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*US-Europe-Russia Security Relations:
Towards a New Compact?*

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Introduction

President Silvestri, General Camporini, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues. Thank you for inviting me to address your symposium today. I am happy to be here as your topic is both timely and of strategic interest within NATO Headquarters. In my capacity as Assistant Secretary General for Defence Policy and Planning, I am responsible both for defence aspects of NATO policy and, under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council, for issues relating to NATO-Russia defence-related cooperation. This has afforded me an up-close perspective of the complexities of managing our multi-dimensional relationship with Russia even as NATO grapples with major out-of-area operations and its own ongoing transformation. Indeed, the significance of our engagement with Russia is highlighted by the many linkages between the Alliance's priority issues – operations, transformation, defence against terrorism and many others - and NATO-Russia relations. These are summed up in the overarching reality of the unprecedented threats and challenges we all face in today's global security environment and our common interest in a united response to them.

It was in response to these conditions and in recognition of the indivisibility of security in the Euro-Atlantic space that the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council and its successor, the NATO-Russia Council, were founded. All of the issues planned for discussion in today's symposium have been part of the NRC dialogue, some to a greater extent than others, and some have been the subject of extensive practical cooperation. Perhaps most significantly, the NRC has been seen as part of the answer to the question you addressed first today – “How to foster long-term security?” As set out in the NATO-Russia Founding Act, NATO and Russia undertook, on the basis of an enduring political commitment, to “build together a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area on the principles of democracy

and cooperative security.” This effort was also firmly grounded in a shared commitment to a set of values and principles including transparency, equal partnership, democracy and the rule of law, refraining from the use of force, and respect for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of all states. I will return to these points later.

So today I would like to focus first on the pursuit of long-term security within the Euro-Atlantic space, second on the areas of cooperation that can contribute to that goal, and, finally, consider the question of a new security compact in the light of the first two.

Background

Let me begin with a bit of background to set the scene. NATO nations and Russia have worked together for several years now towards the common goals outlined in the NATO-Russia founding documents on the basis of dialogue and practical cooperation. Against the background of ongoing political dialogue, tangible progress has been achieved in a number of practical areas including cooperation against drug trafficking in Afghanistan and Central Asia, in Theatre Missile Defence, in developing a Cooperative Airspace Initiative to counter air piracy, in the ability to operate jointly at sea in Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR and in search and rescue at sea, and in a range of other areas.

However, even as these processes were unfolding, profound disagreements on a number of issues emerged that caused dialogue and cooperation to suffer. Everyone here is, no doubt, well versed in the various issues and diverging perspectives around NATO enlargement, missile defence, Kosovo, implementation of the CFE Treaty and, finally, last August’s conflict in Georgia and subsequent events in the region. The August events were the catalyst for NATO’s declaration last year of “No Business As Usual” as the Alliance assessed the implications of the August events for its relations with Russia.

I have reviewed this well-known narrative because it is the context in which discussions of long-term security in the Euro-Atlantic space are now unfolding. After several months of stasis in our official relations, we have entered a period of re-

engagement. Russia and its partners in NATO and the EU are now beginning to grapple anew with the core issues that have caused disagreement and are seeking to return to effective joint work toward common goals. We see this on several interconnected fronts including the recent EU-Russia Summit, the upcoming meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers, which will include Russia's proposals for a new European security treaty in its discussions, and in the bilateral US-Russian nuclear arms reduction negotiations.

From the NATO side, the path to re-engagement was opened by the decision of Heads of State and Government meeting at the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit in early April. Political dialogue has re-commenced in the NATO-Russia Council and work in some practical areas of mutual interest is proceeding. The next step in mapping the way ahead will be taken in just five days when NRC Foreign Ministers meet in Corfu on the margins of the OSCE meeting. We hope this first meeting of NRC Foreign Ministers since last August will reinvigorate political dialogue and practical cooperation and pave the way for renewed exchanges among NRC Defence Ministers and Chiefs of Defence and a re-opening of military-to-military cooperation.

A Way Ahead in Fostering Long-Term Security in the Euro-Atlantic Area

Re-engagement within the NRC framework will be informed by and make contributions to developments on the issues which are the topic of our symposium today. And here I turn to the question of fostering long-term security and the points I said that I would return to regarding the essence of the work of the NRC.

During the last year or so it may have become easier to focus on what divides the interests of nations in the Euro-Atlantic neighbourhood. There were major disagreements, divisive events, and volumes of unhelpful rhetoric being exchanged. But, given recent developments, we can begin to be more optimistic that the issues of the day are beginning to yield to common enduring interests. With regard to NATO and Russia, the power of the enduring political commitment of Allied nations and Russia, to "build together a lasting and inclusive peace" – the overarching interest we all share – has begun – but only just – to overcome the inertia of division.

In the broader context, the ability of the NRC to weather the recent storms fits the renewed commitment by NATO Heads of State and Government at Strasbourg/Kehl to a common approach, within existing structures, to the challenges of peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area. In other words, Allies are convinced that NATO, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe remain effective means to foster long-term security in the Euro-Atlantic area. Naturally, multi-national structures can only operate effectively on the basis of shared values and principles. In this regard, Heads of State and Government at Strasbourg/Kehl re-stated their commitment to the same values and principles which underpin the NRC. While pragmatism is the lubricant that enables cooperation, it is shared values and principles that motivate and energise it. Here I am not referring to vague notions but to values and principles in action. In this regard, our common security could be greatly enhanced by concrete demonstrations of commitment to those values and principles in finding a way forward in resolution of regional conflicts, non-proliferation, arms control, fulfilling existing treaty obligations, and responding to common threats.

These, then, would be two basic elements of the way ahead in fostering long-term security in the Euro-Atlantic area – energetic use of the existing structures developed and proven over decades of experience and a firm resolve to operate on the basis of the fundamental values and principles we all share.

This is not, however, an argument for rigid adherence to the status quo. Indeed, the flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances of the existing Euro-Atlantic security structure have been essential to its effectiveness. In this regard, Allied Heads of State and Government indicated at Strasbourg/Kehl their openness to dialogue on a broad, cooperative approach to Euro-Atlantic security, including on ways to improve implementation of existing commitments, institutions, and instruments. We see this policy in action in the re-engagement efforts that are now underway and to which I referred earlier – and, in particular, in the discussions OSCE Foreign Ministers will initiate at Corfu in five days.

The Interplay of Cooperation with the Broader Security Discussion

Now that I've outlined one perspective on a way ahead in fostering long-term security, I would like to turn to the range of issues and areas of cooperation that derive their momentum from the broad political effort toward security and, in turn can energise that effort. Among these are the ones you will discuss today, including nuclear arms control; missile defence; non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament; energy security and others.

I have mentioned already the beginning of US-Russian efforts to find a compromise on a legally binding START follow-up. The outcome of these clearly bi-lateral efforts will naturally contribute to the atmosphere in which the broader multi-lateral security dialogue takes place. Beyond atmospheric, the START follow-on talks gained a tangible connection to Allied interests with the introduction of the Russian suggestion that they should include consideration of continental missile defence plans.

In missile defence we find both a priority security concern of Allied nations and an area of fruitful NATO-Russia cooperation. Heads of State and Government at our last summit restated their judgment that "Ballistic missile proliferation poses an increasing threat to Allies' forces, territory, and populations." In Allies' view, missile defence is an appropriate part of a broader response to this threat.

This has been a particularly divisive issue but it need not be. A cooperative approach to missile defence is very much a part of Allied thinking. The foundation has already been laid with several years of productive work on Theatre Missile Defence in the NRC framework, including an extensive interoperability study and four successful command post exercises. In fact NATO National Military Authorities assessed TMD as one of the most productive areas of military cooperation with the Russian Federation. At Strasbourg/Kehl the Alliance repeated its support for increased missile defence cooperation with Russia and remains ready to explore the potential for linking US, NATO and Russian missile defence systems at an appropriate time. In order to address the concerns surrounding the issue, the Alliance proposes proceeding on the basis of maximum transparency and reciprocal confidence building measures.

I should add that NATO has not yet taken any programmatic decision. Let me stress that the political debate on fundamental issues continues. Allies believe that further detailed work still needs to be undertaken before a decision on any architecture option could be made. However, the Alliance remains committed to pursuing the full spectrum of measures to address the increasing threat posed by ballistic missile proliferation. I repeat that this has been a fruitful area of cooperation and can be even more so in the future. To renew our sense of urgency toward these programmes, we need look no further than recent developments in North Korea.

In the wider area of proliferation, NATO has worked with Russia for several years to broaden and strengthen cooperation against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, to strengthen existing non-proliferation efforts, and has sought opportunities for intensified practical cooperation on protection from NBC agents. Presidents Obama and Medvedev in London expressed interest in discussing threats posed by WMD. The development of a joint threat assessment was mentioned in the Founding Act of the NRC - this is "unfinished business", and perhaps an area that can be picked up again, not only bilaterally but also in the NRC.

Regarding energy security, the Alliance will continue to consult on the most immediate risks in that field. In Bucharest principles were agreed that govern NATO's approach in the field of energy security, with options and recommendations for further activities. The Alliance has continued to implement these recommendations. At Strasbourg-Kehl, a "Report on Progress Achieved in the Area of Energy Security" was noted by HOSGs. The disruption of the flow of natural gas in January 2009 seriously affected a number of Allies and Partner countries. Stable and reliable energy supply, diversification of routes, suppliers and energy sources, and the interconnectivity of energy networks, remain of critical importance. Today Support continues for efforts aimed at promoting energy infrastructure security. In accordance with the Bucharest decisions, NATO will seek to ensure that its activities in this field add value and are fully coordinated and embedded within those of the international community, which features a number of organisations that are specialised in energy security. An interim report for the Foreign Ministers' meeting in

December 2009 will be prepared and a further report on the progress achieved in the area of energy security will be considered at the next Summit.

These are just a few areas of cooperation which support broader efforts to enhance security in the Euro-Atlantic area. The stabilisation of Afghanistan, crisis-management, counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, and anti-piracy are other areas of common interest which interplay with the broader security dialogue.

A New Security Compact

This brings me to the issue under discussion today – a new security compact. I note the question to be addressed is “What prospects for a new security compact?” I will take a half-step back and address instead the question, “What security compact?” The one on the table, proposed by Russia, is known only in its broad outlines.

The outline includes an emphasis on the treaty as a legally binding document; a focus on military-political or “hard” security; reaffirmation of the inadmissibility of the use of force; specification of procedures and mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution; guarantees of “equal security;” principles for developing arms control regimes; confidence-building measures; restraint and reasonable sufficiency in military development; renunciation of additional permanent stationing of “substantial combat forces” abroad; new approaches to cooperation against proliferation of WMDs, terrorism, drug trafficking and transnational crime; and an assessment, as part of treaty negotiation, of the adequacy of existing Euro-Atlantic security structures.

This is a useful basis for discussion, but my first point on the question of a new security compact is that full and frank discussions on the supporting details of the proposal, its specific aims and proposed means, is an essential first step.

Second, and with reference again to the statement by Allied Heads of State and Government at Strasbourg/Kehl reaffirming the efficacy of existing security structures, an exchange clarifying the rationale for the proposal would enhance the discussion. Several of the elements of the proposal that I outlined above likely have

a familiar ring as being part of the extant security architecture. This presents more opportunity for in-depth discussion on existing structures and examination of the value-added of potential new arrangements. It also suggests an update for the 21st century to the existing Euro-Atlantic security architecture as opposed to devising an entirely new one.

While it is difficult to assess the prospects for a new security compact on the basis of currently available information, it is important that a substantive dialogue take place in the OSCE and all aspects of the proposal and surrounding security concerns be aired. The dialogue, while not an end in itself, can only benefit our efforts toward long-term security for all. The OSCE is the best forum for this dialogue to occur.

Conclusion

To conclude, we are now on a path to reengagement that will allow us to return to serious cooperative efforts. The proposal for a new security compact reflects the judgment that we have reached a critical mass in the number of issues that divide rather than unite. While many may share this judgment, the proposed solution remains to be debated. Though views on how to achieve our ends may diverge, our common goal is a truly cooperative security structure in the Euro-Atlantic area in which all states feel free and secure. I am convinced that open discussions within the OSCE, enriched by the lessons of the regional and global developments of the last ten years, can rebuild our momentum toward that goal.