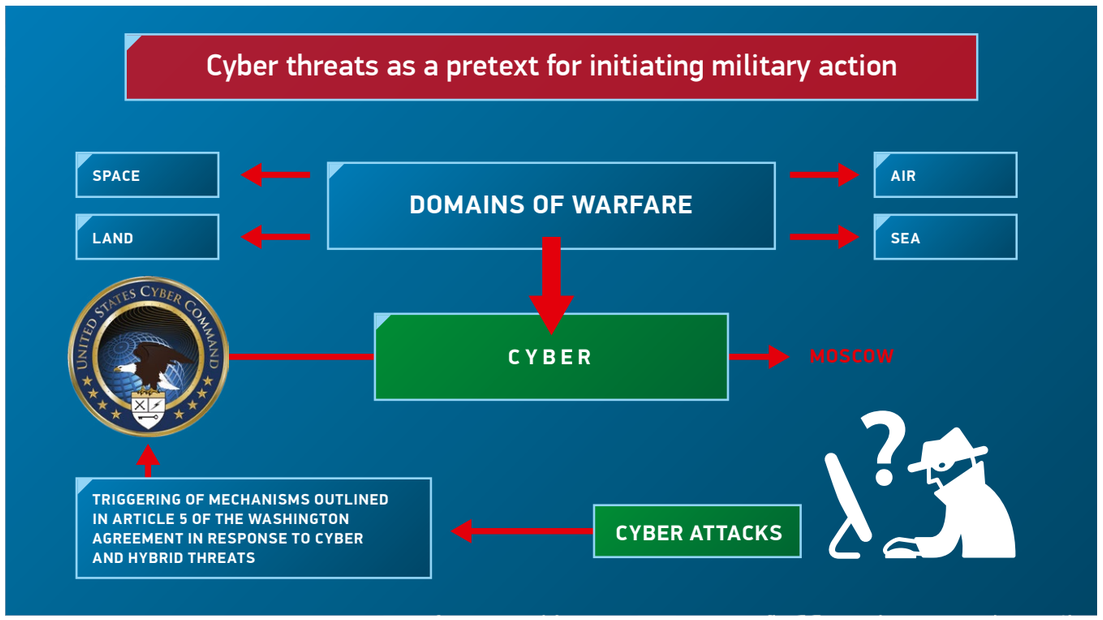
Countries in the West are increasing their intense information war against Russia. If you watch the news on EU and US media, you get the impression that almost all the negative events that take place across the globe are down to either Russia's secret services or its hackers. This disinformation campaign has very clear aims: to blacken Russia's name as much as possible and belittle its role in the fight against international terrorism and in solving other international problems.

The very fact that today, in cultured and tolerant Europe, monuments to Soviet soldiers who died in the fight against fascism are defaced is itself a direct consequence of the information policy enacted regarding Russia.

The old propaganda concept of "the Russian threat" is being actively applied in order to justify the policy of containing Russia and to support the demand for NATO in public consciousness across the European Union.

Evaluating the state of Europe's security architecture, one can conclude that it no longer corresponds to the fast-changing nature of international relations. Hostility, pressure, sanctions: these are not the right instruments to use to strengthen it. A new and mutually beneficial European security system can be built together, through joint efforts and the participation of all European states.

In today's environment Russia is not willing to curtail cooperation on security issues. We will continue to transform the Russian Armed Forces with unprecedented openness. Every day the Russian Ministry of Defence website posts dozens of news updates about diverse areas of Army and Navy activity. We are as open as we can be about the operational and combat training exercises for forces and staff. We release information about snap checks of forces and major exercises. We regularly hold briefings on their



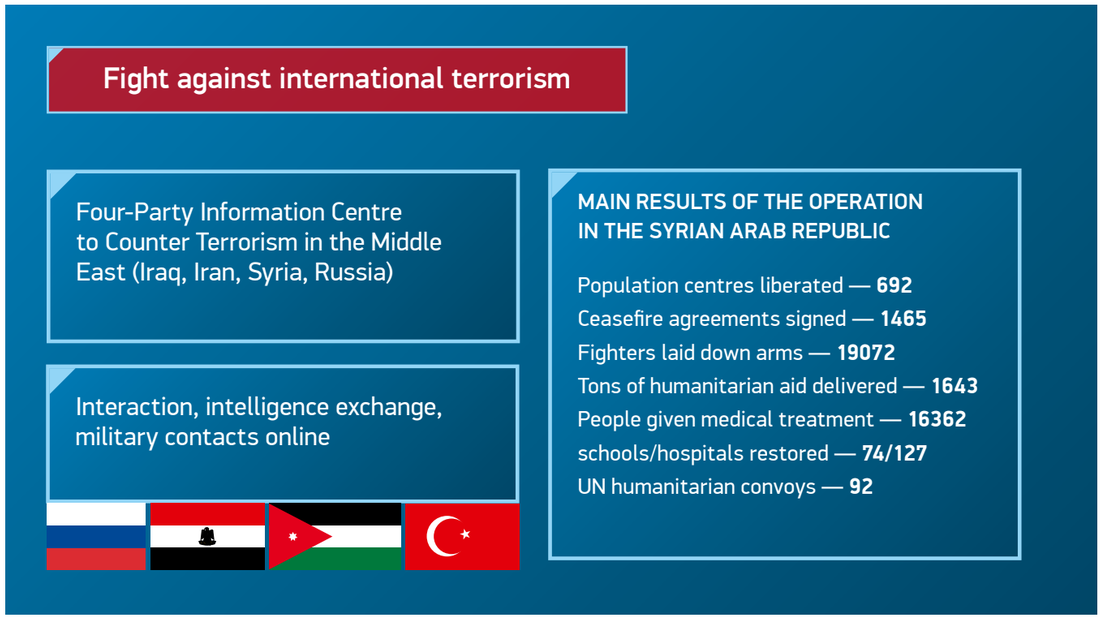
results. All major military training exercises are covered extensively in Russian and international media. The frequency of updates on the activities of the Russian Armed Forces has significantly increased since the Russian Aerospace Forces started operating in Syria. We intend to continue along this track, and will invite representatives of NATO countries' militaries and NATO military command to take part in events organised by the Russian Ministry of Defence.

We are open to full-scale dialogue and interaction with NATO. It is most important that this process takes place on an equitable, trusting, and constructive basis.

The Russia–NATO Council meeting last year saw the Russian side propose a number of concrete measures to rebuild relations with NATO along the military track, and also to define opportunities for joint response to

common challenges and threats. The Russian initiative went unanswered. The West also ignores our offers to join forces in the fight against international terrorism. Since 2015 Russia has been fighting radical Islamist groupings in Syria, containing terrorism abroad, and preventing its advance onto Russian and European soil.

The lack of close cooperation between our countries in the fight against terrorism creates conditions for ISIS to flourish. Proof of this can be seen in the major terror attacks which have claimed numerous lives in Europe (in France, Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Russia), and which ISIS is responsible for. However, no steps are being taken to bring our positions closer together. The leadership of the EU and NATO continue to pursue a unilateral policy that casts Russia as responsible for all the negative events in the world.

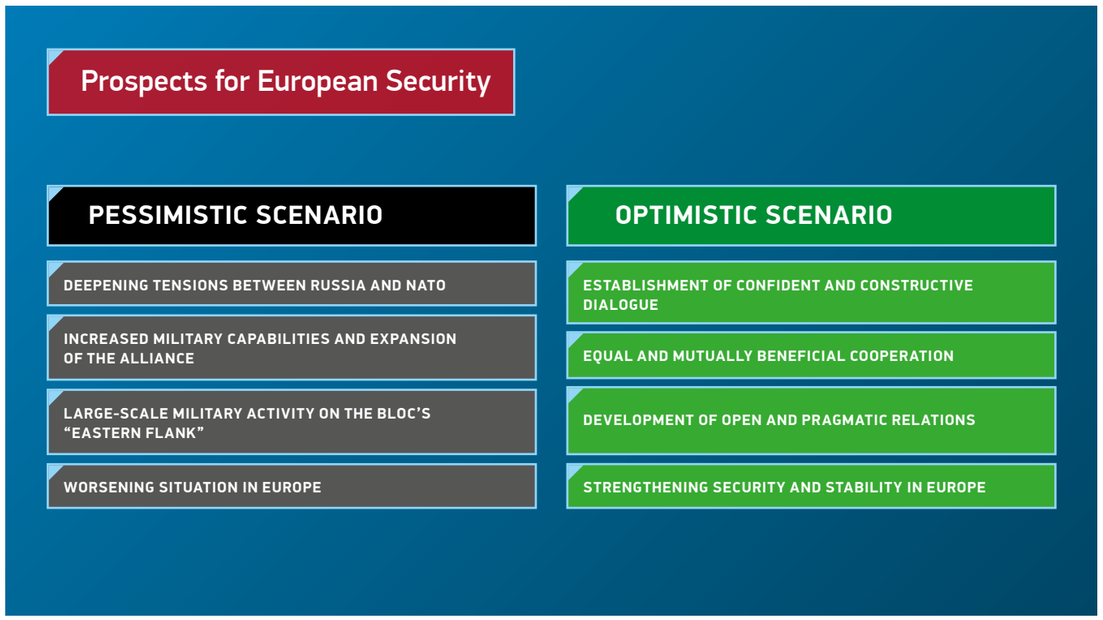


A particularly clear example of this situation can be seen in the US missile strike on the Syrian government forces' airbase, which was enthusiastically supported by almost all European countries despite the lack of any evidence that Bashar al-Assad had used chemical weapons. As for the prospects for European security, a realistic assessment of the environment today leads us to two scenarios for its further development.

First, the pessimistic scenario. The significant differences — particularly between Russia and NATO — that exist today will continue to deepen. The alliance will continue to expand, and will continue its large-scale military activity on its Eastern flank. Russia will be forced to respond adequately to the situation and take required deterrence measures. Common threats and challenges that the West and Russia face, and which require a joint solution, will remain unsolved. As a result, European security will only deteriorate.

The second scenario is optimistic. The West and Russia will understand each other's interests and concerns. A dialogue will form between them, trust will build, and open and pragmatic relations will develop. European politicians will stop trying to impose their own conditions on the development of relations with Russia.

I am confident that this scenario would enable the strengthening of security and stability in Europe. This confidence is rooted in the fact that we have long faced the need for decisive measures to stabilise the situation, ensure equitable and indivisible security for all peoples of Europe. But being realistic, we will take concrete practical measures to respond to new threats and challenges, not only to our own security — but also to that of Europe.



LIEUTENANT-GENERAL ANDREY RAVKOV
Minister of Defence of the Republic of Belarus

On behalf of the Republic of Belarus, let me extend my regards to all the participants in the VI Moscow Conference on International Security. As almost all international military cooperation contacts between the world's leading geopolitical powers have been frozen amid the ongoing confrontation between them, the role of this venue for discussion in increasing openness and international confidence is as high as ever. We are grateful to the organisers for this opportunity once again to outline our fundamental position.

Its essence lies in our commitment to the peaceful resolution of all disagreements by means of diplomacy. Our country does not threaten anyone; nor does it make any demands upon anyone. In our opinion, the use of military force is a measure of last resort, and we must do our utmost never to have to resort to it.

The Republic of Belarus lies at the centre of the European continent; it straddles the geopolitical divide between the East and West. Our state cannot distance itself from the processes unfolding in Europe. But everything that is happening on that continent right now can be described in one word: uncertainty. That is why we would like to share our concerns about the direction these processes right across the border are now taking. Our first concern is the growing militarisation of Europe. The question of why NATO did not cease to exist at the same time the Warsaw Pact did is rhetorical. Instead of dissolution or transformation into a political body, the alliance has been looking far and wide for a new enemy.

It has now found that "enemy". In the West, everyone and his dog is now talking about the "Eastern threat". NATO's eastward expansion is now a fact we have to live with. Our country's northern and western neighbours are members of that military bloc. Our southern neighbour, Ukraine, is also pressing ahead with its own integration into NATO.

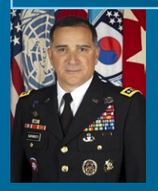
These are the geopolitical realities that we face; division lines are not being erased, they are merely moving closer to our own borders, thereby multiplying the level of military threat in Eastern Europe.

We have a similar view of the decisions taken by the NATO leadership in the framework of operations Atlantic Resolve and Enhanced Forward Presence. Their implementation includes building up the NATO forces in the east. Conditions are being created for a build-up of third countries' strike forces in the territory of our neighbours. The amount of heavy weaponry stockpiled in the Baltic states and in Poland for arming US brigade tactical groups is enough to deploy an entire army corps. What is worse, the numbers of these weapons are not regulated by any treaties.

NATO's bombastic statements of support for its Baltic and Polish allies also conceal another important event. The Warsaw summit has approved changes in the mechanism of NATO decision-making: instead of decisions

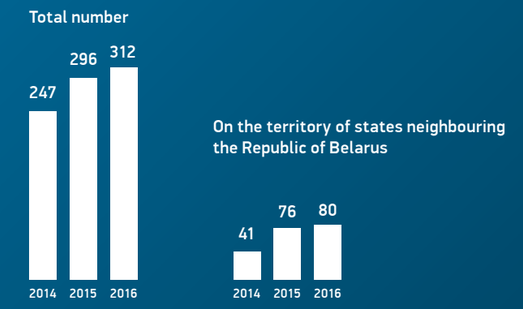
Growing militarisation of the European continent

"The Supreme Allied Commander Europe is responsible for the overall command, control, and conduct of NATO military operations. He conducts the necessary military planning of operations. He has the right to order the use of the rapid reaction force.
(Following the Warsaw Summit)"



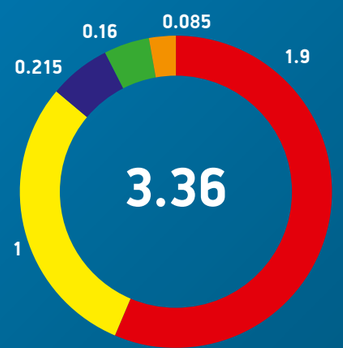
CURTIS SCAPARROTTI
Supreme Allied Commander Europe

INCREASED INTENSITY OF NATO ALLIED FORCES EXERCISES AND TRAINING



Growing militarisation of the European continent

2017 COSTS OF OPERATION ATLANTIC RESOLVE (US $ BILLION)



- increased stocks of armaments and military equipment
- support for the presence of the US Army's Armored Brigade Combat Team
- improvement of infrastructure that enables the deployment of US troops
- exercises and training held at greater intensity and scope
- military capacity building in NATO member states and partner countries

By May 2017, the total number of NATO troops in Eastern Europe may amount to 11,000 servicemen and 570 pieces of military equipment.

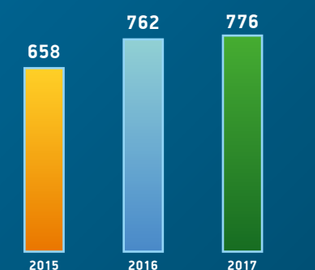
NATO OTAN

Upward trend in military budgets

COUNTRY	DEFENCE EXPENDITURE IN 2016, US $ BILLION (AS A SHARE OF GDP)
United Kingdom	69.2 (2.4 %)
Germany	37.7 (1.37 %)
France	34.8 (1.75 %)
Turkey	20.8 (2.1 %)
Poland	9.6 (2 %)
Lithuania	0.631 (1.48 %)
Latvia	0.4 (1.41 %)
Estonia	0.49 (2.07 %)

NATO OTAN

TOTAL DEFENCE APPROPRIATIONS OF NATO MEMBER STATES (€ BILLION)



By 2018, Latvia and Lithuania plan for their defence budgets to reach the target of 2% of GDP

Poland as a contender for the role of the regional centre of power in Europe

POLAND SEEKS THE STATUS OF REGIONAL LEADER IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE:

it advocates the revision of relations within the EU;

it is a member of the Visegrád Group (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary) and the Weimar Triangle (Germany, Poland, and France), furthermore it presents itself as the leading state of Eastern Europe;

it initiates the process of creating a new geopolitical entity, the so-called Intermarium Union. This union should include states of the Baltic and Black Sea regions, as well as the Visegrád Group;

it serves as the crucial advance base of the United States in Eastern Europe;

it seeks to strengthen ties with states of Central and Eastern Europe and further guard them from "possible Russian aggression".

Centrifugal tendencies in the European Union

RESULTS OF THE REFERENDUM ON THE UNITED KINGDOM'S MEMBERSHIP OF THE EU

FIVE SCENARIOS OF EU DEVELOPMENT

48%
Remain a member of the EU

52%
Leave the EU

29.03.2017

PRIME MINISTER THERESA MAY SIGNED A LETTER NOTIFYING THE EU AUTHORITIES THAT SHE HAD TRIGGERED THE PROCESS WHEREBY THE UNITED KINGDOM WOULD EXIT THE EU

"Continuation of previous policies" — the 27 remaining members of the EU, as before, will focus on reforms

The EU's primary efforts will be aimed at developing the common internal market and political integration processes will be put on hold

"Multi-speed Europe" — "those who want more do more". The EU could become an even less transparent and more complex structure

The EU will focus its efforts on several areas guided by the "fewer but more efficient" principle

EU states "will share authority, resources, and responsibilities for decision-making"

being taken after careful consideration by all members of the alliance, that role has now been usurped by a single military official.

One does not have to be an experienced military theoretician to realise that such a change radically alters the strategy of military deployment in the event of a military conflict. That new strategy leaves precious little time for attempting a peaceful settlement of international differences. The cardinal rule now is, "whoever acts first, wins".

We are now witnessing exactly such an approach being implemented in the scenarios and reflected in the numerical strength of the exercises and manoeuvres of the joint NATO forces.

Faced with these facts, Belarus has to respond. In this, we absolutely agree with our strategic ally the Russian Federation. The upcoming Zapad 2017 joint exercise is not sabre-rattling, but merely another one in a series of drills whose main goal is to ascertain the ability of our armed forces to serve their defensive purpose in this new environment.

But on the whole, the large-scale exercises being held by all the parties, and the mutual accusations of insufficient notice being given to neighbours, or of the lack of transparency of such events, merely point to the need for urgent measures to reduce tensions and resolve our differences. The only way out is to resume dialogue and rebuild an effective system of treaties on security and confidence-building measures.

The second major problem I would like to highlight is growing military spending.

Much more money is being spent these days on defence than on conflict prevention or humanitarian aid.

Centrifugal tendencies in the European Union

MOVEMENT TOWARDS SELF-DETERMINATION

- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Flanders
- Bavaria
- Basque Country
- Catalonia
- Corsica

THE CONCEPT OF A "MULTI-SPEED EUROPE"

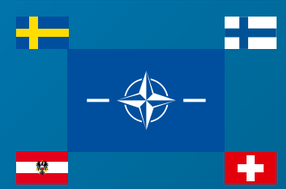
grants each EU member the freedom to participate, or not to participate, in particular integration steps depending on its own priorities and the domestic political environment;

involves preserving an EU in which member states act together when possible, at different intensities and pace when necessary;

A "Core Europe" will continue moving towards its "cherished goal", while other states that do not, for various reasons, share this desire should step aside.

Neutral states' cooperation with the North Atlantic Alliance

The rules of the game in Europe have changed so much that old concepts of neutrality — as the framework for neutral states' interests and policies — are no longer relevant



NATO's Partnership for Peace programme was joined by:

Finland and Sweden in 1994;

Austria in 1995;

Switzerland in 1996

The Partnership for Peace programme provides Austria, Sweden, Finland, and Switzerland with an opportunity to cooperate with the North Atlantic Alliance on their own conditions without becoming a member of the organisation.

Neutral states' partnership with NATO can be regarded as a successful hedging strategy. It does not entail any burden associated with membership of the organisation.

But instead of seeking an agreement on a reasonable limitation of military budgets, many states keep ramping them up.

We have a very critical view of the attempts by the US leadership to force all the European NATO members to spend at least 2% of their GDP on defence. We believe that this is nothing but lobbying on behalf of the North American military-industrial complex.

Even more worryingly, the growing defence spending and military capability of the European allies is not being compensated for by the pullout of US military bases from these countries. No promises are being made that those troops will be withdrawn! That is why our assessment of these processes is unambiguous: we are witnessing an excessive and unjustified militarisation of the European continent.

The stance taken by the Eastern European states on this issue is quite clear.

By ramping up their military spending and building up their military might, some of them are demonstrating their aspiration to become major regional powers in their own right. We understand that for our neighbours, choosing militarisation as a driver of growth is a long-term trend. That is why Belarus views this as a negative factor that raises the level of military threat in the region. Now let me say a few words about centrifugal tendencies in the European Union.

The question of whether Europe will remain united militarily has to do with the evolution of the pan-European security and defence policy. In that sense, we need to ponder the concept of a "multi-speed" Europe recently adopted by four leading European nations.

In our opinion, that concept radically changes the system of decision-making in the EU. There is no guarantee that this new initiative will not be applied to military decision-making. There are also many remaining questions about the principles of using the EU's multinational forces.

As for Brexit, we believe one of the goals Britain might be pursuing is to give itself a greater freedom of manoeuvre militarily. This concern is also being fuelled by the ongoing parliamentary debate in the UK about strengthening Britain's nuclear capability and increasing the country's defence spending.

The third major issue I would like to raise today is the problem of neutral states being dragged into military preparations.

The world has yet to fully understand how Austria's or Switzerland's active participation in NATO projects accords with their neutral status. Meanwhile, NATO is also increasing its pressure on two other neutral states, Sweden and Finland.

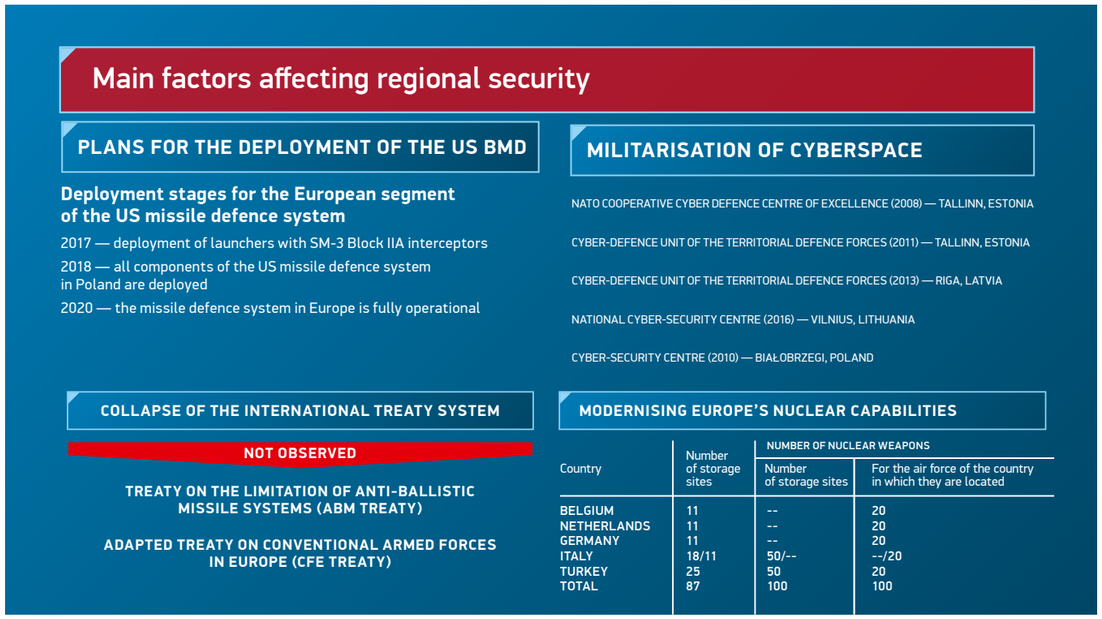
The pretexts for dragging these countries into NATO vary from having to stand up to the alleged Russian military threat to protecting the assets of Swedish and Finnish banks in the Baltic states.

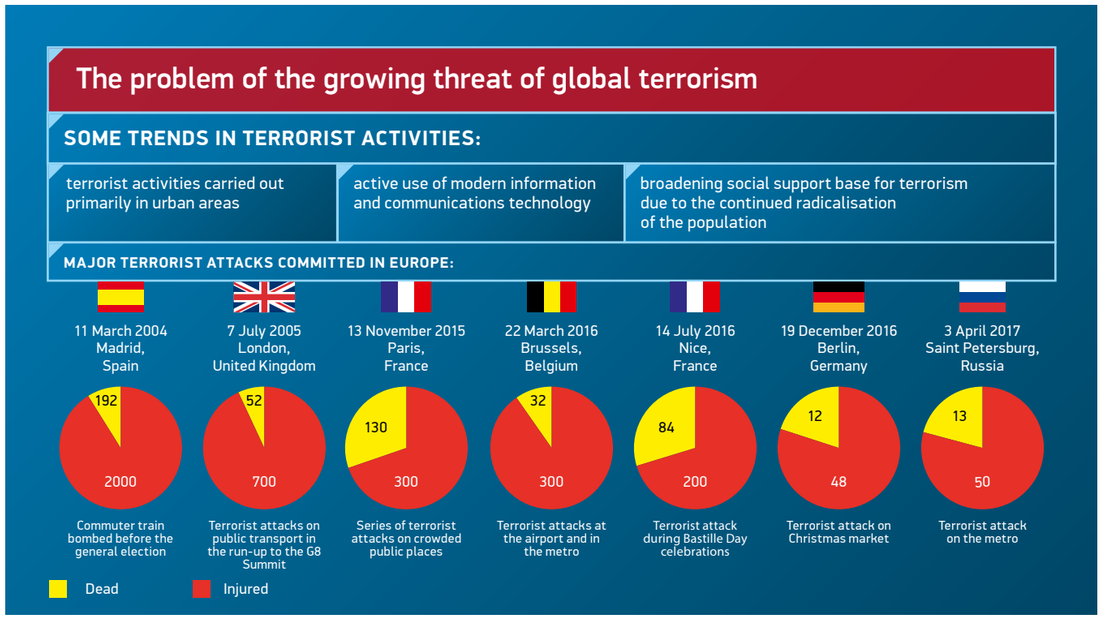
To Belarus, all of this means that still more foreign powers might one day deploy their forces in the territory of our neighbours, and that the size of those forces might increase even further.

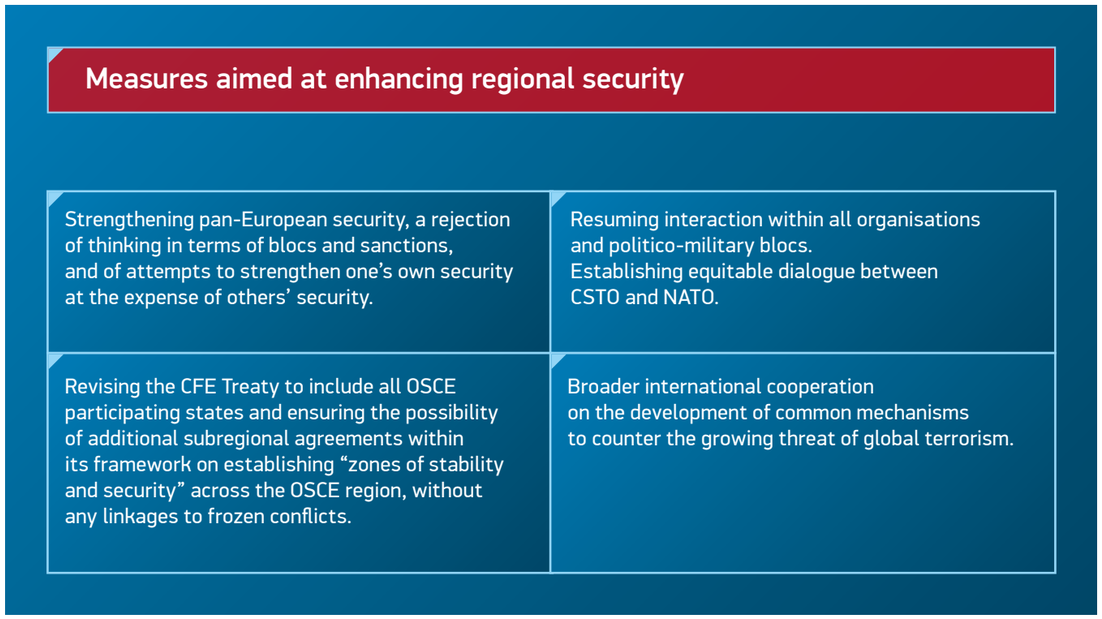
Finally, the fourth major issue I would like to discuss is the military confrontation in Ukraine.

As one well-known European politician once put it, "instead of being a bridge between Europe and Russia, Ukraine has become a battlefield". In essence, we now have a constant source of instability right across our border. The "frozen" military conflict in neighbouring Ukraine inflicts major damage on our own security, especially in the economic sphere. Investors see the risks and refuse to invest in the Belarusian economy because they see it as a country situated in an unstable region. Our companies are losing their traditional Ukrainian market; commercial partnerships built over decades are being broken up, including partnerships between defence industry companies.

Speaking of the purely military side of things, we have a number of major concerns. The first and the most worrying of them is that the direction of our neighbour Ukraine's military policy has dramatically changed. Fraternal nations are now in a state







Measures aimed at enhancing regional security

The Republic of Belarus regards its participation in the work of the UN as a basis for improving mechanisms for maintenance of global security.

As an OSCE participating state, the Republic of Belarus advocates the development of the regional security system with due regard for the interests of all states, rooted in the principles of trust and mutual understanding.

Maintenance of good-neighbourly and mutually beneficial relations with the EU as well as partnership with NATO.

Further development of relations regarding confidence- and security-building measures within the framework of bilateral agreements signed by the Republic of Belarus.

of confrontation. Second, there are now huge amounts of unaccounted weaponry and ammunition, and some of it could make its way into Belarus. Third, we have to worry about the potential “migrants” who only know how to make a living as soldiers of fortune. Such people being used as weapons are nothing new. We have before us the example of Europe, where uncontrolled migration has caused a major increase in the terror threat.

The reverse side of this coin is that the priority of bringing migration flows back under control is being used as a pretext for drawing new division lines. The border infrastructure of some of our neighbours has recently begun to resemble a system of layered military defences.

The problems I have briefly outlined are merely the tip of the iceberg.

You are all well aware of such long-running issues as the American missile defence system in Europe, the degradation of the international system of confidence-building and security measures; the modernisation of the European nuclear arsenals; and the militarisation of cyberspace.

All of this raises the level of military threat and increases the uncertainty on the European continent. In these circumstances, the policy of confrontation is a policy that leads us to a dead end; a policy that merely shows the weakness of its proponents.

Any temporary truce that would freeze our relations in their current state would not be enough, either. That would be only a partial solution, and its effectiveness would be far from certain. We must think of the future! Only such an understanding of the processes that underpin modern international security can bring us to a successful outcome. That is why please allow me to reiterate the proposals we outlined at the previous security conference in Moscow:

First, we should abandon the rhetoric of recriminations and bloc mentality. We should abandon the concept of a post-truth world, in which all kinds of accusations can be levelled at one’s opponents without a shred of evidence. We should return to mutually respectful dialogue on the basis of the principle of indivisible security. We should look for common ground and seek compromises. We should resume cooperation in the framework of all the existing organisations and military-political blocs. There should be equal dialogue between the CSTO and NATO. Let me emphasise the importance of making sure that all international actors without exception are engaged in that process.

Second, the unjustified increases in defence spending must end. This will help to bolster security in Europe without ramping up the military capability and presence near each other’s borders. Defence spending must be based on the principle of reasonable sufficiency rather than military dominance. The same principle should be at the core of any future arms control agreements in Europe.

Third, we need to improve the military-political toolbox at the disposal of the international security organisations, especially the OSCE. Negotiations should continue on achieving a settlement of frozen conflicts in Europe. If the peace process makes progress, there will be no major migration flows, which are an element of hybrid warfare. People will have no reason to flee their home countries. As for peace, it can be achieved only if all the leading geopolitical powers come to an agreement and to a shared vision of the future. Otherwise, each will play to their own set of rules, and the confrontation will continue to spiral out of control.

Fourth, we should expand our cooperation on developing shared mechanisms of countering the terror threat, including the use of military instruments. That, in our opinion, is the common ground that can help all the interested parties stand united in confronting our common enemy.

To conclude, we firmly believe that reason will eventually prevail.

A selective cooperation would mean a return to the Cold War past. It would endanger our shared future.

Let me also reiterate once again our commitment to coordinating and promoting our shared interests on the international arena, based on the universal principles of equal dialogue and mutual respect. Our fundamental position remains unchanged: we call for building confidence and security in a modern pragmatic system of international relations.

In pursuit of that goal, we are open to cooperation with all states without exception who respect the national interests of the Republic of Belarus and of the Belarusian people.

ZORAN ĐORĐEVIĆ
Minister of Defence of the Republic of Serbia

It is my great pleasure to greet participants of the VI Moscow Conference on International Security on behalf of Prime Minister and future President of the Republic of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić. It is my honour to have the opportunity to call attention to one of the most serious problems that the world order faces today, and at the same time to present the views of the Republic of Serbia, which modestly and safely endeavours to follow the most powerful states in dealing with contemporary security challenges and asymmetric threats.

The process of globalisation has brought a great problem of runaway world, and in the era of the constant race in technology and scientific innovation, we see sudden economic collapse, which destroys some of the strongest systems regardless of borders and military structures, and there is also the new type of asymmetric threat posed by terrorism, which, being a global threat, represents a danger to all of us.

Instead of global rapprochement, the modern world is faced with a process of intensive global divergence. In most cases the nation state and national ambitions remain strong, and the struggle for power is still the main characteristic of international relations.

Nationalism has been discovered again in the centre of Europe, the place which is believed to have gone furthest in practicing a multi-ethnic social concept. Global terrorism has become the main global security challenge and threat in the 21st century because it threatens to cause serious consequences of global proportions. The recent terrorist attacks demonstrate that the instigators and perpetrators of these, the most blatant form of political violence, are not an isolated problem that can be solved exclusively by repressive means. Therefore, it is necessary to take a multidisciplinary approach through preventive and repressive measures. Furthermore, these measures have to have sufficient scope, and should include: political, legal, economic, social, psychological, communicative, educational, intelligence, and finally military and police measures.

In the region of the Republic of Serbia, extremism obviously represents the cause and consequence of conflict. It deepens mistrust and acts as a starkly destabilising factor of regional stability. With all its conflict potential, it represents one of the most significant challenges for the normalisation of ethnic and other relations of the Western Balkans countries.

The Republic of Serbia is committed to enhancing regional cooperation as part of its European process. We actively contribute to bilateral security cooperation, as well as to collaboration within regional multilateral security initiatives. We are firmly committed to implementing the policy of military neutrality protecting and promoting our national interests.

Serbia has intensive relations with the Russian Federation including military and security cooperation. The support of those countries that have not recognised the unilateral declaration of independence of so-called Kosovo is of vital importance in protecting our national interests.

Kosovo and Metohija is still the main security challenge for our country. We will never recognise a unilateral declaration of independence of so-called Kosovo, and the way to the permanent and sustainable solution is possible only through negotiations in accordance with the international law.

Serbia would like to have a status-neutral dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and to solve issues of vital interest for citizens in the province within this framework. We are fulfilling the Brussels Agreement and we expect Pristina to do the same.

In order to continue with the economic recovery of the Republic of Serbia, it is necessary to provide political and security stability not only in Serbia, but in the surrounding areas as well. Thus, we are interested in preserving peace and stability in the Balkans, as well as in Europe as a whole.

Respecting its foreign policy priorities, the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia will endeavour to additionally strengthen cooperation with all strategic partners in the following period, especially in the sphere of conducting joint exercises.

Today Serbia, as the greatest security exporter in the region, stands again as the guard of the most dangerous road and the most fateful gate. Serbia is successful in solving consequences of the migration crisis, preventing potential threats including terrorism. Therefore, I am especially proud of the excellent cooperation within the Joint Force of the Ministry of the Interior and the Serbian Armed Forces, which in a humane and professional manner strive to mitigate the consequences of the migration crisis, and to quickly respond to all attempts and activities of transnational organised crime, which also involves illegal human trafficking.

As the Defence Minister, I was one of the initiators of the development of the Strategy for Combating Terrorism, which represents a valuable normative contribution of the Republic of Serbia. Under the draft Strategy, which is in the final phase of adoption, the Ministry of Defence has a functional role in priority activities involved in a system-wide response to a terrorist attack, involving impact management and mitigating the consequences of a terrorist attack.

Specifically, we are talking about the Serbian Armed Forces achieving a level of operational and functional capabilities through participation in international exercises on crisis management and mitigating the consequences of a terrorist attack.

The international position of Serbia has significantly improved in recent years. Serbia has been recognised as a responsible, reliable and predictable partner, which, as an EU candidate, would like to share responsibility with European partners and develop cooperation with all international security actors in the security and other spheres and thus contribute to the global security.

Therefore, I am convinced that there is a common interest in jointly mastering the skills of strategic communication as the most important type of prevention of terrorism, violent extremism, and radicalisation.

Throughout history, Serbia has always chosen the right side, dear friends, and be sure that in the future Serbia will always choose the right side. The others should consider which side they were on and which side they will take. Today Serbia has no doubts in the fight against terrorism. Serbia has chosen the right side and stood shoulder to shoulder with its friends.

Today, more than ever, it is necessary to be united in the fight against terrorism. It is the only way to overcome and eradicate it forever, because, as His Excellency Vladimir Putin said, terrorism does not have either religion or statehood, and there is no difference among terrorists, because they are interested not in reaching an agreement and calming a situation, but in the maintenance of the constant war in order to secure the aims of their leaders behind the curtain. We stand for a more secure and peaceful world!

AMBASSADOR LAMBERTO ZANNIER
Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

After the end of the Cold War the promise of a common and indivisible security space stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok seemed within reach. Indeed, the vision of a cooperative and rules-based order outlined in the Charters of Paris and Istanbul seemed all but inevitable. Many looked to the OSCE with high hopes and great expectations.

It is now clear that the post-Cold War order failed to provide genuine stability. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the break-up of Yugoslavia soon shattered the emerging security paradigm. Divergent threat perceptions appeared. Trust and confidence in East-West relations diminished. Military predictability deteriorated. New borders divided peoples, creating crises and conflicts whose dire legacies still affect security today.

We are now entering a new phase in relations in the OSCE space. Although we still see signs of Cold War logic, including renewed geopolitical competition and confrontation, we have left behind both the Cold War and the post-Cold War transition. But the new realignment is not yet complete. In fact, the process is still in motion, and what shape it will ultimately take remains unclear.

Today's world is fundamentally different from that of the Cold War. We now live in a multipolar, increasingly complex and interconnected security environment with many more actors, including non-state movements and groups that seek to exploit our divisions.

In many countries in the OSCE region, new national tendencies are making it difficult for governments to continue old policies. Growing populism, nationalism and even xenophobia are reactions to new trends, including more frequent acts of terrorism, the proliferation of transnational threats, and the pressures of mass migration. They also contribute to fragmentation and polarisation within and between societies, increasing the risk of confrontation.

We are at high risk of being drawn into a vicious circle driven by fear and prejudice fed by a growing sense of unpredictability and uncertainty. This is creating a fragmented, polarised and confrontational environment that undermines stability and cooperation. This in turn deepens insecurity, further eroding stability.

Some of the tools and principles we developed together to ensure security and stability have not withstood the challenge of these changes. The norms and principles that underpinned the international order for decades are being contested. Some tools have become obsolete, and we are struggling to develop policies to address new challenges like cyber-threats. In this regard, we have some measures in place to prevent conflict stemming from cyber-threats, but implementation is lacking.

As the balance tips further away from cooperation towards confrontation, multilateralism is being challenged. We see this on a daily basis in the OSCE, where mistrust and confrontation are crowding out space for dialogue and cooperation.

There is a limit to what can be done if governments are unwilling to engage. It can lead to a downward spiral of increasingly hostile rhetoric, greater investment in defence, growing pressure for militarised responses, and, ultimately, heightened risk of conflict — including accidental conflict triggered by misperceptions or misunderstandings. All of this forces me to conclude that we need to reconsider the whole post-Cold War security arrangement.

Throughout its history, the OSCE has been an instrument for stability. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was established to enable dialogue with the concrete aim of preventing war. It is high time for us to revive this kind of results-oriented dialogue. But we also need to reform the Organization to ensure it has the capacity to confront contemporary challenges to stability and security effectively.

The OSCE has repeatedly proved to be flexible and responsive. It was transformed in the wake of the optimism of the early 1990s and evolved again in response to the ensuing conflicts. Today it continues to adapt itself to address both traditional and emerging challenges. Yet throughout its history, the OSCE's fundamental characteristics have remained constant. Its comprehensive approach takes into account the interconnection and interaction of different elements of security and seeks solutions that address them together. It can serve as a bridge between sides that sometimes have radically different visions of what security means. And it continues to invest in efforts to prevent instability and conflict, and to deal with their consequences when they arise.

Unfortunately divergent threat perceptions and different interpretations of fundamental principles in this new context are undermining the OSCE's capacity to seek common approaches. As a North-South split is starting to emerge, the East-West divide is deepening not only in geopolitical terms, but also in terms of values. The West has dug in its heels to preserve the status quo, while here in the East, we hear complaints about the current state of affairs, especially in relation to the expansion of European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. Meanwhile, those caught in the middle of this renewed competition are being pulled in both directions.

Despite these divisions and differences, current challenges to security demand cooperation. A return to zero-sum logic is in no one's interest. We must continue to look for areas of engagement. We must be pragmatic and seek convergences of interests. We have no other choice. Otherwise the dynamics of confrontation will only continue to gain momentum and could propel us into conflict.

We can see these dynamics at work right now in the crisis in and around Ukraine. Completely different narratives about the crisis and its origins are fuelling mistrust and tensions, and we see increasing pressure for militarised responses. The risk of escalation is extremely high, and it carries the potential to reignite protracted conflicts in the OSCE region and beyond. At the same time, the hybrid nature of the crisis has shown the limits of traditional crisis management tools.

Achieving a peaceful and durable settlement to the crisis in and around Ukraine is more urgent than ever. The OSCE is doing its part to facilitate the political process through the Trilateral Contact Group, and our Special Monitoring Mission is working hard to de-escalate tensions on the ground. I would like to commend our monitors for their courage and their commitment to carrying out their work in increasingly dangerous conditions. A few days ago the Mission experienced its first casualty, and I offer my heartfelt condolences to the family of the colleague who died. This tragic incident underlines the dangers that our monitors confront every day. But they also face daily hindrances to their work, and I once again call on all sides to respect the monitors' mandate and guarantee them freedom of movement and unfettered access.

This brings me to a larger point. Ultimately, responsibility for achieving peace in Ukraine lies with the local actors. I urge all those who have influence on the sides to press them harder to comply with the Minsk Agreements and to take real and substantial steps towards a sustainable peace. Millions of innocent people in the conflict region have lost their loved ones, their homes and their livelihoods. They deserve peace. They deserve the chance to put their lives back together.

My final message to you today is that we must not abandon multilateralism, and I would like to echo the words of UN Secretary-General Guterres on this. To prevent crises from turning into conflict, and to confront new challenges effectively, we need comprehensive, cooperative and coordinated solutions. These can only be achieved through robust collective engagement underpinned by strong political leadership.

But traditional multilateralism is not enough. Today we must build flexible coalitions, mobilising diverse constituencies who can bring in new perspectives and unique expertise to complement traditional intergovernmental dynamics. Once again, the OSCE is doing its part. As the world's largest regional security organisation under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, we are building broad and strategic partnerships. We are enhancing our engagement with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners, with whom we increasingly share common security concerns. We are also strengthening our engagement with civil society, media and academia, as well as with less traditional partners like municipal governments, philanthropy and the private sector.

The OSCE is also intensifying its efforts to support the role of youth in preventing and resolving conflicts, countering global and transnational challenges, and building peace across our region. We need a new generation who can be a positive force for change, questioning old, divisive messages and calling for accountable and transparent government and institutions. We also continue to reinforce the role of women in all stages of conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

Reopening a space for real dialogue is key. With this in mind, in May I will convene a Security Days in Prague on "Countering fragmentation and polarisation: Re-creating a climate for stability in Europe", aiming to stimulate dialogue on how to re-create a stable and resilient security environment at a time of growing uncertainty and unpredictability and complementing the structured dialogue process launched by the 2017 Austrian OSCE Chairmanship.

I recently came across a very troubling quote from Antonio Gramsci. In the aftermath of the World War I he said: "The old world is dying. The new world is struggling to emerge. It is in this twilight that monsters are born".

These words should make us reflect. Today we seem to be facing an equally precarious transitional moment. But in contrast to Gramsci's time, today the international community has a well-equipped toolbox of instruments and mechanisms for preventing monsters from emerging, and for cooperatively tackling monsters already in our midst. The OSCE, with its inclusive platform for dialogue and joint action, is a very relevant tool. It is our common responsibility to make full use of its potential to help build a safer and more stable future for us all.

THEOLOGOS SYMEONIDIS
Head of the Office of the Hellenic Minister of National Defence

I would like to cordially thank the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation for the opportunity given to me to participate in this important conference with items on the agenda that are extremely topical.

First, I would like to underline that our countries are linked by strong ties of friendship based on, inter alia, our common spiritual and cultural values, as well as our common past.

In this era of globalisation when national borders are weakened, distances are limited and the mobility of goods and people is increasing, states and international organisations are called to face new emerging threats to international security and peace.

These threats have created a volatile environment, favouring the multiplication of supra-national risks against security. The latter mainly refers to the spread of international terrorism, the rapidly increasing trends of illegal migration and international organised crime, the spread of uncontrolled weapons trafficking, as well as the sustainment and strengthening of radical trends, such as extreme nationalism and irredentism.

The fight against terrorism should become the first priority for the international community. Modern terrorism exceeds the limits of internal security services' ability to manage it and acquires characteristics of a threat with global traits, with particular consequences for security at international, regional and national level. As a result, cooperation at every one of these levels with the aim being to eliminate terrorist threats is an imperative necessity.

In this framework, the armed forces, as they try to maintain their principal role which comprises responding to the operational demands of modern conflicts, are simultaneously called on to assume new roles, such as their commitment to humanitarian purposes and their engagement in actions against terrorism.

I would like to point out that modern terrorists appear to have no hesitation. Terrorist attacks that have already taken place, mainly in Western Europe and also here in Russia, in combination with the rise of terrorist activity in countries of North Africa and Middle East have raised serious concerns within the international community.

A basic kind of threat that stems from terrorism is that of religious extremism. There is no doubt that conflicts in the name of religion constitute a serious threat to global security.

These conflicts do not have borders. Because of the dispersion of people with radical convictions over the whole space of the international community, religious conflicts can spill over everywhere in the world.

Security and stability are not guaranteed for a country that is home to conflicting religious groups. Terrorist attacks carried out mainly by extremist Islamic organisations are characterised by three basic elements: first, that of surprise or no-warning of terrorist attack, second, integrist fanaticism and self-sacrifice, and last, access to financial resources that are extremely important for the viability, comprehensive organisation, and global expansion of these organisations.

Funding of terrorism from undefined sources is an important parameter which should be taken seriously into account by the international community. What is more alarming though, is the fact that these actions, in combination with the establishment of appropriate structures for the support and recruitment of new members for these terrorist organisations, are still taking place within various countries increasing the risks both at the domestic and at the global level.

The participation of jihadists from European countries in the wars in Syria and Iraq and their activation in North Africa, together with the role they are intended to play once they have returned to their country of origin, remains a constant and deep concern for international security.

Greece, as member state of the United Nations, the European Union and NATO, firmly supports every effort of the international community for the consolidation of stability, security, and peace around the globe.

For this reason, our Armed Forces have participated and will continue to actively participate, together with our allies and partners, in multinational missions and operations for the consolidation of peace and crisis management, in various countries, and are willing to contribute to international efforts for the promotion of peace, fight against terrorism, and the creation of peaceful living conditions in countries that are particularly affected by conflicts.

Another threat for international security is the uncontrolled trafficking of weapons systems and the deployment of weapons of mass destruction. Weapons of mass destruction are a threat that exceeds the limits of individual states, they impact global stability and their control requires smooth cooperation among the competent international organisations, as well as interstate cooperation and action in line with their international impact.

These days, the proven deployment of weapons of mass destruction, the crisis in the relations of states that have a nuclear arsenal at their disposal, the prolonged concern for the nuclear programme of North Korea together with the rise of extremism and terrorism, turn the problem of weapons of mass destruction into one of the major threats against international security and humanity in general.

At this point, I would like draw your attention to a question that concerns my country, which is a geostrategic hub between three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa. Greece, as the south-eastern gateway to Europe, is one of the states that are called on to respond to the problem of illegal migration and organised crime in combination with terrorism. There is no doubt that illegal migration routes are largely used by organised crime, providing a source of resources, originating mainly from the illicit trafficking of weapons, drugs and human trafficking.

It is worth noting that in those states that are already weak, the flow of resources linked to international criminal networks can help sustain parastatal groups and organisations that could be strong enough to question the ability of these states to maintain their sovereignty.

In addition, the interconnection of organised crime with terrorism is a dimension that should worry us deeply, mainly because this strengthens and financially supports terrorist entities. For instance, the illegal oil trade had been a source of resources for terrorist organisations, particularly ISIS. Apart from that, it seems that various countries and companies also participate in this illegal oil trade, drawing mutual benefit from prolonging this situation as they increase their profits.

Terrorist attacks in Europe prove, without a shadow of a doubt, the ties between illegal migration and terrorism, given that a certain number of terrorists that took part in particular terrorist attacks entered Europe via migration flows. In every case, the main priority of all states should be the effective response to potential threats emerging from organised criminal groups which exploit the migration routes.

In addition, concern for the security of a great number of states is raised by the role of diasporas. Attacks in Europe, particularly in Brussels and Paris, clearly reveal the active engagement of members of diasporas in terrorism. These incidents prove that the policies followed by Europe for the integration of migrant groups into European societies had no positive effect. In any case, the policy of states for the effective management of this situation should be based on three axes:

- the re-orientation of the education offered;
- the application of other integration policies;
- the implementation of practices aimed at controlling and confining persons and groups that spread intolerance and fanaticism.

Regarding the threat to international security posed by extreme nationalism, I should point out that this phenomenon is indeed the source of many conflicts and an eventual reason for the destabilisation of the international system. It is also an important factor of concern and polarisation between different groups (religious, ethnic, etc.) in the wider areas where it appears. In such an environment, the action and influence of extremist elements is favoured and is spread within states and societies which are tormented by intense conflicts and separatist trends.

The constantly increasing nationalist trends which appear in various corners of international community, such as the Western Balkans and South-Eastern Europe in general, as well as in the territories where minorities live, are prone to lead to the destabilisation of these regions in the short term.

The prevalence of extreme nationalism, in combination with the phenomenon of irredentism and of expansionism of nationalistic groups, could probably trigger new tensions in different areas and states. It is no coincidence therefore, that irredentism is the main cause that impedes the solution of long-lasting problems between states or between states and nationalist groups, thus creating fragile balances for the consolidation of peace and security.

Justice, meritocracy, equal opportunities for all citizens, and in general the compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations together constitute a strong tool in the fight against convictions that could threaten modern societies.

International cooperation to reinforce weak state structures which are underperforming, on the one hand, the rehabilitation of democratic institutions and the control over centres of power which feed various scenarios of irredentism, on the other, should become a priority for the international actors. The final aim should be to eradicate these phenomena.

The fight against terrorism, illegal migration, international crime, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which are a threat to the international community, depends, on the on hand, on the level and effectiveness of cooperation and, on the other hand, on the strategy followed by every state and its ability to formulate effective policies against these threats.

Border security is one of the major factors in a resolute response to the phenomenon of terrorism and the various kinds of threats it generates. In this respect, the capacity of states to control their borders, in combination with assistance from international organisations due to the supra-national

nature of threats, undoubtedly remains a substantial measure for the effective management of terrorism.

The international community has proven that it can cope with common threats when it cooperates harmoniously. This was demonstrated by the international cooperation in the fight against piracy and the protection of free navigation in the coastal waters of Somalia but also by the deployment of operation Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 in the maritime region of the Aegean within the framework of the fight against the migratory trafficking network, and finally, the operation of the European Union in Central Mediterranean, called SOPHIA.

Before closing, I would like to mention that the Russian Federation together with the United States remain the main actors who safeguard international security and their cooperation in the fight against terrorism is extremely important. For this reason, any possible differences in concepts of global security should be brought closer together so as to effectively respond to the common enemy. In any case, relations of trust are a prerequisite for the creation of the international environment which is necessary for the consolidation of global security.

Greece, as member of the principal international organisations and as a state which promotes peace and international law, is willing to cooperate with other members of international community to deter and respond to any possible threat which puts at risk global security.

With these thoughts in mind, I welcome the organisation of this very important conference and I am sure that fertile conclusions will come out of the presentations and the subsequent discussion, favouring creative cooperation between all of us, to the benefit of peace and security at the international level.

STJEPAN MESIĆ
Ex-President of the Republic of Croatia, public activist

I would like to begin in a somewhat unusual way, but I hope you will understand why. I will repeat, word for word, a few phrases from my speech at last year's conference in Moscow. Back at the time, I said, and I quote, "The tone that is now used to discuss war and peace in Europe, and the need for a new system of European security, is equally challenging and sensitive. In other words, we are living in an era when it appears that all the previously accepted foundations of international relations are not being taken into account; in a time when might makes right, and when force is used to impose regimes that suit someone's preferences".

Why did I just repeat those words? Because I wanted to draw your attention to the worrying fact that over the past year, nothing has changed for the better on the international arena. Truth be told, we saw some very hopeful signs suggesting that the United States, led by a new president, would abandon the policy of imposing regimes on other countries. But now we have concrete evidence that the new president is facing a growing rejection of his policy in his own country — and I am not talking about rejection by the electorate. I am talking about rejection by influential circles, the hidden actors behind the curtains. The new US president is therefore increasingly leaning towards the previous American course.

At this point I have to mention the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, held in Helsinki in 1975. For the world as a whole, and for Europe in particular, that was a landmark event. Back at the time, we hoped, and we firmly believed, that it was the beginning of the road to a better and safer future. Yes, we believed and we hoped. And yes, we were wrong.

Looking at today's Europe, one has to admit that the Old World is now living in a climate of a renewed Cold War. Even though the European countries now have a common currency, and in most cases open borders (albeit there are growing questions about that openness), security and stability have become for them something almost unattainable compared with, say, the situation only a decade ago.

This is the reality that we have. And we have to admit it, unless of course we are prepared to lie to ourselves and to others. I intentionally use the harsh word "lie", because shameful lies have become an integral component of modern politics; indeed, they have in some cases become the essence of politics.

We have biased, polarised, and centralised media that sometimes appear to be led by a pro-Fascist propaganda minister, such as Goebbels. We have the internet and web portals, which are full of trash. We also have plenty of impartial analysis — but it finds it difficult to find its way to the front pages of newspapers or to the national TV networks, be they commercial or publicly owned.

Finally, we have the social networks, which are using freedom of speech as an excuse for peddling prejudice, stereotypes, fabricated reports, and worst of all, hatred. That is a phenomenon people don't like to discuss, but we can't simply ignore it.

In this political and information environment, many tend to forget — or deliberately to brush aside — the key principles of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. That is why it is becoming clearer with each passing day that the EU, despite the "union" in its name, is becoming increasingly disunited, and lacking the political will — let alone mechanisms — to change the situation.

Peace in Europe, which was the greatest achievement of the integration process, and which had lasted since the victory over fascism in 1945, was, frankly speaking, interrupted by the bloody wars that resulted in the break-up of Yugoslavia. But even after those wars, peace once again settled in Europe, and no one could predict the situation I described in my last year's remarks, and which has essentially remained unchanged to this day.

The situation may have become even more alarming. In fact, it has become more alarming, without "mays".

Europe increasingly resembles a huge military base, to which hundreds of tanks and thousands of soldiers are being brought from the other side of the Atlantic. It is living in a climate that may seem new to the young people, but is very familiar to people of my generation — a climate of Cold War, which may at any moment degenerate into an open armed conflict.

At the same time, it is obvious to any impartial observer that neither Western Europe nor any of its constituent parts are really menaced by any aggression from the East. Yes, the current situation in Ukraine is dangerous, but we have the Minsk Accords, which pave the way to a resolution of that problem. It is important for both sides to abide by these accords — and

I stress, both sides; each must fulfil the commitments it has undertaken.
Speaking of Ukraine, and of the growing fear of aggression, which is allegedly imminent, there is one other aspect we must take into account. That aspect is clearly becoming a major obstacle to security and stability in Europe. I am talking about information warfare — wars being waged with the help of inaccurate or semi-accurate facts through the mass media.
That warfare has two greatest victims. The first victim is the journalists themselves. What is called journalism these days has nothing in common with what used to be an honest and respected profession. The second victim is the public, which has been deprived of vital information and is increasingly being manipulated.
As a result, the main victim of the propaganda war sponsored by the governments and the secret services — and we should have no illusions about that — is security and stability in Europe today, and all over the world tomorrow.
That should be said loud and clear!
Europe is now facing the consequences of a dangerous and misguided policy of imposing regimes and economically exploiting the developing and the underdeveloped countries. It is slowly but surely drowning in the mire of right-wing populism. I don't agree with those who speak only of European skepticism — though one must admit that the European project, the way it has been going in recent years, gives plenty of reasons to be skeptical about it.
I am talking about skepticism that has become a mask for the forces that draw their inspiration from the dark pages of 20th-century European history. That should be said for all to hear. And if we see that danger in one country, we must be sufficiently clear-sighted to notice it in other countries as well. Otherwise, our short-sightedness will create problems for our own selves. Now let me return once again to what I said last year. I must reiterate that Europe needs a new — or rather, renovated — security system. This means that we should return to strict compliance with the principles of international law, and with the virtually forgotten basic principles of the Helsinki Final Act. In short, security in Europe cannot be provided by piling up arms and troops, by demonstrations of force, by "inventing" nonexistent enemies, and by mobilising the public for fighting a nonexistent adversary.
There is only one way to provide security in Europe: all sovereign states must have equal rights; they should desist from any use of force; they should resolve their differences only by peaceful means; they should not meddle in the internal affairs of other states; they should respect the right of peoples to self-determination; pursue interstate cooperation; and abide by their international commitments.
Does it all sound familiar? Of course it does. These principles used to be at the foundation of the entire system of international relations. Europe's duty — however unlikely it sounds today — is to embark upon an internal European reassessment of values and an internal remodelling. The goal of that exercise is to make Europe an independent actor on the international stage, an actor that could help others to turn aside from their erroneous path.
Let me reiterate that this can be achieved only by an independent Europe, speaking in one voice of its own accord because it has realised that the European interests are also global interests. To some, a return to the basic principles of Helsinki, to the basics of international relations that have now been completely distorted and forgotten, may seem a painful or even impossible process, given the current state of affairs.
I cannot criticise those who think it will be very difficult or impossible. But I must say that I can see no other way out of the current crisis.
There is no alternative to a European identity and European interests.
There is no alternative to cooperation between Russia and the EU, and to Russia's inclusion in the European integration project. But trying to engage Russia will not bear fruit if it is based solely on throwing accusations at Moscow. The accusations being voiced now are not backed by any solid, concrete evidence. Their usual wording is, "we know it for certain but cannot reveal our sources".
Europe must carefully weigh everything before irrevocably siding with those who make such accusations. It should think, first and foremost, whether it would be in its own interests.
Similarly, there is no alternative to multiculturalism and a multi-faith society, to tolerance and acceptance of distinct national characteristics; there are no reasons for standing disunited, of for barring anyone from any clubs.
Or rather, there is only a single alternative: a return to a raging nationalism, to national ghettos surrounded by barbed wire, and to disowning everything millions of people died for in the struggle against Nazism and Fascism.
In the end, this would lead to war!
Are we prepared to accept such an alternative? Of course not!
And that is why we should all say loud and clear — compared to how this has been done in past several decades since politics of tensions eased — we should say that the only solution is cooperation, mutual respect, and mutual understanding.
I should therefore like to conclude my remarks just as I did last year: We shall not let those who profit from war take away peace from us!

ALEXANDER GRUSHKO
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to NATO

I largely share the worries expressed today in this chamber over the security situation in Europe. I would also like to point out the high quality of the discussion, the comprehensive analysis, and the sincere efforts to seek a path to normalisation, towards confronting together the challenges and threats facing us all — especially as these efforts are being made in this difficult situation, when many in Europe really have no idea what to do. I would like, however, to draw your attention to three factors I believe will have a major systemic impact on such efforts.
First, 2017 will go down in the history of Europe as the year when the decisions taken at the Warsaw Summit on strengthening NATO's eastern flank will be implemented in terms of additional military hardware. As we can see, the policy of confrontation announced at that summit is now taking the shape of tangible military preparations. These preparations are being made for the long run. Clearly, all the investment in the infrastructure, the tanks being brought in — all of that will require continued ideological and political pretexts. As a result, we risk finding ourselves trapped in the logic of the Cold War — something familiar to us all — with hostile military planning requiring ongoing ideological support. Let me emphasise once again: breaking out of this vicious circle will be very difficult, and the tactic of small steps will not work in this case. We need drastic steps to put an end to what is now going on in Central Europe — which, as some commentators rightly pointed out today, used to be a region most safe and free of any classical threats.
The second issue I would like to raise is the danger of the Western campaign of ramping up military spending. Let us not forget that the US $250 billion the European countries spend on their defence is a stratospheric sum, higher than the Russian and Chinese military spending put together. And if the European NATO members and Canada meet the target set in Warsaw, their military spending will rise by an additional US $100 billion a year, for a total of US $350 billion, of which 20%, or 70 billion, is supposed to be spent on buying new weapons. That is a colossal amount of money. Such a turn of events would mean an undeniable militarisation of Europe — and that in a situation where there are no genuine military threats. That in a situation when money should be spent not on defending against the imaginary Russian threat, but on standing up to the risks originating from the South, especially on fighting terrorism and other unconventional threats that require a very different kind of investment, including different military investment.
The third issue I would like to raise is that all of this is happening amid a total freeze on all systemic military-to-military contacts. The situation is very grave, and NATO is not making any attempts to resume military-to-military dialogue.
To conclude, these three issues may not be among the main topics of discussion at various political venues. But they represent long-term factors that will continue to stifle any attempts to move towards normalisation, towards some mechanisms of cooperation based on building security together with Russia rather than separately from Russia, let alone against Russia.

JUHA MARTELIUS

Special Adviser to the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Finland

As we have heard on many occasions today, the global political system in the world is in turmoil. The change is reflected in the fact that the main pillars and institutions from the Cold War multilateral order are deteriorating. In Europe, this means that the rules and principles of collective security are increasingly faced with challenges.

From the beginning of the 1990s there has been a shared belief that common values are, indeed, common. Europeans have sought to develop open, democratic societies whose activities are based on rule of law and human rights. It is now clear that power politics has made a comeback. Continuous changes in the security environment and the multi-purpose use or threat of power have become "a new normal".

Idealism could not carry us sufficiently far in situations where national interests were tested. A key theorem in the school of thought of classical political realism is that states maximise their efforts to further national interests within all available means. Unfortunately, this has been confirmed again.

Confronted with the increasingly unstable security situation in Europe, we see an urgent need to work also for strategic stability, restraint, predictability and verifiable transparency to reduce both security and military risks.

I would like to conclude by reminding that, in a situation like this, it is important not always to react when provoked, and to maintain a dialogue with other countries so that we can together address common security issues.

VLADIMIR ORLOV

Head of the Centre for Global Trends and International Organisations at the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Donald Trump is unwilling to get bogged down in the confrontations currently seen in Europe, in particular regarding Ukraine. He is doing his best to discard this part of the US agenda. That is what took Angela Merkel to Sochi earlier this month, the very Sochi that she was so short-sighted to ignore in February 2014.

The question "What is a new European security architecture?" now requires an immediate and clear answer.

The current European security architecture resembles a dilapidated bridge that people use only because no new bridge has been constructed. Time and again, holes in this bridge are patched. However, leaning on the bridge railing is dangerous. Russia offers its own drawings of a new bridge from time to time, but neither political will nor creativity to launch the "Russia plus Europe" joint venture can be seen on the Western side.

So, will we just sit and wait until the old bridge collapses? That would be unacceptable. First, we need to increase the level of confidence in our capabilities. We need a successful pilot project for a new Europe, a major and ambitious one. The revival of Ukraine must and can become such a project. It should be based on three legally binding pillars. The first pillar is a guaranteed and legally binding neutral status of Ukraine, similar to that of Finland or Austria. The second pillar should be ensuring and guaranteeing respect for human rights, including language issues, throughout Ukraine from its West to Donetsk and Lugansk. The third pillar should be Russia's and Europe's joint economic assistance to Ukraine, aiming to facilitate Ukraine's recovery, under the condition that the country manages to eliminate their record-breaking corruption and poor public administration.

We can clearly hear skeptics claiming that Europe will never accept Ukraine as a neutral state. But is it really the case? It is not only the United State that is exhausted with Ukraine, Europe is too. This fatigue leads to a more active search for a way out. Recently, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, responding at a meeting in Geneva to a question (raised by a Ukrainian expert, by the way), confirmed that NATO could accept Ukraine as a neutral state provided this is a choice made by the Ukrainian people. By focusing on the historical examples of Finland or Austria, I intentionally emphasise their military neutrality but I do not link it with the issue of economic partnerships.

Ensuring equal rights for all people in Ukraine is another issue that will require taking into consideration Europe's experience. The situation is so neglected that it might be too late to address this issue through providing autonomy. It is more and more likely that the issue of federalisation may appear on the agenda.

I have been now speaking about the best-case scenario. However, I see that the "war party" is on the rise in Kiev, desperately trying to catch Trump's attention. It is a critical moment. The risk of provocation is high. What will be the outcome? Obviously, it would lead to a new escalation of the conflict, eventually resulting in the balkanisation of Ukraine. If this is not Europe's goal, then Europe should urgently warn the "chevaliers of fortune" in Kiev against any attempts at self-affirmation through bloodshed.

The next step should be Europe and Russia joining forces to prepare mutually acceptable outlines of the new European security architecture so that a détente over Ukraine can lead to a new détente across Europe.

DISCUSSION 1

Middle East: modern objectives of counter-terrorism and counter-radicalism

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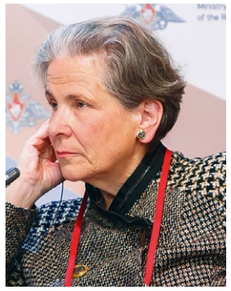

COLONEL-GENERAL SERGEY RUDSKOY

Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff —
First Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces

In response to a request by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for military assistance in the fight against international terrorism, and in accordance with a decision made on 30 September 2015 by the Supreme Commander of the Russian Armed Forces, after notifying the interested state parties, combat aircraft of the Russian Aerospace Forces delivered air strikes against ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra international terrorist organisations' targets in the Syrian Arab Republic.

By the time our military operation began, the situation in Syria had become critical. The Syrian government was engaged in a lone struggle against terrorism in Syrian territory, whereas the forces of the so-called "moderate opposition" had essentially merged with ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra, which had a more generous financing, as well as a flow of weapons and ammunition, from their foreign sponsors. Terrorists were in control of more than 70% of Syrian territory, and continued their offensive on all fronts. The country's resources were close to exhaustion. Not only Syrian statehood, but the security of the entire region was in jeopardy. A recently prosperous country was turning into a source of the spread of the terror threat throughout the entire Middle East. This scenario posed a direct threat to Russian national security because ISIS was quite clear about its plans to advance towards Central Asia, the Russian Caucasus, and the Volga region. We estimate that by early 2015, ISIS and other terror groups had about 4,500 Russian and CIS citizens fighting in their ranks.

As a result of the strikes delivered by the Russian Aerospace Forces, the terrorists' command and logistics infrastructure sustained crippling damage. The flow of resources feeding the ISIS and Jabhat al-Nursa gangs has been disrupted and in some places halted altogether. Terror groups have been left without their main source of revenues generated by the oil smuggling. The main routes used by the militants to replenish their weapons and ammunition supplies have been cut off.

I should also note that strikes are delivered only against legitimate targets confirmed by various intelligence sources, including satellites and UAVs. Any use of air strikes or artillery against cultural heritage sites, mosques, schools, and hospitals is completely ruled out, even when terrorists are present at those sites.

By the time the Russian operation in Syria was launched, the Russian armed forces had rapidly built up a strong contingent at the Khmeimim airbase, consisting of only modern or upgraded aircraft equipped with advanced targeting and navigation systems. That enabled the Russian forces to deliver high-precision strikes against militants all over Syria without entering the effective range of the adversary's man-portable air defence systems. Additionally, the use of reconnaissance-strike systems consisting of reconnaissance, command, and communication complexes enabled the Russian forces to implement the "one target — one bomb" principle of operation.

The effectiveness of Russian combat operations in Syria is further augmented by the use of unmanned aerial vehicles. Approximately 80 drones are deployed in Syria, enabling the Russian forces continuously to monitor the situation on the ground, receive intelligence about targets in real time, and promptly launch strikes against those targets.

Russia has also deployed a multi-tier command and control system that relies on the latest technology. It has enabled the Russian forces to monitor the situation in the air and on the ground throughout the whole country from the Khmeimim airfield, and to control Russian troops all the way down to the tactical tier.

Key terrorist targets are destroyed using cruise missiles launched from ships, submarines, and heavy bombers at a distance of up to 1,500 km, as well as using long-range bombers.

The superiority of the Russian forces in reconnaissance, electronic warfare, command and control, and strike systems has enabled them to wage warfare without coming into close contact with the adversary or putting themselves in harm's way.

The precise composition of the Russian air group in Syria has varied depending on the current objectives. The number of the Russian aircraft in Syria, including carrier-based planes deployed there from 10 November 2016, to 10 January 2017, has never gone above 35 aircraft.

Following the ceasefire announced in February 2016, and in view of the ongoing stabilisation of the situation in Syria, there are now fewer terrorist targets left in the country. This has enabled Russia to pull out almost half of its aircraft from the Khmeimim base.

A comparative analysis of the results achieved by the Russian air forces in Syria versus the results of the international coalition's air forces indicates that with just a fraction of the coalition's number of planes, the Russian forces have nevertheless flown three times as many sorties, and delivered four times as many missile and bomb strikes. Since the beginning of the Russian military operation in Syria, Russian aircraft have flown over 23,000 sorties, and delivered more than 74,000 air strikes.

Meanwhile, Russian military advisers are providing significant assistance to the Syrian army command. They are involved in planning military operations, in the provision of intelligence information, and in training the Syrian armed forces and people's militias. Our specialists coordinate strikes of the Russian Aerospace Forces with operations by the Syrian government forces on the ground. On the most important stretches of the front, they perform the full scope of operational

planning and control troops on the ground. One example is the operation to liberate Palmyra, conducted in March under the control and supervision of Russian military advisers. In a space of six weeks, government troops and militias overcame fierce resistance put up by the terrorists in difficult mountainous terrain, crushed the ISIS forces, advanced more than 60 km, and took full control of Palmyra. 12 population centres and 665 sq. km of territory were liberated.

As a result of that operation, the terrorists lost more than 1,000 personnel, 35 tanks, 37 armoured fighting vehicles, and 264 pickup trucks used as chassis for heavy weapons systems. As present, Syrian government troops are extending their area of control around Palmyra and continue their eastward offensive.

The Russian Special Operations Forces, along with the aviation and ground troops, made a decisive contribution to crushing terrorists in and around Palmyra. They proved themselves highly effective, and played the key role in eliminating senior terrorist commanders, destroying key infrastructure facilities, and acting as spotters for our air strikes.

The Russian military operation has enabled the Syrian armed forces to achieve a complete turnaround. As of today, large terrorist forces have been destroyed in and round Hama and Homs; militants have also been dislodged from Latakia. Government forces have substantially improved their situation in the Damascus province and in the suburbs of the Syrian capital. Palmyra, a world cultural heritage site, and the city of Al-Qaryatayn, which sits astride key communications between Damascus and eastern Syria, have been liberated.

The main road between Damascus and northern Syria is now under government control; communications between the capital and Aleppo have also become much safer. The government has restored control of the Jisel, Hayyan, and Magara oil and gas fields.

The main event of last year was the liberation of Aleppo, which is often called Syria's second capital. That victory has major military and political implications for the entire country.

A large ISIS force was destroyed north of Aleppo earlier this year. Government troops have liberated 41 towns and villages, and advanced to areas southwest of the city of Manbij, which is held by Kurdish self-defence forces. During that operation, the Russian Aerospace Forces and the Turkish Air Force for the first time worked together against terrorists.

The government offensive in the northeast of the Aleppo province is also making good progress. In a space of six weeks, government troops have liberated 90 towns and villages and 1,525 sq. km of territory. Russian aircraft have destroyed 536 ISIS targets, including ammunition depots, bases, and large concentrations of armoured vehicles. Meanwhile, Syrian government troops have reached the Lake Assad reservoir and continue their offensive along the west bank of the Euphrates. In fact, the Syrian army has already reached the Jirah airfield.

Nevertheless, terrorists in Syria have yet to be completely defeated. ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra forces are putting up fierce resistance, and demonstrating their readiness for a bitter war of attrition. For example, starting from 21 March, several terrorist groups attempted an offensive against the city of Hama. A force consisting of more than 10,000 militants — mostly Jabhat al-Nusra and its allies — was amassed in an area held by the opposition. Using their numerical advantage, the terrorists managed to seize several towns and villages near Hama and approach the city itself. Thanks to courageous action by Syrian government troops and to air support by the Russian Aerospace Forces, the situation in the area has now been stabilised, and the terrorists have been pushed back more than 10 km from Hama. During fierce fighting in the area, more than 4,500 militants, 68 armoured vehicles, 22 of the so-called jihad-mobiles, and more than 150 trucks used as chassis for heavy weapons systems were destroyed.

Since the beginning of the Russian military operation in Syria, the legitimate Syrian government has retaken 692 population centres and over 135,000 sq. km of territory. This has enabled the return of more than 108,000 refugees to their homes.

Also, in 2015–2016, government forces and their allies captured 448 tanks and other armored fighting vehicles, 57 multiple launch rocket systems, 418 improvised MLRS, 410 mortars, and more than 28,000 pieces of small arms from the militants.

During the Russian military operation, our troops have destroyed more than 2,000 militants hailing from Russia itself, including 17 field commanders. All of those militants were planning to spread the ideas of radical Islam and to bring jihad to the territory of Russia.

The lessons we have learnt fighting terrorism in Syria suggest that the Syrian crisis cannot be resolved by military measures alone. In addition to eliminating terrorist forces in Syria, we need to work with those armed groups that are ready to end the fighting and return to peace. We also need to provide humanitarian assistance to civilians in the liberated territories. To that end, Russia has set up the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides at the Khmeimim airbase. The centre and its branches in the Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, and Latakia provinces are already up and running.

Servicemen from the Russian Centre for Reconciliation have conducted 1,085 humanitarian actions since 2016. As part of those actions, they have delivered more than 1,610 tonnes of food, medicines, and essential supplies to Syrian civilians. Additionally, Russian cargo parachutes have been used to drop 1,869 tonnes of supplies to cities besieged by the militants. The Il-76 transports supplied by Russia to Syria for that purpose have flown 82 missions. The Russian forces provided support, including fighter escorts, for airdrops of UN humanitarian aid by Abakan Air; a total of 4,305 tonnes of food was delivered like this to the city of Deir ez-Zor, which is currently blockaded by ISIS forces.

The best example of the work of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation is the humanitarian operation conducted during the liberation of Aleppo from militants. During that operation, more than 108,000 civilians, including 47,000 children, were moved from the eastern part of the city, which was held by the militants, to safe areas. Some 4,138 militants voluntarily laid down their weapons. As part of that uniquely large and complex humanitarian operation, 28,528 irreconcilable militants and members of their families, as well as everyone who expressed their wish to leave Aleppo, were moved to the Idlib province.

At present, Aleppo is quickly returning to normalcy. Servicemen of the Russian military police are helping to maintain law and order in the city, while the Russian Centre for Reconciliation is delivering humanitarian cargos to those in need on a daily basis. Military medics working at the hospital deployed in Aleppo by the Russian Ministry of Defence are providing invaluable assistance to the city's population. Quality medical care has been provided to more than 14,000 people. Work is underway to rebuild homes, schools, hospitals, and other social infrastructure facilities in Aleppo. This has enabled more than 56,000 residents to return to their homes in eastern Aleppo.

The lessons learnt during the operation to liberate Aleppo are applied in other parts of Syria. An agreement has been reached on the Al Waer district of the city of Homs joining the cessation of hostilities regime. With the Russian Centre for Reconciliation acting as mediator, more than 8,500 militants and members of their families have been moved from that district to territories controlled by the pro-Turkish opposition. More than 600 former members of the militants' forces have returned to civilian life under the terms of an amnesty announced by the Syrian government. At the request of field commanders, security during that operation was provided by servicemen of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation and of a military police battalion.

The reconciliation process is also well under way in Eastern Ghouta, a suburb of Damascus. Representatives of the local authorities and the leaders of the self-defence forces in that area have signed agreements on joining the cessation of hostilities regime.

But the situation still remains difficult in the Jobar and Qaboun districts, which are held by Jabhat al-Nusra forces. Syrian capital, including the district that hosts the Russian embassy and the embassy building itself, regularly come under mortar fire from those districts. To neutralise that threat, Syrian government troops have launched a special operation to eliminate the terrorist forces from the affected areas. Meanwhile, in another suburb of Damascus, Eastern Qalamoun, moderate opposition forces have signed a reconciliation agreement and are working in coordination with the Syrian army.

As part of a joint operation by the Syrian army and the opposition forces, ISIS militants have been dislodged from commanding high points near the Damascus–Palmyra road. Government forces have retaken a 15 km stretch of that strategically important motorway that had been controlled by terrorists for three years.

The turnaround achieved in the struggle against terrorism in Syria has forced a number of political actors to reassess the balance of power in the region. This has made it possible to launch the process of political settlement and reconciliation of the warring factions. That process is also facilitated by international meetings in the Astana format, which have already become a regular occurrence.

After years of bitter confrontation, representatives of the Syrian government, of the armed opposition, and of the guarantor states — Russia, Turkey, and Iran — with the UN also taking part, gathered at the negotiating table.

As a result of the agreements reached between the armed opposition and the Syrian government with Turkish and Russian mediation, a cessation of hostilities regime was announced on 30 December 2016, all over Syria. To date, 204 individual armed units representing the moderate opposition have committed themselves to abiding by that regime, and their number continues to grow.

The issue of separating the moderate opposition forces from the terrorist groups, which the Western countries previously failed to tackle, is now resolved in practice.

The Russian initiative on discussing a draft of a new Syrian constitution has also found a broad backing. The mechanism of discussing and adopting that draft is now being worked out.

These measures have sped up the process of signing truce agreements with the local administrations and armed groups. To date, such agreements have been reached with the leaders of 1,464 cities, towns, and villages, with a combined population of over 6.36 million.

Specialists from the International Mine Action Centre of the Russian Armed Forces are now engaged in humanitarian mine clearance in the Syrian territories liberated from terrorists. The largest mine clearance projects have been completed in Damascus, Palmyra, and Aleppo. In Aleppo alone, mines and unexploded ammunition containing a total of 66,000 tonnes of explosives have been disarmed. Work is still under way to clear Palmyra of landmines and unexploded munitions. Since the start of the operation in Syria, Russian engineers have cleared mines from 4,876 hectares of territory, 14,934 buildings and structures, and over 1,130 km of motorways. A total of about 59,000 mines and explosive items were found and defused.

The Russian Armed Forces are continuously analysing the lessons learnt from the campaign against terrorists in Syria. Let me outline our key conclusions.

First, terrorist organisations are pursuing increasingly ambitious goals, and are prepared to engage in an open armed confrontation with legitimate security forces to achieve those goals.

Second, international terrorism recognises no national borders. Defeating it will therefore require cooperative action by all the interested state parties and international organisations. The nature of that action should be not only force-based, but also political, economic, information-related, etc.

An especially important component is an ideological campaign to prevent the spread of terrorist ideas and to deprive the militants of support among the local populations.

Third, to wage successful warfare against terrorists, with their distinct tactics and weaponry, the armed forces should have special training. Classical warfare methods,

developed to fight regular armies, are not always effective in this case.
Fourth, fighting terrorists who use civilians as human shields requires the ability to deliver prompt surgical strikes in order to avoid civilian casualties.
We should target, first and foremost, the facilities that generate revenue for terrorists, as well as their logistics and command and control infrastructure. We should also aim to limit their ability to manoeuvre their forces and assets.
To conclude, let me emphasise that the Russian Aerospace Forces' air group at the Khmeimim airbase and the Russian Navy's station in Tartus remain operational, helping to maintain the strategic balance in the region and to contain the spread of terrorist groups in Syria and neighbouring states.

CORPS GENERAL MAHMOUD SHAWA
Deputy Minister of Defence of the Syrian Arab Republic

Today, our conference takes place against the background of important changes happening on the world stage, in particular in our region, on the back of dangerous events resulting from the spread of terrorism that threatens the security and stability of our states and the future of our nations.
In this regard, our conference becomes very important, which is dictated by the urgent need to find ways and means of countering terror, curbing its spread, eliminating its threat and preventing its catastrophic consequences.
We, the Syrians, taking part in this conference today, reaffirm the need for serious strengthening of mutual cooperation between all states for the sake of eliminating the threat of international terrorism, from which no geographical location on the globe is safe.
We all know that the ailment of terrorism, which has been tormenting our region and many other countries of the world for many years, is not an occasional phenomenon and has not emerged from nowhere. There are objective causes for its emergence, and it is driven by a range of important factors contributing to its spread, as well as by the actions of some parties that need not to be mentioned here and that promote and support its ideas, plans, and goals.
Extremist theories would not have been able to spread among communities in many countries in recent years but for the existence of ideological sources fuelling such theories, especially given that there are no constraints, legislative or governmental barriers in their way.
It is important to note the role of the environment in which such ideas are cultivated and transmitted by individuals and groups of individuals, as well as economic and cultural factors providing a fertile soil for the assimilation of such ideas. Poverty, unsatisfied basic needs, illiteracy, underdevelopment, and cultural immaturity are important factors contributing to the formation of an environment conducive to terrorism, which is based not on sexual, religious or racial belonging, but on social, cultural, and economic conditions of life.
Terrorism recognises no state or regional borders, and it is ready to spread in any direction. It can be said that the threat of international terrorism to which all states in the world are exposed results from the lack of determination and commitment among the international community to rebuff violators of international treaties and legal norms.
Moreover, the absence of one consistent international definition of terrorism, which would cover all its manifestations and causes, leaves loopholes enabling some parties to patronise terrorism directly or indirectly. This enables terrorist organisations to act and move under the cover of legitimacy given to them by some forces in the world.
The apparent inconsistency of the positions of a number of states with regard to the phenomenon of terrorism and their reluctance to play a serious role in countering terrorism and limit its spread is an important factor contributing to the expansion of terrorism and the increase of its threat.
This is especially noticeable in the light of the policy of double standards pursued by some states with respect to other nations and countries. In addition, a selective approach to the interpretation of terrorism offers terrorism an opportunity for further growth and dissemination. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive approach and join international efforts to identify and eliminate the causes of terrorism.
Uncoordinated efforts will always have a limited scope and will not be able to eliminate the causes of terrorism, which lie beyond the competence of each individual party. However, unless the causes of terrorism are eliminated and the channels for its financing are cut off through joint international efforts, the situation will only worsen due to the intensive growth in the number of terrorist groups and their proliferation as a result of internal splits that make terrorists even more cruel and bloodthirsty. This is what we see today in Syria, where terrorist organisations continue to disintegrate, giving birth to new groups under new names. They do not differ in terms of their extremist and philosophical nature, their methods and crimes from their parent organisation, but may pose even a greater threat after they split from it.
Speaking of international terrorism, we cannot but touch upon transcontinental terrorism. When terrorism has a certain ideological foundation, its threat is not limited only to the country of origin or its neighbouring regions. Terrorism represented by Al-Qaeda and its extremist offspring known as ISIS is not a national organisation having goals limited to the borders of a single state. This is international terrorism that is based on goals and programmes that recognise neither states nor borders.
While states could still resist the threat of terrorism emanating from terrorist organisations operating on the basis of national plans, combating international, transboundary and transcontinental terrorism requires a strong international commitment and the coordination of the actions of security agencies of different countries, which would ensure the universal deterrence of the terrorist threat.
The fight against terrorism requires the implementation of decisions of international organisations and the development of a balanced policy that does not use double standards in defining this phenomenon. It is necessary to work out measures to eradicate terrorism, which are based on the rejection of

manifestations of hegemonism and the imposition of decisions, and on the cessation of colonial expansion and the use of terrorism as a policy tool. National and cultural specifics of other countries and nations should be respected; the states that promote, support and finance terrorism should be punished; equal development of all nations, and an unbiased attitude to all beliefs and religions should be ensured so that people could live in peace and harmony.

The fight against terrorism, its prevention and the elimination of its consequences should be based on scientific criteria, since the use of conventional security methods alone is insufficient to achieve the ultimate goal, i.e. its complete eradication. Special attention should also be paid to the activities of intelligence agencies as regards collection of information on the capabilities and goals of terrorist organisations, as well as on the sources of their financing. It is also important to conclude security agreements between neighbouring states, which would ensure harmonious cooperation between them in the field of combating terrorism, sharing information and reinforcing mutual security. We should not disregard the fact that the development of communication technologies has facilitated contacts and interaction between members of terrorist cells and organisations, helping them to pursue their tasks and goals. In addition, some media, such as radio, satellite television and the internet, began to cover terrorist attacks, thus offering new ample opportunities for terrorists who seek to promote their ideas and goals and justifying their actions. Therefore, it is necessary to find a form of control over these networks, identify and punish the management of satellite channels and radio stations that directly or indirectly propagate terrorism.

Suffering from the actions of terrorists for already six years, Syria actively attempts to restore security and stability in the country and secure the future of its citizens. In cooperation with multiple parties, it is making every effort to put an end to international terrorism and liquidate its sources. As before, it demands that the international community fulfil its moral and humanitarian duty towards the Syrian people and all other nations of our region, who have suffered for many years from the adversities of war, destruction and terrorism, having faced systematic devastating actions aimed at erasing our historical, cultural and humanitarian heritage. Similarly to all other nations of the world, our people have the right to life and the right to determine their own destiny without being exposed to violence, oppression and exploitation, these being methods employed by certain forces and regimes that support terrorism and disregard any laws, humanitarian or moral norms.

In conclusion, we call to join international efforts for countering terrorism, taking real actions to eradicate it, using the whole range of political, economic, information, intelligence and other specific methods of struggle to prevent propaganda and dissemination of ideas of extremism and intolerance. We should support any opportunities for reconciliation and strengthen security and stability, and facilitate development, which we all strive for in our region and throughout the world.

MAJOR-GENERAL MOHAMED ELKESHKY
Deputy Minister of Defence of the Arab Republic of Egypt

I am glad to be here with you today and have an opportunity to share ideas and thoughts on a topic that is important not only for our countries but for the whole world. Terrorism is trans-boundary, and Egypt like other states suffers from it.

Allow me to express, on behalf of the entire Egyptian nation and my chiefs, my condolences in connection with the terrorist attack in Saint Petersburg. I know that you share our pain in connection with the recent explosions in Egypt.

There is no doubt that the phenomenon of terrorism and religious extremism is one of the key features of the new world order. The harsh truth is that terrorism is now becoming more dangerous than war. It is not tied to certain countries, nationalities, or religions, and does not distinguish between developed countries and developing countries. This aggravates the problem for all countries of the world without exception and threatens security and global peace, especially when it comes to the recruitment, training and interconnection between terrorist elements, which promotes the spread of extremist philosophy.

Despite the successes of the international counter-terrorism campaign, there is evidence of the geographical spread of its elements and the emergence of new generations of terrorist groups and organisations, which act in a decentralised manner and create new bases in the regions hit by an internal crisis.

Assessing the phenomenon of terrorism and extremism in the Middle East, which intensified significantly since the beginning of the so-called Arab Spring, several aspects can be highlighted.

First, it is the development of ideological thoughts.

Terrorists are trying to spread extremist interpretations of the concept of the Islamic caliphate. In the long term, they seek to extend it to the states of the region and create cooperation networks between terrorist organisations from the Arab and Islamic states, which share the idea of the Islamic State of Takfirism in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) and swear allegiance and obedience to the so-called commander of the faithful, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, as happened in Libya, on the Sinai peninsula, and in Nigeria.

They claim that those in power in the Arab and Islamic states are unfaithful, and they believe that they do not follow the God's law (Sharia) and declare war against them and those who help them applying the principles of Islamic Sharia. Their radical views contradict the values and ideas of the Islamic religion and are inconsistent with the rights recognised by the Al-Azhar University.

Secondly, there are changes in the approach to recruitment.

Terrorists focus on recruiting educated young people who face social problems and have a weak sense of patriotism. They make extensive use of social media, spreading erroneous ideas about Islam and associating it with the need for jihad to protect the religion, and they promise in exchange various moral and material benefits.

The recruiters focused on the areas affected by conflicts, where people suffer from persecution by the government (northern and eastern Syria, central and western Iraq). They try to recruit a large number of individuals, offering money.

A wide network of foreign militants is being created, who are attracted by the national concepts of the caliphate and the history of Islamic conquests, which are far from the principles of Islamic Sharia.

Third, the resources and organisational capacity of terrorists are improving.

Terrorists cooperate with organised criminal groups, trade in ancient historical artefacts and receive financial benefits from the territories under their control. These resources are subsequently used for financing terrorism.

Preparations are under way to establish an administrative machine for managing terrorist activities.

Fourthly, various methods are exploited to expand the geography of terrorist activities.

Terrorists conduct guerrilla wars both for opposing the security forces and for intimidating civilians.

They use suicide bombers, recruiting poor low-educated people and instilling in them the idea of jihad against the godless.

Terrorists post information about their crimes on the internet, making it accessible to a wide range of people. They seek to spread horror and also to present their position from the right perspective.

Terrorist groups use failed states, where they find safe haven and create training camps. A long-term strategy is needed to protect society from the threats associated with terrorism and extremism. We should focus on the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy with a view to eliminate the socio-economic and political causes and motives that lead to terrorism. To this end, it is necessary to support human and economic development efforts, which improve the living conditions of people, as well as to eliminate the environment conducive to the spread of the epidemic of terrorism and extremism.

It is necessary to expand the cooperation network at the national, regional and international levels, create and use databases to track the leaders of terrorist groups, and promote interaction between security services and people.

At the national level, we should rely on the support of the general public in the fight against terrorism. Information materials should be developed to draw public attention to the goals of terrorism and extremism and promoting an open dialogue with more moderate elements.

Along with the strengthening of security

measures, preventive actions against the leaders of terrorist and extremist groups, including the suppression of their financing channels, are required. Particular attention should be paid to the protection of borders.

At the international political level, we should intensify diplomatic efforts to reach bilateral and multilateral agreements based on the existing treaties and UN Security Council resolutions. We should strive to elaborate a clear definition of the phenomenon of terrorism. It is necessary to restrain the activities of states helping terrorists, avoid conflict escalation and settle conflicts in a civilised manner in order to maintain relations between nations. We should also abandon the policy of interference in the internal affairs of any country.

We should understand that we are facing a destructive phenomenon and that the outcome will be deplorable, unless we unite and coordinate our actions using both hard and soft power. After all, we should not allow terrorists to succeed and change our way of life and our lifestyle, intimidating the population and preventing individuals from traveling and networking with each other. There should be no impression that terrorism is stronger than the state.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL MAHMOUD FREIHAT
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

First let me express my sincere respect and gratitude to the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation for its generous invitation to join this conference taking place under emergency conditions seen on the international and regional scene, requiring from us joint concerted actions to confront terrorism and extremism.

Today, we all face an unprecedented spread of extremism and terrorism, a phenomenon affecting all nations with no exception, meaning that no one can feel completely safe. The growth and spread of this disgusting phenomenon have been facilitated by a set of factors, the most important of which are political extremism, the lack of social justice, difficult economic conditions, and the lack of understanding of the prospects for resolving the seminal problems faced by a number of nations. The lack of attention to the problems young people face, stemming from poverty and unemployment, also provides fertile grounds for the emergence and polarisation of extremist ideas that evolve into terrorist projects that cannot be avoided by any society.

Our previous experience shows that the fight against terrorism and extremism cannot be limited only to military and law enforcement activities, but should involve complex work to address this phenomenon, based on an understanding of the true causes fuelling the extremist philosophy. For example, ISIS is nothing but a product of socio-political conditions associated with pressing problems, such as a feeling of estrangement, abandonment, weak social ties, and a search of national identity.

Focusing on military, force, or even ideological measures in the struggle to destroy or weaken extremist groups, or on a cultural approach that involves finding new pedagogical methods or moderate religious rhetoric may be useful in combating extremism. However, the results achieved will be inadequate and limited, unless such efforts are supported by simultaneous work to eliminate the conditions and causes that lead to the emergence of the factors that encourage terror and with efforts to overcome them and reduce their influence in different countries and communities.

Jordan is among the first countries to join the fight against terrorism, realising its danger for the region and the whole world. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan that has become one of the targets of terrorist groups has repeatedly proven that it can successfully resist their attempts to undermine the commitment and will of the Jordanian people in the war against them.

Jordan takes various counter-terrorism measures at various levels, paying due attention to fostering cooperation between all countries and nations with a view to cut off the sources of financing and support of terrorist groups and strengthen international mechanisms producing a positive effect in this area. Jordan's unambiguous position internationally on countering terrorism is supported by the vast amount of work done to promote cooperation in countering terrorist crimes. Jordan has repeatedly reaffirmed its resolute and clear intransigence with terrorism in all its manifestations and forms. In this regard, Jordan has signed multiple counter-terrorism treaties and is committed to all international decisions related to it and has joined a package of relevant international treaties and agreements.

The Jordanian strategy for combating terrorism and extremism is focused on identifying the true causes of the emergence of terrorism. In accordance with the strategy, countering terrorism and extremism requires joint efforts of all stakeholders. It is necessary to promote an open and merciful religious culture that asserts the values of mutual understanding, religious tolerance and culture, respect for human rights and their recognition through the relevant institutions. In this regard, His Majesty King Abdullah II, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, through the Amman Message initiated a campaign to explain and spread the image of merciful Islam in different parts of the world. His goal is to demonstrate the Islamic values and the spirit of mercy that makes an individual better. That message also shows that Islam is a religion based on balance and centralism, and it has at its core the spirit of mercy and tranquility and affirms the principle of rapprochement of religions.

In addition, the Jordanian strategy attaches great importance to the strengthening of the family, developing young people and their participation in decision-making. It focuses on addressing the problems of poverty and unemployment, given their obvious impact on young people, especially on their spiritual inclinations. After all, young people are the layer of society which is most susceptible to the influence of terrorist groups in the face of harsh economic conditions faced by our countries.

In conclusion, I would like to reassure all of you that Jordan will remain committed to all of its promises and obligations to the international community regarding efforts for combating terrorism and extremism at all levels. It is understood that the fight against terrorism is not the task of a single country or region, but a shared responsibility. We should double our efforts to counter this danger, and any efforts in this field will not be sufficient without joint efforts of all countries.

I would like to restate my great gratitude and high appreciation to the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation for their honourable invitation and excellent organisation of this event.

CHRISTINE BEERLI
Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

It is an honour and a privilege to be addressing this audience today, and on behalf of the ICRC, I would like to thank the Ministry of Defence for the invitation.
The topic before this panel is modern objectives of counter-terrorism and counter-radicalism in the Middle East. In this context, my remarks will focus purely on the humanitarian dimension of what has effectively become a highly complex, multidimensional battlefield in the region; one with tangled and competing ideological and political interests at local, regional and global levels. While it would be naive to believe that humanitarian action can happen in a political vacuum, it is crucial for a humanitarian organisation like the ICRC that its approach and objectives remain clearly distinct from any political, military or economic agenda.
Of course, when we talk about the Middle East, the armed conflict in Syria and its catastrophic humanitarian impact on people in and beyond the country continues to be pivotal. With over 5 million refugees being hosted mainly by neighbouring countries, and more than 6.3 million internally displaced, Syria has become the world's single-largest driver of displacement, and has alone made the Middle East the biggest producer and host of displaced people. Millions more live in besieged or hard-to-reach areas, in desperate humanitarian need.
Meanwhile the situation in Yemen has become increasingly alarming. Two years of intensifying conflict have caused spiralling humanitarian needs on a massive scale, including soaring levels of acute malnutrition and the risk of famine, especially among children.
Similarly, in Iraq, an upsurge in the hostilities since 2016 has caused unprecedented levels of humanitarian needs throughout the country, with huge numbers of people fleeing fighting in Mosul and many other areas as well.
The Occupied Palestinian Territories too are continuing to suffer the effects of long-term occupation.
And as we see from the continuing arrival on Europe's shores and borders of large numbers of migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, the consequences of the armed conflicts in countries like Syria — and the lack of viable political solutions so far to end them — are not contained within the region itself.
Even though the current crisis in Europe is only part of a much bigger phenomenon of migration, and even though the neighbours of the countries of origin are under far greater strain, it has nevertheless forced the international community to sit up and take notice of the massive impact of the humanitarian crises that have been unfolding in the Middle East and elsewhere for many years now.
Much of the suffering we are witnessing in the context of armed conflicts in the Middle East today is a direct consequence of flagrant violations of international humanitarian law (IHL); committed by various parties, mostly with impunity, and in some cases glorified on social media and used for propaganda purposes. The overriding problem is widespread lack of respect for, and protection of, civilian populations.
Violence against health care — and more broadly against humanitarian workers — is one of the most worrying trends we are currently witnessing, not least because of the extremely far-reaching consequences.
Direct attacks on health care facilities and ambulances, and the killing or wounding of staff and patients, are one part of the problem. Many hundreds of attacks have been reported in Syria, Yemen and Iraq in recent years, on all sides of frontlines.
While the statistics are numbing, the impact of each attack goes far beyond any immediate loss. To give just one example: following the destruction of one of its hospitals in Yemen's Saada province in October 2015, Médecins Sans Frontières reported that at least 200,000 people were left without access to vital medical care. Over 160 such attacks have been reported to the ICRC since the current conflict in Yemen began in 2015. Less than half of the country's health care facilities are now functioning. The Russian military also knows the far-reaching consequences of such incidents, having suffered an attack on one its field hospitals in Aleppo, Syria in December of last year.
Beyond the impact of specific incidents, the general insecurity and disruption created by armed conflict or violence, while hard to measure, undoubtedly has a massive impact on the provision of, and access to, impartial health care.
Even where health care facilities are functioning, albeit barely, reaching them may be fraught with dangers — and fear.
Obstacles and threats directed by states and by non-state armed groups at health workers and humanitarian organisations that are seen to help "the other side" impede access to entire communities in need of vital medical care.
Furthermore, the crippling loss of health professionals has compounded the humanitarian crises in countries like Syria, Iraq, Yemen and many others. More than half of Syria's doctors are reported to have fled or been killed.
Similarly, when humanitarian workers are attacked — a clear violation of humanitarian law — the impact is felt far beyond the pain or tragic loss of those directly affected. In Syria alone, 63 volunteers from the ICRC's closest partner in the country, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, and another eight from the Palestine Red Crescent Society, have been killed in the course of their work since the conflict started. Beyond the appalling loss of life, the chilling effects of such incidents cannot be overestimated — not least the impact on the countless vulnerable people whom these brave volunteers were helping.
Addressing these massive and complex challenges of course requires action on multiple levels by a range of stakeholders focusing not just on the consequences of the armed conflicts in the region, but ultimately on the root causes.
For the ICRC, whose core mission is to protect and assist people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence, ensuring a sustained and principled humanitarian response in the conflict-affected countries and their regional neighbours is vital.
Our long-standing presence in practically all of these countries in the region is testimony to our commitment. To this end, securing acceptance for our work from all communities and political and military groups is essential. This requires a clear demonstration of impartiality — the provision of humanitarian assistance based exclusively on actual needs — as well as neutrality and independence.
This entails engaging with all stakeholders, including those deemed "terrorist" by some parties. This is vital not only to gain acceptance but also access to as many vulnerable people as possible, on all sides of frontlines.
The single most effective way to reduce the terrible suffering we are witnessing is, without doubt, improving respect for international humanitarian law and the basic principle of humanity. Working to ensure respect for IHL is at the heart of our mandate and mission on legal, policy and operational levels. For example, we engage in a wide range of activities to advise and support parties to armed conflict, both state and non-state, on IHL and its implementation. This includes providing training and training materials on IHL for armed forces, armed groups, and civilian audiences such as decision-makers and legal practitioners. In the framework of our "Health Care in Danger" initiative we have carried out numerous activities at national and global levels to raise awareness and proposed concrete measures to bring an end to violence against health care.
Of course, we can only be one small part of the solution. Ultimately, primary responsibility for compliance with IHL lies with the parties to armed conflict themselves. There is a need, however, for a broader, concerted international effort to improve compliance with the law. This means that all states must at all times ensure respect for IHL and do their best to ensure that other actors, particularly their partners and allies, do the same. There are countless ways in which they can do this. Supporting and providing IHL training to their partners, states and non-state actors alike, including with regard to respect for and protection of the medical mission, is just one example.
It means avoiding labelling armed groups as "terrorist" simply to deny the applicability of IHL in an armed conflict.
And it also means national legislators and courts fulfilling their responsibilities of ensuring that domestic legislation recognises the criminal responsibility of those who violate IHL, and of actually enforcing such legislation. Perpetrators of violations must be held accountable.
There are some grounds for hope. On a political level, the UN Security Council passed a resolution in 2016 specifically on the protection of the medical mission in armed conflicts, reaffirming the crucial importance of IHL compliance to this end. The Russian Federation itself has repeatedly expressed its concern over the plight of civilians, protection of medical facilities and other humanitarian issues in the Syrian conflict. On a practical level, cooperation between the ICRC and the Russian Federation, among others, helped facilitate the evacuation of some 35,000 people from Aleppo last December, to give just one example.
Faced with the enormity of the humanitarian challenges in the Middle East today, much more needs to be done, by all of us. The challenges are much too vast for one organisation or even one sector to tackle. For the ICRC, this means expanding our interaction with strategically important states — the Russian Federation being one of them — and also continuing to seek ways to better engage non-state armed groups. It means strengthening partnerships within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; and seeking greater levels of pragmatic cooperation with specialised UN agencies, neutral and impartial humanitarian NGOs on the ground, and the private sector.
Ultimately it is up to states and non-state armed groups — both of whom are bound by the provisions of IHL — to show the requisite political will to turn legal and policy provisions into a meaningful reality, and to show good faith in protecting the victims of armed conflicts as well as those who help them. Not only will this help to alleviate the suffering we are witnessing in the here and now, it will help pave the way for political dialogue and eventually, a sustainable peace.

DISCUSSION 2

Security of information space and freedom of access: a contradictory interrelation

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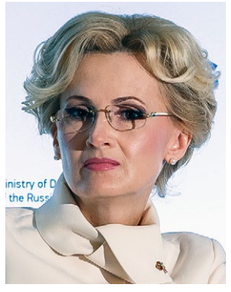

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MAJOR-GENERAL IGOR DYLEVSKY

Deputy Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces

Modern information technologies are increasingly being used for aggressive ends. Combined with extremist, nationalist, and racist actions, they can destabilise the situation and remove from power any government, regardless of whether the country in question is backward or very advanced.

These days, no country in the world can feel safe and protected from information threats originating from across the border.

According to information from the Russian FSB, more than 70 million criminal attacks were committed last year against information resources in the Russian Federation; most of those attacks originated abroad.

Information technologies can even trigger international military conflicts.

Additionally, creating a conflict situation using such instruments is much cheaper than the standard preparations for traditional warfare. It does not require putting together large military forces, amassing aircraft, artillery, or air defence systems in specific areas, preparing the logistics, etc.

An information impact is bloodless. It does not destroy the environment, and it can be delivered via entirely peaceful means, such as the mass media, the internet, telecommunications, and IT systems, etc.

Injections of misinformation via media outlets, publication and distribution of extremist statements, racist or xenophobic flash mobs, cross-border computer attacks against critical infrastructure facilities, and other such methods can bring the situation in any country to a boiling point and cause major social upheavals.

Such actions can also bring two or more countries to a state of serious conflict and even war.

Examples of "colour" revolutions and conflicts in recent years have demonstrated that these technologies are already quite mature.

The question is, where will they be used next, when, and who will be their next target? Let me also put to you another question: What country can feel confident these days that such technologies will never be used against it? What country can feel completely protected?

The answer is obvious: no country can feel safe. This situation is compounded by the fact that in order to gain supremacy over the adversaries in the information sphere, interfere in the work of their automated systems and weapons, attack their command staff and military servicemen, and target their population and infrastructure, many states are currently developing special information technologies, tools and methods collectively known as information weapons.

The term has various interpretations. Let me cite one definition used in an annex to the Agreement on Cooperation in Ensuring International Information Security between the Member States of the SCO. The document defines information weapons as information technologies, tools and methods used for the purpose of information warfare.

It has often been said that the damage inflicted by such weapons can lead to man-made disasters and major accidents at critical industrial, economic, energy, and transport facilities. It can even trigger a financial meltdown and a systemic economic crisis.

Further progress in information technology will lead to the development of a greater range of information weapons; the list of the potential targets of such weapons will also become longer.

We are well aware of the fact that it's not possible to ban the development of information weapons, or to verify its possession by states, let alone terrorists. Nevertheless, it is possible to initiate efforts to develop a mechanism of information weapons nonproliferation.

Additionally, adopting international legal norms could reduce the risk of information weapons being used against critical national facilities in the nuclear industry, the energy sector, life-supporting infrastructure, etc.

Our Western colleagues, however, have chosen a different path.

At its 2014 summit in Wales, NATO adopted amendments to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty; these amendments allow a collective use of military force in response to so-called cyber-attacks.

Also, at the 2016 summit in Warsaw, NATO recognised cyberspace as one of the "domains of operations" for collective defence operations (along with the air, sea, land, and space).

In other words, the information space has become a new theatre of warfare.

Indeed, the armed forces of almost every single state now have outfits that specialise in operations in the information sphere. It has often been reported that more than 120 states are currently developing information weapons. The latest NATO documents have now officially designated a new battlefield.

In this context, specialists of the Russian Ministry of Defence are seeking answers to several crucially important questions, such as:

- Do information attacks constitute a violation of national sovereignty, and should they be regarded as acts of aggression?

- Can the right of nations to individual and collective self-defence, as stipulated in Article 51 of the UN Charter, be invoked in response to such information attacks?

- To what extent is humanitarian law applicable to information attacks?

Let me offer a brief analysis of the current situation. Violations of national sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another state are usually perpetrated in specific physical environments (land, sea, or air).

But we now have a new environment, the information sphere, in which every state also has its own national interests that need to be protected. And unlike the physical environments, the information sphere does not have clearly delineated national borders.

In accordance with the Russian Information Security Doctrine, "information sphere" includes the combination of information, informatisation objects, information systems and websites on the internet, communications networks, information technologies, entities involved in generating and processing information, developing and using the abovementioned technologies, and ensuring information security, as well as a set of mechanisms regulating public relations in this sphere.

A destructive impact on entities that constitute the information sphere can be made using conventional weapons as well as information technologies. In our opinion, that can be qualified as a breach of sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another state — i.e. an act of aggression.

Let me explain.

Take, for example, a hydroelectric or nuclear power plant. Clearly, such a facility is part of critical national infrastructure. If any party attacks the plant using any of the existing modern weapons, that would lead to an enormous amount of destruction and numerous casualties. That would constitute an act of aggression.

But what if the same consequences are caused by a computer attack that disrupts the power plant's automated control system? Should that also be regarded as an act of aggression? We believe that it clearly should; it is a manifest act of aggression.

When assessing any specific act of military use of information technology from the point of view of international law, in accordance with the Definition of Aggression resolution, we should take into account two main factors.

First, a state can be designated the aggressor if it was the first to launch an information attack against another state in order to achieve its military-political ends.

Second, to formulate a final verdict as to whether such an information attack qualifies as an act of aggression, we should assess the nature of the consequences of the attack. If the consequences can be judged catastrophic, then the attack can qualify as an act of aggression.

There have been earlier reports in the media about computer attacks against Iranian nuclear facilities. Specialists believe that these attacks delayed the progress of the Iranian nuclear programme by two years. Can these attacks be regarded as serious? If so, then, in theory, Iran can be regarded as a victim of an act of aggression, while those who commissioned and perpetrated the attacks can be regarded as aggressors — if they acted on orders from a national government.

In practice, however, making such judgments would hardly be possible at this point in time because adjudging the gravity of the consequences of any military use of information technology would require a clear set of specific criteria.

At present, the criteria regarding the use of conventional military force are contained in the list of possible acts of aggression cited in Article 3 of UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 (Definition of Aggression) dated 14 December 1974.

I am not going to list those criteria now — but I will say that to a greater or lesser degree, all of them can be used with regard to any aggressive use of information technology.

But over the four decades since 1974, information technology has made such enormous progress that the list contained in Resolution 3314 is no longer sufficient.

To return to the example of a devastating computer attack against a power plant, the list of the possible acts of aggression can be amended with the following clause: "the use of information weapons by the armed forces of a state against critical facilities of another state, leading to numerous human casualties or major devastation".

It is also necessary to formulate a new clause on the use of information/psychological impact techniques that have become very widespread. For example, such techniques are used to foment "colour" revolutions. One possible wording of such a clause would be "inciting the overthrow of legitimately elected governments; propaganda of war and of the use of force; and spreading deliberate information or misinformation to destabilise the domestic or international situation, or to provoke and escalate armed conflicts".

Let me note that under Article 4 of the Definition of Aggression resolution, the UN Security Council has the power to decide which acts constitute acts of aggression. That mechanism can be used to determine the perpetrator of an act of aggression.

The answer to the second question, on invoking states' right to individual or collective self-defence, as stipulated in Article 51 of the UN Charter, in response to an armed attack perpetrated using information weapons, is closely related to the previous question regarding acts of aggression.

To begin with, we need an international legal definition of the term "armed attack perpetrated using information weapons". Without resolving this issue within a UN framework, direct use of the existing regulations on individual and collective self-defence is impossible. Nevertheless, our NATO colleagues have already made that norm part of their body of laws and regulations, bypassing the UN framework.

In practice, qualifying cross-border information impacts as "armed attacks" appears problematic.

First, the methods and instruments for quickly and accurately pinpointing the location and national identity of the source of an information attack have yet to be developed.

Second, even if we can identify the source, the next problem is how to establish the relationship between some network entity and the government party behind the attack. What if the members of that entity are driven purely by patriotic or other motives? Who should bear international responsibility for the consequences of a malicious information attack? Who should be the specific target of any steps taken in retaliation for an attack? Wars are started and waged by states using their armed forces. As for other legal entities or persons, they can be regarded as sources of aggression only if they are acting on orders from a government. The actual persons or entities that commit cross-border attacks, driven by motives of terrorism, extremism, or personal gain, cannot be regarded as sources of an armed attack. In such a case, information attacks should be qualified as terrorist, extremist, or other criminal offences.

So long as this problem remains unresolved, we will not have full clarity as to whether there is a basis for launching retaliatory military action against states that commit armed attacks using information weapons. The only legally correct way of resolving this problem is by adopting relevant legislation in the UN framework. Since there is no such legislation at this time, parties can take their case to the UN Security Council and ask it to recognise an information attack as a threat to peace, or as an act of aggression, and take the appropriate measures stipulated in the UN Charter. If some kinds of information impacts are qualified by the UN Security Council as armed attacks, the victim will have a legitimate right to self-defence.

Nevertheless, the next question that will arise in such a case would be whether to launch a symmetric or asymmetric retaliatory action, using information weapons or conventional weapons.

It should be noted that the Western countries approach this issue only from the angle of cyber-attacks — or, using our own preferred terminology, computer attacks.

They do not, for example, regard the information/psychological impact that leads to "colour" revolutions as part of this problem, even though the consequences for the national economy and the social sphere resulting from the fall of a government are much more devastating than the consequences of an attack against individual critical facilities. If the norms of international law are ignored, and if decisions are taken outside the UN framework, the NATO states can designate any country they do not like as an aggressor. It will be sufficient for these states merely to declare themselves victims of a so-called cyber-attack, thereby giving themselves the pretext for using military force.

The third question, the question of states' responsibility for actions in the information space undertaken by their agents, pertains to a much broader problem of participants in an armed conflict waged using information weapons.

Under the current provisions of international law, wars must be waged only between the armed forces of the state parties involved (i.e. between the combatants). The armed forces (regular and irregular) include the police and security forces, volunteer units, militias, guerrillas, and members of the public who take up arms at their own initiative in order to repel the invading aggressor, before they have the time to organise themselves into regular units. All these categories of combatants are regarded as legitimate participants in warfare, so long as they meet the following conditions defined by international conventions:

- They are commanded by a person responsible for his subordinates;
- They have a fixed distinctive sign recognisable at a distance;
- They openly carry arms;
- They conduct their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war.

Clearly, some of these criteria are not met by cross-border information attacks, and cannot be directly used for investigating such attacks. Therefore, defining "combatant" with regard to entities operating in the information space will also require the development and implementation of new international legal methodology. Otherwise, bringing the offending states and their officials to responsibility becomes an insurmountable task.

To conclude, let me say that the qualifying characteristics of the events and developments in the information space that pose military-political threats must be formulated on the basis of analysis of the existing international laws, national laws and regulations, and the available information about the recent and ongoing investigations of information security incidents in countries around the world.

Let me also note that to date, there has not been a single case, in any country, of the qualification of such events.

We advocate broad international cooperation in resolving the global problem of countering the threat of information wars and of the proliferation of information weapons. In our view, the main goal of such cooperation should be the establishment of an international legal regime for the provision of information security. That regime should regulate, among other things, military activities of states in the global information space on the basis of the principles and norms of international law. We advocate the creation of mechanisms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation on military aspects of international information security.

IRINA YAROVAYA
Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation

First of all, we need to define the current information space. It is global, it is comprehensive, but it has no regulatory framework, no established rules. It completely violates sovereignty and, in fact, today information weapons become weapons of mass destruction.

When we talk about the impact on the mind of an individual as the bearer of civil rights and freedoms, the bearer of national sovereignty that ensures the sovereign security of each country, we should also note that the current information space, not protected by international agreements or treaties, is not just vulnerable, but has been appropriated and monopolised by one state only.

Facts and evidence are always important. In 1953, the United States put forward the concept of psychological warfare. Back then, during the Cold War, that was how the United States tackled its geopolitical tasks with regards to the countries of the socialist camp. After the Soviet Union collapsed, the United States was the first in the world to put forward the concept of information warfare in 1992. Initially, those were instructional materials of the Secretary of Defence. In 1996 and 1998, such concept makes is way to US doctrinal documents. In this regard, it is fundamentally important to understand what the original meaning promoted by masterminds of information warfare (and these are the United States) was in terms of how they planned to use information weapons in the long run. Let me read the quote to convey the exact wording from the official document. Information warfare is a complex impact on the system of state and military administration of the opposing side, and its military and political leadership, which — and this is fundamentally important — would already during peacetime lead to the adoption of decisions that are favourable to the country that initiated the information impact. In fact, the United States has been acting within this very paradigm. Therefore, we can say with full confidence that nowadays false information is a prelude to genocide, aggression, economic devastation, "colour" revolutions, and coups.

Today, the greatest shortage that the world is facing is the shortage of truth. And it is fundamentally important that today, at the beginning of the conference, all officials speaking on behalf of Russia said that we propose dialogue to the world, we propose the truth for objective assessment of the situation in terms of the logic of further administrative, military, and political decisions.

If we analyse the mechanism of destruction that was launched during the Arab Spring, in Ukraine, during the revolution in Georgia, and in all countries that have suffered from this, we will see that everywhere the same approach is used. It starts with an information attack, an information intervention that precedes further economic and political colonisation. Today, colleagues from other countries said they feel now that military and political presence is being commercialised and that ultimately it is all about the direct economic interests of seizure of resources, devastation and enslavement.

However we need to understand how this mechanism is launched. It can be said that today non-governmental organisations often act as a mobile squadron that produces the required impact and is exploited by the main actor that has monopolised the information space.

Today there is only one corporation, created by United States, which holds the exclusive right to assign domains. All other states have only an advisory vote. That is, today only one sovereign in the world has the exclusive right to permit or prohibit someone to be present in the information space. The encryption system that prevents intelligence agencies of other countries from fighting terrorism, a global international threat, falls into the same category, because today there is again only one state that has such an exclusive right, and this is the United States. That said it is very important what modern doctrinal documents look like, for instance in Russia and the United States.

In its Military Doctrine, Russia says that information space should be a space of security and equal sovereign rights, while the United States claims that it seeks to ensure its information superiority. At the same time, the United States also invented the so-called theory of five rings, through which it determines the levels of information attacks in order to achieve its strategic and current goals on the territories of other sovereign states.

Therefore, today, when we talk about information security, the issue of protecting humanitarian sovereignty needs to be tackled. Sovereignty of citizens who hold exclusive rights to shape their respective countries' domestic policies.

As regards the theatre of operations, already today in its documents the United States stipulates that any information attack is considered an intrusion and that it intends to repel such attacks using any means available, including weapons of mass destruction. It is fundamentally important, because Russia has proposed already twice to adopt at the United Nations international documents that would allow for information cooperation to be used in the fight against terrorism and that would establish international arrangements to stand up for, inter alia, preservation of sovereignty.

What conclusions can be drawn from all of this? First, the world needs information disarmament. The world needs to develop immunity to fake information. The world needs international agreements that will clearly differentiate the rights, obligations and responsibilities of each subject of international law in information space.

And lastly, in today's world, the human mind is valuable and precious. Therefore, I think that at international military forums we will increasingly find ourselves discussing the value of culture, education, and upbringing. For Russia, it is an everlasting choice of values. And it is absolutely clear to us that in Russia, Syria or Libya, we equally value human lives and we will equally protect the right of every citizen of any state to their own understanding of their culture, their traditions, and their future.

CAPTAIN WEN BAIHUA
Professor at the Centre of Information Security of the Chinese People's Liberation Army National Defence University

When big powers face the paradox of information space security and information access freedom, their options are limited.

Let me give as the first example the United States. Through massive metadata collection activities to implement its national security policy, which is rooted in its core position in international communication networks, the United States has globally put tremendous pressure on ordinary citizens' confidence when they access the internet.

From August 2016, according to Shadow Brokers documents, the United States has been stealthily stockpiling zero-day vulnerabilities for its intelligence community, and declared that it has responsible policy under the leadership of the National Security Council. These activities have been the top threat to public information assurance. The US government even took the risk of impairing the integrity of the Middle East SWIFT banking system in the name of counter-terrorism, undermining the stability of international financial system.

As far as the European Union is concerned, since 2014 it has applied domestic laws on international data centres, and controls the dataflow across its borders, causing ICT industries like Google or Facebook to face the dilemma of choosing between their international markets and the cost of providing services. The European Justice Commissioner noted the widespread use of encryption backdoors in messaging apps across the EU, and plans were made to strengthen law enforcement from June, which would impact public confidence in internet use.

Last November, the United Kingdom declared that it was going to build a national firewall to filter out extreme speeches online. This March, Germany pressed Twitter and Facebook to delete remarks advocating terrorism as soon as possible.

Last December, Russia published its national Doctrine of Information Security. According to the doctrine, "the information security of the Russian Federation is the state of protection of the individual, society and the State against internal and external information threats, allowing to ensure the constitutional human and civil rights and freedoms".

China upholds the cyber-sovereignty principle for national interests and international stability. The cyber-sovereignty principle has been China's basic solution to keep balance between information security and access freedom. This principle was promoted by China and Russia for a long time, and in particular in the 2015 report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts. It was then reiterated by Chinese and US leaders during President Xi Jinping's state visit to the United States in 2015.

According to China's 2016 National Cyberspace Security Strategy and the 2017 International Strategy of Cooperation on Cyberspace, respect for and protection of cyber-sovereignty has been set out as one of four principles alongside peace, shared governance, and shared benefits. It is in accordance with these principles that China is trying to resolve this paradox.

Considering the difficulty of comprehensively implementing cyber-sovereignty at present, the core value of this principle is to preserve strategic agility around the world and for the future.

China is trying to learn from the best practices of the EU and the United States in dealing with cross-border dataflow, and to cooperate with all the other nations to fight against international cyber-crime.

According to the International Strategy of Cooperation on Cyberspace, enhanced defence capability in cyberspace is an important part of China's endeavours to modernise its national defence and armed forces, which complies with the strategic guideline of active defence.

International cooperation is the final solution in the long run. Geopolitical strategic structure is still the dominant concern for all nations in dealing with the inevitable paradox in virtual space.

From the traditional military or security perspective, stability of cyberspace is still the top priority of international cyber-security in the near future. The cyber-pact under the UN system is far more important at present.

But this is not enough. Another crucial factor is cyberspace cooperation. China and Russia have a long tradition of cooperation on promoting norms governing international cyberspace. This April, the G7 also issued a declaration on responsible states' behaviour in cyberspace, which urges a closer cooperation among states.

It's not enough to cooperate on cyber-issues only from the political perspective. Across the world, we should develop new projects to strengthen bilateral, regional, and global cooperation in the political, military, economic, security, and social fields to resolve the paradox comprehensively.

We should bear in mind that, compared with unilateral actions, cyber-cooperation is much cheaper, more sustainable, and more efficient in safeguarding national security interests and it can preserve perpetual information access freedom more vigorously at the same time.

YAKOV KEDMI
Expert (Israel)

Every military action, war, and military operation always pursues political goals. These political goals are to influence the political situation and change it as necessary.

Information wars have the same goal, to influence the political situation. Information warfare is an indispensable and natural part of political confrontation.

Unlike military operations that take place from time to time, an information war unfolds before, during, and after a military operation. The goals of information warfare are to influence military results, sometimes strengthening them and sometimes weakening or neutralising them.

However sometimes information wars get out of control, and their role, instead of an auxiliary one, becomes decisive. A vivid example that I want to provide is the year 1948, before the war for independence. The Prime Minister of Iraq speaks quite frankly and honestly: "If we start a war against Israel, we will lose it. But we drove our people to hysteria, and if we do not start it, they will overthrow us". And the country, due to a wrongly devised information war, began the war, which it lost, knowing in advance that it would lose it.

We faced a similar situation in 1967. No one wanted the Six-Day War, but the information hysteria in the Middle East got out of control and our entire region was engulfed by this war, the results of which we still reap until today.

Similarly to any other war, information war possesses all the features of military operations. Strategy, tactics, offence, defence, planning, staff work, manoeuvres. However, unlike military operations, of which defence is a natural part, an attempt to wage an information war defensively almost always leads to defeat. Unlike military operations, a successful information war must always be offensive and proactive. Defence, as they say in Russia, is similar to death.

During hostilities, the time and pace of military operations are of great importance. In an information war, their importance is even greater. Its success largely depends on transmitting information from the battlefield as quickly as possible. However, there is a problem regarding information reliability. Reliability plays the same and sometimes even a greater role. In our army, we have always tried to ensure that information is reliable, but this has led to delays in information transmission, making information less effective, if effective at all. So, great efforts have been made recently to ensure that any military operation is supported by services dealing with information. This also happens at the planning stage. Transmission of information from the battlefield is one of the tasks of those responsible for planning and execution of operations, in order to ensure that information is transmitted as soon as possible and is as reliable as possible.

On the other hand, the battlefield is characterised by uncertainty. It is natural, and either side always tries to make the situation for the enemy unknown and uncertain.

The information space is usually formed by the media, both public and, more and more often, private media. In the battlefield, all media have a common quality of being irresponsible, even if they are state-owned. Therefore, the media should be controlled; otherwise, as those who have been engaged in intelligence know perfectly well, they can cause serious damage to the military operation and the troops, should an information leak occur. A lot of information always leaks from the battlefield, and we ourselves have experienced that.

Those responsible for the military operation must also be responsible for information security in the battlefield. Such responsibility should not be delegated to anyone. It is the responsibility of the operation commander. And, as long as it is his responsibility, he must have all powers and authorities to enforce and ensure it. During military operations, we always have military censorship in the army. All reports from the battlefield must be censored. If someone evades censorship, it will be treated as a violation of law.

Countries considered democratic apply even more stringent measures. Please recall that during the war for the Falkland Islands or Malvinas (the name itself was an element of information warfare) no one was admitted to the battlefield by British troops. The same thing happened in Iraq.

In conclusion, I want to provide an example of what an information war is. In 1973, representatives of Vietnam and the United States met in Paris. The American general bitterly said to the Vietnamese officer: "We won all battles". The Vietnamese officer smiled and said: "You lost the war". It is the best example of what an information war does, even in case of absolute military superiority.

ALEXANDER RAHR
Editor-in-Chief of Russlandkontrovers (Germany)

Increasingly more attention is being paid to cyber-security. A few years ago, only intelligence agencies were concerned about this issue. Today, this topic is on the agenda of multiple international conferences, including the Munich Security Conference.
Experts agree on one thing: in the future, not tanks or soldiers, but cyber-weapons will become the main force in the battlefield. Using hacker attacks, the military of the future will be able to paralyse the enemy's economic centres, de-energise nuclear power plants and shoot down aircrafts.
Information wars will become a challenge for any state. Everyone, both large and small states, will have to rewrite their military strategies to adapt them to the new threat. Only recently, a special Bundeswehr unit responsible for internet security was set up in Germany. It employs over 100 people and will expand.
There is an ethical problem. Democratic states have long faced a dilemma of how to ensure freedom of speech and open access to information, while protecting the state structure and social order. Here, discussions are taking place from completely different perspectives.
Accelerating digitalisation in multiple spheres of human life, as well as in economy in general, has led to a situation when criminals learnt to exploit technology for criminal purposes: to commit cyber-attacks and engage in espionage and manipulations through the internet. Cyber-crime is no longer qualified as a minor offence. It threatens the existence of entire states, shared financial systems, banks, individual bank deposits, even in a well-off country like Germany.
In 2016, the German Minister of the Interior publicly drew attention to the problem of cyber-attacks and seriously urged the population to create water and food reserves to be used in case of emergency. This caused many questions among the population, but it also demonstrated that the national government was acting responsibly and seriously and was ready to face a new challenge.
After the US presidential elections, the West accused Russian intelligence agencies of hacker attacks on Hillary Clinton's campaign, which allegedly secured Donald Trump's victory.
According to Western intelligence agencies, cyber-espionage has reached new milestones. Both Russia and the West are preparing to repel foreign hacker attacks with the help of cyber-armies. In the future, it will be cyber-war that will ensure victory or defeat of states in wars.
The first real cyber-battle may take place in North Korea in the near future. According to recent media reports, the United States managed to tap into the IT systems of the DPRK Ministry of Defence and sabotage ballistic missile tests.
The current hysteria around possible cyber-attacks relates to the fact that only a few experts today are really able to understand how the internet can be turned into a weapon. While previously intelligence agencies and security experts were engaged in counting missile carriers and nuclear warheads, now they hunt for adversaries on the internet.
In this regard, the Moscow Conference on International Security could make an important contribution to the de-escalation in this area and discuss how the West, Russia, and China could initiate cyber-disarmament, achieve transparency, and improve information exchange. All this is necessary to deepen cooperation in the fight against a common enemy, international terrorism, which uses the same information tools.
Whether it is possible to create an internet Interpol, who will control it, whether it will be possible to build confidence for data exchange — all these issues needed to be addressed yesterday, not today.
It should be noted that topics such as cyber-crime or espionage are hardly interesting to the general public. In fact, the global population starts getting used to the fact that their personal data are freely available online, and people even contribute voluntarily to such developments, sharing more and more personal information on the internet.
That is the spirit of our time, but it is very dangerous. If 20 years ago it had become known that the CIA or NSA monitored their NATO partners, a huge wave of protests would have arisen in Germany and all over the West. Today, however, there is no such wave. The events of recent years are alarming. Due to ongoing digitalisation and the development of industry 4.0, completely new security measures will be needed in the near future. The world is rapidly turning into a homogeneous and unlimited information space that is becoming increasingly vulnerable.
The danger of leaks of confidential government documents increases. More and more threats come from the spread of so-called fake news. Often, such deliberately false information, once uploaded to the internet, turns into truth.
At the moment, states can protect themselves against such dangers in one way only, by limiting the use of the internet and banning Facebook and Twitter. Some Asian states choose this way, but the price of such measures is high: economic losses and political isolation.
This April, Facebook spread sensational news directly connected with the issues we are discussing. Soon, Facebook will provide its users with the functionality of generating information using telepathy instead of writing or dictating texts. That is, devices will be developed which can read human thoughts easily and quickly. It is not fiction. Does it open the door to new and dangerous technologies enabling one to spy on the brain and specifically to spy on national leaders? Are we on course for an Orwellian world?

VLADIMIR SOLOVIEV
Journalist, member of the Public Council of the Russian Ministry of Defence

Speaking about information warfare, we should understand that nothing has fundamentally changed since the times of Ecclesiastes and Sun Tzu. One more battlefield has emerged, but it is still a war, in which the parties primarily pursue their own interests and benefits. Anyway, we still deceive ourselves. We avoid answering the key question: who benefits and why?
We accepted the existence of a country that completely changed the notion of international law. While the terrible sufferings of Syrian children can serve as reason for a missile strike on the airfield, why are the terrible sufferings of children in Donbass not a reason for a strike on the positions of the Ukrainian troops that are shelling them?
Why is it possible to impose sanctions on Russia because someone thinks that Russian troops are deployed in Lugansk and Donetsk, without imposing any sanctions on the United States and Turkey, whose troops are definitely present in Syria?
Why do they talk about the annexation of the Crimea, but say nothing about any associated territories? It is because the Yalta world has collapsed long ago.
Each time, deceiving ourselves, we believe that there is some opportunity to come to an agreement at international forums and believe in some international institutions. The state of Iraq collapsed because of fake news. Who was punished in any way? Can we see the International Court in The Hague condemn US representatives to the United Nations or the US President for having launched that aggression? It is ridiculous to talk about this. Have we seen any cash compensation paid? No.
So let us stop deceiving ourselves. As long as man exists, he will be imperfect. Let us avoid trying to improve human nature, let us look at ourselves.
The media should answer the simplest question: in whose interests? For this purpose, the government should determine what their own interests are. We cannot make people believe in what is contrary to their nature. But their nature can be changed by changing people's ideas about themselves through education, culture, and media.
Mrs Yarovaya's use of the term "immunity" is apposite. Our country itself is guilty of having lost its immunity. So it's ridiculous to expect that the United States or any other country will suddenly change their nature and say: "Indeed, we will step down from the pedestal to which we have climbed". As a young nation, they can afford the luxury of looking at the whole world and thinking that the world was born together with them. We understand that their triumph, de facto since World War II, is virtually insignificant when compared to more than three thousand years of triumph seen by the Chinese civilisation. However we retreated. We, as a country, abandoned our sovereignty in the 1990s.
We abandoned our ideology. Therefore it is ridiculous to demand that the army, with media as an ideological army (with all relevant specifics and nuances) being de facto a part of the army, advance, when the government does not provide an ideological platform. The government is afraid of this word.
How can the army fight when the commander does not lead it, when the commander sets no task?
Sun Tzu writes that you cannot manage the army in the same way that government officials are managed. It's the same with the media. The media require a special approach and special respect. They are not landing troops that can land right away and solve the problem. Their task is different. The media should be treated with respect, in a systematic manner. The media are inside the ideological structure.
We live in a very amusing time, when all our concepts are corrupted. The concept of democracy, the concept of freedom, the concept of justice. They are understood differently by different individuals. As a result, we see the return of sovereign nations to their inherent forms of government and forms of presentation and perception of information. Otherwise, "Islamic State" which is banned in Russia would not have been so successful. It is a caliphate. Does anyone think that Egypt has gone far from its traditional forms of government? Does someone still believe that most African countries are democracies?
We should stop deceiving ourselves. We should realise that external threats will never disappear. And we should proceed on this basis to address the challenges we are facing inside the country, relying on a coherent, powerful ideological platform, recognised and enshrined by the government. Just as is done in the United States.
It is not accidental that Irina Yarovaya mentioned 1953 and the emergence of the doctrine of psychological warfare. McCarthyism was at the peak of popularity then. Violations of human rights akin to those seen during McCarthy's time are hard to recall. When comrade Deng Xiaoping faced the information threat that could destroy Chinese sovereignty, he, now perceived almost as an icon of change, without hesitation persuaded his peers in the party that the Tiananmen Square protests should be suppressed brutally. As a result, China today shares the 1st and 2nd places with the United States and is obviously one of the leading powers.
Stop making other people's mistakes. It's time to mind our own sovereignty.
Stop trying to please the external world. We need to try to please our own citizens and our own country.

HARLAN K. ULLMAN
Senior Adviser at the Atlantic Council (USA)

We are drowning in a sea of bits, zeroes and ones, and metadata. We urgently need life rafts and lifeboats built on first principles. So, let me give you a couple of these lifeboats as we think through not just the world of cyber but information and communications technologies as well.

First, I am very uncomfortable with the term information warfare. It is not new. If you read Sun Tzu, Carl von Clausewitz, Marshal Vasily Sokolovsky or two PLA air force colonels writing in 1999, the means may have changed but information warfare has been around for a very, very long time.

Second, one of the great problems we face conceptually with cyberspace and the information space in general is that we lack a foundation for policy and strategy. Let me give you three analogies. As a very, very former sailor I was intimately familiar with the maritime rules of the road that very sensibly were in place for safety and for preventing collisions. In 1945, three nuclear bombs were detonated and within three or four years we had a system — or a concept or a theology — of deterrence. Now, deterrence theory may have been rather mystical and theological but we were able to deal with it.

But I think the most relevant analogy to cyber and information is the international monetary and money system. Money like information is ubiquitous. People are trying to tamper with it, steal it, bend it, do whatever they possibly can to manipulate it. Banks have got firewalls called guards and safes; checking accounts have passwords and all sorts of other safeguards are in place to protect money and the monetary system. We have currency exchanges. We have SWIFT to facilitate transfers across borders. And we have many ways of regulating and protecting the monetary system. I believe that this is a good or even best analogy because we lack for the world of cyberspace a series of first principles or a foundation in dealing with this very, very amorphous and often ill-defined subject. I want to raise two questions, implicitly that delve more deeply into this world of cyber. The thesis of this conference is that the greatest threat facing us collectively is terrorism in the form of jihadi and extreme violence. I disagree with that conclusion. In my view, I think global terrorism a symptom not a cause. And I think the number one problem facing mankind today is failed and failing government.

Failed and failing government exists from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe with Brussels and Washington in between. Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders didn't get as many votes as they did because the American system of government was working well. Brexit didn't happen because the British government was really working well. What is happening right now in France with Marine Le Pen is clearly a result of bad government. And you can look around the world identifying all these hot spots where bad government has really been a major cause of these ideological religiously motivated problems.

The second point I want you to consider is how do we improve the US–Russian relationship. When Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was in Moscow last week and met with Foreign Minister Lavrov and President Putin, they achieved a diplomatic standard of agreeing to the fact that our relationship has never been worse since the end of the Cold War. If that's a triumph of diplomacy I don't know what is.

So how do we try to recover from the nadir to which this relationship has descended without making it worse? One way to begin would be through a dialogue over how do we deal with information, how we deal with cyber. During the Cold War, you all know that one of the most successful sets of negotiations was over arms control. And it wasn't necessarily because we actually reduced the number of weapons that we had and for a time limited anti-ballistic missile defence.

But both sides through this very long process got to know each other far better. Washington and Moscow see the world in profoundly different ways. Russia's view of strategy and the role of defence and deterrence is far different than America's. And so, perhaps, both sides could begin by striking up some way of using cyber, using communications and information as a basis for exchange and dialogue. Maybe this is best done through the private sector, possibly through Google or one of the many American and equivalent Russian companies. I think that this is essential. Because if action is not taken right now I can almost guarantee you that the already dismal condition of our relations will get worse. It will get worse politically, it will get worse in the fields of cyberspace and information and communications. And neither the best interest of the United States, Russia or any other country would be well served by that.

MAJED AL TURKI
Director of the Saudi Centre for Media and Arab-Russian Studies

First of all, I would like to draw your attention to the terms that were used today. One of the terms that have been discussed a lot is Islamic terrorism. It seems to me that this term is associated with some kind of mundane confusion. In fact, one cannot say that NATO's actions in Iraq or Afghanistan are a war of Catholics against Muslims. Also, it cannot be said that Russia's interference in Syrian affairs is a war led by the Russian Orthodox Church. Therefore, international terrorism cannot be characterised as Islamic. We believe that we are talking about terrorism disguised under religious clothes. My report is close to this topic, and it deals with technical information and tools that can be used in information warfare.

A key characteristic of terrorism is that terrorism is a clandestine activity that uses clandestine means to achieve its military goals and defeat the enemy. Another aspect is connected with the characteristics of terrorist organisations. As a rule, their leaders hide and do not appear in the information space. They often come up with messages explaining the activities of their organisations. An important point about the clandestine nature of terrorist organisations is that they use symbols or pseudonyms that do not enable the identification of real individuals.

The leaders of terrorist organisations set themselves a number of strategic goals. First of all, they are willing to undermine national security of the countries targeted by terrorist attacks. Secondly, they try to undermine people's confidence in the ability of the state security services to ensure security and stability. They also try to undermine the activities of international organisations in their target countries and demonstrate that these countries are unable to maintain security and protect international interests. Finally, terrorists, through their attacks, undermine the socio-economic situation in their countries of operation.

It is difficult to identify the political aspects of terrorist organisations' activity due to two reasons. First, terrorist organisations do not represent themselves, i.e. they express the will of some other hidden forces. Usually, they are controlled by the secret services of some states. Also, most often they seek to achieve purely information goals focusing on the general public. Secondly, their goals vary depending on the wishes of their sponsors and customers, and therefore such organisations can often be seen to emerge suddenly in different regions. The causes can only be understood by analysing the events and assessing who suffers and who benefits from terrorist attacks.

I believe Russian-Saudi cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism to be unconditionally important. We can talk about the similarity of conditions on both sides. The terrorist organisations' activities are directed against Sunni Muslim communities and include, inter alia, recruitment of Sunni Muslim youth for terrorist activities. Both Russia and Saudi Arabia have suffered multiple terrorist attacks, both purely information and real ones.

Let me propose cooperation between Riyadh and Moscow in several areas:

- Cooperation in the field of information security in a broad sense, in combating drug trafficking and organised crime, since they are the main source of finance for terrorist organisations and terrorist activities.
- Cooperation in the development of procedures and rules governing the use of electronic means of communication.
- Direct cooperation in matters related to the fight against ISIS.
- Cooperation in the ideological struggle against extremism, and such struggle should not be limited to the religious domain, but should embrace the manifestations of extremism in a broader sense.
- Cooperation in the organisation of an international counter-terrorism conference, including the adoption of appropriate measures and laws.
- Organisation of a round table discussion on information security in a broad sense, in cooperation with research institutions and centres, on the margins of meetings of government experts.

NATALYA KASPERSKAYA
President of InfoWatch Group, co-founder of Kaspersky Lab

At the end of last year, WikiLeaks published a major leak showing that the United States' CIA developed weaponised malware. The leak included 8,500 documents, and many signs suggest that the documents are authentic. It is not the fact that the CIA develops weaponised viruses that is interesting, since it was known or at least one could guess about it. What's interesting is the fact that the CIA has a separate unit that disguises such viruses to make them look as software developed by other countries. Russia, China, and Arab countries were named among such countries.

One should bear in mind that if a hacker is unwilling to be identified, he can easily do it. Computer crime clearance rates are extremely low, with about 5% of crimes cleared and 95% remaining unsolved. General Igor Dylevsky came up with a good proposal to ensure that information attacks entail punishment, but, unfortunately, it is extremely difficult or even impossible to identify the initiator and the true author of an attack, especially in the light of the fact that necessary camouflage measures can be taken and malware can be disguised as programmes developed by other countries.

So, let me make the following conclusion: it is necessary to fight against such cyber-attacks and confront them. While understanding at the same time that any publication concerning cyber-attacks and any equation of a cyber-attack to a real military attack is extremely dangerous. Because the responsibility for some virus can be attributed not to its real developer.

In this connection, the phenomenon of Russian hackers that has been actively discussed during the last six months is particularly illustrative. However, it is a purely media phenomenon, and it is just a vivid example of an information attack that we spoke a great deal about today. There are some mysterious Russian hackers who are so mighty that they can elect the president of the most powerful country in the world. However, they are also so stupid and naïve that they cannot even hide the traces of their intrusion into the network, although 95% of computer intruders do know how to do that. There is some kind of logical contradiction, a quite obvious one, which, however, does not cause any surprise among those who spin the news, because their task is not to prove, but to repeat for many times. We will simply repeat the statement about the terrible threat coming from Russian hackers for 250,000 times, and eventually everyone will believe it.

The Internet of Things is a hot topic right now. In fact, we are talking about the creeping introduction of information technology in our traditional engineering systems, i.e. in systems that used to be reliably protected, especially critical facilities; and we are now simply introducing information technology for the sake of incremental improvement or performance increase. And the system becomes as unprotected as a regular computer, for which over 7 million viruses have been created.

It is a serious problem, and I would propose to draft an international convention on non-proliferation of cyber-weapons and the recognition of non-proliferation of cyber-weapons by all countries. We all understand that this may be a kind of double-dealing, but it is necessary to discuss this and strive to ensure that all countries, in particular the leading powers, sign such a convention.

DISCUSSION 3

BMD: implications for global and regional security

Moderator

Lieutenant-General (Retired) Evgeny Buzhinskiy

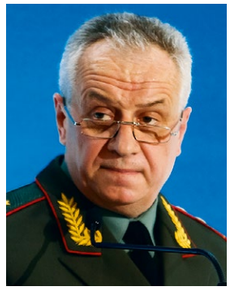
Chairman of the PIR Center Executive Board

Major-General (Retired) Sergey Yagolnikov

Chief of the Central Scientific Research Institute of Aerospace Defence Forces of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation

Lieutenant-General Viktor Poznikhir

First Deputy Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces



Richard Weitz

Director of the Centre for Political-Military Analysis at Hudson Institute (USA)

Major-General Cai Jun

Deputy Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the Joint Staff Department under China's Central Military Commission

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL VIKTOR POZNIKHIR

First Deputy Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces

The evolving situation in the field of missile defence is the key issue of international security. The missile defence factor has a direct impact on the arms race, nuclear disarmament, and on the maintenance of strategic stability. This is due to the fact that strategic offensive weapons and strategic defensive weapons are inseparably linked.

Based on an understanding of the destabilising impact of missile defence, in 1972 the Soviet Union and the United States signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. It provided for the maintenance of military-strategic parity of nuclear deterrent capabilities between the two leading nuclear powers.

For 30 years the ABM Treaty had been the cornerstone of strategic stability, which was in turn the basis for all the ensuing arrangements regarding the limitation and reduction of strategic offensive arms. In 2002, using an argument that revolved around the so-called Iranian and North Korean missile threats, the United States withdrew from the ABM Treaty and initiated a massive deployment of mobile and stationary missile defence systems that had previously been covered by the restrictions set out in this agreement.

Today, elements of the US missile defence system are deployed in the Continental United States, in Europe, and in the Asia-Pacific region. Maritime means for ballistic missile interception are deployed near Russia's and China's shores. According to the US Administration, today the missile defence system is already capable of fulfilling current operational tasks. The decision has already been made to further expand its capacity.

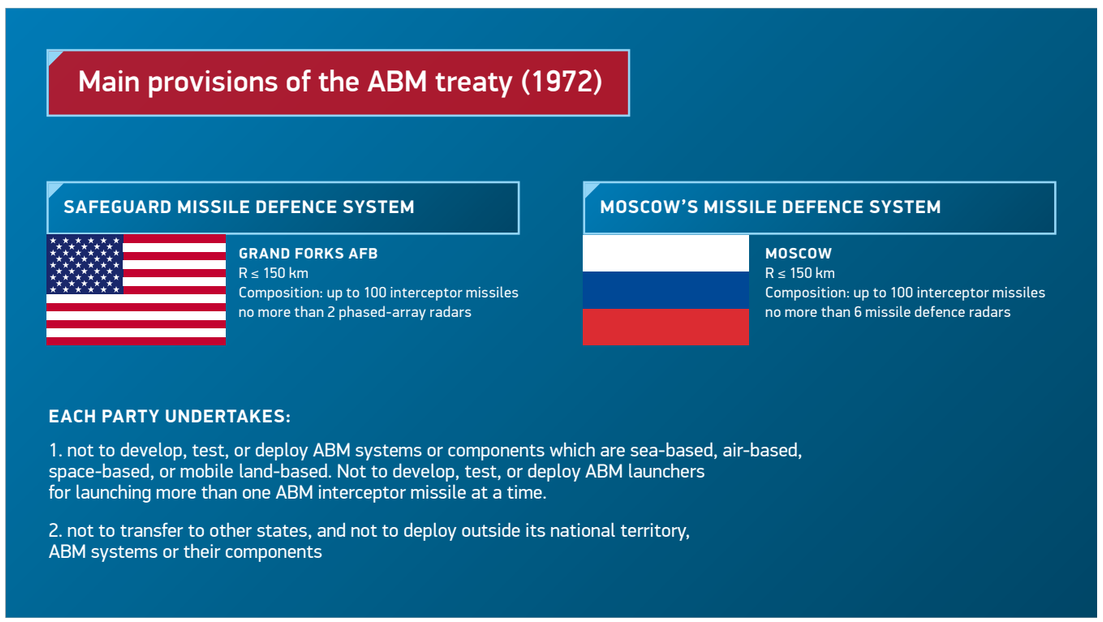
The deployment of global missile defence gradually destroys the existing international security system. By building up its missile defence capabilities, the United States aims to achieve a strategic advantage by devaluing Russian and Chinese deterrent capabilities. This may lead to serious consequences in the field of security.

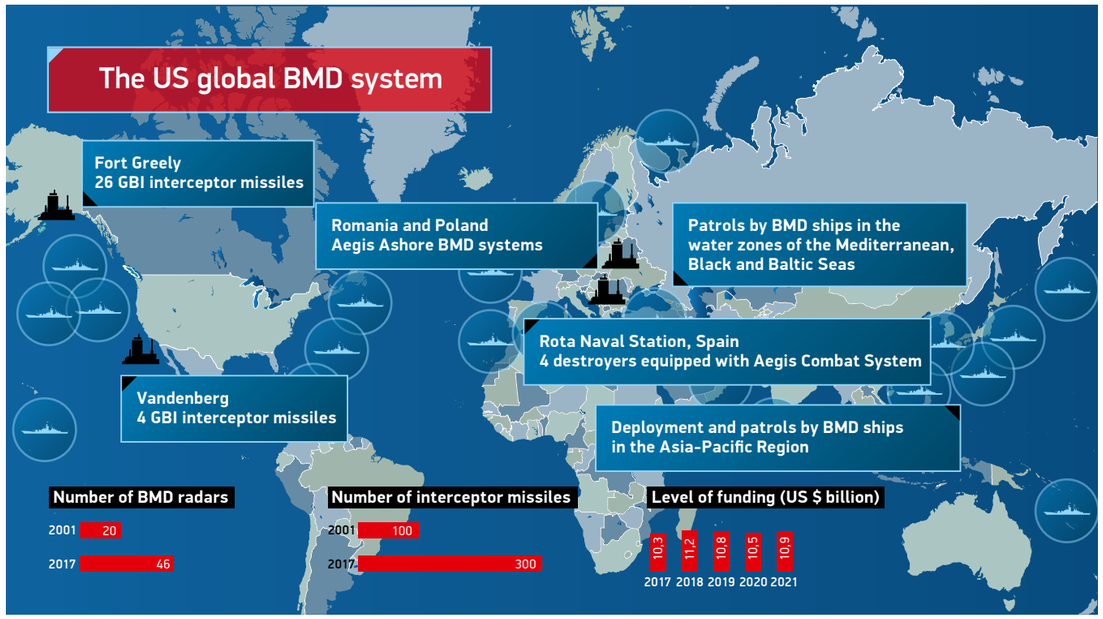
First, the existence of a global missile defence system lowers the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons because it gives the United States an illusion of impunity over a sudden use of strategic offensive arms under the "missile defence umbrella".

Second, US missile defence undermines the existing balance of deterrent forces, thereby posing a threat to the implementation of the 2010 Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and the 1987 Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles.

Third, the creation of the missile defence system poses a threat to the security of international space activities and obstructs the conclusion of agreements on the non-deployment of weapons in space.

Fourth, missile defence serves as an





incentive for a missile build-up around the world, and thus provokes a new arms race.

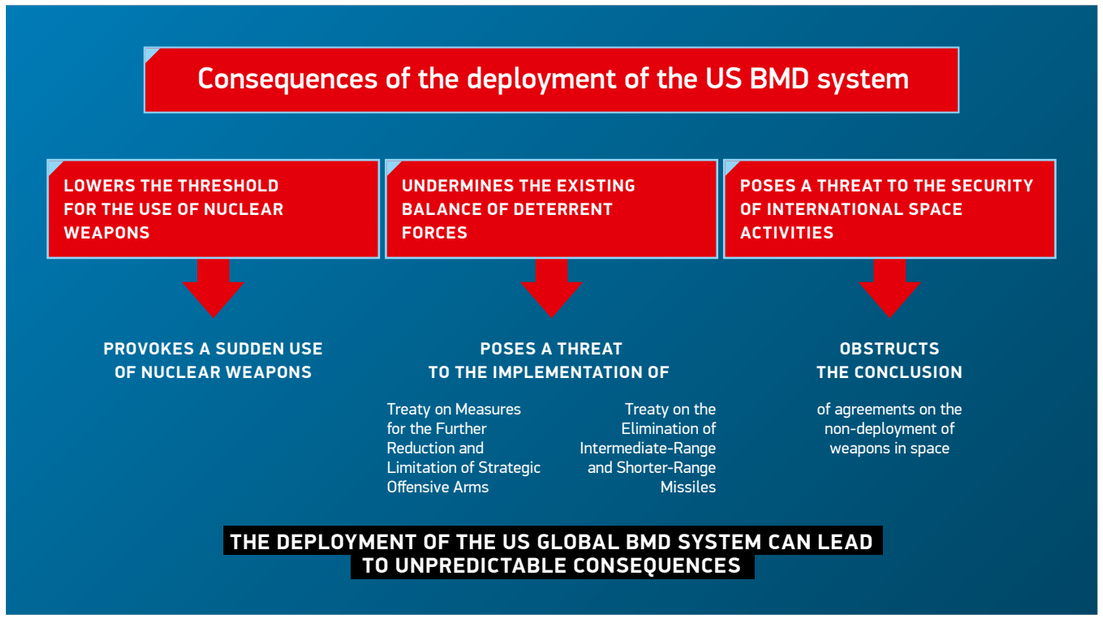
As a military expert, I would like elaborate on what is behind these statements.

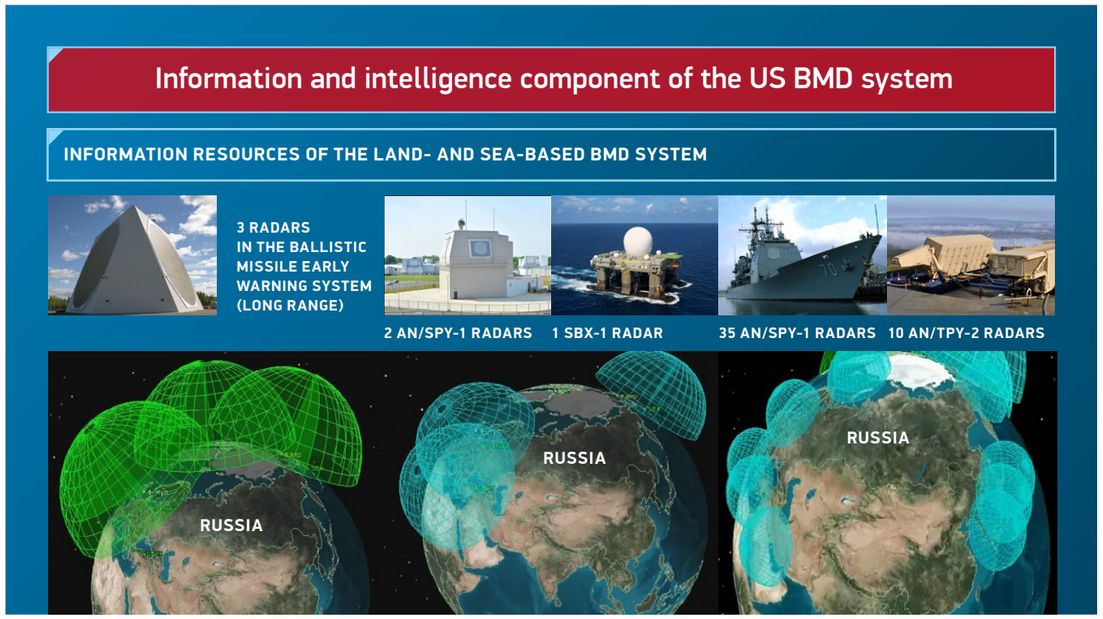
Stationary radars involved in the US missile early warning system cover all possible flight trajectories of Russian ballistic missiles in the direction of the United States.

US radars cover almost the entire territory of Russia.

These radars are capable of tracking the flight of intercontinental ballistic missile and submarine-launched ballistic missile warheads and feeding targeting data to radars in missile defence complexes.

The use of the sea-based mobile radar near Alaska, radars in Romania and Poland as well as missile defence ships' information systems significantly increases operational capability and accuracy of targeting data about Russian





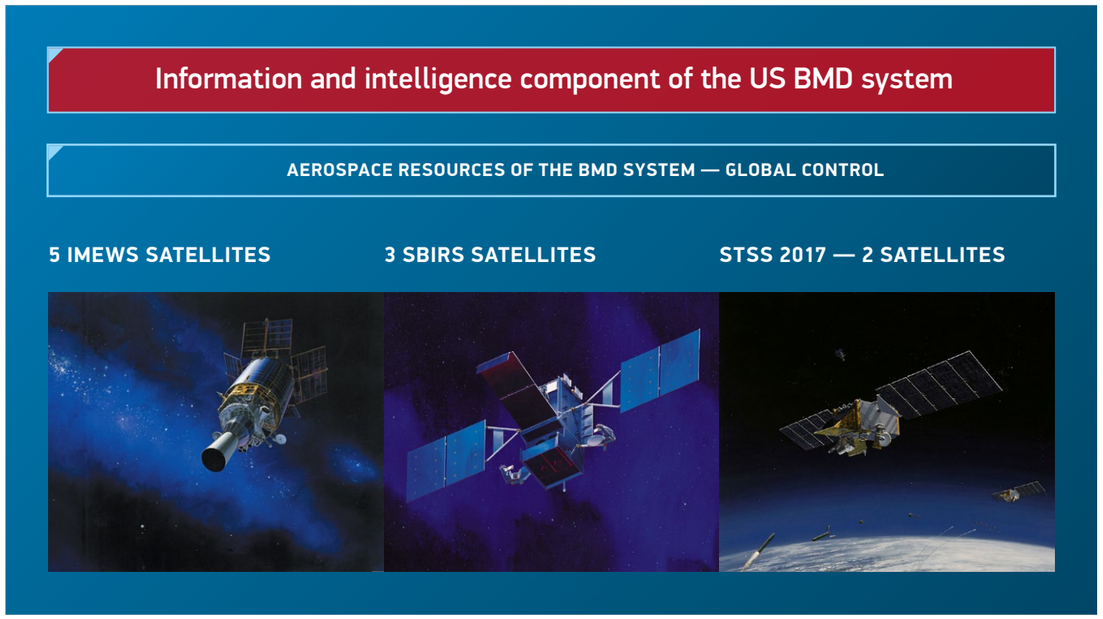
ICBMs and SLBMs, hence the possibility of their interception also increases.

A growth in the US missile defence system's information capabilities is expected as a result of the development of a low-orbit space system for detecting and tracking ballistic missiles. Due to the ability to transmit data directly from the space vehicle to interceptor, the capabilities of the US missile defence system will move to a new level.

Thus, the information and surveillance capabilities of the US missile defence system today make it possible not only to detect Russian ballistic missile launches and track their flight trajectories, but also enable the transfer of target designation data to missile defence system to intercept warheads of ballistic missiles.

Let's consider the firepower capabilities of the US missile defence system.

Today, they comprise about 30 GBI



Fire component of the US BMD system

GBI systems

Alaska (Fort Greely), California (Vandenberg). Planned deployment of 20 more interceptor missiles in the north-east of the United States

Aegis Ashore system

Romania (Deveselu)
This system is being built in Poland (Redzikowo)

Ships equipped with Aegis and Standard Missile-3 interceptors

Spain (Rota), Japan (Yokosuka), West Coast and East Coast of the United States
Planned construction of 10 more Arleigh Burke-class destroyers

THAAD systems

United States (Fort Bliss, Texas and Guam).
THAAD battery is being deployed in South Korea

THERE ARE AROUND 300 INTERCEPTOR MISSILES DEPLOYED, WHICH IS INCOMMENSURATE WITH THE LEVEL OF THE IRANIAN AND NORTH KOREAN MISSILE THREATS (NO MORE THAN 10 INTERMEDIATE-RANGE MISSILES). BY 2022, THE NUMBER OF INTERCEPTORS WILL INCREASE MORE THAN 3 TIMES, TO OVER 1,000.

interceptors, 130 Standard Missile-3 interceptors, 150 THAAD system interceptors deployed on US territory and as part of European and Asia-Pacific missile defence regional segments. A certain number of interceptors are deployed on US allies' ships.

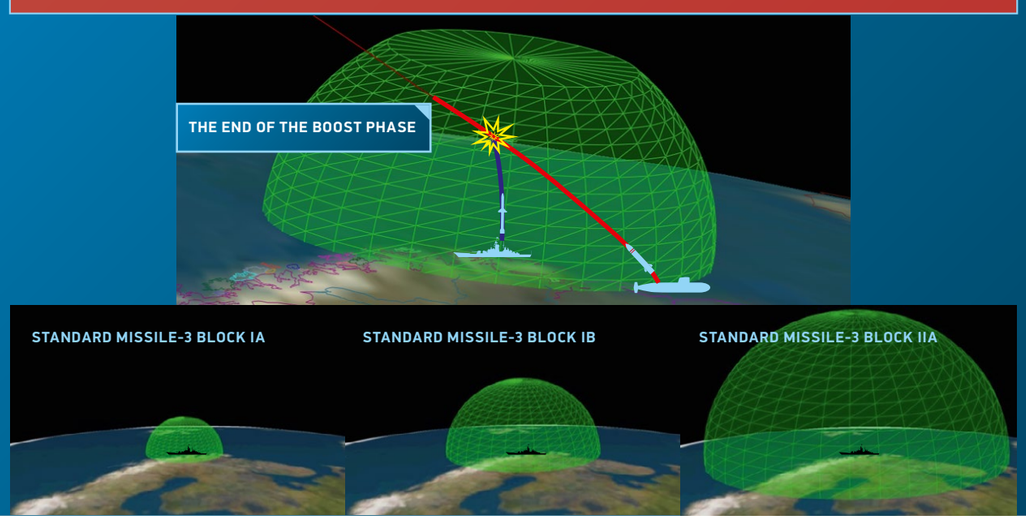
According to our estimates, by 2022, the missile defence system will have more than 1,000 interceptors, and in the future, their number will exceed the number of warheads deployed on Russian intercontinental missiles.

This amount of missile defence firepower poses a serious threat to the Russian deterrent capability, especially given the ongoing work to modernise missile defence weapon systems.

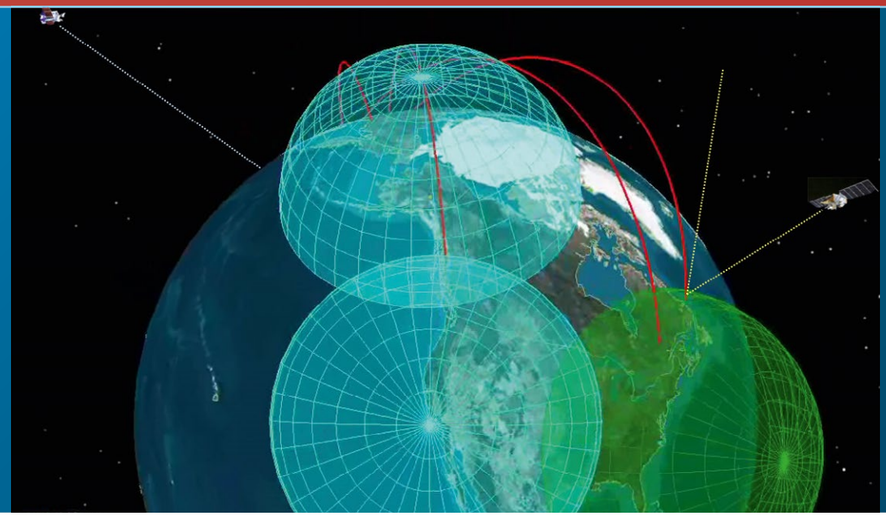
After the modernisation of Standard Missile-3 interceptor it will have increased velocity, range, and altitude of interception of ballistic missiles.

As Russian experts have concluded, Standard Missile-3 Block IIA, expected

Variants of sea- and land-based SM-3 interceptor missiles



US BMD system capability to intercept Chinese and Russian missiles



to be deployed in 2018, will be capable of intercepting strategic ballistic missiles not only in the midcourse and terminal phase, but also in the ascending phase of the missile's flight path.

In this case, missile interceptors would be capable of hitting Russian and Chinese ballistic missiles before the warheads are dispensed. Research institutions under the Russian Defence Ministry have conducted a computer simulation of the interception of Russian and Chinese ballistic missiles by US missile defence.

I would like to emphasise that we considered hypothetical scenarios in which the ballistic missiles were launched in the northern direction. These scenarios are used for research purposes. The selection of scenarios is intended to give an idea of the conditions of the use and the capabilities of the global missile defence system.

The first scenario shows the interception of an intercontinental ballistic missile launched from the European part of Russia by a shipborne missile defence complex located in the Baltic Sea.

The flight of the Russian missile follows a ballistic trajectory.

A few seconds after the missile is launched it is detected by the space missile attack early warning system, the type of missile is identified as are its launch area and launch azimuth.

Having received preliminary target designation data, the missile defence ship automatically directs the shipborne radar to the search sector of the ballistic target.

As more information on the target's trajectory is accumulated, the target designation is prepared to launch a missile interceptor.

In this scenario, the interception was successful and was implemented at the initial stage of the Russian intercontinental ballistic missile's flight.

In the second case, the simulation involves intercepting a missile launched from a submarine by a shipborne missile defence complex in the Norwegian Sea.

The initial situation: a missile defence ship equipped with Standard Missile-3 interceptors is patrolling in the Norwegian Sea, a Russian submarine is located in the Barents Sea.

An SLBM launch is detected by the space system, on which information the shipborne radar performs acquisition and tracking of the ballistic missile and transmits target designation data to launch the missile interceptor.

The balance of time allows the system to carry out the firing and interception of the Russian SLBM.

These results of the simulation demonstrate that due to the high velocity of the interceptor, in both cases interception of the target is possible in the initial stage of its flight.

The next scenario simulates the launch of multiple Russian ballistic missiles.

The missile field is located in central Russia, and interceptors are launched from the continental United States.

Since detection and until impact or interception, Russian missiles are tracked by missile defence space segment assets.

Trajectory information received is used to direct land-based and sea-based missile defence information capabilities.

As the missiles enter the operations area of the ground echelon of the missile attack early warning system, the targets are tracked by radars in Greenland, the United Kingdom, and Alaska.

With data provided by them, the high-resolution sea-based missile defence radar in the Pacific Ocean is utilised.

Data received through these information

capabilities is used to prepare target designation for GBI interceptors located in Alaska and on the West Coast of the United States.

Interception of the missile was carried out by an interceptor launched from Alaska. Two remaining missiles are in the impact zone of GBI interceptors deployed in California.

In this situation, the warheads of Russian missiles, whose trajectories avoid the area covered by regional segments of missile defence, can be intercepted by missile defence weapons systems based on US territory.

Russian experts also assessed the capabilities of the US ballistic missile defence system of firing at Chinese ballistic missiles.

In this scenario, GBI interceptors fired from areas in Alaska and on the West Coast of the United States intercept Chinese ballistic missiles.

Integrating data from space sensors, sea-based, and land-based radars makes it possible to launch and guide interceptors.

A Chinese ballistic missile, launched in the northeastern direction, is successfully intercepted by a US GBI interceptor.

With the deployment of the third positioning area of GBI interceptors in the northeastern United States, plans for which have been announced by Washington, the cumulative capabilities of the missile defence system will make it possible to intercept all Russian and Chinese ballistic missiles flying in the direction of the United States.

The strike capability of the missile defence grouping poses as much of a threat to the security of Russia and China. Missile defence cruisers and destroyers of the US Navy, equipped with interceptors, also carry Tomahawk cruise missiles with a range of up to 2,500 km.

Each Ticonderoga-class cruiser is equipped with 128 Mk 41 launchers and each Arleigh Burke-class destroyer with 96 of them. These launchers are universal. They are capable of launching Standard Missile-3 interceptors as well as Tomahawk long-range cruise missiles. Potentially, more than 1,000 Tomahawk cruise missiles could be deployed on these missile defence ships. Missile defence ships patrolling the Black and Baltic seas pose a threat to facilities in European Russia, as there is uncertainty regarding which weapon is currently loaded into the launchers.

The same universal launchers that are used on ships to launch interceptors and cruise missiles are installed at the missile defence bases in Romania and Poland.

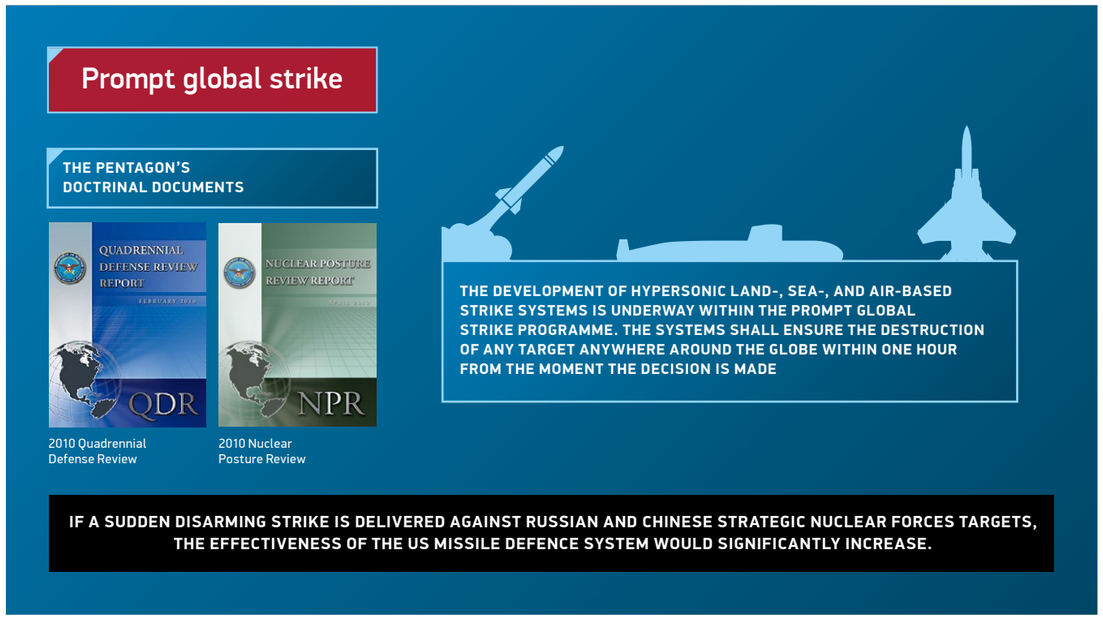
The idea that the land-based version of the Mk 41 launcher supposedly loses its ability to launch cruise missiles is unconvincing. Interceptors at European missile defence bases can be replaced with Tomahawk cruise missiles covertly and within a short timeframe. In this case, the entirety of European Russia would be in the cruise missiles' range.

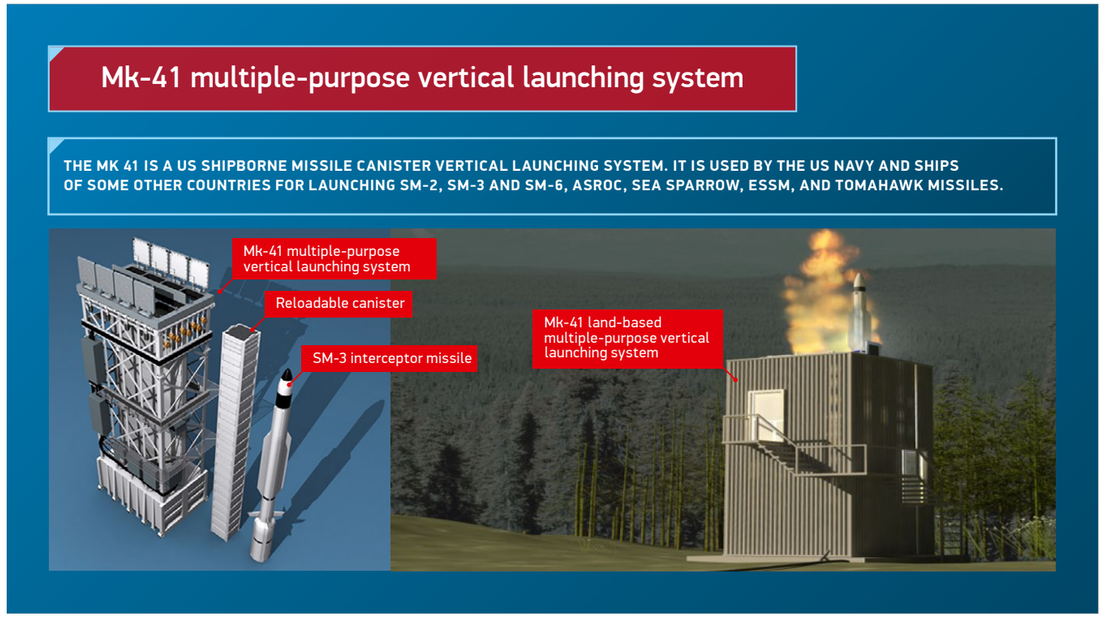
I would like to emphasise that the possibility of using the land-based version of a shipborne launcher to deploy Tomahawk cruise missiles is a direct violation of obligations under the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles.

We have repeatedly conveyed to our American partners Russia's concerns over the violations of international obligations by the United States. There has been no reaction.

Under its concept of joint use of offensive and defensive arms, the Pentagon started to develop an advanced Prompt Global Strike weapons system.

According to doctrinal views, this capability is designed to conduct sudden pre-emptive strikes and to ensure the destruction of any target anywhere around the globe within one hour from the moment the decision is made. The US armed forces should receive the first of these systems in 2020.





The link between plans to deploy the missile defence system and to create prompt global strike weapons is obvious. If a sudden disarming strike is delivered against Russian and Chinese strategic nuclear forces targets, the effectiveness of the US missile defence system would significantly increase.

Thus, the creation of prompt global strike weapons is another factor that confirms Washington's desire to destroy the existing balance of forces and ensure its global strategic dominance.

It is necessary to mention the threats that US missile defence poses to space activities.

In February 2008, the Pentagon demonstrated that it was capable of striking spacecraft with missile defence weapons. In that year, a US satellite at an altitude of about 250 km was destroyed by one of the earliest versions of Standard Missile-3 interceptor launched from a US Navy cruiser.

The anti-satellite capability of advanced Standard Missile-3 Block IIA interceptors with increased velocity, as well as that of GBI interceptors, is much greater. Virtually all low-orbit spacecraft in the area covered by missile defence weapons are under threat of destruction.

Given the global nature of missile defence ships' actions, the activities in space pursued by any state including the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China are under threat.

Russian representatives repeatedly and at various levels have drawn the American side's attention to the danger posed by the global missile defence system to the global strategic balance. Our arguments are disregarded and obvious facts are being ignored. The United States claims that their missile defence system is not directed against Russia and China. However, as you have seen, the results of our computer simulation suggest otherwise.

Overall, based on our analysis of United States' and their allies' actions over missile defence and the simulation results we can draw the following conclusions:

First. Under the pretext of countering the North Korean and Iranian missile threats, the United States is deploying a strategic system designed to destroy Russian and Chinese ballistic missiles, upsetting the balance of deterrence.

Second. Today the US missile defence system is capable of intercepting Russian and Chinese ballistic missiles and currently poses a threat to Russian and Chinese strategic nuclear forces. In the future it will become even more capable of doing so.

Third. The presence of US missile defence bases in Europe, missile defence ships in the seas and oceans near Russian territory creates a powerful covert strike component for a possible launch of a sudden nuclear missile attack against the Russian Federation.

Fourth. The deployment of the US missile defence system upsets the existing parity in strategic weapons and serves as a destabilising factor, greatly diminishing the possibility of a dialogue on nuclear disarmament.

Fifth. The build-up of US missile defence capability encourages an arms race, primarily in the area of strategic weapons, forcing other states to take retaliatory military and military-technical measures.

Sixth. The global US missile defence system poses a threat to the free use of outer space by any state.

In conclusion, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that, after the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, Russian officials have repeatedly explained that the destruction of strategic stability as a result of the creation and deployment of the global missile defence system would be disastrous. At the same time, efforts have been made to find solutions to problems relating to the development of US missile defence, and various options were proposed to resolve emerging disputes. In particular, we proposed to conduct a joint threat analysis to determine what kind of missile defence would be appropriate and would not create preconditions for a new arms race in the strategic field.
In the framework of our cooperation we also proposed to jointly develop a missile defence architecture for Europe that could guarantee protection from non-strategic missile strikes.
However, all the Russian initiatives were rejected.
Russia is therefore forced to take appropriate measures aimed at preventing the existing balance of forces in the area of strategic arms from being upset and at minimising possible damage to the security of the state as a result of further US missile defence build-up.
But the world will not be safer.
That is why we call for equal and constructive dialogue on the issue of missile defence that aims to find solutions that factor in the interests of all interested parties.

MAJOR-GENERAL CAI JUN
Deputy Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the Joint Staff Department under China's Central Military Commission

The international strategic balance is undergoing a deep restructuring. The security situation is becoming complex and volatile. We are facing many new pressing issues in the global governance framework that should be resolved through dialogue between all states. In particular, one of the important issues is missile defence, which has a major and long-term impact on the global strategic balance, stability, peace, and security. The deployment of the global missile defence system, which undermines the strategic balance and stability, inevitably leads to a deterioration in the international security situation. The broader international community is opposed to it. The UN General Assembly has passed several resolutions calling on the respective countries to suspend their missile defence development plans.
A missile defence system is essentially a defensive instrument. The development of such a system should be proportionate to the actual threat, it should not be disproportionate to the defensive needs of the country developing that system. But for those states that possess large numbers of offensive strategic weapons and place the emphasis on preventive measures, a missile defence system serves as a shield that enables the launch of a preventive strike and strengthens the superiority of a strategic strike. A unilateral strengthening of a missile defence system that ignores the overall international situation and the legitimate rights of other states becomes the aspiration to absolute unilateral military superiority. It will strengthen the likelihood that international disputes are resolved through the use of force, exacerbate the tense regional situation, and trigger an arms race. In the end, it will undermine global and regional stability, without providing absolute security for the country developing such a system.
At present, the United States is using the pretext of countering the alleged North Korean and Iranian missile threats to deploy instruments such as six DSP satellites, six SBIRS satellites, two STS satellites, five ground-based early warning radars, one Cobra Dane radar, six X-band radars, 30 ground-based mid-course interceptors, 33 Aegis ships, one Aegis Ashore system, 11 Patriot-3 missile battalions, and five THAAD batteries, which constitute an already existing global missile defence system. Nevertheless, the United States continues to develop new versions of weapons systems and to advance their global deployment, with major implications for global and regional stability.
Meanwhile, the situation on the Korean peninsula remains extremely complicated and volatile. Using the argument of the North Korean nuclear tests and missile launches, the United States is strengthening its asymmetric operational superiority over North Korea by deploying a missile defence system in the Asia-Pacific region. On the one hand, this inevitably encourages the DPRK to ramp up its nuclear and missile capability. On the other, it lays the ground for the United States and The Republic of Korea to try to resolve the situation on the peninsula through the use of force. It has become quite clear, over the years, that the strategy of military threats does not work. In particular, the missile defence ring being built in the Asia-Pacific region by the United States and its allies is further exacerbating the military and political confrontation between North Korea on the one hand and the United States and The Republic of Korea on the other. It further increases the uncertainty on the peninsula, thereby making a new escalation and the outbreak of an armed conflict more likely. All of this runs counter to efforts by the United Nations and the international community to resolve all differences though political dialogue.
The United States and the Republic of Korea reiterate their assurances that the deployment of the THAAD system pursues the sole objective of defending them from a North Korean nuclear missile threat, and is not aimed against any third country. But in truth, the Korean peninsula is only 840 km long from north to south, requiring a maximum ballistic range of no more than 1,000 km, whereas the range of the THAAD system's radar is over 2,000 km. The system is therefore capable of intercepting ballistic missiles with a range of up to 3,500 km. Using such a radar deployed in Seongju County in The Republic of Korea, it is possible to track the test flights of ground and sea-based missiles in northeastern China and the Bohai Sea. The circular segment of their detection is over 5 minutes, which makes it possible to gather a lot of data. This will, therefore, inflict major damage on our national security.
The United States and The Republic of Korea have already deployed more than 100 launchers of the Patriot-3 missile defence system and 10 Aegis ships in the Asia-Pacific region. We have a saying in China, "Xiang Zhuang performs the sword dance, but his mind is set on Liu Bang", meaning an elaborate deception hiding malicious intent. The real reason that the THAAD system is being deployed is that the United States wants to augment the existing elements of its global missile defence system and, at some point,

further increase the capability of the Asia-Pacific segment of that system versus China and Russia; to acquire a greater ability to monitor the strategic depth of China and Russia's Far East; and to degrade the strategic capability of both Russia and China. Such steps are very detrimental to our strategic interests.

China and Russia are opposed to the deployment of a global missile defence system. The leaders of both states have already adopted a joint declaration on strengthening global strategic stability. That declaration expresses our opposition to the US deployment of its Aegis Ashore systems in Europe and THAAD systems in Asia-Pacific, which ignores the security concerns of countries in the region. We will continue to take further measures in response to these steps in order to protect Chinese and Russian security interests and uphold the strategic balance in the region.

MAJOR-GENERAL (RETIRED) SERGEY YAGOLNIKOV
Chief of the Central Scientific Research Institute of Aerospace Defence Forces of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation

I represent one of the Russian Ministry of Defence's research centres that conducted the aforementioned assessments of the capability of the US missile defence system. One of the most important questions about the US missile defence system that is being deployed in Europe and Asia, is whether it is capable of intercepting Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) at the ascending phase of their trajectory, including the boost phase. The US argument boils down to the statement that this type of intercept is impossible because the flight of an ICBM or SLBM during the boost phase is unpredictable, and there is not enough time to calculate its trajectory for the interceptor to be targeted with precision. According to the United States, an interceptor can be launched no sooner than 40 to 50 seconds after the end of the ICBM/SLBM boost phase, which translates to the 220th–230th second of the missile's flight.

Given the available flight time of the interceptor, which is about 90 seconds, the Americans say that the interceptor can strike the ballistic missile only by catching up with it on a pursuit course, which is technically impossible because the interceptor does not have sufficient velocity to catch up with an ICBM or SLBM. But assessments conducted by Russian specialists suggest otherwise. In essence, once you have information about the locations of the ICBM or SLBM launch sites, you can determine the most likely directions of the ballistic missiles' launches in advance. You can also calculate in advance the trajectory of the Russian ballistic missiles' flight and the possible intercept area allowed by the location of the interceptor system sites. These calculations can be fed into the algorithms to compute preliminary targeting data for the interceptors. Also, by tracking the movement of the ICBM/SLBM jet plume using space-based missile attack early warning systems, it is possible to determine the azimuth of the ballistic missile launch, and provide approximate targeting data to the interceptors. Once this data is available, preparations to launch the interceptor can begin. As soon as the interceptor is ready, it can be launched using the targeting calculations completed beforehand, made more precise by the real-time data received from satellites and terrestrial radars. This makes it possible to use the head-on course for approaching the ICBM/SLBM. And since the SM-3 interceptors can travel at more than 5 km per second, they are entirely capable of intercepting Russian ICBM and SLBM. Once the interceptor missile has been launched, its interceptor stage can be guided to within range of the homing head's seeker by processing all the data received from the space-based sensors, missile attack early warning systems, and data-gathering instruments of the missile defence system itself. Such an algorithm was used in 2012 during a joint Russia–NATO exercise using a model developed by IABG, a company based in Ottobrunn, Germany. With the help of this model, a US missile interceptor was launched using preliminary targeting data, and the exact targeting coordinates were sent to the interceptor later on, when it was already in flight. In addition, due to the development of interceptors with cluster warheads carrying multiple kill vehicles, at some point in the future, missile interceptors will require less precise targeting data against ICBM and SLBM. Let me cite our estimates of the time parameters for intercepting Russian ICBM and SLBM, calculated on the basis of the known characteristics of the US missile defence system, including the capability provided by integrating the data received from satellites, land-based radars, and sea-based radars.

Using the external target designation data received from satellites, for example from the SBIRS spacecraft, missile interceptors can be launched as early as 85 seconds after the ICBM/SLBM launch. That includes 20 seconds the SBIRS system requires to detect an ICBM/SLBM launch, 20 seconds for the launch command to reach the interceptor, and 45 seconds for pre-launch preparations of the interceptor and for calculating the intercept coordinates. This algorithm of preparing and using the missile defence complex leaves plenty of time for intercepting Russian ICBM and SLBM at the ascending phase of their flight. As a result, there is the potential technical capability to intercept Russian ICBM and SLBM using the head-on approach from the 150th second of the ascending phase of their trajectory. Of course, we also need to take into account the geographical relationship between the ICBM/SLBM launch sites and the interceptor launch sites. I would like to emphasise that, during joint Russian–US and Russian–NATO exercises, the calculations obtained using Russian models, which have been tested on numerous occasions, were never questioned or criticised by US or NATO specialists. Also, several American scientists, including George Lewis and Theodore A. Postol, have completed their own calculations, and confirmed the feasibility of intercepting Russian ICBM/SLBM by US missile defence capabilities at the ascending phase. Since intercepting ICBM and SLBM at the ascending phase offers a number of significant advantages, in the near future this could become one of the default approaches to using interceptor systems.

To conclude, let me second the argument made by Major-General Cai Jun, deputy chief of the Main Operations Department of the Joint Staff Department under China's Central Military Commission, who said that the United States' deployment of the THAAD missile defence complex in South Korea is not a proportionate response to the North Korean missile threat, and that it pursues other goals. We are confident that Washington's real goal is to give its missile defence system a global capability and to strengthen its Asian segment, the main targets of which are China and Russia. Russian and Chinese experts have reached an agreement to continue their joint research into the impact of the US missile defence system on strategic stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

RICHARD WEITZ
Director of the Centre for Political-Military Analysis at Hudson Institute (USA)

We need to think creatively how to prevent ballistic missile defence technologies from escalating nuclear instability in Northeast Asia through confidence-building and stability-enhancing measures among Russia, China, South Korea, and the United States, especially regarding the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system in South Korea.

The Russian and Chinese governments, along with some independent experts, have claimed that the US BMD deployment could intensify a strategic arms race, elevate the risks of inadvertent war, and undermine mutual deterrence by enhancing the US ability to intercept their strategic missiles.

Their collective apprehensions extend to future US BMD plans and capabilities, US-led multinational BMD networks encompassing other Asian partners, integrated offensive-defensive capabilities giving Washington pre-emptive strike options, and hardening US diplomatic stances that they argue could further threaten regional stability.

Moscow and Beijing have sharply denounced US-South Korean BMD activities in numerous bilateral and multilateral forums, undertaken Russian-Chinese counter-BMD exercises, discussed establishing their own joint BMD programme, curtailed security ties with South Korea, and pursued additional offensive strategic technologies directed against the United States, i.e. multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles, cyber-strike weapons, upgraded nuclear and hypersonic delivery systems, etc.

Yet, recent developments have established a more favourable environment to address BMD-related instability in Northeast Asia: widespread dissatisfaction with North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes as well as Pyongyang's provocative rhetoric; renewed Russian-US security dialogue; and regional alarm at Sino-US tensions as well as further horizontal and vertical nuclear weapons proliferation.

The four governments should analyse BMD-related confidence-building and stability-enhancing measures such as restricting the size, location, and capabilities of US BMD on the Korean peninsula; increasing reliance on less-destabilising military technologies; crafting joint information-sharing mechanisms aimed at reassurance through transparency; and building a multinational BMD network similar to the one NATO and Russia considered before the Ukraine crisis.

For example, the study would consider how confidence-building and conflict management measures developed earlier to manage Russian-US tensions regarding European-based BMD might now apply to the Korean situation, where conditions for compromise are arguably more favourable.

A successful outcome would ideally spur further cooperation on related nuclear security issues, such as the Six-Party Talks and the P-5 Process.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL (RETIRED) EVGENY BUZHINSKIY
Chairman of the PIR Center Executive Board

The United States insists that it is deploying such a powerful missile defence force, consisting of dozens of ships and hundreds of missile interceptors on the ground and at sea, for the sole purpose of intercepting an Iranian missile — which, as yet, does not even exist. From the Russian point of view, that argument does not hold water. Iran does not have such missiles; furthermore, as far as I am aware, they don't even have plans to develop missiles with a range greater than 2,400 km, let alone intercontinental ballistic missiles. Let us recall that initially, the Americans explained their plans to deploy GBI interceptors in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic by the need to intercept Iranian and North Korean missiles, should those countries attempt a missile strike against the United States. But then the Russian military drew their US partners' attention to the distance to the United States that any putative North Korean missile would have to travel if launched over Russian territory. After that, North Korea disappeared from US explanations of why they need missile defence in Europe; the focus switched to Iran only. Additionally, looking back, let us recall the argument the United States put forward for signing the 1972 ABM Treaty. Their then defence secretary, Robert McNamara, persuaded the Soviet leadership that an ABM system is not a defensive system at all, because its purpose is to deflect a retaliatory strike and minimise the damage from such a strike — so in essence, it is a weapon of a potential aggressor, and a factor that undermines strategic stability.

DISCUSSION 4

Security in Central Asia: Afghan factor

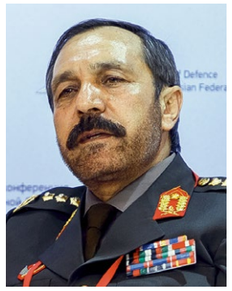
Moderator

Zamir Kabulov

Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for Afghanistan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Colonel-General Abdul Hamid Hamid

Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan



Colonel-General Igor Korobov

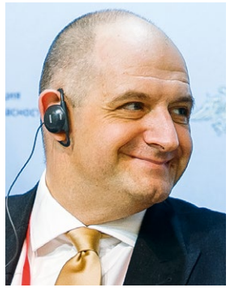
Chief of the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces — Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation

Lieutenant-General Shavkat Normatov

First Deputy Minister of Defence — Chief of the General Staff of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Hans-Jakob Schindler

Coordinator of the ISIL (Daesh), Al-Qaeda and Taliban Monitoring Team, UN Security Council



Taalatbek Masadykov

Expert (Kyrgyzstan)

Nandan Unnikrishnan

Vice President and Senior Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation (India)

COLONEL-GENERAL IGOR KOROBOV

Chief of the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces — Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation

I would like to begin by saying that the Central Asian republics are not just neighbours and important foreign partners of the Russian Federation. These are countries that share a long history with Russia, and for whose security, stability and growth Russia feels a special sense of responsibility. At present, each one of these republics is following its own path of building its statehood and resolving the various problems that are either shared by all the countries in the region or specific to each individual state. At the same time, the threats posed by the international terrorist organisations, religious extremism, and drug trafficking from across the border with Afghanistan are facing every single Central Asian republic.

Unfortunately, we must acknowledge that efforts by the national unity government of Afghanistan have failed to achieve a revitalisation of the Afghan economy or a national reconciliation in that country. At this time, of all the armed opposition groups, only the Islamic Party of Afghanistan led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is engaged in the political settlement process. The others continue to maintain their irreconcilable stance.

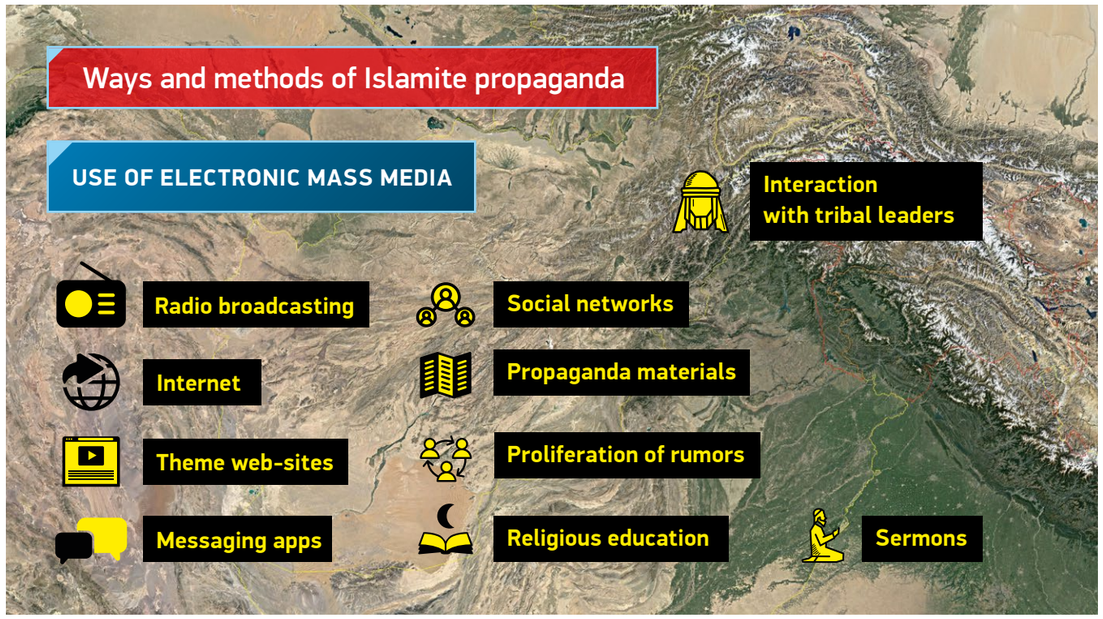
As a result, the security situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate. The central government in Kabul is now in control of only about 60% of Afghan territory. In 2015, this figure was at 70%. Attempts are being made to use military force to restore government control over extremist-held territory; this has led to mounting losses among the Afghan troops. In 2015 some 5,000 Afghan servicemen were killed; in 2016 this figure rose to over 6,500. There are also growing civilian casualties; 11,500 civilians were killed in the fighting in 2016.

The Taliban remain the main military and ideological opponent of the government in Kabul. It controls approximately 40,000 to 50,000 fighters. Its objective is to oust all foreign troops from Afghanistan and turn the country into a theocracy named the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

Even though the Taliban have had two leaders since the death of Mullah Omar in 2015, it has managed to preserve its unity, strengthen its control over its fighters in the field, and win support among broad swathes of the Afghan population.

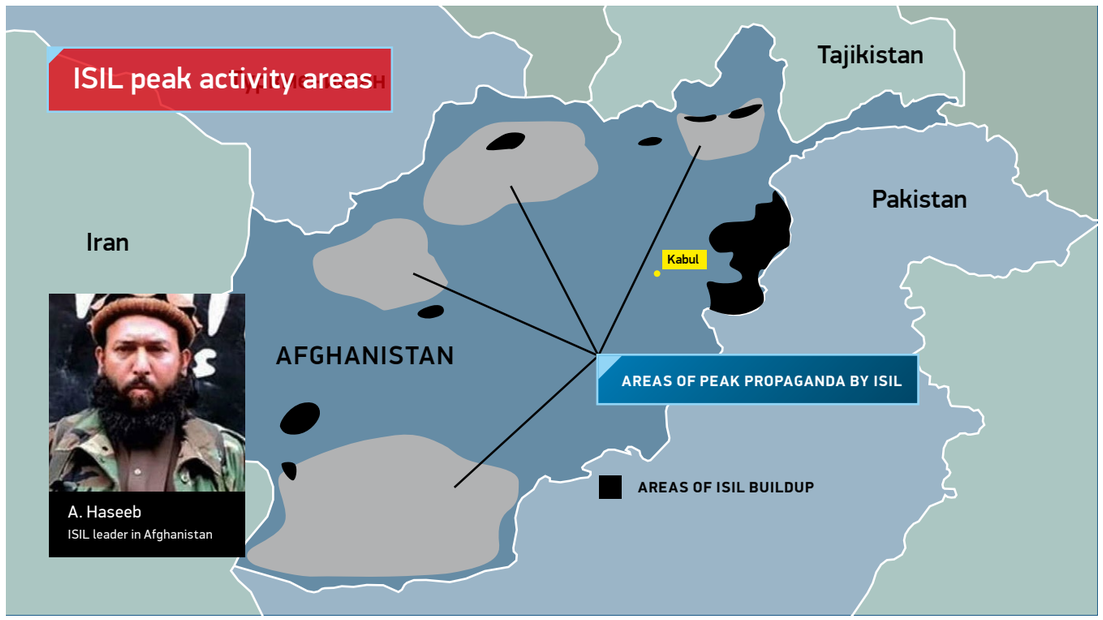
As a result, its military capability has seen a significant improvement. For example, in August–September 2016 it came very close to seizing the administrative centres of the Helmand, Kunduz, and Uruzgan provinces. The government managed to beat the extremists back only with the help of foreign troops.

Nevertheless, the Taliban kept the government forces on the back foot over summer, essentially keeping them pent up at their bases. Meanwhile, local administrations, especially in rural areas, often work under the



extremists' control. At present, the Taliban are ramping up its propaganda campaign among the Afghan population. That campaign relies on traditional and electronic media outlets, as well as the religious leaders who share the Taliban ideology. These efforts focus on strengthening the movement's standing in the country's northern provinces. The target audience includes young males of Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkmen ethnic origin. Even though the Islamists currently have no plans to spread their influence beyond Afghanistan, it is clear that, should they come to power, they would do nothing to prevent allied extremist organisations from bringing terror to neighbouring countries. These allies include the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Ansarullah, and Jundullah.

Especially worrying is the recent strengthening of ISIS in Afghanistan.



This has been made possible by the difficult social and economic situation in the country, and by the fact that many people are receptive to the ideas of radical Islam. The ISIS strategy of creating an Islamic caliphate poses a real threat to the security of Afghanistan itself and of the neighbouring Central and South Asian states. At this time, the Islamists have about 3,500 fighters in their ranks in Afghanistan; they intend to at least double that figure by the end of 2018.

ISIS has the strongest positions in eastern Afghanistan, with up to 1,500 Islamists operating in the Nangarhar and Kunar provinces. There are about 1,000 ISIS fighters in the north of the country, and another 1,000 are spread between relatively small groups of militants all over Afghanistan. ISIS usually posts militants with experience of fighting in the Middle East to the northern and western provinces. Up to 50% of its fighters are foreigners, of which at least 70% hail from Central Asia.

One of the reasons why ISIS has been able to gain a strong foothold in Afghanistan is its formidable financial resources, supplied mainly by the so-called caliphate in Iraq and Syria, foreign sponsors — including some Gulf states — and generated by criminal activities in Afghanistan itself. Using these resources, as well as its reputation — that the media helped to foster — as the world's most successful Islamist group, ISIS has managed to persuade some Taliban units to defect and join its ranks. Some of the "ethnic" extremist organisations have also declared their willingness to work closely with ISIS: these include the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the Islamic Movement of Eastern Turkestan, Hizb ut-Tahrir, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and several others. In recent months, experienced fighters returning from Syria and Iraq have played an increasingly important role in ISIS operations in Afghanistan.

At the same time, ISIS suffered heavy losses in Afghanistan in 2016. As early as spring 2015, it had more than 4,000 militants operating in the country. That figure has now fallen by almost 15%, thanks to a more energetic campaign by Afghan government troops, backed by the US Air Force and local self-defence force units. The Taliban have also made a major contribution to containing ISIS. It is unwilling to allow an ideologically alien outfit to encroach on its turf. Neither does it wish to share the proceeds from drug trafficking and other illegal revenue streams.

In response, ISIS has launched a propaganda campaign that aims to foment a split within the Taliban. It accuses the Taliban leadership of betraying the idea of a jihad against the occupying US forces, and of secretly discussing the possibility of laying down arms with the Afghan government and with the US administration.

ISIS leaders are also trying to reach a "peace agreement" with the Taliban, or at least to agree on their separate areas of control. So far, these attempts have been unsuccessful.

The ongoing instability in Afghanistan, the pressing social and economic problems facing that country, and the vast recruiting pool present there suggest that ISIS will continue to build up its capability in Afghanistan.

The Islamists will also use every opportunity they get to make the Central Asian republics part of their "caliphate"; in fact, they are already working towards this.

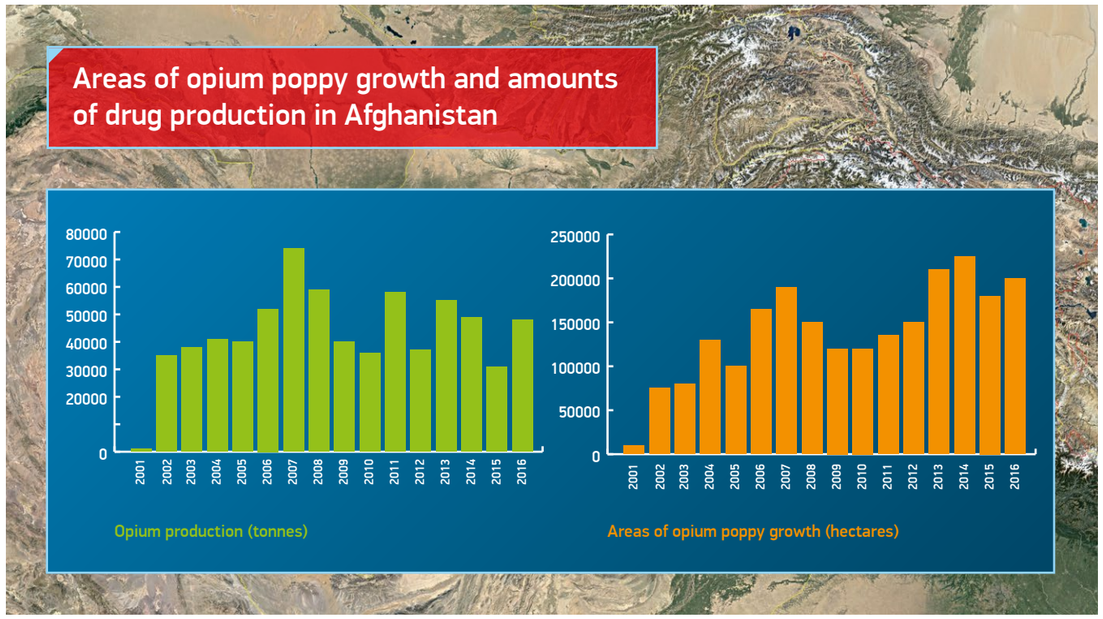
We must acknowledge that the Afghan national army and police, despite their numerical and technological advantage over the militants, are unable to turn the situation around. The key reasons for this include failings in the planning of counter-terrorism operations, poor training, a shortage of weaponry, and an inadequate level of social security offered to Afghan servicemen. As a result, despite individual successful operations against the extremists in Afghanistan, the security situation in general does not show any signs of improvement.

US forces, and those of Washington's allies and NATO partners, have been present in Afghanistan for many years — but they have not come any closer to their proclaimed goal of eradicating terrorists. Washington and Brussels are well aware of the danger of leaving the Afghan government to face the extremists on its own; they are taking steps to maintain their military presence in the country for the long run. But even though they have not completely pulled out of Afghanistan, they have, to all intents and purposes, already left the Afghan people to struggle on their own with the country's grave political problems, to live with their devastated economy, their rudimentary social sphere, and the hugely exacerbated drug trafficking problem.

Afghanistan remains the world leader in the production and trafficking of hard drugs. In 2016, the area of opium poppy cultivation in the country rose by another 10% to about 200,000 hectares, up from 183,000 hectares in 2015. Opium production shot up by 43% to 4,800 tonnes from 3,300 tonnes in 2015. Since drug trafficking generates much of the extremist organisations' revenue, their ability to wage war on the Afghan government will be augmented even further.

In view of all these factors, there is no reason to expect a normalisation in Afghanistan any time soon. The government will have to spend all its available resources on holding on to power, while the poorest sections of Afghan society will become even more radicalised. The country will remain a major source of the terror threat, crime, and drugs exports, thereby destabilising neighbouring Central and South Asian states.

In these circumstances, all the countries that want to achieve a normalisation in Afghanistan must pool their efforts. We need to prepare our response options — including a military response — should ISIS begin to actively infiltrate neighbouring states from Afghanistan. It is also important to wage an effective information



and propaganda campaign aimed at discrediting the Islamists' ideas. The leading role in such a campaign belongs to moderate religious leaders, the elders, and all reputable representatives of civil society. We must continue our efforts to identify the forces ready for dialogue with the central government in the name of peace in Afghanistan. We should also work to prevent those forces from getting closer to ISIS. That is the only way to avert chaos and the collapse of Afghan statehood, and to lay the groundwork for stabilisation not only in Afghanistan but also in the wider region.

HANS-JAKOB SCHINDLER
Coordinator of the ISIL (Daesh), Al-Qaeda and Taliban Monitoring Team,
UN Security Council

Taliban strength has not diminished since the end 2016. Estimates of Taliban numbers vary widely from different interlocutors. However, on average, the assessments of several member states put the number of fighters and supporters at around 25,000–60,000. The Taliban do not appear short of fighters, funds, weapons, or ammunition.

The Taliban set themselves the key objective in 2016 of taking and holding a provincial capital. They tried to do this in Kunduz three times, Lashkar Gah twice, Tarinkot twice and Farah once. On each occasion, the Afghan military retained control with coalition force support. Member states expect that this is going to be a key objective for the Taliban again in the coming fighting season.

As in the past few years, the Taliban continue to control rural areas in significant parts of Afghanistan and therefore hinder the delivery of governance by the Government of Afghanistan

Taliban fighters have kept pressure on Afghan forces over the winter season and not retired over the border as has been the case previously.

The Taliban have been planning for the next fighting season a few months ago. Several meetings were held during the winter for the Taliban leadership in this regard.

Despite these preparations, several interlocutors of the Monitoring Team reported some dissent among senior Taliban, which indicates friction between the remaining factions that support Mullah Mansur and Mawlawi Haibatullah. The reasons for this dissent primarily revolve around Haibatullah's ability to lead militarily and arguments over finances. According to the assessment of these interlocutors, the Taliban leadership is currently fractured between elements loyal to Mawlawi Haibatullah, Sirajuddin Haqqani, and Mullah Zakir Qayum.

The Taliban's overall income has not diminished, with narcotics contributing around US $400 million annually, while a further $600 million is derived from illicit mineral extraction, taxation, income from extortion involving mobile communications and electrical distribution, and external donations.

Interlocutors described the Taliban as having provided an umbrella for all the foreign terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan excluding ISIL (Daesh), but including Al-Qaeda core, Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) as well as fighters formally aligned to other terrorist groups. This means they provide the space and protection for these groups to operate.

The connection between the Taliban and Al-Qaeda remains strong, with Al-Qaeda operatives being used in facilitation and mentorship roles.

In the north of Afghanistan, the IMU is currently not a very significant fighting factor. The group was weakened by dissent among some of its fighters who joined ISIL in the east of Afghanistan.

Currently, member states assess that the group is not strong enough by itself to represent a clear and present risk to Central Asia.

In terms of overall numbers, member states assess that currently the group commands between 1,500 and 4,000 fighters primarily located in Nangahar, but they move back and forth across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and therefore the number is difficult to assess precisely. Interlocutors of the Team estimate that the majority of ISIL fighters in Afghanistan come from the region and are not Afghan nationals.

While ISIL tried to establish itself in a number of areas, as a force they have been downgraded by Afghan military operations together with international air support

Despite repeated recruitment efforts of ISIL in the north of Afghanistan over the past three years, they have not yet managed to establish a fighting force there. Nonetheless, their recruitment efforts in the north are clearly a concern for countries neighbouring Afghanistan to the north.

With the ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaeda as well as the 1988 sanctions regime, the United Nations Security Council and the international community have two global instruments at their disposal to counter this threat.

Targeting both sanctions lists on those individuals who perform key functions as facilitators, financers, IED designers, or operational leaders enables the international community to disrupt the activities of these terrorists and therefore to counter the actions of the respective terrorist groups.

As terrorism is a truly global phenomenon, the effectiveness of the regime and the extent to which the sanctions list is adequately targeted requires the active participation of all member states in order to ensure that regional nuances of the threat are properly addressed.

The Monitoring Team continues to work to provide Security Council members with regular updates on the developing threat these groups pose to the international community and to raise awareness concerning the functioning of the sanctions regimes and how these instruments can be effectively employed as part of national counter-terrorism strategies.

As the Monitoring Team, we stand ready to actively support member states in this regard.

COLONEL-GENERAL ABDUL HAMID HAMID

Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Allow me, on behalf of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defence, the leadership of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and on my own behalf, to welcome everyone here and thank the leadership of the Ministry of Defence of this friendly country for inviting the Afghan delegation to take part in such an important event.

In an environment where the world as never before faces multiple challenges and needs security and stability, the VI Moscow Conference on International Security, convened by the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, can serve as an effective step towards the consolidation of progressive forces in the fight against international terrorism and towards the achievement of stability, peace, and tranquility in the region and throughout the world.

I hope that at this conference we will come to an understanding on consolidating our efforts to address the challenges facing the whole world.

An undeclared war has been underway in Afghanistan for four decades, with innocent citizens of our country becoming its victims every day.

We confront multiple terrorist organisations, such as the Taliban, ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and other small and large groups engaged in arms and drug trafficking and supported by certain political and intelligence circles in some countries of the region. With their help, training camps are set up to recruit uneducated young people. Then, after being brainwashed, they join the ranks of terrorists and conduct subversive activities and massive killings of children, women, and the elderly. Terrorists blow up bridges and schools, loot public property, and engage in arms and drug trafficking. In doing so, they destabilise the situation in the region.

I state with confidence that one should not divide terrorists into good and bad. Bitter experience shows that the support and financing of some terrorists in their struggle against other terrorist groups in pursuit of one's own goals cannot end well.

The Armed Forces of Afghanistan are in the forefront in the face-to-face fight against terrorists, suffering great losses. Therefore, the legal and legitimate Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan needs effective support and assistance from the countries of the region and from the world powers.

We thank the Russian Federation for their recent efforts to establish peace in Afghanistan.

It's high time for all progressive forces to combine their efforts to fight international terrorism and eradicate this inhumane evil throughout the world.

I strongly believe that we will defeat terrorism if we act together.

I wish you fruitful cooperation in the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan and in the region.

Good luck at the conference.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SHAVKAT NORMATOV

First Deputy Minister of Defence — Chief of the General Staff of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Against a global upsurge in terrorist activity, the fight against, and the prevention of, the spread of, international terrorism and extremism, phenomena that have received huge support in certain Middle Eastern countries such as Syria and Iraq, remain among the current priorities of the international community.

Given recent events in the above-mentioned countries, where people from different Central Asian republics fight in the ranks of multiple terrorist structures, it cannot be ruled out that some of them will try to return to their homeland.

We note that Afghanistan, where today conditions are preserved for radical Islamists to stay and increase their number and fighting capabilities, could be one of the probable routes for their return.

As you know, for over 35 years Afghanistan has been one of the most unstable states in the world. The situation in terms of security within its territory has not improved, which gives rise to particular concerns in neighbouring countries.

Political instability, a low level of socio-economic development in the country, as well as the vigorous activity of various radical extremist and terrorist groups remain the key factors that negatively affect the situation in Afghanistan.

Under these conditions, the Afghan crisis gets worse and worse each day, to such an extent that it is becoming "chronic." The impact of challenges and threats such as terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking on Afghanistan's neighbouring states is also increasing.

As we can see now, a low-level confrontation between the opposing groups is still underway in the greater part of Afghanistan, which naturally poses a threat to Central Asian states, since there is a danger that various destructive forces could seep into the neighbouring countries in the region.

According to various estimates, 45,000–50,000 militants are operating in Afghanistan, who, having captured a significant part of the peripheral territory, are attacking large cities, district and provincial centres.

The observed tactics of their military operations suggests that they are currently trying to seize as many territories as possible across the country.

The relocation of armed groups from Afghanistan's southern and eastern regions to its northern provinces, and the growing tension in the immediate vicinity of its borders with the Central Asian countries are particularly worrying phenomena. In this regard, the situation in the northern part of Afghanistan has recently aggravated considerably.

The main destructive forces operating in the northern provinces now include the Taliban, "Islamic State", the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, Jamaat Ansarullah and Jundullah.

In our opinion, however, the main destabilising force remains the Taliban movement, whose ranks, according to various estimates, include at least 2,000 people from the Central Asian countries alone.

In this regard, given the increased capacity of the Taliban, it should not be ruled out that the Taliban can help their militants of Central Asian origin penetrate the countries of Central Asia.

An important role in destabilising the situation in Afghanistan, mainly in the country's north, can be played by the Afghan wing of the terrorist group "Islamic State", known as the Khorasan Emirate, which currently continues to covertly mobilise, recruit, and increase its combat potential in the country.

This situation is also aggravated by the fact that currently "Islamic State" supporters, having suffered significant losses during the military operations conducted in the eastern provinces by the Afghan and coalition forces, are gradually leaving their territories and moving to other parts of the country.

I would like to stress that the militants of Central Asian origin who are currently members of the Taliban and "Islamic State" may well become the main challenge and source of security threats for the countries in the region. It is quite possible that their number may also increase due to the arrival of radical Islamists from Syria and Iraq, and the "Afghan foothold" will become for them a transfer site in the Central Asian direction.

Under these conditions, the Afghan security forces, which currently bear the main burden of countering the armed opposition after the withdrawal of the majority of the foreign contingent, remain the guarantor and the key tool for preventing the situation in Afghanistan from deteriorating.

Taking this into account, Afghanistan is an important country in terms of ensuring stability and security in the Central Asian region.

However, continuing instability in Afghanistan demonstrates that the conflict is still far from its final resolution. There is no doubt that currently the Afghan government needs external assistance, including assistance maintaining security in the country.

Speaking about the process of reconciliation of the opposing parties in Afghanistan which internal and foreign actors repeatedly tried to launch, we can point to the fact that it was unsuccessful and has reached a dead end.

In this regard, restoring peace and stability in Afghanistan as soon as possible is the most important factor in maintaining and strengthening security in Central Asia.

At the same time, the main efforts of the stakeholders in the settlement of the intra-Afghan conflict should be focused on addressing this problem using political rather than military means.

Taking this into account, all opposing forces must have a strong political will and readiness for the mutual concessions and compromises that could lead the crisis in this country out of deadlock.

Against this background, the Uzbek side is ready to support Russia's initiative to expand the circle of participants in the negotiation process, which could play a positive role in the settlement of the Afghan crisis.

This option implies the beginning of the formation of a new model of interstate cooperation in the region, which requires the similarity or coincidence of strategic interests of both the Central Asian countries and a number of other states.

As our head of state notes, "for all of us, terror has no borders and nationalities; and this again demonstrates that we need to take very harsh measures on this matter".

In this regard, it seems appropriate to more actively engage the world powers and the states in the region, as well as international and regional structures, in the settlement of the situation in Afghanistan, with the central coordinating role to be played by the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to note that countering terrorism and extremism in all their manifestations will remain one of the priorities in the interaction between the regional security services.

At the same time, it is important to continue close coordination of approaches in the field of counter-terrorism by developing and establishing effective forms of interaction with the countries in the region to ensure stability and security, as well as by strengthening cooperation between the regional security services in order to forestall and prevent possible infiltration by militants into Central Asian countries from Afghan territory in a timely fashion.

TAALATBEK MASADYKOV
Expert (Kyrgyzstan)

First of all, allow me to thank the organisers of this very important conference on international security, the Government and the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, for the invitation and opportunity to speak.

Currently, when globalisation has embraced almost all aspects of life in most countries of the world, when new technologies, including military ones, are developing so rapidly and information is available in a few seconds to the overwhelming majority of the world's population, issues of regional and international security are relevant as never before. Addressing these issues is an urgent task for all countries across the world, even though their positions on certain issues may differ. Of course, this assumes that global peace and stability are indeed the goal of the world's leading powers.

For almost the last two centuries, Central Asia and the Afghanistan-Pakistan region have thrice become an arena in which the geopolitical interests of the world's leading powers intersect. This includes the Anglo-Afghan wars in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This includes the invasion by Soviet troops of Afghanistan in 1979–1989. And, finally, this includes the invasion by US and NATO troops of Afghanistan from the end of 2001 to the present day. Have the world's leading powers achieved their declared and undeclared goals as a result of these operations? I think most likely the answer is — no. So far, all this happened and is still happening in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, and so far it is mostly the Afghan people who have been bearing the brunt of these processes.

In recent years, we have seen that the conflict in Afghanistan will not de-escalate, and on the contrary expands, destabilising one province after another and threatening to destabilise the neighbouring countries in Central Asia. The international community has invested billions of US dollars in the stabilisation and reconstruction of Afghanistan, and continues to do so, but peace and stability have not been secured.

Of course, there are many different opinions as to why it cannot be achieved. Some experts say there is no coordination of efforts undertaken by all actors in the international community to stabilise the situation in Afghanistan; other experts advocate various conspiracy theories, just as the population of Afghanistan do themselves.

In Central Asia meanwhile, we are witnessing these dangerous processes in Afghanistan become more acute, despite official assurances from Kabul that the situation is under control and that the Afghan security forces (the national army and national police) are taking every effort to defeat terrorist organisations such as "Islamic State" and other groups. The security and intelligence services of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States, NATO, Central Asian countries, Russia, and other states concerned are well aware of the situation in Afghanistan, particularly in its northern provinces. While previously we said that extremists' training centres were situated in Pakistan, in the border areas with Afghanistan controlled by independent tribes, now such training centres are appearing in Afghanistan's the northern regions.

According to various Afghan sources, in the provinces of Faryab, Sar-e Pol, Samangan, Baghlan, Kunduz, Takhar and Badakhshan, not to mention the eastern provinces of Afghanistan, there are already some bases and training centres where extremists from different countries, mainly from the former Soviet Union, are trained in using explosives. In Faryab and Sar-e Pol provinces there are even training centres for women, where women from Central Asian countries are trained. These centres receive regular technical and financial support, and groups of terrorists are transported in an organised manner from the southern provinces of Afghanistan to the northern areas bordering on Central Asia, and local and foreign militants move almost freely across the northern regions of the country.

A few years ago we all said that "Islamic State" would have no future in Afghanistan, and now it is already a reality. Extremists from the former Soviet Union, who claimed to be members of various terrorist groups, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the Islamic Jihad Union, East Turkestan, Ansarullah, now all pledge their allegiance to "Islamic State".

The security forces of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and NATO claim to be doing their best to fight "Islamic State", the Taliban, and other extremist groups. However, these and other groups not only remain undefeated, but on the contrary gain strength and control more and more territories within Afghanistan.

I would like to point out that there are different groups that operate under the name "Taliban". There is a so-called Taliban that help "Islamic State" and participate together with it in combat operations against the Afghan security forces. There are also representatives of the traditional Taliban movement, who fight against "Islamic State". Given that the traditional Taliban oppose the spread of "Islamic State" in Afghanistan, it would be expedient for the official government in Kabul and for key actors in the international community to launch negotiations with the Taliban to achieve a peaceful settlement of the internal conflict. This would both help to stabilise the situation inside Afghanistan and to more

effectively counteract "Islamic State" and other terrorist organisations not only in Afghanistan, but also beyond its borders.

Western experts and even some experts from the former Soviet Union claim that Russia exaggerates the threat emanating from the Afghanistan-Pakistan region in order to frighten and control the countries of Central Asia. I not only disagree with this opinion, but on the contrary I would say that Russia does not even disclose all the information available about the real situation and the threat coming from the Afghanistan-Pakistan region.

As an international UN official, I spent more than 12 years in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, dealing directly with the problems of political settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan. It seems to me sometimes that some agencies of the leading NATO countries, having organised training centres for the Afghan mujahideen in Pakistan in 1979–1989 to overthrow the official regime in Kabul supported by the Soviet Union, after its overthrow, forgot about this affair, which for all this time, has existed and continues to exist independently, creating a headache for Afghanistan and for Pakistan. Now this headache could easily spread to Central Asia.

Several years ago, at a summit of the SCO heads of state, President of Afghanistan Dr Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai said that the Central Asian countries were also responsible for the fact that people from those countries were engaged in terrorist activities in Afghanistan. I do agree with this view to the extent that unresolved socio-economic problems, corruption of those in power, and the lack of a systematic approach and effective interaction between the security forces in certain countries of Central Asia indeed create an environment conducive to the growth and spread of radical ideas among the population of these countries and motivate some individuals to join terrorist organisations. Taking into account the natural integration processes in the Eurasian countries, this can contribute to further spread of terrorist activity in Eurasia and beyond.

Currently, Russia plays a leading role in counteracting the spread and activities of terrorist organisations, not only within the CSTO, but also outside the Eurasian space. If we really want local conflicts in different regions of the world to remain under control and not to grow into a global conflict, the leading world powers together with the countries involved in these processes should move from words to practical cooperation with the purpose of preventing, localising and eradicating the activities of terrorist organisations. It is high time for an open dialogue instead of confrontation, and it is high time for practical action instead of political rhetoric.

NANDAN UNNIKRISHNAN
Vice President and Senior Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation (India)

Before I begin my presentation, I would like to thank the organisers for the privilege of participating in such a prestigious event. Also, I would like to note that while I am going to speak about the Indian position on Afghanistan, unlike some on this panel, I do not represent the Indian government. Hence, mine is merely a layman's understanding of the official Indian position mixed with my understanding of the situation in Afghanistan.

I will start by noting that there is no doubt among Indian policymakers that continued instability in Afghanistan presents a major threat to neighbouring regions — not only Central Asia but also, among others, to South Asia. It is without doubt imperative that Afghanistan is stabilised. But while this diagnosis is probably correct, the prescription of treatment is not helped by the lack of clarity about what is envisaged as the final outcome of either this treatment or the stabilisation efforts.

Recent developments in Afghanistan have further complicated matters and make any assessment of the correct road to stabilisation more difficult. The first development is the emergence of IS-Khorasan/IS-K/Daesh in Afghanistan and its apparent battle with the Taliban for domination. It has revived the debate about "good terrorists" and "bad terrorists" and has intensified the competition for influence among the powers involved in Afghanistan. Ironically, the Taliban, weakened by infighting, have improved its negotiating potential, and strengthened the internal glue that binds the group together. Incidentally, Indian policymakers do not think that, at this stage, Daesh constitutes a significantly greater threat than the Taliban.

The second is the emergence of a new rivalry among global powers in Afghanistan sparked by uncertainty over US policies towards the country. This is reflected by the unexpected US use of the "mother of all bombs" in Nangarhar province, the US refusal to participate in the multilateral talks on Afghanistan in Moscow, which Washington decried as a "unilateral Russian attempt to asset influence in the region". US military officials also allege that Russia is seeking to "undermine NATO efforts" to achieve peace in Afghanistan and allege that Moscow is providing the Taliban with arms. Russia vehemently denies these charges and views them with apparent disbelief and non-comprehension. But irrespective of who is right in that particular debate, what is undeniable is the emergence of a great power rivalry. This has further contributed to the development of the storyline that Daesh is a "greater threat" to stability in the region and therefore it is prudent to establish contacts with the "nationalistic" Taliban to develop an effective counter to Daesh. Russia, China, and even some in Iran seem to have bought into this line. This may also be not because these countries see Daesh as an immediate greater threat, but as a policy of hedging bets just in case the Taliban insurgency succeeds, given that the Taliban currently appears to have the momentum on its side. If the Taliban do succeed and captures power, it would indeed appear a prudent policy to have established links in place prior to that event.

It further complicates matters that the position of the Afghan Government, which everyone officially recognises, is radically different. They feel that a precondition to any peace talks should be a Taliban commitment to a ceasefire prior to the talks. Anything else, they feel, would amount to legitimising violence by an outfit that is currently recognised by the UN as terrorist. It would also help if there was a semblance of consensus on what the end-state is that the international community wants to achieve through peace talks. The current proposed solutions based on some kind of principles of federalism are unacceptable to both the government and the Taliban. Meanwhile, the Afghan government feels that with improved funding, training, and weapons the Afghan National Army would be able to deal with the twin threats of the Taliban and IS. And here, I would agree with what Mr Karzai said earlier in the day, that merely increasing the number of US troops by a few thousand would not substantially change anything. The Afghans are not happy with the United States, but nor are they rushing to embrace the Russian initiative, since they still perceive it as an attempt to impose a solution on them.

Given this situation India has some very difficult choices to make. It has consistently opposed any contact with the Taliban outside the conditionalities accepted by the international community at the UN.

The second is the old problem that goes back to the origins of the Taliban. In other words, that neither the Taliban nor Daesh are home-grown Afghan organisations. Both share a similar ideology and have their roots outside Afghanistan. The Taliban have, however, grown sufficient roots inside Afghanistan to warrant the question if it is a terrorist outfit or an insurgency movement.

Therefore, India would, I believe, tread a cautious path, hopefully driven by its national interest. This may require more intense military and technical cooperation with the Afghan government, but will probably stop short of putting boots on the ground. India has repeatedly stated that it would support an Afghan-driven reconciliation and reintegration process based on a transparent and inclusive process. Maybe, as some analysts have suggested, support for the High Peace Council is a place to start. Once upon a time Russia, Iran, and India were on the same side in the struggle against extremism taking over Afghanistan — a reflection of the convergence of their national interests. Given that their interests are still apparently the same, I hope they end up on the same side once again.

OPENING OF THE SECOND DAY OF THE CONFERENCE

SERGEY NARYSHKIN
Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation

The importance of our dialogue — or rather, as recent events show, the pressing need for it — is growing every day. As recently as the beginning of this year, politicians and military leaders in countries around the world still entertained some hope that a realistic approach would prevail on the international arena. Many believed that common sense would finally take the upper hand, and that countries would work side by side, on the basis of mutual respect and trust, towards resolving regional conflicts, and together look for answers to such pressing challenges facing us all as international terrorism.

So far, these hopes have not come to pass. With regret, we have to say that our partners in the West have failed to overcome inertia and relinquish their usual egoistic approach to world affairs. They carry on with their attempts to pursue dialogue only from a position of strength, often with no regard for international law.

Let me say right from the start that, used against Russia, such tactics will never bear fruit. Any attempts by the West to put pressure on our country, and to incorporate Russia into its own version of the international system as a junior partner, are absolutely unacceptable. We will cooperate only on the basis of equality and mutual consideration of the entire range of each other's interests. We firmly believe that this is the only approach that can uphold the global and regional balance of power, and maintain constructive, good-neighbourly relations between countries and peoples. Any aspirations to impose one's own will on another under various pretexts will lead to nothing but further descent of the international system into chaos. That is the reason for many, if not all the ongoing international crises, and for the human suffering caused by these crises.

This is especially clear as we look at the example of the Middle East and North Africa. The region has never been a paragon of stability. It recent years, however, it has become a hostage to other powers' geopolitical games. Reckless attempts by the West to reshape to its own template such countries as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria — which all have their own distinct and specific nature — have only brought chaos and violence. They have upset the fragile internal balance in the region, and have cost millions of ordinary innocent people — children, women, and the elderly, who wanted nothing to do with politics — their lives. ISIS, the quasi-state that has existed for only a few years — which is a few years too many — would never have emerged in the first place, were it not for an external influx of resources and support. That quasi-state is largely a result of our Western partners and their regional allies being indiscriminate in their choice of methods to achieve their goals. For a time, the arrival of the new administration in Washington gave a glimmer of hope that the situation in the Middle East would finally begin to return to normal. But the recent US Tomahawk strike against the airbase in Syria used by the Syrian government forces for their anti-terrorist effort has prompted us to question the sincerity of President Trump's election promises to pursue a coordinated international campaign against "Islamic State". All we have seen is shows of force that haven't been coordinated with anyone, for example, blowing up of one of mega-bombs in Afghanistan. If that was a signal to ISIS, then the signal has clearly failed to produce the desired effect. And if it was not, then the obvious question is, whom was that signal addressed to, and to what end?

There have also been other worrying signs of Washington's growing preference for a unilateral force-based approach in international politics. For example, the United States and several of its closest allies have returned to the rhetoric of confrontation in their dealings with Iran. They are trying to meddle in Turkish domestic affairs, and to foist an artificial political settlement arrangement on Libya. There are also great risks posed by the current state of the Middle Eastern settlement. As tensions in the region mount, the current deadlock in the negotiating process may push the participants in the Palestinian–Israeli dialogue towards trying to achieve their goals by means of violence.

The situation on the Korean peninsula also remains extremely alarming. North Korea has come under fierce international pressure for pulling out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and for being overly energetic with its nuclear programme. But that step by Pyongyang is little different from Washington's own decision to pull out of the ABM Treaty, which was taken unilaterally, and based solely on US own interests. In other words, we are once again facing a situation where everything is permissible for Jove, whereas the bull is permitted only to be a victim.

The maniacal attempts to show "who's in control" on the peninsula and to prove whose military potential is the greater will only lead to a further escalation of tensions. History has shown time and again that sabre-rattling can trigger a very real armed conflict, all the way up to an exchange of missile strikes. The international community and the major regional actors must not allow such a turn of events. They should work together towards reducing international tensions and keep the situation from deteriorating beyond the point of no return.

Nor are conditions along our own western borders entirely tranquil. The main reason for this is the hectic military preparations by NATO. Major build-up of the alliance's military infrastructure along the border with Russia has essentially been designated as a key and long-term NATO priority. Another serious threat to regional and global stability is the decision by the NATO allies to recognise cyberspace as one of the domains of operations. They have, to all intents and purposes, legalised planning and conducting cyber-attacks against the potential adversary.

Modern warfare and conflicts are increasingly acquiring a hybrid nature. They encompass not only the military, but also the social, economic, cultural, and information spheres, which are essentially becoming new theatres of war in their own right.

Conflicts in the ideological and information spheres are especially intense. The current phase of the ideological confrontation is becoming as heated as the confrontation during the Cold War, if not more so. The major difference is that this time around, the ideology is being peddled not by the Eastern Bloc but by the Western elites — or rather, that part of them that is clinging to the neo-liberal globalist approach. The agenda they are pushing is one of intrusive globalisation, multiculturalism, which eulogises all sorts of deviations. Things have become so grave that the very idea of a majority in public and social affairs is becoming marginal. The majority can no longer defend its rights in the face of aggressive minorities; it is forced constantly to bend over backwards and to apologise for its own existence.

There is no reason to expect the confrontation in the information sphere to subside in the foreseeable future. On the contrary, the "battle for hearts and minds" will become even more heated, and spread to new arenas. It will include a widespread dissemination of so-called fake news, innovative techniques of subtly shaping public opinion, and attempts to blur the line between the real and virtual reality. In this post-truth world, the objective of strengthening information sovereignty is becoming just as pressing as strengthening the national defensive capability or the national economy.

International terrorism remains a major challenge for the collective security system. As the world becomes globalised, so does terrorism. The terrorist outrages in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, the recent tragic events in London, Berlin, Brussels, Paris, and Stockholm, and the latest cowardly terrorist attack in Saint Petersburg prove that not a single region, and not a single country in the world can be regarded an island of tranquility. No one is safe from terrorist attacks.

The entire world has become a danger-zone. The terror threat is becoming part of people's daily lives, especially in big cities. At least, that is what the terrorists are trying to tell as, as are those who irresponsibly aspire to use terrorism for their own selfish ends. The multifaceted nature and complexity of international terrorism is another reason why standing up to that challenge individually is impossible.

We all understand what a difficult period we are living in. We also understand that this period of transition has not yet run its course. International instability continues to grow, exacerbating the old challenges and threats, and giving rise to new ones. To see those challenges off, the entire international community must take concerted and energetic action. Such cooperation must be pursued by diplomats, public institutions, the military, law-enforcement agencies, and the secret services.

I am confident that our meeting in Moscow will be an important step towards deeper international cooperation in strengthening global and regional security and fighting international terrorism.

PLENARY SESSION

Asia-Pacific: balance of interests or a military standoff?

Moderator

Alexander Dynkin
President of the Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations Russian Academy of Sciences, Academician

MAJOR-GENERAL SHAO YUANMING
Deputy Chief of the Joint Staff Department under China's Central Military Commission

I am grateful for this opportunity to take part in the VI Moscow Conference on International Security. I would like to thank our Russian colleagues for the invitation and for the effort that went into organising this important event.

Yesterday we discussed global and European security issues, and outlined new approaches to international security cooperation. Now I would like to outline the Chinese position on the global situation and in the Asia-Pacific region.

Our world is in a state of dynamic growth, comprehensive reform, and profound restructuring. Peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit are the priorities of this era. On the whole, the international situation remains peaceful, but we face some difficult problems and factors of uncertainty. There are also numerous security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region and on a global scale.

The global economic downturn has led to growing signs of crisis in the area of security. The global economy is looking for new drivers of growth; disparities in development are widening, and competition for unevenly distributed resources is gaining momentum. The process of globalisation has run into major headwinds. Poverty and the associated problems of starvation, disease, and societal discord inevitably lead to social, political, and security problems. We must address these problems, which have arisen as a result of the development of humankind itself.

The Cold War mentality still persists; new hot-spots are springing up one after another. Cold War thinking and the policy of "might makes right" are fuelling geopolitical rivalries, territorial disputes, and growing ethnic and sectarian divisions. The main trend of major powers' defence policy in every region is evident and is expressed in efforts to strengthen alliances to ensure a dominant position on regional issues. Again we witness an escalation on the Korean peninsula and in Northeast Asia.

The international terror threat is becoming ever more serious. Terrorism in the Middle East is tightly intertwined with unresolved problems in Syria and Iraq. ISIS and other terrorist groups are spreading their influence into new countries and regions. Terrorist attacks are becoming an increasingly regular occurrence, with grave implications for global and regional security. We condemn the recent terrorist attacks in Saint Petersburg and Paris. Terrorism is becoming a common enemy of humanity in its entirety, and we are facing the difficult task of defeating it.

The arms race shows no sign of abating; this poses a major challenge to global strategic stability. New military reforms are taking place on a global scale; arms and military hardware are acquiring new capabilities, such as high precision, smart technologies, and automation. Outer space and cyberspace are becoming the new arenas of strategic competition.

The deployment of the missile defence system by certain states fuels tensions, undermines global strategic stability, and poses global security problems.

Humanity has but one shared home. We are all living in the same "global village". Every citizen of that village has the responsibility to protect peace and prosperity in our shared home. China has always contributed to peace across the world, and to stability in the Asia-Pacific region. We advocate the concept of shared, comprehensive, and sustainable security based on cooperation, and we are prepared to build a community of common destiny together will all the other countries.

We advocate building a new type of international relations. We must protect the basic clauses and principles of the UN Charter, relinquish the Cold War mentality, and desist from the use or threat of force. Any hegemony or "joint control of individual states" is unacceptable. We must adopt a shared approach that is based on mutual respect and security guarantees; we must reform the global governance system in order to build a new type of international relations, with an emphasis on cooperation and mutual benefit.

We advocate a shared security achieved through joint efforts. The interests of all counties, and the security of all countries, coincide to a large degree. No single state — even the strongest — can cope with these complex security challenges on its own. We must find broad common ground on our security interests, improve multilateral security mechanisms, strengthen various platforms for dialogue and cooperation, properly address the problems we face, and turn this crisis into new opportunities and new drivers of growth.

We advocate a resolution of all differences and disputes through dialogue and consultation. We must fully take into account the rational concerns of all parties through the open exchange of opinion, dialogue and consultation; resolve our differences to avoid damage to key interests of other countries; and build strategic confidence. We must prioritise taking crisis situations under control, and preventing their escalation into conflicts; we must pursue our mutual and comprehensive benefit.

China has already proposed the idea of denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, simultaneously with creating a peace mechanism for that peninsula. As a first step, China has also proposed a simultaneous suspension of North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile activities, and of the large-scale military drills by the United States and the Republic of Korea. The Chinese proposal takes into account the concerns of all sides and is both practicable and sensible. At present, thanks to the joint efforts by China and the ASEAN states, the situation in the South China Sea has become much calmer. Through negotiation and consultation between the parties involved in South China Sea issues, we are achieving new results. Nevertheless, that process is not going as smoothly as we would have liked, which is why all parties must undertake additional efforts and try to prevent certain countries from provoking further disputes.

We advocate both symptomatic measures to address the security problems, and measures aimed at the very roots of these problems. The causes of tension, disorder, and growing differences in some regions boil down to poverty, disparity, and inequality, which create a fertile breeding ground for radical ideas. We must take both symptomatic and profound measures, and achieve lasting security through sustainable development. China has proposed the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiatives. To that end, we have established the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund. All these initiatives share one goal: cooperative development.

China has adopted a peaceful path of development, and pursues a defensive military policy. On 3 September 2015, President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping officially announced that the numerical strength of the Chinese armed forces would be reduced by 300,000 servicemen, thereby demonstrating the Chinese people's goodwill and aspiration to peaceful development.

China's military and defensive forces are adequate to its needs and international status. Their priorities are to protect Chinese sovereignty, national security, and development interests, as well as to uphold peace and stability in our region and globally.

The Chinese armed forces pursue comprehensive international ties and work to strengthen strategic confidence. They have already established military cooperation with more than 120 countries, which makes an effective contribution to security and stability. As part of our comprehensive strategic cooperation and partnership with Russia, China pursues closer military cooperation with the Russian armed forces, and together we work to uphold global strategic stability.

We are also developing our relations with the armed forces of the United States in order to build confidence, as well as to avert or contain various crises. We pursue cooperation with the armed forces of the neighbouring states based on the principles of "closeness, sincerity, mutual benefit, and tolerance". We are also working to build our military relations with the armed forces of European states. We maintain our traditionally friendly ties with countries in Africa, Latin America, and the South Pacific. We are constantly expanding our circle of friends.

The Chinese armed forces pursue international military cooperation in the interests of shared security. In recent years, they have been working with the armed forces of other countries in such areas as defence policy, training, and joint exercises, thereby helping to strengthen shared security for all. We pursue closer military cooperation with the SCO states, and together maintain peace in Central Asia. We have held six unofficial meetings with the ASEAN states. We are involved in practical cooperation as part of the ADMM-Plus and the ASEAN Regional Forum. We have also launched a counter-terrorism coordination mechanism with the armed forces of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. China will continue to look for new cooperative formats, and to promote practical international military cooperation.

The Chinese armed forces are actively engaged in international peacekeeping activities, both regionally and globally. More than 30,000 Chinese peacekeepers have contributed to 30 different peacekeeping operations under UN auspices since 1990. In fact, China ranks first among the permanent UN Security Council members in terms of its peacekeeper contribution. China also makes a major contribution to providing security along the maritime shipping routes. More than 80 Chinese ships have been involved in such operations in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast since 2008; these ships have escorted more than 6,300 vessels, half of which were foreign-owned. China will continue to do all it reasonably can to fulfil its international responsibilities and contribute to peace and development.

In a few days' time, on 9 May, we will mark Victory Day over Nazi Germany. The people who fought in that war know very well how difficult it is to achieve peace. The people who won that war know that peace must be protected with all our strength. We must be firm and decisive in bearing our responsibility to protect peace in the whole world, and to build a better future.

RASHID ALIMOV
Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

First of all, let me thank the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation for the convocation and excellent organisation of this conference on security, a most important international forum, and for the creation of conditions conducive to our joint work.

Currently, as the world is going through a difficult era of profound transformation, a broad exchange of views on topical security issues is of particular importance. Recently, calls have been voiced for the creation of a more equitable, polycentric model of the world order, which takes into account the interests of every state. It could be based on the common fate of humanity, mutual respect, mutually beneficial cooperation, and the rejection of confrontation and conflict.

It is clear that an objective need has arisen in the international environment to find new stable pillars of international cooperation, which should strengthen the mechanisms of global governance based on the norms of international law, the principles of equal and indivisible security and the mutual consideration of interests. Such an approach would help foster the conditions for a new stage in the development of the world community and international relations.

Security in the 21st century cannot be ensured by one party only. Terrorism and violent extremism, drug trafficking and arms trafficking have closely interwoven with each other, have acquired a transboundary character and a global scale of interconnectedness. It is possible to counteract them only if coordinated measures are developed and collective efforts are taken.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation makes a significant contribution to ensuring regional peace, security, and stability. Over the past 15 years since its formation, the SCO has demonstrated its effectiveness in the fight against the forces of "three evils" — international terrorism, extremism, and separatism.

The SCO's founding members have tested and successfully apply a partnership model of interstate cooperation based on the principles of the "Shanghai spirit", which enables a well-coordinated response to conventional and new threats and challenges within the purview of the Organisation.

Ensuring regional security and stability, countering terrorism, separatism, and extremism, as well as combating drug trafficking and cross-border organised crime were and remain among the SCO's top priorities.

To facilitate effective cooperation in this extremely important area, a large set of international legal documents has been developed and is successfully used within the Organisation.

Consistent practical work is undertaken within SCO mechanisms such as meetings and summits of the secretaries of security councils, defence ministers, ministers of internal affairs and public security, and anti-drug services.

The SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) operates effectively, with a mechanism for multilateral counter-terrorism cooperation created and successfully tested within this structure.

However, the terrorist threat will not decrease. Unjustified terrorist attacks have now acquired a transnational character: they have no national features and recognise no boundaries. Given this, cooperation within the SCO is aimed at identifying and preventing terrorist and extremist crimes.

The SCO is not a military alliance, but an uncompromising struggle against the terrorist threat dictates the need to develop and strengthen mechanisms for decisive eradication of terrorist activities.

A special role in this field is assigned to the Peace Mission, joint counter-terrorism exercises of the armed forces of the Organisation's member states.

Held regularly since 2007, the exercises contribute to the joint drilling of the practical skills needed when conducting military operations against terrorist groups in a variety of conditions and in the use of various types of weapons and equipment.

Joint exercises foster an ongoing professional dialogue between militaries of the SCO member states, improve skills, and strengthen the morale of the personnel. Such measures are taken in the framework of comprehensive efforts aimed at countering attacks by terrorist groups.

We share the view that, in the current conditions, a response to emerging challenges and threats to global peace, security and sustainable development is possible only by building collective efforts of the international community.

The SCO is open to this joint work. SCO member states attach particular importance to strengthening cooperation with the United Nations, its specialised institutions and agencies, primarily with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee.

We assign an important role to the comprehensive interaction of regional organisations in the fight against international terrorism. The format of regular meetings of top officials from the CIS, the CSTO, and the SCO makes it possible for participants to be on the same page on the key issues of regional security and stability. Similarly, the SCO seeks to interact with other important regional organisations and forums in the Asia-Pacific region, including ASEAN and CICA among others.

Illicit drug production and trafficking continue to be among the most serious security threats that undermine international peace and stability. Comprehensive work to combat the drug threat is among the priorities of the SCO. In this regard, the SCO's Anti-Drug Strategy and the Action Programme for the next five years are under development.

The focused work of SCO member states over the past five years to counter drug trafficking has resulted in the seizure of 69 tonnes of deadly heroin, to give just one example. This volume accounts for about 14% of global figures. Joint actions by the competent authorities also facilitated the seizure of more than 75 tonnes of the precursors used to produce this narcotic poison. Nevertheless, we believe it is possible to effectively counter the drug threat only if the entire international community continues to consolidate their efforts. In this regard, we attach special importance to the continuation and expansion of close interaction between the SCO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Over one and a half decades, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation has built one of the world's largest regional cooperation systems with an emphasis on guaranteeing political stability, enhancing security, expanding trade and economic cooperation for joint development and prosperity of SCO nations from the Arctic to the Indian Ocean and from the South China Sea to the Barents Sea.

This year, on 8–9 June, the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Astana, will host the next summit of SCO member states. The leaders of our countries will formulate consolidated assessments of the international security situation in the context of the development of the situation in the region and in the world and outline current directions for further improvement of cooperation within the SCO in countering current challenges and threats. Undoubtedly, this topic was, is, and will remain the focus of the Organisation's activity.

DELFIN LORENZANA
Secretary of National Defence of the Republic of the Philippines

First and foremost, allow me to express my appreciation to the Russian Ministry of Defence for inviting me, for the hospitality and the excellent arrangements accorded to me and my delegation, and the opportunity to share our views on some of the pressing security issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

The topic "Asia-Pacific: balance of interests or a military standoff" is very timely, especially in the face of recent developments in the Asia-Pacific region.

This is my first time attending this conference and before coming here I went over the presentations and discussions from the 2016 Moscow Conference on International Security. I found that there are threads that run as a constant theme through these discussions, especially as they relate to the Asia-Pacific region and how they are being addressed by nations individually or collectively. I am glad to see that everyone agrees that security challenges have become global and that it will require the concerted efforts of every nation to address them. Some of the common denominators are: terrorism, illegal drugs, cyber-crime, transnational crimes, climate change, natural disasters, and human trafficking. Unfortunately my country, the Philippines, has suffered most from these problems especially terrorism, illegal drugs, and natural disasters in the recent past with devastating consequences for our people.

Aside from those enumerated above, there are other non-security challenges faced by each Asia-Pacific nation alone, or with neighbouring countries, that could, if not managed properly, lead to violent confrontation. One of these is water resources which affects the so-called Mekong countries in the Indo-Chinese peninsula, over sharing the Mekong river resources. The fates of displaced or stateless people are also a continuing concern, such as the Rohingyas in Myanmar.

But the "elephant in the room" that could engulf the whole region in a conflagration if not handled correctly, is territorial conflict — specifically the South China Sea disputes. I will return to this later.

The principal players in the region are those who, by the sheer weight of their economy and military could exert the most influence.

The United States remains the principal power in the region despite the view posited by some experts that it is on the decline. It is still the only country in the region that could project its formidable military power anywhere in Asia. It has alliances with the Philippines, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, New Zealand, and Australia; and military cooperation with Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Such alliances and cooperation are not borne out of a changing of the guard in this region. It has stepped up efforts to maintain if not to enhance these relationships. It is expected to remain as such in the foreseeable future.

China, whether we like it or not, is an ascendant military power and could be on par with the United States in a short time if it continues the current phase of its military build-up. It is also the second largest economy. Because of this newfound power it has started to flex its muscle to the alarm of its neighbours.

Russia, another superpower, is also an Asia-Pacific nation. It has increased its engagement with Asia-Pacific countries since joining the East Asia Summit in 2011. Aside from its relationship with Vietnam in the Soviet era, Russia is only just starting to build close and lasting relationship with ASEAN and other Asia-Pacific countries. It has the stature and the resources to be a force in the region.

Japan, once the second largest economy, may have slipped down the ranking but it is still a formidable force not only because of its huge economy and the high productivity of its people but because it was once a world military power and some observers agree that it could again be one if situation warrants especially if its security is threatened.

South Korea is a medium player in the region with its robust economy and large armed forces but this is backed by a medium size population. The existence of US bases in South Korea and the frequent visits of a US carrier group greatly increase its power.

North Korea, whether we like it or not, has become a military power if only due to its nuclear arsenal that has made its near neighbours very nervous. This has become a huge security concern for all Asia-Pacific nations, especially since its leader has been displaying unpredictability and warlike rhetoric. North Korea has been testing ballistic missiles lately and issuing threats prompting the United States to deploy a carrier group in the waters off the Korean peninsula. The United States has also deployed anti-missile defences, something that has not been well received by China.

Except for Indonesia, which has the largest military (and economy) among the 10 ASEAN countries, the other ASEAN members individually are minor players due to their small military and smaller economies. However, with its population of more than 600 million and highly educated and productive populace, ASEAN can exert its collective influence if the members can come together and agree.

What drives national interests in the Asia-Pacific region? There are many drivers. Population growth impels a country to compete for resources it cannot produce. New-found affluence can also goad a country to equip itself with the wherewithal to protect its interests. Fear of domination rooted in past experience under colonisers is another factor. Recapturing past prestige and glories could be another factor. Countries that cannot hope to stand up to other dominant powers seek and forge alliances with stronger ones to protect their interests collectively.

Now, let me go back to the elephant in the room I mentioned earlier at the start of my remarks — the South China Sea.

The South China Sea is vital to all the Asia-Pacific countries and to the whole world. More than 5 trillion dollars' worth of goods passes through it every year.

There are five claimants in the South China Sea dispute: China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Taiwan. The problem started when China claimed virtually the entire South China Sea with its so-called nine-dash line laying claim to areas covered by the 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone awarded by the UNCLOS to littoral nations in 1983. China invokes the historical basis for its claim. It has since reclaimed shoals within the 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone of other claimants. The Philippines brought the issue to the Permanent Court of Arbitration, which, after two years of deliberation and research, ruled that China's nine-dash line has no historical basis. China ignored the ruling and even stepped up its reclamations. Meanwhile other claimant countries are starting to build their military.

Which brings us now to the heart of this discussion: balance of interest or military standoff?

In a presentation yesterday I heard a familiar term — zero-sum game. And that is exactly what is happening in the South China Sea. Some players are trying to play the zero-sum game at the expense of other claimants. It is the classic all-or-nothing strategy. But is it necessary? Is it even beneficial to all parties in the long run? This zero-sum game would lead everyone into an arms race and finally to a military standoff. The danger of this is miscalculation and a possible major armed conflict. Esteemed colleagues, let us learn from history. Two world wars were fought in the last century killing hundreds of millions of people because leaders sleepwalked into conflict. I argue that achieving balance of interest among nations is the better alternative. All nations argue that what they are doing is for the good of their people. But let us remember that every resource we expend for arms is one less resource for the development of our societies. Again we face the age-old choice between the ploughshare or the gun, butter or bullets.

Amidst the interplay of power relations and competing interests, may I suggest the following to attain a balance of interests in the Asia-Pacific region?

First, all parties must follow a rules-based approach tosettling disputes. No nation should cherry-pick agreements and rulings to follow, especially if they are signatories to these agreements.

Second, all nation states must respect the rights of their neighbours. Countries are expected to uphold common norms in accordance with international law. Countries in the region should observe the principle of reciprocity and rein in their conduct based on how they expect to be treated in return.

Third, countries in the region should continue diplomatic engagements through bilateral alliances, trilateral arrangements, and multilateral platforms, and treat engagements with the superpowers as a cornerstone of regional stability.

A state's alliance with another state should not preclude the development of new partnerships or the deepening of existing relations.

Lastly, areas of contention must be turned into a venue for cooperation. For example, with regards to the overlapping claims in the South China Sea — disputes could be transformed into shared development of resources. However, the region must be able to use internationally recognised frameworks, such as those under UN auspices, to determine entitlements as a basis for the sharing of resources. We also owe it to the future generation to protect the fragile ecosystem of the South China Sea.

On North Korea, it behooves the three superpowers (the United States, China, and Russia) to come together to diffuse rising tensions through meaningful and constructive dialogue with Korea.

Let me end my remarks with a Chinese proverb I lifted from the speech of honourable General Chang Wanquan, Minister of National Defence of China at last year's Moscow Conference on International Security: "Those who rely on moral values will prosper, those who rely only on force will eventually fail".

COLONEL-GENERAL CHANSAMONE CHANYALATH
Minister of National Defence of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

First and foremost, it is my pleasure and great honour to visit Moscow, Russia's very beautiful capital city again and to attend the VI Moscow Conference on International Security. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation for inviting me to participate in this important conference since it is regarded as a significant platform to contribute to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability, and security of the Asia-Pacific region and the world.

The topic that I am going to share with you today is "Military-to-Military Dialogue as a Factor of Stability". As we know, the military plays a vital role in promoting national, regional and global peace, stability, security, and prosperity. During an emergency or crisis involving both traditional and non-traditional security challenges, the military often has a leading role in helping to address the security challenges as they arise, and in mitigating the situation.

Recently, there have been a lot of events happening around the world, including those contributing to the national, regional, and global good. For example, global trade has grown rapidly and the flow of goods has expanded unprecedentedly as a result of advances and renovation in technology, while globalisation makes our world seems smaller.

For ASEAN, the most outstanding phenomenon was the establishment of the ASEAN Community on 31 December 2015. ASEAN demonstrated unity and commitment in order to build ASEAN as a community of peace, stability, and security for its peoples' prosperity.

ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting or ADMM is the highest defence and security cooperative mechanism, and has been one of the key drivers contributing to maintaining peace, stability, and security in the region. Within the ADMM framework, a number of defence cooperative mechanisms have been established such as the Direct Communication Link in the ADMM Process. This is a crucial platform to facilitate communication between and among ASEAN Defence Ministers in case of emergency, to ensure that such situations are addressed in a collective and timely manner, and to avoid any misunderstanding or escalation of the problem. In addition, there is also the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine which officially launched in April last year and ASEAN Militaries Ready Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). These mechanisms will play an important role in deploying military assistance forces in a coordinated manner to conduct HADR operations and help the affected country to cope with disasters quickly and effectively.

In addition to ADMM, we also have the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus with eight dialogue partners namely Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia, and the United States. These dialogue partners play a crucial role in capacity-building for the ADMM-Plus member countries through meetings, seminars, and Field Training Exercises of the Experts' Working Groups or EWGs covering humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, military medicine, peacekeeping operations, counter-terrorism, maritime security, and humanitarian mine action. We also have a new EWG in the new cycle, 2017–2020, and that is the Cyber-Security EWG.

The ASEAN Chief of Defence Forces Informal Meeting is the highest defence forum for dialogue and consultations on mutual concerns and interests, especially on ASEAN military cooperation, and aims to enhance mutual trust, confidence, and understanding between and among ASEAN Defence Forces, something that is considered a vital factor for the enhancement of interoperability and cooperation among ASEAN member states.

One more important mechanism is the ASEAN Regional Forum or ARF comprising 27 members. It serves as a platform for preventive diplomacy and confidence-building measures between and among the member countries.

These are manifestations of the significance and contribution of military-to-military dialogue to aid the process of building mutual trust, confidence, and understanding, which serves as a fundamental foundation for cooperation towards the promotion of national, regional and global peace, stability, security, and prosperity.

While some parts of the world enjoy peace and prosperity, others are facing security threats and challenges such as terrorism, extremism, natural and man-made disasters, human trafficking and drug trafficking, tension in the Korean peninsula, maritime security, and many others. Such threats and challenges have become a major obstacle to regional and global progress and development.

With regards to terrorism, particularly the ISIS group, it continues to pose a major threat to regional and global peace and security as exemplified in attacks in many countries worldwide. The terrorists' network is expanding in many parts of the world and they are using sophisticated fighting strategies that have made it difficult and challenging to tackle them. Hence, military-to-military dialogue, especially between and among the superpowers and the concerned nations, will be an important way of addressing and dealing with this security issue that confronts our world.

Lao PDR may be a small country, but we are a peace-loving country, and would like to see every country able to live in peace, security and prosperity. Therefore, we in Lao PDR have done our best to participate in activities at both regional and global levels to contribute to maintaining and promoting regional and global peace, stability, and security.

Between 2017–2020, Lao PDR and Russia will co-chair the Expert's Working Group on Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) within the framework of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus. We, the co-chairs, will do our utmost to play a part in addressing the issue of unexploded ordnance in the region and in the world.

Lao PDR is a country with a substantial amount of explosive remnants of war, which has become a major hindrance to our national economic development. Therefore, co-chairing the EWG on HMA will be an important opportunity for Lao PDR to build our capacity in the field of demining. It is also fundamentally significant to be a co-chair with Russia since it is a country that has substantial experience and expertise on unexploded ordnance. I hope that the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation will assist and support the Lao People's Army in the field of demining and ensure the successful completion of our HMA co-chairmanship task.

Before ending my talk, I would like to briefly summarise that since the Asia-Pacific region is being confronted with various security challenges, as I have previously mentioned, we are required to double our cooperation, promote good relations and enhance dialogue not only between our militaries but also with all concerned bodies to collectively explore ways to address such security threats and challenges effectively and efficiently.

Russia is a country that plays a crucial role in maintaining security of the Asia-Pacific region and the world. Hence, I do hope that Russia will do its best to help address the security threats that the region and the world are facing in order to ensure that the people of the Asia-Pacific region and the world can live in peace, stability, security, and prosperity.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL PHAM HONG HUONG
Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Vietnam People's Army

I highly appreciate the topics suggested for discussion at this conference, and at the same time I share the opinions voiced by my colleagues who spoke earlier. I believe that the issues raised are especially relevant in the current environment of the worsening situation regarding international and regional security, and taking into account, chiefly, the increasing security challenges, both conventional and unconventional.

Speaking on the topic of "The role of military power in international relations", I would like to share some views.

In recent years, the global and regional security situation has tended to become more complicated, and there are numerous hot spots that could deteriorate into armed conflicts and local wars. Every day, the number of unconventional challenges that threaten the security and stability of all countries, and that cannot be addressed by any state alone, multiplies. The involvement of all states and all forces, including the military, is required to contain existing confrontations and conflicts, and also to encourage cooperation to address common security problems, especially under existing conditions.

Experience shows that in recent years political tools have been significantly improved and strengthened in their role as a means of containing conflicts and wars, ensuring control, and maintaining peace, as well as global and regional security. Throughout its history, the United Nations has adopted thousands of resolutions for resolving conflicts and wars. Regional cooperation mechanisms, especially ASEAN, have also greatly contributed to the maintenance of peace and stability.

When it is impossible to resolve conflicts or confrontations by political means, the use of military power will be a method of intimidation, coercion to peace, and, in extreme cases, military intervention aimed at ending the conflict, restoring peace, security, and stability in a single state as well as in the entire region. Amid an unstable international environment, there is a growing trend towards using armed forces and military power to resolve disputes and conflicts.

In recent years, the world has witnessed numerous local and civil wars, which not only had a negative impact on security and stability in the countries directly involved in the conflict, but which also destabilised the situation in the region and in the world.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a country that has lived through many wars, and therefore the Vietnamese people value peace and stability as necessary for building and developing the state. Vietnam pursues a national defence policy that is peaceful, defensive in nature and which embodies the concepts of not using force or threatening to use force in international relations; it refuses to join any military alliances or alliances with other states against third countries. Vietnam always advocates the resolution of differences, disputes, and conflicts through political means and peaceful negotiations, in line with the UN Charter, legal provisions, international regulations and conventions, based on the principles of justice and respect for the legitimate interests of all states.

Vietnam supports the idea of expanding and enhancing the role of the United Nations and multilateral mechanisms in ensuring security and stability in the region and in the world. The armed forces should be used only in pursuance of a UN Security Council resolution recognised by all the parties concerned, based on an impartial attitude and the principle of not using force.

Since 2006, the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM), attended by the heads of the military ministries of the ASEAN member states, has proven to be a model of effective cooperation in the defence sphere in Southeast Asia. With the introduction in 2010 of an expanded meeting format (ADMM-Plus), which also includes representatives of eight dialogue partners, ASEAN has strengthened its leading role in the mechanism of consultation and military cooperation at the highest levels in the Asia-Pacific region. ADMM-Plus aims to provide a platform for participants to exchange opinions and views on regional security issues; increase the level of mutual understanding, clarify defence policy, build trust between states; cooperate on the development of mechanisms and policies; share experience and information; discuss various areas of interaction and implement them in practice in the form of simulation exercises and combined manoeuvres. Perhaps modern history has rarely witnessed a situation when the heads and representatives of the defence ministries of 18 states gather, not to discuss war, but to share views and discuss real military cooperation for the sake of maintaining security, peace, stability, and common development, as happens within ADMM-Plus.

Currently, Vietnam continues its active participation in organisations and mechanisms of regional and international cooperation, seeking to enhance their effectiveness in strengthening security and resolving conflicts.

Since 2014, Vietnam officially participates in peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the United Nations, demonstrating responsibility and peacefulness, to contribute to preserving peace and ensuring global security and stability together with the international community. Vietnam prioritises the expansion of its participation in UN peacekeeping operations. Having established the Vietnam Peacekeeping Centre (in May 2014) to improve the quality of management and personnel training to meet the highest standards of participation in UN peacekeeping operations, Vietnam sent 19 officers of the People's Army of Vietnam to participate in UN missions in South Sudan and the Central African Republic. Vietnam continues to build the necessary resources and capabilities for its more active participation in UN peacekeeping operations in future.

At the end of my report, let me express my appreciation for the efforts of the Russian Ministry of Defence in organising the conference and share the opinion that it is an opportunity for the armies of our states to exchange views and propose new methods and initiatives for countering common security challenges in an effective manner. I am also confident that the conference will make a significant contribution to enhancing cooperation between the armed forces of the participating countries in the future for the sake of peace, stability, and common development.

MOHAMAD MALIKI BIN OSMAN
Senior Minister of State for Defence of the Republic of Singapore

I would first like to thank Minister Shoygu and the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation for their kind invitation to Singapore to be part of the VI Moscow Conference on International Security. It is truly an honour for me to speak at this third plenary session.

First, let me speak about the importance of multilateralism. Our topic today is a timely one. Global dependence on the Asia-Pacific region for manufacturing, trade, and shipping has risen. The Asia-Pacific region is home to some of the largest economies in the world, and accounts for more than 50% of the global economy. In 2015, China alone produced about 80% of the world's air-conditioners, 70% of its mobile phones and 60% of its shoes. Trade within the Asia-Pacific region accounted for more than half of the world's global maritime trade in 2015, and this is expected to continue to rise in the future. Many of the world's strategic shipping lanes traverse the Asia-Pacific region, and half of the world's oil supply passes through the Straits of Malacca.

The nature of our globalised economy means that the Asia-Pacific region requires peace and stability in order to continue driving global economic growth. Yet, even though there is so much at stake in this region, or perhaps I should say because there is so much at stake in this region, regional flashpoints have become more acute. Geopolitical uncertainties and unresolved regional disputes have heightened the risk of miscalculation and conflict. The Asia-Pacific region is one of the only regions in the world where defence spending has been increasing. Defence spending in Asia grew by 4.6% annually over the 2012 to 2016 period, while defence spending in North America and Europe fell by 2.7% and 3.4% annually respectively over the same period. In fact, defence spending in the Asia-Pacific region is projected to climb by 23% from 2016 to more than US $500 billion by 2020. Such rising military modernisation carries with it the increased risks of an arms race, miscalculation, and conflict. Nationalistic sentiments in the region have also become more prevalent, and governments may feel compelled to take tougher and more assertive positions with other countries to satisfy their domestic publics.

It might be naïve to suggest that win-win solutions exist for all competing interests, but we need to ensure that we do not fall into the trap of lose-lose situations like military standoffs. History is full of such lessons, from the Konfrontasi, or Indonesian-Malaysian confrontation in the 1960s that lasted four years and inflicted hundreds of casualties on both sides, to the recent Cambodian-Thai border dispute from 2008 to 2011 that also resulted in military and civilian casualties on both sides of the border. The Korean War caused more than a million casualties and cost around US $100 billion, yet when it ended, the borders between North and South Korea had scarcely changed.

Fortunately, we have moved on from these events with the realisation that we only stand to lose from such armed conflict, and that we need to make a conscious effort to facilitate multilateral interactions and military-to-military engagements, in order to gain a greater appreciation of each other's worldviews and constraints, open more trusted channels of communication, and reduce the risk of miscalculations and mistakes. Singapore has long supported such multilateral engagements in the region. The ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus, the only formal defence dialogues in the region held at Defence Minister level, are prime examples of multilateral platforms that help build a stable regional security architecture. A key value proposition of the ADMM-Plus is its ability to bring senior leaders from its members' militaries together through its Experts' Working Groups, or EWGs, for regional dialogue and practical cooperation, despite differences on particular issues such as territorial disputes. Currently, the ADMM-Plus has seven EWGs covering humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, counter-terrorism, military medicine, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian mine action and cyber-security. In 2016, four field training exercises were held involving all EWGs, including the first ADMM-Plus Maritime Security and Counter-Terrorism Exercise in May 2016 co-hosted by Singapore, Brunei, Australia, and New Zealand, which involved 3,500 personnel from all 18 ADMM-Plus countries, including the United States and China. Singapore also supports the proposed holding of an ASEAN-China Maritime Exercise, which would build mutual trust and confidence, and reflect China's commitment and willingness to engage the region.

The Five Power Defence Arrangement or FPDA comprising Singapore, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia, has also played an integral role in the regional security architecture over the last 46 years. Through the regular conduct of multilateral exercises, the defence forces of FPDA member nations have been able to share professional knowledge, build confidence, and enhance regional cooperation. The Shangri-La Dialogue is an annual meeting that drew more than 600 delegates in June 2016, including 30 ministers from 35 countries, and which has facilitated constructive dialogue on regional issues. And around the globe, the 35-member Indian Ocean Naval Symposium or IONS with its focus on maritime security and cooperation in the Indian Ocean; the Sulu Sea Patrols involving Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, which aim to combat human trafficking and terrorism; the Malacca Straits Patrols, where the littoral states of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand undertake air and sea patrols and intelligence sharing to combat piracy in our waters; and the 21 Pacific nation-member Western Pacific Naval Symposium or WPNS, are other examples of multilateral groupings that have evolved to tackle transnational challenges and threats.

One example of the progress made by such platforms is the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea or CUES. It was first adopted by the 14th WPNS in 2014, and Singapore is looking to get all ADMM-Plus countries to adopt it as well. The Republic of Singapore Navy is also seeking to develop a code of conduct for submariners to enhance underwater and submarine operations safety through multilateral naval forums like the Submarine Operational Safety Conference or SMOSC and the WPNS. It is critically important for us to proactively engage in these multilateral platforms to manage differences, appreciate each other's space, and find common ground in this age where security challenges are becoming increasingly transboundary in nature, and are moving into non-traditional realms, such as cyberspace and the threat of information warfare.

Yet we must not forget that the global threat of terrorism is at an all-time high. Within the Asia-Pacific region, Islamic extremism and terrorism are becoming an increasingly clear and present threat. There are almost 30,000 foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria according to UN reports in 2016, and more than a thousand of these fighters are from Southeast Asia. The threat of returning foreign fighters looms large, with ISIS' territorial losses in the Middle East prompting it to change its tactics and encourage decentralised attacks in home countries instead. This has manifested in recent attacks such as in London, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sweden and Saint Petersburg.

Returning fighters may also leverage domestic discontent in their home countries to set up bases in the Asia-Pacific region. ISIS seeks to establish a caliphate in Southeast Asia, and has been aided by the rising number of regional extremist groups. Southeast Asia saw a rise in ISIS-linked plots and attacks in 2016, with ISIS claiming responsibility for at least three successful attacks in Malaysia and Indonesia, and with another 21 planned attacks foiled by authorities. The Philippines, Thailand, and Myanmar are also facing increasing levels of terrorist-linked activity, with last month's edition of ISIS' Rumiyah magazine even devoting a section to the southern Philippines. Just two weeks ago, Philippine security forces thwarted an attempted kidnapping plot through clashes with Abu Sayyaf militants in Bohol. If not dealt with urgently, this problem could become endemic to the Asia-Pacific region, and severely threaten our security and economic development. Singapore is certainly not immune to such terrorist threats. For the first time in a decade, Singapore's terrorism risk level has been raised in a recent report by global consultancy Aon. In August 2016, a plot to launch a rocket attack on targets in Singapore by ISIS-linked elements was foiled by the Indonesian authorities. In response, Singapore has adopted a multi-pronged approach, by building resilience and maintaining social cohesion within our multi-racial and multi-religious society. Proactive and preventive measures are taken by our Mufti and organisations such as Singapore's Religious Rehabilitation Group to counteract ISIS propaganda and rehabilitate individuals who have been radicalised. But beyond our own borders, greater international cooperation and coordination are needed to address the problem of transnational terrorist networks. Multilateral platforms that enable countries to cooperate on counter-terrorism efforts, including intelligence-sharing, will become increasingly vital to our ability to effectively deal with terrorist threats in the region.

Singapore remains optimistic that the Asia-Pacific region will continue to be a reliable engine for global economic growth, but all countries in the region need to continue lending support to not just sustaining, but proactively growing multilateral platforms that facilitate engagement and regional dialogue. Only then will we have the chance to develop long-standing relationships built on trust and cooperation, and be ready to tackle the regional challenges that lie ahead of us.

ANATOLY TORKUNOV
Rector of MGIMO University

The Asia-Pacific region remains an area of relative stability compared with the turmoil in the Middle East and the breakdown of security cooperation between the key actors — especially between Russia and the United States — on the global level. The region's economy keeps growing at a healthy rate. Development and closer regional and transregional connectivity remain part of the agenda for all parties involved.

Nevertheless, the main regional security problems (the Korean problem and the territorial disputes in the South China Sea) remain unresolved. In fact, they are becoming structurally more complex. As time goes by, they are tending to spiral to whole new levels. For example, the situation on the Korean peninsula is now exacerbated by the deployment of elements of the US missile defence system in South Korea, as well as the DPRK's aspiration to take its nuclear programme to a new technological level. Meanwhile, territorial disputes in the South China Sea show no sign of abating; military spending in the region is on the rise; and there are major differences between the United States and China over how to interpret freedom of navigation: Washington insists that freedom of navigation applies not only to merchant shipping but to warships as well. The countries involved in these disputes appear unwilling to seek a resolution on a bilateral or multilateral level. In the wider region, the three major naval powers in the Indian and Pacific oceans — the United States, China, and India — are building up their military capability, adding to the uncertainty of the regional situation.

In a move that upsets the military balance in the region, the United States has decided to deploy its THAAD ground-based ballistic missile defence system in South Korea. That system's radars have sufficient range to monitor Chinese and Russian airspace.

Neither is the Asia-Pacific region immune to the problem of Islamist extremism. Southeast Asian states with a large Muslim-majority population are the worst-affected. ISIS operatives are active in Indonesia and Malaysia. Between 2012 and 2014, close to a hundred nationals of Southeast Asian states were recruited by ISIS to form a separate ethnic Indonesian-Malaysian battalion of militants fighting in Syria.

All these regional security challenges form a complex regional situation. Their combination may well jeopardise future economic growth and development in the Asia-Pacific region. All the parties involved should therefore adopt new regional security approaches that are built on a consensus rather than confrontation.

Another cause for serious concern is the absence of an effective system of providing security of sea lanes and maritime communications in the Asia-Pacific region. The main threat relates to territorial disputes in the East China Sea and the South China Sea, which could potentially deteriorate into a full-scale armed conflict. What is at stake in these disputes is not really the territories themselves, as most of them are barren rocks, but the colossal economic wealth — fishing rights, hydrocarbons, various minerals, etc. associated with them. One way or another, this problem affects the relations between Japan and China, Japan and Russia, China and South Korea, China and Vietnam, and South Korea and Japan. Amid the complex and often confusing situation with the regional security system of military alliances, some nuclear powers that have no part in these maritime disputes may nevertheless be dragged into a conflict.

Barring a few notable exceptions, international land borders are clearly marked on maps and reflected in international agreements. By contrast, maritime borders often remain uncertain. According to some estimates, approximately half the existing mileage of maritime borders is disputed.

East Asian nations are reluctant to take their territorial disputes to courts such as the UN International Court of Justice. That is because the UN International Court of Justice prioritises the existing body of treaties and agreements, which are all but absent in the region. Most of the parties involved in these conflicts prefer to argue their case on the basis of their historical claims. For example, they use old maps drawn even before the signing of the first border agreements; they cite historical documents, etc. One such is the nine-dash line shown on Taiwanese maps dating back to 1947. Under those maps, almost the entire South China Sea is controlled by China.

Another example is the old chronicles suggesting that the Senkaku/Diaoyudao Islands became part of the zone of Chinese economic interests some four hundred years ago. One should emphasise, however, that such arguments have no legal weight, and are used primarily for their psychological effect to create the required public sentiment.

Meanwhile, there is a growing naval arms race in the region, which has significantly outpaced the build-up of ground forces. In 2013 China launched its first aircraft carrier, which is now being upgraded. Its second carrier was launched just a few days ago. By 2020, Chinese forces will receive an additional 70 conventional and nuclear-powered attack submarines, 84 destroyers and frigates, two aircraft carriers, and many other ships and boats. China's neighbours, such as Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia, are trying to keep up with that pace.

This naval arms race, spurred by regular escalations in tensions over disputed territories, leads to an aggravating armed confrontation and has an adverse impact on the international security situation. It engenders a vicious circle: on the one hand, tensions over the territorial conflicts in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, which have been ongoing for decades, are preventing the parties involved from normalising their relations. On the other, the problem of maritime borders cannot be resolved in a climate of tension and mutual mistrust, with confidence sorely lacking.

Another important trend that has emerged in the Asia-Pacific region is the rise of a new bipolarity. Many processes in the region are unfolding in the framework of Sino-American confrontation, which is continuing unabated despite the deep integration of the two countries' economies. That bipolarity, which remains clearly confrontational, is giving rise to a Pacific arms race, and stymies any attempts at reaching an understanding on arguably obvious matters, such as the peaceful resolution of the Korean peninsula issue. For example, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the combined defence spending of the Asian nations rose by 5.4% in 2015, whereas the global average was only 1%.

The new bipolarity is reproducing the mental stereotypes of the Cold War, which are still strong in the foreign-policy establishments of both China and the United States. Not only the Chinese and American generals, but also diplomats, politicians, and public opinion leaders still regard the opposing party as the enemy whose every step is dictated by the logic of a zero-sum game, and therefore poses a threat to national interests.

Meanwhile, the military security system in the Asia-Pacific region has retained the old foundations laid during the Cold War. It is based on bilateral treaties between the United States and its regional allies: Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, and Taiwan. That format is sometimes described as a hub-and-spoke system, the United States being the hub, and its treaties with strategic allies in the region the spokes. Such a system is the complete opposite of NATO, which is built as a network alliance, and whose organisational structure hinges on the principles of equal participation of all members and collective decision-making.

To strengthen its own positions in East Asia, Washington is now trying to bolster the role of its strategic allies in the region, primarily Japan and South Korea. Strategic partnership with the United States' "number one ally" in the Asia-Pacific region, Japan, has a special role to play. There is a clear recent trend towards a stronger military component in the allied commitments undertaken by Tokyo as part of its security treaty with the United States. Japan also appears to be gradually moving away from peace clauses in its own legislation stipulating its peaceful status. We are talking not only about abolishing Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, in which Japan relinquished war as an instrument of resolving international disputes, but also about a number of corollary laws, principles, and agreements.

Russia regularly draws attention to the fact that only a multilateral regime involving all the countries in the region can help reduce tensions and structural instability in East Asia. The parties involved should think about a system of cross-treaties binding together all the regional states and enabling them to monitor and verify each other's compliance. Incidentally, such a system would make small and medium-sized countries feel safer, without having to apply to the major military powers for security assurances. In other words, a multilateral approach would prevent a deepening military-political confrontation in the framework of hostile military blocs.

The Asia-Pacific region is unique in that its countries have managed to build a broad and inclusive network of regional institutions in recent decades.

These include such security institutions as the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting with Dialogue Partners (ADMM-Plus), and the East Asia Summit. Importantly, dialogue is pursued not only in the official format, but also in the track two (experts) and track one-and-a-half framework. The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP), the Shangri-La Dialogue, and meetings of ARF Experts and Eminent Persons — all these venues create a culture of dialogue on security issues in this highly diverse region.

The complaints being voiced about these institutions — including charges that they take too long to discuss pressing issues, and that their results leave much to be desired — do not mean that the region can do without them. On the contrary: with the growing number of regional security challenges, many of which are transnational, coordinating international efforts is as important as ever.

Russia is a constructive actor in the multilateral security cooperation mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region; in no way does it deepen regional polarisation. On the contrary, Russian proposals are aimed at consolidating regional efforts to provide security in the Asia-Pacific region. In particular, Russia is a staunch advocate of the principle of equal and indivisible security in the Euro-Atlantic, Eurasian, and Asia-Pacific regions. This is reflected in the 2016 edition of the Russian foreign policy concept. With Chinese backing, Russia proposed an initiative to build a transparent and equal security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region at the East Asia Summit in Brunei, 2013. Given the persistent problems and dividing lines in the region, Russia's

proposal to build a universal security architecture not based on blocs could serve as the foundation for resolving regional differences.

We also believe that the experience of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in developing confidence-building measures, securing national borders, and preventive diplomacy has yet to be fully appreciated in the Asia-Pacific region; indeed, that experience could be used by the countries in the region to a very good effect.

As regional security problems become more complex, the Asia-Pacific states can hardly expect these problems to be effectively resolved without building a productive military-to-military dialogue.

The problem of the militarisation of the Asia-Pacific region, ongoing chronic international conflicts, and new transnational threats, all require a higher level of coordination between the various defence ministries.

In particular, this cooperation can and should be the answer to the problem of a lack of strategic confidence in the Asia-Pacific region, something regional leaders highlighted a few years ago as one of the key regional issues to be resolved.

Dialogue between the defence ministries, and their participation in military transparency and confidence-building measures in the region could alleviate many concerns — including those over the growing defence spending in the region, the ambiguous interpretations of some countries' steps, new military programmes, etc.

Years of practical cooperation, including joint efforts in the ARF framework, suggest that even good personal contacts between the representatives of military and diplomatic structures of the Asia-Pacific states can help to create a cooperative international climate.

We believe that Russia is prepared to make a valuable contribution to building such dialogue on security issues and on responding to various emergency situations in the region.

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PLENARY SESSION

Military-to-military engagements: regional aspects

Moderator

Veronika Krasheninnikova
Zvezda TV channel presenter, member of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

JOSEPH BETI ASSOMO
Minister-Delegate at the Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon
in Charge of Defence

I sincerely thank the chair and the bureau of this important international gathering for giving me the floor to speak on behalf of the Cameroonian delegation in Central Africa, which I have the privilege of leading here in Moscow.

I feel particularly honoured to have been invited to take part in the VI Moscow Conference on International Security and to present my country's contribution during discussions at this prestigious meeting.

Before I delve into the heart of the matter, let me thank the Government of the Russian Federation for this invitation, which reflects the relevance and quality of bilateral cooperation between Russia and my country in general and in the area of security in particular.

I would like to avail myself of this forum to express the very positive consideration of the President of the Republic of Cameroon, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, His Excellency Paul Biya — on behalf of whom I bring you warm regards — for this opportunity to discuss and analyse security problems that are critical in shaping the experience of the peoples of the five continents. I would especially like to assure you of the solidarity of the government and people of Cameroon after the attack of 3 April 2017 in the Saint Petersburg metro, which caused the death of some fifteen innocent people and injured about ten others.

At this same forum last year during the V edition of this conference, I presented to you a map of the threats confronting my country, namely cross-border crime, maritime crime in the Gulf of Guinea, organised crime, and poaching. Thanks to robust action by the government, these scourges have been kept at a very low threshold.

My speech particularly focused on the aggression perpetrated against my country by the terrorist group Boko Haram since 2013. I had described to you in great detail the horrors it had caused the Cameroonian people in the northern part of the country, at the convergence of the borders with Nigeria, Chad, Lake Chad, and beyond Niger.

Since my visit here exactly a year ago, the situation has changed a great deal for the better.

Thanks to national efforts and relevant sub-regional synergy, a more vigorous response was issued to the Boko Haram terrorists, who not only saw their military organisation virtually disarticulated and their potential almost totally neutralised, but who also had to abandon their main sanctuaries under repeated onslaughts from the Multinational Joint Task Force of the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

Today, we can say that at least 80% of the territories formerly occupied by Boko Haram have been taken over. In addition, hundreds of its fighters had to lay down their arms and surrender themselves to the authorities of the countries concerned. The process for their de-radicalisation and social reintegration is ongoing.

At the national level, Cameroon succeeded in inflicting heavy losses on the enemy, thus helping to practically scale down its military capabilities to the barest minimum and almost totally forbidding it from acting as a formation across its national borders.

With three other countries involved in the Multinational Joint Task Force of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), namely Nigeria, Niger, and Chad, we have succeeded through intense pressure, to drastically lessen the freedom of action afforded Boko Haram, to neutralise it tactically and technically, and to chase it out of its traditional strongholds.

Today, the enemy has been considerably weakened, but is still very dangerous.

Indeed, faced with numerous military setbacks, Boko Haram quickly reconverted to the methods it knows best: suicide bombings, land mining, laying improvised explosive devices, light ambushes, hostage taking, and theft of various resources for its sustenance. Due to its unpredictability, this asymmetric mode of operation still causes loss of human lives among the population and within the ranks of the Defence and Security Forces.

With regards to Cameroon, thanks to the vigorous action of the government, supported by the local populations who are invested in the struggle against the assailant often at the risk of their lives, the social situation has improved considerably. The major economic corridors linking Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad, and Niger have been reopened, pupils have returned to school, and economic activity has resumed, albeit timidly.

In support of the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing this phenomenon, Cameroon has implemented a development plan for the Far North Region, the epicentre of Boko Haram's activities on its territory.

As I said a year ago, without making a mountain out of a molehill, Boko Haram, a terrorist organisation affiliated with Daesh, is a major threat to global security. It has indeed emerged as a clear expression of a process of the violent destabilisation of states on a global scale, a prism through which it must always be perceived.

Beyond these national efforts, I am delighted at the results achieved by the Multinational Joint Task Force of the LCBC, which, after two years of waging war against the insurgents, has now become an effective and relevant sub-regional model of a defence mechanism. Discreetly, and without vast resources, it has succeeded in destabilising the terrorists and has become an example of a success story in Africa and the expression of our states' determination to eradicate this scourge, whose negative consequences on the local economies and the people are far-reaching. These successes are the outcome of enhanced political and military cooperation and a more dynamic and proactive sub-regional solidarity.

Despite all this, the Multinational Joint Task Force needs support and all initiatives in this direction are welcome in terms of funding and logistics. Our countries also need support for the de-radicalisation and the social reintegration of former terrorists.

Last March, the Committee of Ambassadors of member countries of the United Nations Security Council visited LCBC countries, namely Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, and Chad. These senior officials from New York together with their respective governments reviewed progress made in the fight against Boko Haram. They took cognisance of the reality of the war waged by terrorists against our countries and its devastating humanitarian consequences. They admitted that the war against Boko Haram was a "war forgotten by the international community" in light of the reluctance of the international community to act more vigorously, compared with the spirited and determined conduct of operations against Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

While one may take some comfort in the fact that it is never too late, on behalf of my government, a member country of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, I would nonetheless like to avail myself of this rostrum to express my country's deep gratitude to the international community and to friendly states, particularly Russia, for the multifaceted support provided not only to ensure that Boko Haram is recognised as a threat to world security, but over and above all else, for it to be eradicated forthwith. The new and robust momentum under way in Iraq and Syria gives us reason to hope for a more stable future.

I would also like to take advantage of my visit here to raise awareness about the war that is wreaking havoc in Africa, the consequences of which consequences will reach the northern shores of the Mediterranean if nothing is done. We are open to all proposals and contributions that will enable us to put an end to terrorist attacks and to devote our efforts more placidly to the development of our countries. Our security rests on these efforts, considering that no one is safe from terrorism, whether in the North, South, East, or West.

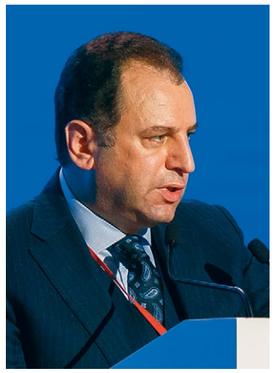
The appraisal I made in 2016 of the situation remains topical considering the momentum that groups such as Boko Haram and Daesh are capable of deploying. This concerns the origin, environment, funding, and support of these groups. We believe that if clear and firm responses are provided by the international community, terrorism would be checked. Global security is a challenge to all and sundry. The responsibility to tackle this challenge lies with the greatest and most powerful nations, considering the technical and technological means that these countries possess to detect, track and destroy terrorists.

I reaffirm the fact that global security must be ensured, as advocated by the President of the Republic of Cameroon, His Excellency Paul Biya, who is accustomed to saying: "A global threat requires a global response". My country has resolutely embraced this logic through its untiring contribution to international security initiatives in Africa or elsewhere, as is the case here in Moscow.

Also, we continue to advocate for a more active, permanent, frank, and loyal international solidarity between states and nations, large and small, powerful and less powerful.

To conclude, I would like to once more express Cameroon's gratitude to the Government of the Russian Federation for its support and assistance in several areas.

We welcome all initiatives that would help us in the vigorous fight to obtain final victory over terrorism, which, today, is clearly a very lucrative business that some do not hesitate to take advantage of in keeping with their covert but well-known interests.



VIGEN SARGSYAN
Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia

First off, I would like to thank the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation and Minister of Defence, Army General Sergey Shoygu in particular, for the invitation to and the organisation of this wonderful event.

Dialogue and interaction between defence agencies is the very mechanism that must enforce restraints on escalations and provocations, while foreign policy agencies and national leaders carry out negotiations, and search for compromises concerning the essence of the problem.

The vast majority of ongoing conflicts cannot be solved through the use of weapons. Of course, it is possible to catalyse negotiations by escalating tensions. However, the results of any such catalysis are difficult to predict, or are altogether unforeseeable. Such military operations, in any case, conclude with peace negotiations, compromises, and ceasefire agreements. In the end, it seems that, in the 21st century, which is arguably a century of progress and scientific breakthroughs for all mankind, the horror of wars and atrocities serve merely to soften the negotiating positions of conflicting parties, i.e. to render us, the individuals responsible for decision-making, more reasonable and sober-minded.

The use of force cannot be a way to resolve conflicts. The cost is prohibitively high. Huge resources are be required for recovery and reconstruction. Too many human destinies become hostages of history. What is more, the very methods of warfare and their effects on the civilian population, regular citizens, are in direct contravention of international humanitarian law and social development.

In the 21st century, the primary emphasis must be placed on the principle of non-use of force or the threat to use force. The efforts of the international community must be focused on that.

Unfortunately, war is increasingly viewed through the prism of the Clausewitzian formula, as "the continuation of politics by other means".

I believe that military officials who know and understand war, its consequences and its costs, only too well should return to the idea that war cannot be the logical continuation of anything.

History is given to mankind for creation and development, not for war or confrontation. These days, it seems as if armed conflicts are the norm interrupted by irregular and short intermissions of peace.

We have spoken, and continue to speak at length about regions. However, the deep transformation of the very definition of the concept of the "region" is the main issue in modern security.

This geographic formation, which just yesterday was axiomatically considered a "region", is today a part of a whole set of previously unknown "regions".

We witness a globalisation of non-state actors that independently start forming new regions on the world map: regions of terrorist groups' influence and their power centres. Regions that are more susceptible to ISIS recruitment. Regions that are particularly vulnerable to hate preaching.

Linguistic, ethnic, religious, and ideological regions that often stretch beyond their political borders.

Regions of poverty versus regions of prosperity, regions that are sources of refugees and regions where they arrive. Regions that require development programmes, where sometimes even drinking water is scarce, and regions that strive to attract more foreign investment. Regions of war and regions of peace, regions where young people dreams about the top ten universities, and regions where illiteracy is widespread.

Regions where weapons, drugs and human trafficking are more powerful than national borders and customs offices, and regions where these issues seem as divorced from reality as screenplays of thriller films.

Regions of freedom of speech and thought, and regions where the population can demand that its government reinstates the death penalty.

No matter how different these classifications of regions are, the truth is very simple. Security depends on the full understanding of trends of such regionalisation and the consideration of local nuances when control systems are established.

No single recipe can fit all, however an obvious reality does exist. Long-term and effective results can only be achieved through consistent and indivisible approach, the rule of principles, rejection of any forms of selectivity and double standards, a refusal to build one's prosperity on the suffering of others.

Today, division into regions is based on the concrete task at hand.

Life leads us away from geographic regionalisation, but we continue to return to it. It seems more convenient, more familiar to us. Regionalisation in the 21st century is based on existing issues and ways to solve them. We can call it goal-oriented regionalisation. That is, the same country can simultaneously exist in different, often seemingly incompatable regions, depending on the issues at hand.

In this context, cooperation between defence agencies becomes particularly important. It requires:

- More information sharing;
- Direct lines of communication;
- The ability to keep promises — as a matter of building mutual trust;
- A certain level of mutual understanding through regular exchanges, retraining courses, and interaction between military representatives;
- Strict observance of rules and provisions of international humanitarian law;
- Most importantly, respect towards partners. The bigger the partner and the greater the impact of its actions and policies, the more thorough should be the understanding that any attempts to gain the upper hand through harsh statements and short-term considerations are inadmissible. The bigger the actor in the international or regional scope, the more accurately it must calculate the repercussions of any of its actions that will provoke counteraction.

The understanding that we cooperate not only in the short run, but for the long run is the cornerstone of effective international dialogue. And given existing challenges and threats this is simply a must.

This is a non-exhaustive task list for military-to-military cooperation in a constantly changing security environment and dynamic transformation of regions.

At the same time, the spiral of violence and vengeance, and attempts to solve existing issues through a single strike, drags our nations towards chaos day by day. As was evident through the example set in the Middle East, it only takes days to transform seemingly stable regions into combat zones, regions of death and poverty, create waves of refugees and legitimise violence. We are still uncertain as to how we must work to correct these mistakes, allowing the people of that region to return to a peaceful life.

The phenomenon of social irresponsibility and selfishness during times of dynamically changing social realities is described by great Portuguese writer, Nobel Prize recipient José Saramago in his novel Blindness. I get the impression that we, as states, peoples, and individuals who are responsible for decision making, are slowly but surely descending in Saramago's downward spiral of the degradation of our security systems.

We have shifted responsibility from ourselves, the decision-makers, to the armaments that we possess. The question "Is it permissible or is it not permissible" in the paradigm of decision-making in the security sphere is increasingly often substituted by such notions as "Can I or can I not", or "Do I or do I not" have the necessary technical means and capabilities.

The farther we are from the historic moment when the two total world wars of the 20th century ended, the more blurred is our sense of social responsibility based on principles and values rather than military capabilities of our nations.

I would like to thank the hospitable hosts once again for the fascinating organisation of this conference. I would like to express my hope that such discussions, meetings and debates are an important factor in building mutual trust, understanding, and respect crucial for maintaining peace and security.

BADMAANYAMBUU BAT-ERDENE
Minister of Defence of Mongolia

First of all, I express my sincere gratitude to the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation for the invitation to take part in such an important conference discussing all aspects of international security. I also express my gratitude to the organisers of the conference for an opportunity to speak.

I would like to briefly talk about the position and efforts of Mongolia with regards to security issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

In the 21st century, the Asia-Pacific region started to play an important role in international relations. In recent years, the system of international relations has changed a lot, and most researchers believe that the centre of international relations is moving from Europe to Asia and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Along with the increasing importance of this region, in which countries' economic potential is rapidly growing and their trade interdependence is increasing, it is becoming clear that it is necessary to establish a system of multilateral cooperation here.

In addition to the fact that territorial disputes between a number of states have long been a presence in the region, which is one of security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, unconventional threats are emerging and are becoming transnational.

In the Asia-Pacific region, there are still security problems that attract international attention. The most notable ones are the territorial disputes between Japan and China, the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, and the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, which involve several countries such as China, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Furthermore, internal instability in the countries of the region may adversely affect regional security in the long term.

In this region, strategic differences between some countries remain unresolved. Moreover, tension remains between some of the region's leading states, which has a significant impact on global politics. The current situation leads some to argue that, to a certain extent, conditions are in place in the region for the resumption of the Cold War.

At the same time, the overall situation with regional security in the Asia-Pacific region suggests a low probability of large-scale direct armed clashes in the near future.

In our opinion, when it comes to ensuring security of any region, the main task is not to aggravate the existing situation, and to maintain regional security in its current state, which in itself is not an easy task. As was already noted, despite the fact that there are no signs of the situation deteriorating, there are also no guarantees that existing disputes and differences will not get worse in the future. Thus, the main issue is not resolving the regional problems, but preventing their aggravation.

Along with this, the nuclear problem of the DPRK, which has threatened not only the countries of the region, but the whole world for many years, is unlikely to be resolved in the near future. This is confirmed by the recent nuclear and missile tests and threats from the DPRK leadership, as well as by political instability in the Republic of Korea.

In addition, some unconventional threats are intensifying, in particular, human trafficking, drug trafficking, terrorism, as well as environmental problems. They become transnational, and consequently an inevitable need arises for cooperation between states and nations to ensure regional security.

Unlike other regions of the world, the Asia-Pacific region has not yet established a unified system of cooperation in the field of security. The purpose of this interaction is not only to address problems, but also to prevent their aggravation.

In this regard, the region needs a joint security system. Undoubtedly, it will not be easy to create a structure for multilateral cooperation on security issues which would embrace the entire region. Nevertheless, there are many proposals and initiatives to create such a structure, and some have been implemented quite successfully. In particular, since 2002 the International Institute for Strategic Studies annually holds the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, at which delegations led by the defence ministers of Asia-Pacific region countries have an opportunity to share their views on topical issues and problems. I think this meeting is the largest in the region, in terms of both its importance and the number of participants.

At the same time, there is a trend towards more regular conferences and seminars on regional security issues organised by various countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

In addition, I would like to stress that during the Moscow Conference on International Security, organised for the sixth time, significant attention is paid to security issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

As a state pursuing an open, multi-vector and peaceful foreign policy, Mongolia seeks to actively participate in regional cooperation and makes efforts to ensure regional and global security.

In this regard, the National Security Concept of Mongolia states that "Mongolia actively supports and participates in the activities of the countries of the region aimed at establishing mechanisms for cooperation on security issues and strengthening strategic stability in the Asia-Pacific region, East Asia and, in particular, Northeast Asia". In addition, the Foreign Policy Concept of Mongolia with respect to the main directions of foreign policy states that Mongolia develops cooperation and bilateral friendly relations with Asian countries, participates in multilateral regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and supports measures for strengthening strategic stability in the East, Northeast and Central Asia, as well as an expansion of cooperation on security issues. This is the basis of Mongolia's policy at the regional level.

Due to the intensification of the globalisation and integration processes, no individual state can ensure security unilaterally. In addition, security of such a small country with such a special geographical position as Mongolia will depend on the overall situation in the region.

Mongolia has already been recognised as one of the countries that is not embroiled in disagreements with other states and that in fact has friendly relations with other states. Therefore, we have real opportunities to organise meetings and forums embracing all countries of the region. In this regard, Mongolia has initiated many proposals and implements some of them. In particular, after Mongolia declared its territory a nuclear-weapons-free zone at the United Nations in 1992, the country has sought to reinforce this status, have it recognised at the international level and prevent a regional nuclear threat in the future, which was highly appreciated by the international community.

Contributing to the development of a system of cooperation on security issues in the Asia-Pacific region is, in a certain sense, an obligation to the international community.

In general, Mongolia can work actively to ensure security in the Asia-Pacific region in the following three main areas:

- Participation, as a mediator, in resolving interstate disputes;
- Active participation and expression of its position at regional security events;
- Proactive involvement in the development of a system of multilateral security cooperation in the region.

Mongolian and foreign experts believe that in the first area Mongolia could, first of all, be a mediator in resolving the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and the differences between the DPRK and the Republic of Korea, and between the DPRK and Japan over abducted Japanese citizens. At the same time, this requires not only Mongolia to be proactive, but also that the parties are willing to use the services of a mediator.

Mongolia actively participates in regional meetings and summits on security issues. In particular, Mongolia regularly and actively participates in the meetings held within the Shangri-La Dialogue. In addition, in accordance with the National Security Concept of Mongolia, Foreign Policy Concept of Mongolia and other documents, Mongolia takes an active part in other forms of regional interaction, seeks to join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and actively interacts with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Mongolia also proposes its own initiatives for establishing a system of cooperation on regional security issues. With regards to this, we can mention the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue that addresses security issues in Northeast Asia. After the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue Initiative on Northeast Asian Security was announced by President of Mongolia Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj in 2013, conferences and seminars on energy issues have been held for three times. The hallmark of this dialogue is that from the very start Mongolia sought to involve all the countries of the region in it. In July 2016, the summit of the Asia–Europe Meeting was successfully held in Mongolia.

Also, for four years we have been working on a number of international scientific conferences on security issues in Northeast Asia, held annually by the Military Research Institute of the Ministry of Defence of Mongolia.

It is very important for Mongolia to use its advantages, such as the absence of severe disagreements with other countries and the presence of friendly relations with them, to ensure security by creating a multilateral security structure in the region. In order to play a meaningful role in this process, Mongolia should develop bilateral relations with all countries in the region.

For the past 20 years, the Asia-Pacific region has been a key priority track in our foreign policy. We are aware of the inevitable need to consider our own security in the context of the regional situation and we are pursuing a foreign policy that takes this aspect into account. It is positive that there are no direct traditional threats. Despite their absence, Mongolia continues to work proactively to ensure regional security, and there is a tendency towards further intensification of such work in the future.

In conclusion of my report, I would like to briefly tell you about the areas of Mongolia's military cooperation.

In the field of defence, Mongolia cooperates with virtually all countries in the region. Its relations with two neighbouring countries are of special importance. Mongolia has military-technical cooperation agreements with Russia and China, which form the basis for the development of cooperation.

We also pay attention to building military trust and strengthening relations in the field of defence with the countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Cooperation in the field of defence is carried out through mutual accreditation of military attachés, exchange of military delegations, military trainings, joint peacekeeping and other exercises, as well as sports and mass events for the military.

As regards strengthening military trust in the region and globally, we participate in international peacekeeping operations, joint peacekeeping and counter-terrorism exercises.

Along with the exercises held at the Regional Training Centre for peacekeeping forces, the Mongolian Armed Forces conduct bilateral peacekeeping and humanitarian exercises, as well as counter-terrorism exercises jointly with Russia, China, the United States, India, the Republic of Korea, and Turkey. We consider this to be our contribution to regional security and building of military trust. In addition, our servicemen regularly take part in the International Army Games organised by the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, as well as in international sports events for the military.

I note with satisfaction that all the reports and speeches at this Moscow Conference on International Security are of great importance for the development of a harmonised approach to the issues being discussed and for the definition of areas for international military cooperation.

I wish you success in your work at this conference.

GENERAL-IN-CHIEF VLADIMIR PADRINO LÓPEZ

Minister of Defence of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

From the Motherland of Simon Bolivar the Liberator, in the name of Citizen Nicolás Maduro Moros, Constitutional President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Commander in Chief of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces, and representing the whole Venezuelan nation, I hereby convey warm, Bolivarian, Chavist, revolutionary and anti-imperialist greetings to Mr Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, to General Sergey Shoygu, Minister of Defence, whom I would like to thank for his kind invitation to this conference, and to all our sisters and brothers in this great country: our sympathies are with you regarding the terrorist attacks that happened recently in Saint Petersburg.

With deeply felt deference, we also greet the distinguished participants of this reputable forum.

When approaching the topic “Military-to-military engagements: regional aspects” the frame of reference I will be using is the way the Latin American states jointly address security and defence issues. In this respect, it should be noted that Venezuela is a part of South America, and during the II Summit of the Presidents of the countries of this subcontinent, which took place in Guayaquil, Republic of Ecuador, in 2002, this region was declared a Zone of Peace and Cooperation. This historic fact reflects the best traditions of understanding and peaceful coexistence between the nations in search of consensus, favouring trust, collaboration, and constant negotiation in security and defence issues, coordinated actions in multinational forums, and the gradual limitation of weapons acquisition.

A common vision of the topic has been forming ever since, until the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) was born in April 2007, during the Summit on Energy on the Margarita Island, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The UNASUR Constitutive Treaty was signed on 23 May 2008, defining this Union as an international organisation comprising 12 South American countries with the objective of creating a space for cultural, economic, social and political integration, with respect for the sovereignty and independence of each state.

Later on, in the year 2008, the Council of South American Defence (CDS) was created, as a mechanism for consulting, assistance, and coordination within UNASUR. It should be made clear that this organisation is not a conventional military or operational alliance. It essentially implements policies of military assistance, humanitarian operations, peacekeeping missions, industrial and technological exchange, educational and training activities. One of the most important tasks of the CDS is to guarantee the above-mentioned Zone of Peace — the basis for improving democracy and the overall development of our countries. As may be seen, the bloc has recourse to understanding, multilateral agreements and conventions in order to define its defence policies.

Along the same lines, during the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the UNASUR countries held in 2009 in San Carlos de Bariloche, Republic of Argentina, it was decided to issue a proclamation that: “The presence of foreign military forces, with their own means and resources related to their specific objectives, may not threaten the sovereignty and integrity of any South American country, and consequently, the stability and safety of the entire region”.

Similarly, this commitment to promote a culture of peace was supported in 2012, in Lima, Republic of Peru, where peace is understood as the supreme good, based on the provisions of the UNASUR Constitutive Treaty, and on the principles of the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations for that matter.

Nevertheless, despite all the above, we are all well aware of the significant influence that the United States of North America has historically held over the security doctrine designed for the Western Hemisphere. In order to achieve this, its foreign policy has always created certain conditions, and is enacted through regional organisations, such as the Organization of American States (OEA), which puts these claims into action through the Inter-American Defence Board, the Inter-American College, and such organisations as the Conference of Ministers of Defence of the Americas, and the Conference of American Armies. During the latest meetings, we have witnessed the presence at these forums of countries closely related to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as an obvious intention to include such topics as joint response against humanitarian crises and natural disasters.

In this respect, the United States currently maintains over 36 military bases in Latin America and the Caribbean, seven of which are located in Colombia. On 24 December 2016, Colombia announced the probable formalisation of a cooperation

programme for information exchange and the fight against organised crime together with NATO. We should emphasise that this organisation is overtly operational in its nature, and has a record of military interventions in different parts of the world; therefore, concerns related to the scope and possible consequences of this programme for the regional peace and stability seem inevitable. It should be remembered that Venezuela is Colombia's neighbour, which is yet another cause of reasonable uneasiness for the Venezuelan state.

At the same time, if we consider the scale of the US support that goes to NATO, a convention with such characteristics creates a scenario with greater operational capacities for both the United States and Colombia. Eventually, that might result in a negative impact on the promotion of mutual trust, and on the efforts that are consistently implemented to improve the construction of a South American identity in terms of defence.

In accordance with its National Constitution, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is rooted in the fundamental principles of freedom, equality, justice, and world peace, among other values; for this reason, our country directs its efforts towards the consolidation of those values, always within the legal framework that governs relations between different countries.

On the other hand, it is true that global threats, both conventional and emergent, such as organised crime, drug trafficking, the illegal arms trade, cyber-war, money laundering, and terrorism, demand constant innovation and revision of security concepts. However, despite the versatile nature of the problem field, they should be approached through a greater will to integrate, and through a stronger union; in order to provide joint responses to those threats, as a single bloc, we should understand that there can be no isolated answers to problems that are shared by the whole region.

Given the situation described, the voice of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is being heard on this important arena, as we voice our concern over the potential implications that the signing of the said programme between Colombia and NATO might have. Therefore, in compliance with the provisions that govern relations within the international community, and in the spirit of inherent harmony, we would like to suggest an in-depth analysis of such a sensitive issue, in the light of the existing need for further reinforcement of various regional and bilateral mechanisms that would provide for a lasting peace in South America.

In conclusion, I would like to quote Supreme Commander of the Bolivarian Revolution Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, one of the architects of the ongoing integration process across Latin America. On 15 September 2006, at the XIV Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, he said: "A world where no country dominates is possible, a world where there is no global policeman, no wars nor bayonets, but instead a more profound feeling of brotherhood and equality".

God willing, may South America and the whole world always continue aspiring for peace, the most desirable of all victories.

VALERY SEMERIKOV
Acting Secretary-General of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation

First of all, let me thank the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation for organising the now-traditional International Conference on the topical issue of ensuring global and regional security.

Today, unfortunately, there is every reason to state that the situation in the world has become even more complicated since last year's V Moscow Conference on International Security. There are increasingly visible statements about an allegedly inevitable third world war and the approaching end of human civilisation.

There are more than sufficient grounds for these assessments. Cynically, with the help of notorious double standards, the system of strategic stability is being destroyed, conflicts are being stirred up, and the principles of equal responsibility for peace and security, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs are being undermined.

Military capacity is being built up under unsubstantiated pretexts. In Central and Eastern Europe, we witness new battle groups, the development of military infrastructure, the deployment of surveillance and reconnaissance systems and information and strike complexes of the strategic missile defence system aimed at neutralising Russia's strategic deterrence forces.

Violent campaigns against sovereign states, which breach international law, clearly demonstrate the existence of clear plans to gain global leadership. The most recent examples of such unlawful actions include missile strikes against government forces' facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic and military blackmail against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The war in the Middle East, which is increasingly acquiring the characteristics of a large-scale armed conflict involving the use of weapons of mass destruction, is cause for serious concern. The use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups to achieve their goals has already become a reality.

Unfortunately, the recent chemical attacks carried out by terrorists in Syria and Iraq were used by the West to discredit the official Damascus and the role played by the Russian Federation and its allies in the fight against terrorism in the region.

Initiated externally, the conflicts in Iraq, Libya, and Syria have plunged the Middle East and the north of the African continent into endless blood-letting. Hundreds of thousands of refugees flee the conflict zone. They have flooded prosperous European countries.

The tragic paradox of this situation is that the powers that have created this crisis are now urging other states to shoulder the burden of responsibility for what they have done.

The qualitative deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan also relates to this. The ongoing confrontation between various ethnic and religious groups, the actions of the Taliban, and the growing volume of drug trafficking are only some of the threats emanating from the territory of this country neighbouring the CSTO.

Today, a flow of ISIS militants who survived in Syria and Iraq has rushed into Afghanistan, and eventually they could turn this country into their foothold for expansion to the north.

The continuing crisis in Ukraine has revealed the failure of the ruling regime that seized power in that country through a coup. In this regard, it is puzzling to see the support provided by the so-called civilised world to the overtly nationalistic policies of the current Kiev government.

Proven technologies of the so-called hybrid war, information pressure, economic blackmail are used against the CSTO member states to destroy the allied relations and disintegrate the Organisation.

Today, international terrorism is one of the most serious challenges to the security of the CSTO member states. International media report an increase in terrorist activity throughout the world. For example, according to their data, 92 terrorist attacks occurred in 22 countries in the first quarter of 2017. The number of terrorist attacks in the Middle East has increased by almost 10%.

In the territory of states bordering the CSTO's area of responsibility, 35 terrorist attacks were committed during that period (28 in Afghanistan, 3 in Turkey, 4 in Ukraine). There was a terrorist attack in the Saint Petersburg metro. Security services of the Russian Federation identified and neutralised a criminal group consisting of Russian citizens and people from Central Asia that intended to launch terrorist attacks in various Russian cities.

Reportedly, there have been recent attempts to resolve differences between ISIS and Al-Qaeda through negotiations and to unite these two terrorist organisations into an alliance. If this initiative succeeds, the terrorist threat across the world will increase many-fold. The continuing conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh,

border disputes between CSTO member states and with third countries, the problem of water and energy shortage, transport isolation and a number of other problems negatively impact the security level in CSTO member states.

The threats of drugs trafficking, illegal migration, criminal use of information networks are still relevant and have already become traditional.

Today, when the Organisation celebrates its 15th anniversary, it is fair to say that the CSTO, as a result of joint efforts undertaken by its member states, has become a self-sufficient Organisation capable of responding collectively to a whole range of current security challenges and threats.

The determination and long-term intentions of our Organisation to develop comprehensive cooperation between its member states in the field of collective security were emphasised in the CSTO Collective Security Strategy adopted by the Collective Security Council in October 2016 for the period until 2025.

The cumulative potential of the CSTO, which guarantees security to the member states in the context of increased military and political instability, is based on three complementary areas of application of collective efforts: political cooperation (priority), military cooperation, and cooperation in the field of countering challenges and threats.

The CSTO has well established mechanisms for political cooperation that is a priority for the Organisation. Member states move forward with their practice of coordinating foreign policy at international venues based on regularly updated collective instructions for the plenipotentiary representatives of our states in international organisations.

The CSTO has built a military capacity adequate for its goals. It is based on the CSTO forces (Collective Forces) that integrate national contingents, regional and coalition military groups, and the necessary military systems (command, communications, air defence, comprehensive support).

Currently, the forces and means of the collective security system include Collective Rapid Reaction Force (CRRF) (over 22,000 people); Peacekeeping Forces (over 3,500 people); Collective Aviation Forces; Regional Groups of Forces, including the Collective Rapid Deployment Force in the Central Asian Region (CRDF CAR) (about 5,000 people). Regular checks of the staffing and combat readiness of these groups demonstrate that the CSTO Collective Forces can fulfil their intended tasks at any time, at the decision of the Collective Security Council.

The development of these CSTO forces is carried out in accordance with the Action Plan for the implementation of the Main Areas of Military Cooperation between CSTO Member States until 2020, as approved by the Collective Security Council in 2013.

Today, the CSTO has its own forces and capability for conducting peacekeeping operations not only within CSTO member states, but also in third countries under a UN Security Council mandate. Close interaction between the CSTO Secretariat and the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations has been established and is developing. We jointly work on practical issues related to formalising the use of CSTO peacekeeping contingents in UN peacekeeping missions.

The CSTO Collective Forces are trained in accordance with annual plans for the preparation of command and control bodies, and forces and capability of the collective security system of the Organisation.

Since 2004, over 30 exercises of different scales have been held involving the forces and capability of the collective security system on CSTO member state territory in accordance with these plans, including Rubezh (Frontier) with the CRDF CAR; Vzaimodeystvie (Interaction) with the CSTO CRRF; Nerushimoye Bratstvo (Unbreakable Brotherhood) with the CSTO Peacekeeping Forces. Special tactical exercises, Grom (Thunder) and Kobalt (Cobalt), are conducted regularly to train the CSTO CRRF to counter terrorism and drug trafficking. Representatives of foreign countries and international organisations are regularly invited to observe and take part in such exercises.

The CSTO has created and is developing a system of training personnel for the armed forces and other security bodies of our states. Annually, about 1,500 people from the Organisation member states receive training on preferential terms or free of charge at military universities of the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation. The same terms apply to representatives of our states when they are trained at specialised universities in the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, and the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Military-technical and military-economic cooperation is carried out on preferential terms. In terms of countering challenges and threats, a system of coordinating joint activities in the field of combating terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, illegal migration from third countries, and ensuring information security has been created and is operational and effective within the CSTO.

Practical interaction to neutralise these threats to the security of CSTO member states is carried out through joint special operational and preventive measures: Kanal (Channel) to counter drug trafficking; Nelegal (Illegal migrant) to counter illegal migration; PROXY to ensure security of electronic networks.

Given the severity of the problem, large-scale measures are taken in the CSTO format to counter international terrorism and extremism. In order to optimise collective efforts in this area, a mechanism was approved at the October 2016 session of the Collective Security Council to create a single CSTO list of terrorist organisations. There is no precedent of such a mechanism in any other international organisation.

During the session, additional measures were also identified, aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the CSTO's counter-terrorism activities.

We pay particular attention to the development of the CSTO crisis response mechanism, which involves streamlining the process of adopting decisions relating to crisis response by the statutory bodies, the ability to provide all types of assistance, including military support to member states in the event of an attack by illegal armed groups.

In my speech, within the time allotted to me, I tried to bring to your attention, in a concise form, just one, most visible, part of the problems of international security faced and taken into account by the CSTO in its work to ensure collective security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Organisation member states. We are deeply convinced that only jointly, on the basis of mutual trust and respect for international law, is it possible to effectively counter existing, emerging, and ever-increasing challenges and threats to the contemporary world.

THOMAS GRAHAM
Managing Director at Kissinger Associates (USA)

I want to thank the Ministry of Defence for holding this important conference and for inviting me to participate.

Before I begin my remarks, I want to stress that I am not speaking as an official or unofficial representative of the Trump Administration. What I am about to present are solely my own views as an observer of American foreign policy with some experience in the US Government, including at the White House.

The Trump administration, as we all know, has been in office for three short months. It does not have fully formed policies even on the issues that dominate the United States' foreign policy agenda, such as North Korea, Syria, counter-terrorism, and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This is not unusual for a new administration. An incoming administration likes to review policies, a process that takes several months. We generally do not see well-formed positions until the summer after the inauguration at the earliest.

What makes this administration particularly difficult to read is that President Trump is an outsider, as far as the two dominant political parties are concerned. He is not drawing on the traditional stable of foreign policy experts from either the Republican or the Democratic party that would give us a clearer sense of where he wanted to take policy.

Moreover, during the campaign he challenged the foreign policy orthodoxy that had formed in the United States in the years after the end of the World War II, especially with regard to American allies in Europe and East Asia, and his warm words for President Putin and his expressed desire to work more closely with Russia set him apart from more mainstream political thinking in the United States.

That said, his picks for key national security posts — Secretary of State Tillerson, Secretary of Defence Mattis, and National Security Advisor McMaster — all fall within that mainstream, and they have tended to give Trump's policy a more traditional cast. In the past month, he has reconfirmed America's commitment to NATO, and earlier he had assured Japanese Prime Minister Abe of America's support.

Looking forward, it is probably true that President Trump's policies will mark more of a continuation of conventional American security policy rather than a radical break. In this he will be following in the path of his predecessors, who criticised outgoing administrations during presidential campaigns only to build on their policies once in office.

Where he will want to break with President Obama is not so much on goals but on tactics. He wants to appear decisive where he believes Obama hesitated. In particular, he appears more inclined to wield the military — in a demonstrative way — than Obama was, although he too will be wary of committing forces to ground combat anywhere in the world, absent a direct challenge to America's vital interests. Likewise, he also believes he derives some benefit from being unpredictable, unlike Obama. We see these attributes in some of President Trump's recent actions.

North Korea has risen to the top of the agenda in the United States. There was a widespread view shared by Republicans and Democrats alike that this problem would prove a central one this year, given the speed with which North Korea is developing its nuclear capabilities and long-range ballistic missile technology. Any American president would have said that North Korea's development of a missile with a nuclear warhead capable of reaching the United States is unacceptable.

Not surprisingly, President Trump is now focused on making sure that cannot happen. Three elements have defined his approach. First, he has reassured America's allies — Japan and South Korea — that the United States remains committed to their defence and to a prominent role in the region. Second, he seeks to persuade China to step up pressure on the North Korean regime to freeze its nuclear programme as a step towards negotiating its dismantlement. That was a major goal of his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping earlier this month, and he appears to have had some success. At least China has taken some steps to slow the flow of financial resources to Pyongyang. And, third, Trump has put the use of force back on the table as a real option, to incentivise China to act and to demonstrate to North Korea the risks of its present course. It is much too early to say whether this approach will bear fruit.

With Syria and more broadly the Middle East, President Trump needed to demonstrate that the United States would be engaged in a serious way. The strike against Syria for the use of chemical weapons demonstrated that, and it has caused all countries in the region to recalibrate their policies, no matter what their positions on the chemical attack. The American strike is not necessarily a prelude to further attacks, however, but it was at least in part intended to get Moscow's attention.

My sense is that President Trump himself would still like to find a way to cooperate with Russia, but a condition for that will be Moscow's willingness to pressure Assad to act with greater restraint. Even then, it will take considerable time to come up with a formula for satisfactory counter-terrorism cooperation, given the different assessments the two countries have of the situation on the ground in Syria and the profound distrust that exists between the American and Russian militaries and special services. Syria, as we all know, is embedded in the larger struggle in the Middle East over the shape of the future order. Trump has reached out to reassure America's traditional allies, including Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. The rhetoric against Iran has been harsh and the administration is looking for other ways to increase the pressure, but, that said, President Trump appears to have backed away from his pledge during the campaign to tear up the nuclear deal with Iran.

In this uncertain situation, the United States and Russia should be discussing the future order in the Middle East as part of an effort to bring the Syrian crisis to a satisfactory and enduring resolution. These two countries cannot alone determine the new order. The regional powers — Egypt, Iran, Israel, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia — will play prominent roles. But American and Russian cooperation is critical to reducing the tension in the region and minimising the extent to which instability spills over into Europe, Russia, and other neighbouring states.

Finally, the conflict in Afghanistan is not going to end soon. As former Afghanistan President Karzai said yesterday, it is getting worse, as ISIS is gaining a foothold and the Taliban are gaining strength. In these circumstances, Russia and the United States should be considering ways to cooperate against the emerging ISIS threat and limiting the spill-over into Central Asia. And given the immediate consequences for them, the Central Asian states, along with the CSTO, should also participate in these discussions.

It is now commonplace to say that US–Russian relations are at their lowest point since the end of the Cold War. The differences between the two countries are indeed significant — on questions of world order and in assessments of current conflicts. But the conflicts will not be properly managed or satisfactorily resolved without Russia and the United States engaging one another. And the two countries need to discuss the foundations of world order, of which they are both essential pillars. The sooner that discussion begins in a serious way, the better off we all will be.

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