



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIPLOMACY IN ACTION

Remarks

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As Delivered

Thank you so much for having me here to speak today. I am always glad to be back in Stockholm and I am very happy to be here at SIPRI. The work of this organization is widely-respected and world-renowned. I was proud to be a part of the SIPRI Board before I joined the Obama Administration. Today, I am here to talk to you about the importance of revitalizing conventional arms control in Europe.

Little known fact: my first trip to Stockholm was in 1986, to speak with participants in the Stockholm Conference on Disarmament in Europe. Pulled up the document last night, here is an excerpt from the first page:

The representatives of the participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)...met in Stockholm in from 17 January 1984 to 19 September 1986, in accordance with the provisions relating to the Conference on Confidence and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe contained in the Concluding Document of the Madrid Follow-up Meeting of the CSCE.

The participants were addressed by the Prime Minister of Sweden, the late Olof Palme, on 17 January 1984.

I want to convey my great respect of Olof Palme, and Swedish diplomacy, for sowing the seeds for conventional arms control in Europe.

So I am glad to back here in Stockholm talking about this issue. Sweden has frequently and productively worked together with the United States and NATO on many shared international security objectives. We in the United States are very appreciative of Sweden's support of NATO security objectives.

Strengthening European security through reevaluation and revision of European conventional force structures is essential to the future of security on the continent and around the globe. Before going into our thinking about the conventional arms control regime, I would like to briefly discuss an issue that tends to draw more attention than conventional arms control and that is the possible negotiations between NATO and Russia to reduce nonstrategic nuclear weapons.

Nonstrategic Nuclear Weapons

Both the President and the Senate – in the New START Resolution of Ratification – have placed a priority on seeking to initiate new negotiations with the Russians on nonstrategic nuclear weapons (NSNW).

Over the past few years, the Administration has taken a number of steps towards this goal. We have been conducting our own internal reviews, while also reviewing this matter with our Allies through the Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR). We have been consulting with our allies, and we've been engaging with the Russians in a strategic stability dialogue.

In approving the Deterrence and Defense Posture Review at Chicago this past May, the Allies determined that NATO's current posture meets the criteria for an effective deterrence and defense posture. NATO has already dramatically reduced its holdings of and reliance on nuclear weapons, but has indicated that it is prepared to consider further reducing its requirement for nonstrategic nuclear weapons assigned to the Alliance in the context of reciprocal steps by Russia, taking into account the greater Russian stockpiles of nonstrategic nuclear weapons stationed in the Euro-Atlantic area.

The Allies have supported and encouraged the United States and Russia to continue their mutual efforts to promote strategic stability, enhance transparency, and further reduce their nuclear weapons in every category.

NATO Allies look forward to developing and exchanging transparency and confidence-building ideas with Russia with the goal of enhancing European security and stability by increasing mutual understanding of NATO's and Russia's non-strategic nuclear force postures in Europe.

Conventional Arms Control in Europe

While we continue to work on nonstrategic nuclear force issues, we are keeping in mind the importance of European security overall. Secretary Clinton stated in 2010, “[a] strong Europe is critical to our security and our prosperity. Much of what we hope to accomplish globally depends on working together with Europe.” In this context, we have all seen that predictable conventional force structures in Europe will contribute to enhancing European security and strengthening trust, including between NATO Allies and Russia.

The three pillars of our conventional arms control agreements in Europe – the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), the Open Skies Treaty and the Vienna Document confidence and security-building measures – provide a foundation for stability in our strategic relationships. Each regime is important and contributes to security and stability in a unique way and when they are working in harmony, the result is greater confidence for all of Europe.

Open Skies

First, I want to touch on the very successful Open Skies Treaty. This Treaty establishes a regime of unarmed aerial observation flights over the territories of its 34 signatories, including Sweden.

Open Skies is one of the most wide-ranging international arms control efforts to date to promote openness and transparency in military forces and activities.

This year, we are celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty and the tenth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force. The Treaty itself remains a solid regime. The observation flights – more than 800 to date – serve to enhance military transparency. They also provide an opportunity for our governments – in most cases, military personnel – to regularly and effectively work together.

The biggest single challenge we face for the continued success of the Treaty is the future availability of resources. The Treaty will only be as good as the States Parties make it, and we cannot make it as effective with old aircraft and sensors. For its part, the United States has recently completed an internal review of future implementation plans. The key development involves a U.S. commitment to transition from the film-based cameras we use today to digital sensors. We urge all parties to also redouble their efforts to modernize the Treaty to allow for the use of these sensors and ensure sufficient assets for future operations.

The United States has proposed a number of ways to improve Treaty implementation, while bearing in mind the budgetary constraints that are a reality in the U.S. and across Europe. One thing we believe has been underutilized is the possibility of sharing Open Skies assets among States Parties. This is the type of creative thinking we need to do to continue to advance European security in the current fiscal environment.

Vienna Document

The Vienna Document is another important part of the European security architecture. This set of politically-binding confidence and security building measures, which applies to all 56 member nations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, has contributed immeasurably to Europe-wide military transparency and reassurance. It is also a useful template for other regions, as they look to build confidence in the military intentions of their neighbors.

Since 2010, we have been working to modernize the Vienna Document to make it more relevant for twenty-first century military capabilities and security realities. In December of last year, an updated Vienna Document was issued – and one of the key changes was to make it a living document to be updated on a regular basis. We are actively engaged with our partners to further modernize the Vienna Document paying particular attention to enhancing military transparency and expanding the content of information exchanges, while increasing efficiency in the conduct of verification activities. Again, mindful of budgetary realities, we are working with our partners to ensure that these enhancements do not impose unreasonable expenses on participating States. Going forward we have two goals in mind: we want to strengthen existing provisions at the same time that we ensure the Document remains relevant to today's security challenges.

Conventional Armed Forces in Europe

Now, let me turn briefly to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, or CFE. Since its entry into force, more than 72,000 pieces of Cold War military equipment – tanks, armored

combat vehicles, artillery, combat aircraft, and attack helicopters – have been eliminated. Under CFE, thousands of inspections have taken place at military sites all over Europe, dramatically increasing confidence and military transparency on the continent by providing a means to verify the information provided in data exchanges.

The CFE regime remains important to the United States, and for European security as a whole. Unfortunately, Russia ceased implementation of its CFE obligations in December 2007. Since then, Russia has refused to accept inspections and ceased to provide information to other CFE Treaty parties on its military forces as required by the Treaty.

After trying for several years to encourage Russia to resume implementation, in November 2011, the United States ceased carrying out certain obligations under the CFE Treaty with regard to Russia. We were joined by our NATO Allies that are party to the Treaty, as well as Georgia and Moldova, in taking this important step – in all, 24 of the 30 countries that are party to the Treaty.

This decision came after the United States and NATO Allies made two major – but ultimately unsuccessful - efforts since 2007 to find a way to overcome the impasse on CFE. We stand ready to return to the negotiating table whenever we have a signal that real progress can be made on the remaining issues, including the right of states to choose whether to allow foreign forces to be stationed on their territories and transparency among all parties essential for preserving confidence during the negotiations.

In the meantime, we have also embarked upon a ground-up reexamination of the entire conventional arms control enterprise.

Moving Conventional Arms Control Forward

We know that a conventional arms control regime in Europe is worth preserving. NATO confirmed the importance of conventional arms control at the 2012 Chicago Summit:

Allies are determined to preserve, strengthen and modernize the conventional arms control regime in Europe, based on key principles and commitments, and continue to explore ideas to this end.

Modernization is the key word here. We have made a serious investment in building the current security architecture in Europe. We must adapt and improve our efforts to meet our current and future security needs, and do it in a way that is efficient and effective for all countries involved. We need some new thinking, and we have been devoting a lot of time and energy to this task.

We're asking fundamental questions: What are the security concerns in Europe in 2012 that a conventional arms control agreement should address? And, taking into account the lessons learned from the implementation of CFE and other existing agreements, what kinds of arms control measures could best address those concerns and uphold core principles of European security?

The fact is, the basic problem that the original CFE Treaty was meant to resolve – the destabilizing surplus of conventional arms on the continent – has been resolved, in no small part through implementation of this important treaty.

Today, for the most part, quantities of conventional armaments across the continent are far below the negotiated ceilings, and are likely to continue to drop.

While the problems of 1989 no longer exist, it is my view that conventional arms control, done right, can significantly improve security on the continent by helping to address today's concerns. It can provide confidence regarding the military activities and intentions of neighbors, especially in sensitive areas. We also need to spend our stretched defense budgets wisely. Arms control can help us do that, for the more predictable our relationships, the better we can plan our defense spending.

Final Thoughts

With that, I would like to stop and take some questions, but I will leave you with a final thought. The conventional arms control regime that has been in place in Europe since the end of the Cold War contributes to the security of the continent. In order to maintain security and stability, this regime requires constant tending. Now is the time for action. If conventional arms control is allowed to falter, then we all will be the worse for it – this includes Russia, too.

Thank you and I am happy to take some questions.