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CO-OPERATION OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE MEETING
OF WORKING GROUP B OF THE FIRST ANNUAL
SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Vienna, 25 June 2003

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, I should like to express my gratitude to the Netherlands Chairmanship and all the organizers of the Conference for this opportunity to speak before such an impressive forum. I believe that the Annual Security Review Conference is going to provide an excellent opportunity to systematically analyse the current situation in the OSCE in the area of arms control and try to find ways of developing the politico-military dimension of European security in the future.

My speaking points have been circulated among the delegations. In my comments today, I shall endeavour to single out the main points.

1. In the rapidly changing security environment, the importance of arms control tools is not only not diminishing but is in fact growing. The politico-military landscape of Europe is gradually freeing itself from the after-effects of the cold war, but this positive process is accompanied by uncertainties and, at times, a departure from the fundamental principles of international law. Trouble spots which project instability on neighbouring regions remain on the map of Europe. Many risks have grown into threats that have acquired a transborder and global character. European and Euro-Atlantic organizations and groupings are undergoing a rapid evolution, transforming their strength capabilities, and the threshold for the use of force against the entire spectrum of contemporary threats is being lowered. In these circumstances, the set of arms control, disarmament and confidence-building measures developed within the OSCE continues to be a reliable safety net for harmonizing security interests and ensuring stability and predictability in Europe.

2. The OSCE with its broad composition, its comprehensive approach and its reliance on the consensus mechanism is a unique forum for the realization of the principle of equality and indivisibility of security. Through the negotiations on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), the Vienna Document and many other politico-military documents of the OSCE, the Organization has sought to harmonize security interests among individual States and between individual States and groups of States, and all this with the aim of creating a pan-European security space. There are, for the foreseeable future, no

alternatives to this exclusive co-ordinating mechanism. What is more, arms control continues to retain its function as a reliable instrument for monitoring the process of incorporating changing political arrangements into military planning.

3. At major turning points in history, arms control has served as quite an important instrument for coping with changes, *inter alia* as regards the incorporation of the new politico-military realities into the general system of security and stability co-ordinates. What is more, I think we can say that today's readjustment of military capabilities to meet new threats, including those of an extraregional nature, would have been impossible without the confidence that had emerged, as a result of disarmament efforts, that there would be no surprises in our European home, and - this is the main thing - that the process of abandoning the military postures of the cold war was irreversible. In other words, the existing arms control regime forms a natural environment for new approaches to ensuring security in general and to military development in particular, allowing military resources to be concentrated on the task of countering global risks and eliminating areas of instability and conflicts.

4. The politico-military dimension of the OSCE is an operational dimension, but its effectiveness depends directly on how appropriate the instruments we have are to the changing circumstances. Here, the state of affairs cannot but give rise to concern. Prevarication as regards the entry into force of the adapted CFE Treaty is isolating the Treaty from the new politico-military situation. The growing factor of uncertainty may destroy the positive system of checks and balances created by the Treaty, which is based on a precise, regulated and, I have to emphasize, consensual balance of mutual interests among all of the players in the European arena. The Vienna Document is falling behind the needs of the time. It is as if it continues to exist for its own sake, without reference to the basic trends of military development - first and foremost, the trend towards establishing and maintaining multinational capabilities. The adaptation of other politico-military instruments of the OSCE is not being pursued energetically enough either.

5. In 2000 the OSCE made a qualitative step forward. For the first time in the history of the Organization, a document was agreed upon which extends arms control beyond the framework of security relations between States. The Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons is designed to help ensure the security of society and of the individual. It is clear that, in the light of the new risks to security, this document has great potential for development, and we are confident that this may be realized during the work on the OSCE Strategy to Address the Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century. The Forum is called upon to make its own contribution to this task.

6. Bringing the politico-military norms of the OSCE in line with the internal needs of the pan-European security space is a very important task, but not the only one. I believe that, to a large extent, how relevant the OSCE's politico-military dimension is will be determined by the ability of the Organization to develop it in order to protect this common security space from external threats and risks. We support the efforts of Ms. Kirsten Biering, Chair of the Working Group on the Development of an OSCE Strategy, and are expecting tangible results to be achieved. We hope that this will prove possible as agreement is sought on the aforementioned Strategy.

Mr. Chairman,

In 1992, the OSCE adopted a Programme for Immediate Action, which was revolutionary for the time and for many years completely determined the specific agenda of the OSCE Forum, an agenda aimed at strengthening our common security. I believe that it is time for us to set ourselves a task of a similar magnitude.