

“NATO's relations with Russia”

Speech by

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German Federal Foreign Office

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Mr. Chairman, Ambassador Aragona,  
Excellencies,  
Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to thank our Norwegian colleagues for hosting this important event. I am delighted to get the opportunity to share some ideas on this important issue with you.

Work on a new Strategic Concept gives us the opportunity to address different perceptions among Allies. In view of the evolving security environment we must forge a new strategic consensus about where NATO should go in the next 10 to 15 years. This work would not be complete without talking about NATO's partnerships and involving partners into the process.

In particular, we have to address our partnership with Russia. The last 10 years have seen substantial “ups” and “downs” of the relations between Western nations and Russia – to name but a few: cooperation in combating terrorism after September 11, the foundation of the NATO-Russia Council, the second round of NATO enlargement, cooperation on

Afghanistan and the Iranian nuclear programme, the moratorium on the implementation of the CFE treaty, the Georgian crisis with the suspension (and later re-establishment) of the NRC's work, and recent decisions by NRC Foreign Ministers inter alia on the NRC work programme for 2010.

Obviously, we cannot be complacent with the state of affairs. What we need is not a mere delineation between NATO and Russia. The problems we are facing are so challenging that we need to cooperate at a higher qualitative level. I am well aware that this is a longer term task, but we must start now. We need a Euro-Atlantic security structure that strives to include all of the Euro-Atlantic space, including Russia, to the degree possible. And that prevents and mitigates potential conflict.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Russia has recently presented drafts on a "European Security Treaty" and on "Basic principles governing relations between the member states of the NATO-Russia Council". Both proposals reflect Russia's concerns – notably her wish to be heard on matters considered to be of vital interest to her. We should deal with this offer constructively. We have an

interest in a cooperative European security architecture in which Russia is an indispensable partner. But it must be clear that talking about European security means that all partners can voice their interests and expectations, and pursue their national interests.

How to approach the issue? We think that the OSCE Corfu Process is the appropriate framework to a comprehensive discussion about European security because the OSCE encompasses all stakeholders in European security, and has a comprehensive approach to security.

The Russian proposal for a European Security Treaty picks up core themes of the OSCE like indivisible security, prevention of conflicts, mechanisms for consultation and for the settlement of disputes. We should discuss those elements in the framework of the Corfu Process.

But we will continue to understand security in a comprehensive sense. It also relates to the freedom of nations to decide themselves on their path of development as well as to join any alliance or international organization of their choice, if their accession is also in the interest of the organization

in question, if it brings an added value to the existing alliance and its members, and if core requirements, which are not to the least value requirements, are met. Security also refers to the individual. Therefore we will have to speak about democracy, the rule of law and human rights without which we cannot establish a lasting and meaningful security in Europe. We are talking about membership in the security alliance of the enlightenment-based, rule-of-law-founded democracies of the West in the Euro-Atlantic sphere.

With a view to the Russian proposal for “Basic principles governing relations between the member states of the NATO-Russia Council” we have to take into account that NATO and Russia have jointly reaffirmed the OSCE principle of 'indivisible security' among others in the Founding Act of 1997. Both have committed themselves to developing their relations on the basis of common interest, reciprocity and transparency to achieve a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
on the basis of these general deliberations, I would like to make some specific proposals to further

develop the cooperation between NATO and Russia:

*First:* A new level of transparency. After years of misperceptions and tension, trust cannot be rebuilt over night. We need a substantial increase in our confidence building activities in Vienna and beyond. Dialogue is important and should be the starting point. A good example has been the seminar on nuclear doctrines that our Norwegian friends hosted here last autumn. We should now take our dialogue a step further. The Russian idea to establish a dialogue about defence planning contained in the “Basic principles for the NATO-Russia Council” could be a good starting point.

*Second:* The Vienna Document already provides for a set of rules and some states like Germany have bilateral agreements with Russia to increase transparency and confidence building. An exhaustive NRC catalogue of standard situations that may raise concerns on the other side could help avert unnecessary incidents and raise confidence.

*Third:* The work programme of the NATO-Russia Council for 2010, agreed recently by Foreign

Ministers, is an excellent roadmap for our cooperation. But we should also seriously look into the possibility of joint exercises. NATO and Russia face together common challenges and risks. There is ample scope for joint action. Why not develop a scenario for a joint exercise on the basis of the joint threat review that is now under way? To start with, we could choose a more technical scenario, for example, disaster relief in the Baltic Sea area. In this region Russia already cooperates with NATO members in the framework of other regional fora like the Baltic Sea Council. We could profit from experiences gathered in these other fora and create useful synergies.

*Fourth: Maritime security* is another field where cooperation – including joint exercises – would be beneficial to both sides. We share with Russia a growing interest in safe shipping routes which are vital for world trade and transport of energy supplies. Today these routes are endangered by attacks from terrorists and pirates. Here NATO and Russia are – quite literally – in the same boat. Cooperation between the European Union and Russia in the fight against piracy on the eastern coast of Africa has yielded encouraging results and

may serve as an example for cooperation between Russia and NATO.

*Fifth:* It is almost ironic that one of the most successful projects in the NRC framework has been the cooperation on theater missile defence despite the political controversy surrounding the issue of missile defence in the past. The Obama administration has started with a fresh approach to missile defence in Europe. It offers another chance to turn this divisive issue into a cooperative one. We hope that the announcement of Prime Minister Putin to develop new offensive systems does not mean that Russia will not cooperate with NATO on missile defence. The NRC could do its part and restart the process of cooperation, maybe with another table top exercise. Further ahead we should be ready to enter into preparations for a live firing exercise.

*Sixth:* We should make better use of the NRC for more fundamental discussions as well as for crisis resolution. NATO and Russia are now engaging in a joint review of threats and challenges to their security. In the case of an emerging crisis, the NRC must prove resistant to diverging views and allow solution-oriented discussions. An early-warning

mechanism might be set up where we can discuss potentially dangerous developments and search for solutions that are acceptable for all sides. In my view, NATO has made a mistake suspending the NRC over the events in Georgia in 2008, instead of using it to discuss the crisis.

*Seventh:* Presently Russia is conducting an important reform of its military forces. NATO could amplify projects already going on bilaterally between some NATO members and Russia by offering support to transform the structures of the military sector into a modern, democratically controlled and transparent body. Such a modernization would not only enhance the chances of effective cooperation between NATO and Russia in peacekeeping operations but also lead to a higher degree of transparency and understanding in our relationship.

*Eighth:* NATO should maintain its Open-door policy, based on the stipulations of the Washington Treaty. How about Russia in that context? While today we can be almost certain that Russia will not ask for NATO membership within the foreseeable future,

this might not be carved in stone forever, however likely that would be. Would NATO be prepared for such a request? Which parameters – on both sides – would have to change? Wouldn't the Alliance, by a general openness on its side to entertain the idea, show that NATO's policies are aimed at strengthening Euro-Atlantic security on a cooperative basis including Russia?.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
we need a relationship based on partnership with Russia not only for cooperative security in the Euro-Atlantic area. Without Russia's cooperation, many pressing issues will be harder to resolve – Iraq, Afghanistan, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the persistent threat of terrorism are just a few of them. The joint efforts to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear-weapons capability is another example . The EU 3+3 negotiations with Iran have not yielded the desired results so far. But even though some of the EU 3+3 countries will continue to be guided by different interests, it is my conviction that only joint political efforts by

partners as diverse as in that format have any chance of success.

The Iran problem also shows that we have to rethink the concept of deterrence. It is no longer successful or even sufficient to sustain massive nuclear forces. This is especially true when terrorists try to get hold of nuclear weapons or when states may fail in their obligations to guarantee the security of their stockpiles.

Against this background, we listened with great appreciation to President Obama's speech in Prague last April. He made it very clear that he is thinking long term. The difference between him and his critics is that he does not proceed from the assumption that our Cold War adversaries, including Russia, must be the adversaries of the future. Therefore, we need to think about whether the approaches of the cold war will continue to give us the right answers.

We have to think about the salience of nuclear weapons in our strategy. What kind of nuclear posture do we need for maintaining our security? How much is enough? We have to address this

question in the course of discussions about NATO's new Strategic Concept, and Russia will have to address them as well. Germany's new government supports the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. We will work to support new arms control and arms reduction treaties. We want to use the NPT Review Conference and the work on a new strategic concept for NATO also to seek the withdrawal of the remaining sub-strategic nuclear US weapons from German soil. I understand that this has thrown up some questions. But let me assure you: we will not move ahead alone, and we will ensure that our policy does not interfere with other disarmament negotiation processes.

We also have to take into account Russia's stockpiles of substrategic nuclear weapons which by far exceed America's. The Russian Federation must join in this effort and be prepared to include substrategic nuclear weapons in future disarmament and arms control negotiations. In this context, I would like to mention that in the past, NATO and Russia have discussed disarmament matters in the Permanent Joint Council, including possible steps to reduce tactical nuclear weapons. Now that this body has been replaced by the NRC and our partnership

has reached a considerably higher level – should it not be all the more possible to resume these talks?

On the other hand, we know that to focus solely on nuclear disarmament will not be enough. We need to create fresh dynamics in the field of conventional arms control as well, not least in order to tackle the concerns of those who argue that “Global Zero” would make conventional wars more likely.

We attach great importance to keeping the legally binding CFE regime intact. The German Government has expressed its willingness to start the ratification process of the Adapted CFE Treaty as soon as possible. We are working hard to create the necessary conditions and urge Russia to end its moratorium on the CFE Treaty.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's seminar is devoted to some of the most important issues we have to face in the work on a new Strategic Concept. We cherish the role NATO has played in the last six decades.

The enduring principles and values enshrined in the Washington Treaty remain valid. For the last two decades - on many occasions - Russia has subscribed to the same principles and values. The

NATO-Russia Council has never been and will not be an instrument of traditional balance of power politics. We want it to be modern and dynamic, to reflect a cooperation on the basis of these values we share.

Thank you.