

A speech delivered at the MSC 2007 by the President Vladimir Putin

Thank you, very much dear Madam Federal Chancellor, Mr Teltschik, ladies and gentlemen!

I am truly grateful to be invited to such a representative conference that has assembled politicians, military officials, entrepreneurs and experts from more than 40 nations.

This conference's structure allows me to avoid excessive politeness and the need to speak in roundabout, pleasant but empty diplomatic terms. This conference's format will allow me to say what I really think about international security problems. And if my comments seem unduly polemical, pointed or inexact to our colleagues, then I would ask you not to get angry with me. After all, this is only a conference. And I hope that after the first two or three minutes of my speech Mr Teltschik will not turn on the red light over there.

Therefore. It is well known that international security comprises much more than issues relating to military and political stability. It involves the stability of the global economy, overcoming poverty, economic security and developing a dialogue between civilisations.

This universal, indivisible character of security is expressed as the basic principle that "security for one is security for all". As Franklin D. Roosevelt said during the first few days that the Second World War was breaking out: "When peace has been broken anywhere, the peace of all countries everywhere is in danger."

These words remain topical today. Incidentally, the theme of our conference – global crises, global responsibility – exemplifies this. Only two decades ago the world was ideologically and economically divided, and it was the huge strategic potential of two superpowers that ensured global security. This global stand-off pushed the sharpest economic and social problems to the margins of the international community's and the world's agenda. And, just like any war, the Cold War left us with live ammunition, figuratively speaking. I am referring to ideological stereotypes, double standards and other typical aspects of Cold War bloc thinking.

The unipolar world that had been proposed after the Cold War did not take place either. The history of humanity certainly has gone through unipolar periods and seen aspirations to world supremacy. And what hasn't happened in world history?

However, what is a unipolar world? However, one might embellish this term, at the end of the day it refers to one type of situation, namely one centre of authority, one centre of force, one centre of decision-making. It is world in which there is one master, one sovereign. And at the end of the day this is pernicious not only for all those within this system, but also for the sovereign itself because it destroys itself from within.

And this certainly has nothing in common with democracy. Because, as you know, democracy is the power of the majority in light of the interests and opinions of the minority. Incidentally, Russia – we – are constantly being taught about democracy. But for some reason those who teach us do not want to learn themselves.

I consider that the unipolar model is not only unacceptable but also impossible in today's world. And this is not only because if there was individual leadership in today's – and precisely in today's – world, then the military, political and economic resources would not suffice. What is even more important is that the model itself is flawed because at its basis there is and can be no moral foundations for modern civilisation. Along with this, what is happening in today's world – and we just started to discuss this – is a tentative to introduce precisely this concept into international affairs, the concept of a unipolar world.

And with which results? Unilateral and frequently illegitimate actions have not resolved any problems. Moreover, they have caused new human tragedies and created new centres of tension. Judge for yourselves: wars as well as local and regional conflicts have not diminished. Mr Teltschik mentioned this very gently. And no less people perish in these conflicts – even more are dying than before. Significantly more, significantly more!

Today we are witnessing an almost uncontained hyper use of force – military force – in international relations, force that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts. As a result, we do not have sufficient strength to find a comprehensive solution to any one of these conflicts. Finding a political settlement also becomes impossible.

We are seeing a greater and greater disdain for the basic principles of international law. And independent legal norms are, as a matter of fact, coming increasingly closer to one state's legal system. One state and, of course, first and foremost the United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way. This is visible in the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations. Well, who likes this? Who is happy about this?

In international relations we increasingly see the desire to resolve a given question according to so-called issues of political expediency, based on the current political climate. And of course, this is extremely dangerous. It results in the fact that no one feels safe. I want to emphasise this – no one feels safe! Because no one can feel that international law is like a stone wall that will protect them. Of course such a policy stimulates an arms race.

The force's dominance inevitably encourages a number of countries to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, significantly new threats – though they were also well-known before – have appeared, and today threats such as terrorism have taken on a global character. I am

convinced that we have reached that decisive moment when we must seriously think about the architecture of global security. And we must proceed by searching for a reasonable balance between the interests of all participants in the international dialogue. Especially since the international landscape is so varied and changes so quickly – changes in light of the dynamic development in a whole number of countries and regions.

Madam Federal Chancellor already mentioned this. The combined GDP measured in purchasing power parity of countries such as India and China is already greater than that of the United States. And a similar calculation with the GDP of the BRIC countries – Brazil, Russia, India and China – surpasses the cumulative GDP of the EU. And according to experts this gap will only increase in the future.

There is no reason to doubt that the economic potential of the new centres of global economic growth will inevitably be converted into political influence and will strengthen multipolarity. In connection with this the role of multilateral diplomacy is significantly increasing. The need for principles such as openness, transparency and predictability in politics is uncontested and the use of force should be a really exceptional measure, comparable to using the death penalty in the judicial systems of certain states.

However, today we are witnessing the opposite tendency, namely a situation in which countries that forbid the death penalty even for murderers and other, dangerous criminals are airily participating in military operations that are difficult to consider legitimate. And as a matter of fact, these conflicts are killing people – hundreds and thousands of civilians!

But at the same time the question arises of whether we should be indifferent and aloof to various internal conflicts inside countries, to authoritarian regimes, to tyrants, and to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction? As a matter of fact, this was also at the centre of the question that our dear colleague Mr Lieberman asked the Federal Chancellor. If I correctly understood your question (addressing Mr Lieberman), then of course it is a serious one! Can we be indifferent observers in view of what is happening? I will try to answer your question as well: of course not.

But do we have the means to counter these threats? Certainly, we do. It is sufficient to look at recent history. Did not our country have a peaceful transition to democracy? Indeed, we witnessed a peaceful transformation of the Soviet regime – a peaceful transformation! And what a regime! With what a number of weapons, including nuclear weapons! Why should we start bombing and shooting now at every available opportunity? Is it the case when without the threat of mutual destruction, we do not have enough political culture, respect for democratic values and for the law?

I am convinced that the only mechanism that can make decisions about using military force as a last resort is the Charter of the United Nations. And in connection with this, either I did not understand what our colleague, the Italian Defence Minister, just said or what he said was inexact. In any case, I understood that the use of force can only be legitimate when the decision is taken by NATO, the EU, or the UN. If he really does think so, then we have different points of view. Or I didn't hear correctly. The use of force can only be considered legitimate if the decision is sanctioned by the UN. And we do not need to substitute NATO or the EU for the UN. When the UN will truly unite the forces of the international community and can really react to events in various countries, when we will leave behind this disdain for international law, then the situation will be able to change. Otherwise the situation will simply result in a dead end, and the number of serious mistakes will be multiplied. Along with this, it is necessary to make sure that international law have a universal character both in the conception and application of its norms. And one must not forget that democratic political actions necessarily go along with discussion and a laborious decision-making process.

Dear ladies and gentlemen! The potential danger of the destabilisation of international relations is connected with obvious stagnation in the disarmament issue. Russia supports the renewal of dialogue on this important question. It is important to conserve the international legal framework relating to weapons destruction and therefore ensure continuity in the process of reducing nuclear weapons. Together with the United States of America we agreed to reduce our nuclear strategic missile capabilities to up to 1700–2000 nuclear warheads by 31 December 2012. Russia intends to strictly fulfil the obligations it has taken on. We hope that our partners will also act in a transparent way and will refrain from laying aside a couple of hundred superfluous nuclear warheads for a rainy day. And if today the new American Defence Minister declares that the United States will not hide these superfluous weapons in warehouse or, as one might say, under a pillow or under the blanket, then I suggest that we all rise and greet this declaration standing. It would be a very important declaration.

Russia strictly adheres to and intends to further adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as well as the multilateral supervision regime for missile technologies. The principles incorporated in these documents are universal ones. In connection with this I would like to recall that in the 1980s the USSR and the United States signed an agreement on destroying a whole range of small- and medium-range missiles but these documents do not have a universal character.

Today many other countries have these missiles, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, India, Iran, Pakistan and Israel. Many countries are working

on these systems and plan to incorporate them as part of their weapons arsenals. And only the United States and Russia bear the responsibility to not create such weapons systems. It is obvious that in these conditions we must think about ensuring our own security. At the same time, it is impossible to sanction the appearance of new, destabilising high-tech weapons. Needless to say, it refers to measures to prevent a new area of confrontation, especially in outer space. Star wars is no longer a fantasy – it is a reality. In the middle of the 1980s our American partners were already able to intercept their own satellite.

In Russia's opinion, the militarisation of outer space could have unpredictable consequences for the international community and provoke nothing less than the beginning of a nuclear era. And we have come forward more than once with initiatives designed to prevent the use of weapons in outer space. Today I would like to tell you that we have prepared a project for an agreement on the prevention of deploying weapons in outer space. And in the near future it will be sent to our partners as an official proposal. Let's work on this together.

Plans to expand certain elements of the anti-missile defence system to Europe cannot help but disturb us. Who needs the next step of what would be, in this case, an inevitable arms race? I deeply doubt that Europeans themselves do. Missile weapons with a range of about five to eight thousand kilometres that really pose a threat to Europe do not exist in any of the so-called problem countries. And in the near future and prospects, this will not happen and is not even foreseeable. And any hypothetical launch of, for example, a North Korean rocket to American territory through western Europe obviously contradicts the laws of ballistics. As we say in Russia, it would be like using the right hand to reach the left ear.

And here in Germany I cannot help but mention the pitiable condition of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The Adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe was signed in 1999. It took into account a new geopolitical reality, namely the elimination of the Warsaw bloc. Seven years have passed and only four states have ratified this document, including the Russian Federation. NATO countries openly declared that they will not ratify this treaty, including the provisions on flank restrictions (on deploying a certain number of armed forces in the flank zones), until Russia removed its military bases from Georgia and Moldova. Our army is leaving Georgia, even according to an accelerated schedule. We resolved the problems we had with our Georgian colleagues, as everybody knows. There are still 1,500 servicemen in Moldova that are carrying out peacekeeping operations and protecting warehouses with ammunition left over from Soviet times. We constantly discuss this issue with Mr Solana and he knows our position. We are ready to further work in this direction.

But what is happening at the same time? Simultaneously the so-called flexible frontline American bases with up to five thousand men in each. It turns out that NATO has put its frontline forces on our borders, and we continue to strictly fulfil the treaty obligations and do not react to these actions at all.

I think it is obvious that NATO expansion does not have any relation with the modernisation of the Alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask: against whom is this expansion intended? And what happened to the assurances our western partners made after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? Where are those declarations today? No one even remembers them. But I will allow myself to remind this audience what was said. I would like to quote the speech of NATO General Secretary Mr Woerner in Brussels on 17 May 1990. He said at the time that: “the fact that we are ready not to place a NATO army outside of German territory gives the Soviet Union a firm security guarantee”. Where are these guarantees?

The stones and concrete blocks of the Berlin Wall have long been distributed as souvenirs. But we should not forget that the fall of the Berlin Wall was possible thanks to a historic choice – one that was also made by our people, the people of Russia – a choice in favour of democracy, freedom, openness and a sincere partnership with all the members of the big European family. And now they are trying to impose new dividing lines and walls on us – these walls may be virtual, but they are nevertheless dividing, ones that cut through our continent. And is it possible that we will once again require many years and decades, as well as several generations of politicians, to dissemble and dismantle these new walls?

Dear ladies and gentlemen! We are unequivocally in favour of strengthening the regime of non-proliferation. The present international legal principles allow us to develop technologies to manufacture nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes. And many countries with all good reasons want to create their own nuclear energy as a basis for their energy independence. But we also understand that these technologies can be quickly transformed into nuclear weapons. This creates serious international tensions. The situation surrounding the Iranian nuclear programme acts as a clear example. And if the international community does not find a reasonable solution for resolving this conflict of interests, the world will continue to suffer similar, destabilising crises because there are more threshold countries than simply Iran. We both know this. We are going to constantly fight against the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Last year Russia put forward the initiative to establish international centres for the enrichment of uranium. We are open to the possibility that such centres not only be created in Russia, but also in other countries where there is a legitimate basis for using civil nuclear energy. Countries

that want to develop their nuclear energy could guarantee that they will receive fuel through direct participation in these centres. And the centres would, of course, operate under strict IAEA supervision.

The latest initiatives put forward by American President George W. Bush are in conformity with the Russian proposals. I consider that Russia and the USA are objectively and equally interested in strengthening the regime of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their deployment. It is precisely our countries, with leading nuclear and missile capabilities, that must act as leaders in developing new, stricter non-proliferation measures. Russia is ready for such work. We are engaged in consultations with our American friends. In general, we should talk about establishing a whole system of political incentives and economic stimuli whereby it would not be in states' interests to establish their own capabilities in the nuclear fuel cycle, but they would still have the opportunity to develop nuclear energy and strengthen their energy capabilities.

In connection with this I shall talk about international energy cooperation in more detail. Madam Federal Chancellor also spoke about this briefly – she mentioned, touched on this theme. In the energy sector Russia intends to create uniform market principles and transparent conditions for all. It is obvious that energy prices must be determined by the market instead of being the subject of political speculation, economic pressure or blackmail. We are open to cooperation. Foreign companies participate in all our major energy projects. According to different estimates, up to 26 percent of the oil extraction in Russia – and please think about this figure – up to 26 percent of the oil extraction in Russia is done by foreign capital. Try, try to find me a similar example where Russian business participates extensively in key economic sectors in western countries. Such examples do not exist! There are no such examples.

I would also recall the parity of foreign investments in Russia and those Russia makes abroad. The parity is about fifteen to one. And here you have an obvious example of the openness and stability of the Russian economy. Economic security is the sector in which all must adhere to uniform principles. We are ready to compete fairly. For that reason, more and more opportunities are appearing in the Russian economy. Experts and our western partners are objectively evaluating these changes. As such, Russia's OECD sovereign credit rating improved, and Russia passed from the fourth to the third group. And today in Munich I would like to use this occasion to thank our German colleagues for their help in the above decision.

Furthermore. As you know, the process of Russia joining the WTO has reached its final stages. I would point out that during long, difficult talks we heard words about freedom of speech, free

trade, and equal possibilities more than once but, for some reason, exclusively in reference to the Russian market.

And there is still one more important theme that directly affects global security. Today many talk about the struggle against poverty. What is actually happening in this sphere? On the one hand, financial resources are allocated for programmes to help the world's poorest countries – and at times substantial financial resources. But to be honest — and many here also know this – linked with the development of that same donor country's companies. And on the other hand, developed countries simultaneously keep their agricultural subsidies and limit some countries' access to high-tech products. And let's say things as they are – one hand distributes charitable help and the other hand not only preserves economic backwardness but also reaps the profits thereof. The increasing social tension in depressed regions inevitably results in the growth of radicalism, extremism, feeds terrorism and local conflicts. And if all this happens in, shall we say, a region such as the Middle East where there is increasingly the sense that the world at large is unfair, then there is the risk of global destabilisation.

It is obvious that the world's leading countries should see this threat. And that they should therefore build a more democratic, fairer system of global economic relations, a system that would give everyone the chance and the possibility to develop.

Dear ladies and gentlemen, speaking at the Conference on Security Policy, it is impossible not to mention the activities of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). As is well-known, this organisation was created to examine all – I shall emphasise this – all aspects of security: military, political, economic, humanitarian and, especially, the relations between these spheres. What do we see happening today? We see that this balance is clearly destroyed. People are trying to transform the OSCE into a vulgar instrument designed to promote the foreign policy interests of one or a group of countries. And this task is also being accomplished by the OSCE's bureaucratic apparatus which is absolutely not connected with the state founders in any way. Decision-making procedures and the involvement of so-called non-governmental organisations are tailored for this task. These organisations are formally independent, but they are purposefully financed and therefore under control.

According to the founding documents, in the humanitarian sphere the OSCE is designed to assist country members in observing international human rights norms at their request. This is an important task. We support this. But this does not mean interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, and especially not imposing a regime that determines how these states should live and develop. It is obvious that such interference does not promote the development of democratic states at all. On the contrary, it makes them dependent and, as a consequence,

politically and economically unstable. We expect that the OSCE be guided by its primary tasks and build relations with sovereign states based on respect, trust and transparency.

Dear ladies and gentlemen! In conclusion I would like to note the following. We very often – and personally, I very often – hear appeals by our partners, including our European partners, to the effect that Russia should play an increasingly active role in world affairs. In connection with this I would allow myself to make one small remark. It is hardly necessary to incite us to do so. Russia is a country with a history that spans more than a thousand years and has practically always used the privilege to carry out an independent foreign policy.

We are not going to change this tradition today. At the same time, we are well aware of how the world has changed and we have a realistic sense of our own opportunities and potential. And of course, we would like to interact with responsible and independent partners with whom we could work together in constructing a fair and democratic world order that would ensure security and prosperity not only for a select few, but for all.

Thank you for your attention.

A speech delivered at the MSC 2008 by the First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey B. Ivanov

Ladies and gentlemen, Excellencies,

Yesterday, HT, opening the conference, said he would speak German, as there is German TV here. Being more liberal, I will speak English – despite the fact there is Russian TV crews here. Hope you would agree that we have all reasons to call Mr. Teltschik a patriarch of this international forum (it is his 10th Conference) and if we speak about me, I'm an old-timer since this is my 8th address to the esteemed auditorium from this podium.

For Gates, this is his last address as defence secretary. This is my first as not one. (laugh) It gives me pleasure to note that the authority of the Munich Conference on Security Policy has increased considerably in recent years. It has gradually turned into a universal venue where leading politicians and experts can express their opinions on international developments, exchange views and jointly discuss solutions to various problems. As President Putin has stated in Munich last year, we don't have to limit ourselves only to diplomatic courtesy but can frankly address all issues. This is the attitude I will try to follow. I am sure that everyone here clearly realizes that the process of Russia's revival objectively combines our ambition to occupy an appropriate place in the world politics and commitment to maintain our national interests.

Right away I would like to make a point: we do not intend to meet this challenge by establishing military blocs or engaging in open confrontation with our partners. Russia's way is different: we are consistently developing multisector cooperation with various nations both on a bilateral level and in the framework of key international and regional organizations.

This strategic targeting is entirely consistent with the new perception of the world by the Russians who now are confident of their potential and, consequently, are capable of thinking globally. We have abandoned ideological and other prejudices. We don't export ideology anymore, you will agree with that. We export only goods and capital. This is also a point of departure in our relations with international partners.

Russia is an open country undergoing unprecedented historic transformation, firmly intending to stay in the mainstream of the world politics and economics. We did everything to get rid of internal shocks and to take a secure path of evolutionary development with transparent goals. I am confident that during the forthcoming Presidential elections to be held on March the 2nd in Russia, the people of our country will demonstrate their full support for this policy. We respect the values cherished by America and Europe for centuries. Democracy is our main guideline, too. But we can hardly accept that there exists some universal experience or idea to

serve as a “master standard” for all times and nations – a kind of a “Troy ounce” to measure political structures, national cultures, religions, convictions and mentality.

Therefore, our perception is based on the notion of development models’ diversity as well as variety of ways of understanding and attaining harmony in society. At the same time Russia shares the opinion that democracy requires similar skills and institutions as those needed for the functioning of free markets. Therefore, market principles combined with social responsibility have already become a solid foundation for our economy. As a result, during the last 9 years, the gross domestic product in Russia has increased by 80 per cent, which is nearly twice as much compared to the average world indicators staying at around 46 per cent. Continuity of this process is ensured by accelerated integration of our country into the world economic system.

Russia is becoming more attractive for foreign investors. Thus, over the past year, net capital inflow has almost doubled against the previous year to reach \$82.3 billion. Foreign direct investments account now for more than 3 per cent of the GDP (gross domestic product).

Alongside, external assets of a number of major Russian companies increase, too, despite of the antagonism on the part of some European countries. We do not aim to buy the entire Old World with our petrodollars. But welcoming foreign investors in Russia, we naturally expect this to be a two-way traffic. Yet, for the moment, the ratio of accumulated mutual investments is one to ten in favour of the European Union. That means 10 dollars invested in the EU, and only one dollar in Russia. Moreover, while talking about liberalization, these states close their own markets and often accompany this with criticism of the Russian leaders who allegedly “deviate from the classical principles of the market economy”. Some even try to stick the label of “state capitalism” to our economic model. May I disagree. The state-private partnership is the key mechanism ensuring the development in Russia. Our goal is not just the mixed economy but ensuring of a close interaction between its two sectors - state and private, with eventual shift of balance towards the latter.

As a part of these practices large integrated structures are being established in Russia giving the investors an opportunity to participate in the privatization process. I am convinced that at this stage the increased state involvement in economic life in Russia has no alternative. To say more, only state interference allows the national economy to make a shift from a one-sided raw material orientation towards the innovative development strategy. We focus on those sectors of technology in which Russia has always had leading positions in the world and which can serve as a basis for our further development.

First of all, those include aircraft engineering and production, shipbuilding, atomic energy, missile and space technologies. I'm also now chairman of the board of the Joint Aviation Corporation and would like to inform you that our cooperation with Boeing is flourishing. Significant efforts are being made in the key area of advanced knowledge-intensive branches capable of producing innovative, breakthrough technologies within the next 10-20 years.

Nano-technology is believed to be one of those and the newly established state-owned corporation will conduct its activity specifically on the basis of state-private partnership. The government will fund nanotechnologies only when the private sector is interested in investing in them too. To encourage development in other areas, specialized institutions are being set up, including the Russian Venture Company, the Investment Fund and the Bank for Development. Last year, the Government has allocated an equivalent of 21 billion US dollars to provide capital for these structures. The Federal budget for years 2008-2009 has a provision for 18 billion US dollars for these purposes.

But even such significant financial injections by the Government are in no way a "cure- all" since the need to repair infrastructure discrepancies, which accompany Russia's economic growth, would alone require funds amounting up to one thousand billion US dollars. We calculated, to modernise our whole Russian infrastructure – roads, etc. We have calculated the sum we need, and we need to attract it from the markets.

Therefore, we rely mostly on private investments, while governmental support acts as an accelerator for innovations and a guarantee for financial involvement of the private sector, including foreign companies. It is self-explanatory that in the case of the latter we seek to ensure that the entire process does not negatively affect sensitive aspects of national security. Thus, a new draft law is now being considered to adopt detailed regulations related to foreign investments in sectors of strategic importance. It should be emphasized that it is based on a "permissive" approach. This is yet another proof that we are not developing any kind of a closed and strictly regulated economy. On the contrary, we aim at establishing a normal and civilized market.

To tell you more, the current structural reforms are already yielding positive results. In 2007, about two thirds of the Russian GDP were generated in the real industrial, construction and trade sectors. Volume of production of mining industries has grown by two per cent only – and that includes oil and gas, by the way - during the same period, while manufacturing and machine building industries have shown a ten- and twenty per cent growth, accordingly. On the whole, the GDP last year grew 8.1 percent. That's not a bad figure. We have good reasons to be satisfied with these figures. At the same time, I would like to specifically note that the shift

from the primary-sector- based economy does not imply any kind of deviation from the fuel and energy sector. Partners can rest assured that Russia has been strictly fulfilling and will continue to fulfil all its commitments regarding energy supplies – I would like to stress that particularly.

Moreover, we do our best to develop our export potential and make it free from the political conditions in certain transit countries. It is with this in mind that Russia and Germany have begun the construction of the North European Gas Pipeline. The “South Stream” project is also entering the implementation phase. Furthermore, we have consistently advocated long-term contractual relations, improvement of the pricing system, as well as establishment of alternative trading platforms. In anticipation of a possible question I would like to state straight away that we are not masterminding any kind of "energy expansion". We simply do our best to achieve maximum economic benefits in the existing situation. High world prices on the exported oil and gas have resulted in the fact that by now, for the first time in the history of the Soviet Union and Russia, our gold and currency reserves have approached the level of 500 billion US dollars. The aggregate assets of the Reserve Fund and the National Welfare Fund that accumulate the excessive gains from the sales of raw materials now exceed 150 billion US dollars.

This provides unprecedented opportunities for economic growth in Russia aiming at a higher standard of living for our people and developing modern social infrastructure. The growing economy means additional jobs and decent wages, modern working and living conditions, new possibilities for professional growth, as well as better education, healthcare, housing, incentives for population growth, mass sports and culture. As a matter of priority, we have tuned home policy to focus on human investment. The success of all efforts taken by the Russian authorities will ultimately be determined by the efficiency of social policy aimed at satisfying vital needs of rank and file Russians and improving the quality of their lives.

The “human capital” is becoming the main factor and basic indicator of development and growth. To the best of our understanding this constitutes the main idea of a socially responsible economy. As President Putin has stressed the day before yesterday at the State Council meeting in Moscow, devoted to Russia’s development trends for the period up to the year 2020, we intend to set up the society “of real and equal opportunities, the society without poverty, providing social security for each individual”. Therefore, in order to ensure a dynamic progress in Russia we are shifting to a principally new policy aiming at the social development and going far beyond mere payment of social benefits.

“The New social policy” is basically the policy of humanism with major goals widely supported by the Russian people. Suggested priorities include rising of public sector salaries, allowance

for servicemen, pensions, scholarships, unemployment benefits, maternity allowance. This year in Russia has been declared the Year of the Family, which should result in new incentives and mechanisms to effectively implement our demographic strategy.

To sum it all, may I stress that we have set up a very special objective: by the year 2020 Russia should be among the world's five biggest economies with per capita GDP of over 30 000 US dollars. Right now, by the way it is around 12 000 USD. Getting richer Russia will not pose a threat to the security of other countries. Yet our influence on global processes will continue to grow.

Besides, historically, many present-day issues are still considered through the prism of relation between Moscow and Washington. Indeed, the two countries have long been sharing a special responsibility for the future of the world. Besides, this could continue to serve as a firm basis unifying our nations. However, major trends of contemporary development, including emerging multipolarity, as well as diversified risks and threats suggest that tackling issues of strategic stability can no longer remain in the exclusive sphere of relations between our two powers. Objectively time has come to open this framework for all leading states interested in cooperation in order to ensure the overall security. This is the essence of our proposals related to the anti-missile defence and to the intermediate- and short- range missiles. Today, there are several nuclear powers in the world and even more countries with a strong missile capability. All of them, and not Russia and the United States alone, should share the responsibility for maintaining strategic stability.

As Mr El-Baradei stated yesterday, and I agree, proliferation is out of the tune. Rules of the games need to be much, much stricter, as they are broken all the way, hundreds of times. This is entirely true for the states which have deliberately chosen not to possess the deadly potential, and which have a high moral commitment for a nuclear free and secure world. However, objectively, Russia-US ties will certainly retain their significance. This primarily concerns control over strategic offensive arms. The SALT I should be replaced by a regime capable to ensure the highest possible predictability in this area, which is vital for the whole mankind.

Here, I would like to stress that it is imperative to ensure that provisions of such a regime should be legally binding so that, in due course, it would really become possible to shift to the control over nuclear weapons and the process of their gradual reduction on a multilateral basis. As I see it, this is precisely an area of international relations where Russia and the United States not merely could but are directly obliged to show leadership. Sooner or later, we will have to start working in a multilateral format since none of us here, I am sure, has any doubts about the

importance of multilateral barriers to WMD proliferation. In this connection, it is noteworthy that Russia and the United States have been seeking, and not without success, to compel all countries to join their Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. At the same time, the two countries are advancing a new joint initiative in the field of nuclear energy and non-proliferation, approved at Kennebunkport. By the way, yesterday, the idea of enrichment centres has been mentioned. A centre like this has already been opened in Siberia, under the IAEA's strict control, and 2 countries have already joined – Armenia and Kazakhstan. So, it already works. I hope that we will also find common ground on the issue of non-militarization of space. In the coming days, Russia is going to table a relevant draft treaty at the Conference on Disarmament.

On the whole, I am firmly convinced that making use of Russian-American strategic heritage as a ground for creating of a modern open collective security system, also in Europe, represents a reasonable alternative to unilateral destruction of its potential. Responsible politicians are bound to notice the unifying trends and to work for pooling efforts in resolving major crucial issues without holding them hostage to short-lived policy considerations. And again, about terrorism. It is a dreadful phenomenon and, evidently, the archenemy of the whole civilized world. No doubt, fighting it gives an ample opportunity for the joint action. But how can we discuss effective interaction if, until present, we have failed to reach accord even on defining what "terrorism" is? On the other hand, some states strive to exploit antiterrorist activities as a pretext to achieving their own geopolitical and economic goals. It is time we should decisively abandon all approaches that have long divided our world on ideological grounds.

Overcoming the past tendencies has become a protracted process with the double standard attitude towards Russia, which even includes attempts to return to the containment policy. It is high time for us to finally develop a common vision of the world we live in. We will make no progress until we elaborate clear and generally accepted rules of cooperation in international affairs. Otherwise, as experience shows, there is no sense to talk about "concurrence of strategic goals" and "certain tactical disagreements". This is particularly true in the case of European security. Russian policy with regard to the OSCE, the Council of Europe and multilateral instruments such as the CFE Treaty is aimed precisely at ensuring that no one could strengthen its security at the expense of others and making it crystal clear to everyone that European security as our common cause and achievement is indivisible and comprehensive.

Ladies and gentlemen, and, finally, to answer the question chosen as the topic of our discussion - "Where is Russia heading?" - I will formulate a short answer. Russia is heading towards the creation of a socially-oriented market economy, improvement of living standards and quality

of life of its people, as well as evolutionary development of the country in the context of close international cooperation based on the principles of international law.

Thank you.

A speech delivered at the MSC 2009 by the First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey B. Ivanov

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, Excellencies,

May I, as one of Munich old-timers, wish every success to the Conference and specifically to Mr. Ischinger in his capacity of its new Chairman. The level of participation and the way we have started to-day show that Munich Conference on Security Policy remains an international forum of a very high standard.

Dear colleagues,

Russia has invariably favoured strengthening the UN role in maintaining peace, international security and stability, working out strategies to counter modern challenges and threats affecting all states without exception. Our priority remains to ensure integrity, viability and effectiveness of the international legal basis, regulating the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The major international agreements such as the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CNDN), treaties on the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons presume the need for universalization and attaining through joint effort their unconditional implementation. We stress the fundamental importance to guarantee openness of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms to ensure participation, on equal footing, of the countries showing interest and capability to make a meaningful contribution to the process.

The START I treaty, which has played a historic role in nuclear missile disarmament, is due to expire on December the 5th, 2009. It is time we move further. In 2005, we invited the US to conclude a new arrangement to replace it. We believe that it should be legally binding and provide for further reductions and limitations both of strategic delivery vehicles (intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and heavy bombers) and their warheads. It is crucial to make a good use of the tested-by-time experience of START I treaty while drafting a new arrangement including, in particular, the ban to deploy strategic offensive arms outside national territories.

However, our commitment to continue this process in a positive manner should not be translated as refusal from certain major approaches. First and foremost, this concerns uploading capability problem. Our point of departure is that any deviation in this sense from basic principles of START Treaty leads to the emergence of uploading capability, which in

fact provides means for quick acquiring decisive military superiority in the area of strategic offensive arms. We expect a constructive response of the new US Administration in this matter and generally to our proposals. This will allow to arrive in the foreseeable future at an arrangement which will mark a new substantial step forward along the road to missile and nuclear disarmament.

Our principle attitude to the issues of anti-missile defence development remains very much the same. We are confident that the creation and deployment of missile defences of various types affect directly regional and international security. If one does it unilaterally without due respect of the interests of strategic stability of other parties involved as, for instance, is in the case with fielding of the US missile defence European site, the situation cannot but result in increased tension.

The potential US missile defence European site is not just a dozen of anti-ballistic missiles and a radar. It is a part of the US strategic infrastructure aimed at deterring Russia's nuclear missile potential. Of course, implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures proposed by Russia with regard to the US missile defence European site might certainly mitigate some of our concerns. However, such measures are not to be considered as an alternative to our response. The Sochi Declaration of the Russian and US Presidents clearly states that Russia is opposed to the deployment of the US missile defence European site.

Now a few words about Treaty between the US and the USSR on the elimination of their intermediate range and shorter-range missiles [Intermediate Nuclear Force Treaty] (INF). Generally, the situation here looks, indeed, alarming. During 20 years after signing of the Soviet – American INF Treaty many countries (North Korea, China, Pakistan, India, Iran, Israel) have acquired such delivery vehicles. And, by the way, all of them are situated near our borders. That is exactly the reason why the US and Russia have come forward with a joint initiative to ascribe INF multinational nature.

As far as nuclear non-proliferation is concerned, our main priority remains to increase the efficiency of the NPT. The next NPT Review Conference will take place as soon as next year. It will become an important landmark in our joint efforts aimed at strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We hope that the year 2010 Conference will be marked with constructive and productive work.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an important instrument for strengthening the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear arms

limitation. Russia has ratified the CTBT in year 2000 and has been consistently promoting its early entry into force. Observance of the nuclear tests' moratorium, however important it might be, is no substitute for legal obligations under the CTBT. We therefore urge all countries whose participation is vital for this Treaty's entry into force to sign and/or ratify it as soon as possible.

Monitoring activities by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is yet another important way of strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We view the Additional Protocol to the IAEA Safeguards Agreement as an effective tool to enhance potential of the Agency in this respect. We expect that all countries, which have not yet joined the Protocol, especially those involved in significant nuclear activities or possessing large stocks of nuclear material, will accede to it at the earliest possible stage.

Nowadays, there is a growing interest in peaceful nuclear energy as a dependable means to ensure national energy security. In our view, international cooperation in what concerns the nuclear fuel cycle should be promoted aiming at providing a cost-effective and feasible alternative to creating all its elements on the national level. Russia has proposed multilateral cooperation in developing the global infrastructure of the nuclear energy sector and in establishing international centres to provide nuclear fuel cycle services. We have already contributed to the implementation of this initiative by setting up of the International Uranium Enrichment Centre on the basis of the processing facilities in Angarsk. The project has already been joined by Kazakhstan, with Armenia and Ukraine finalizing entry formalities. One of the challenges both to the international non-proliferation regime and to the international security as a whole is the threat of nuclear terrorism. Consequently, we regard the Russian-American Global Initiative to Combat Acts of Nuclear Terrorism launched in 2006 by the Presidents of Russian Federation and the United States as a major contribution to the global security. The Initiative is already being implemented and is growing in scale. The number of states participating in the Initiative has reached 75. We consider it to be a good example of how we can cooperate in the modern world in addressing new challenges and threats. On the other hand, the long-lasting reluctance of NATO to bring the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) in line with the new realities and expansion of the Alliance - despite certain countries' security interests, has forced Russia to suspend the Treaty.

At the same time, Russia has proposed a distinct program to restore viability of the European control regime over conventional armaments. Our proposal still applies. We are prepared to continue and intensify the dialogue. And if one believes that the existing control regimes are

inadequate (which, indeed, seems to be the case), we should reinforce them. Russia is ready. Until now, our partners' point of departure was that Russia could be persuaded to make concessions in exchange for the promise to consider its "anxieties" at a later stage. As President Medvedev has recently stated, "national security cannot depend just on promises". In other words, our partners' approach is based on a false assumption and does not leave many chances for this problem's early solution. Meanwhile, time factor and some of NATO countries' own decisions are working against CFE itself.

Missile proliferation problem remains the source of our serious concern, which has only multiplied in the absence of control arrangements similar to those of WMD – namely related to WMD delivery vehicles. The situation with small- and medium range missiles' proliferation – as I have already mentioned – is an obvious demonstration of the fact. Russia favours complex approach to addressing this problem. Our strategic objective is to have a global missile non-proliferation regime based on a legally binding agreement elaborated, in particular, along the lines of the Russian initiative to set up a global missile and missile technology non-proliferation control system. Under auspices of the UN Security Council, we cooperate in the implementation of the Council's resolutions 1540 and 1810 on non-proliferation.

And finally, we participate in multilateral export control activities, including Wassenaar arrangements for control of conventional armaments and dual use goods and technologies, the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). We are convinced that results of cooperation for the non-proliferation purposes could be better if Russia participated in the Australian Group.

Ladies and gentlemen,

no doubt, WMD non-proliferation regime should be strengthened through international cooperation and leaders here should be naturally USA and Russia. Moscow is ready to work closely with the new Obama Administration.

Before I leave this podium may I take the opportunity and suggest that politicians improve their economic thinking in the situation of the global financial and economic crises when the world just cannot afford speeding up expenditure on arms race. And very finally: should we keep the trend when the market conditions improve?

Thank you for your attention.

A speech delivered at the MSC 2010 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov

The dramatic changes in the world over the past twenty years could not but influence the international agenda. We are now faced with the question of its transformation and change. The obvious improvement in the atmosphere in Euro-Atlantic politics, where the demand for confrontational approaches has fallen seriously, also prompts this.

But it is difficult to call normal the situation where the politico-military realities in the Euro-Atlantic area are far behind the contemporary economic, technological, trade, investment and other processes of globalization and interdependence, which occur in the world today.

Over the past twenty years European security has been seriously weakened across all parameters. This applies to the arms control regime and lingering conflicts and attempts to turn the "frozen conflicts" into "hot" ones and the atrophy of the OSCE. The remarks that "all is normal, nothing needs to be changed" do not convince us. I hope our point of view will be listened to.

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty Organization a real opportunity emerged to make the OSCE a full-fledged organization providing equal security for all states of the Euro-Atlantic area. However, this opportunity was missed, because the choice was made in favour of the policy of NATO expansion, which meant not only preserving the lines that separated Europe during the Cold War into zones with different levels of security, but also moving those lines eastward. The role of the OSCE was, in fact, reduced to servicing this policy by means of supervision over humanitarian issues in the post-Soviet space.

As a result, a European architecture that would bring together all states of the Euro-Atlantic space without exception in one organization based on coherent, legally binding principles and with the appropriate tools to ensure them in practice did not materialize. The amorphousness of the OSCE led to its isolation from the needs of real life in many areas.

The main thing is that neither in the OSCE nor in any other framework was there realized the lofty and noble principle enunciated in the 90s at the highest level, the principle of indivisibility of security across the Euro-Atlantic space, according to which no state can be secured at another's expense.

This principle is declared in the OSCE, NATO and the Russia-NATO Council (RNC) alike. But whereas in the North Atlantic Alliance the indivisibility of security is an obligatory, legally confirmed norm, in the OSCE and RNC it is limited to a genre of political declarations, without any legal or practical embodiment. That the principle of indivisibility of security in the OSCE

does not work doesn't take long to prove. Let's recall the bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, when a group of OSCE countries, bound by this political declaration, committed aggression against another OSCE country, which was also covered by this principle. Everyone also remembers the tragedy of August 2008 in Transcaucasia, where a member country of the OSCE which is bound by various commitments in the sphere of non-use of force used this force, including against peacekeepers of another member country of the OSCE, in violation not only of the Helsinki Final Act, but also of the concrete peacekeeping agreement devoted to the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict, which excludes use of force.

The absence of clear-cut rules in the OSCE led to the fact that the information of the OSCE observers in South Ossetia about the preparations of the Georgian leadership for a military attack was not reported to the OSCE Permanent Council. It is still unclear how this could happen. But that this resulted from the lack of clear-cut rules there is no need to prove.

Incidentally, the RNC also failed by refusing to convene on Russia's request for an extraordinary meeting at the height of hostilities. Both Kosovo and South Ossetia are manifestations of the systemic weakness of the OSCE.

But I also want to say about another thing. In historical development there has come a time when serious changes are occurring, and we have to choose between past and future. That, by and large, is the question now. It is important not to miss this unique moment. I am sure we are able to rise above historical complexes and "look beyond the horizon."

By and large, it is necessary to analyse the "family affairs" in Europe, and reassess a lot of things, though not in terms of the euphoria and triumphalism of the early 90s, but on the basis of sober analysis of the real consequences of what has occurred in the past twenty years. On whether we can jointly draw the right lessons the geopolitical weight of Europe depends, as well as of all European civilization, of which both the US and Russia are an integral part. One chief lesson must be an honest acknowledgement that there is a problem with the concept of indivisibility of security and that it will have to be tackled so it does not interfere with taking up specific, important tasks for us all, which are more than enough. Having solved the indivisibility of security problem once and for all in full measure, we can focus on a positive agenda and pressing matters based on coinciding interests and will create a solid foundation for joint action by the US, EU and Russia in international affairs. I would like to note the importance of precisely such a trilateral interaction. Bilateral strategic dialogues are insufficient and cannot replace the trilateral cooperation.

Many understand the unhealthy nature of the current situation. Hence the real interest in the idea put forward by President Medvedev in June 2008 of concluding a European Security

Treaty. A solid thinking process has since been launched both at intergovernmental (OSCE, RNC, the Russia-EU interaction) and at various political science venues. Were it not for this initiative, there would be no shake-up in the OSCE.

Our NATO and EU partners tell us that the Russian Draft Treaty should be discussed only in the OSCE, as this organization is the "custodian" of the adopted by us all comprehensive approach to security, for which we have always consistently advocated. I will note, however, that prior to our initiative, most OSCE member states had not thought about it. Until recently, and even now, the lion's share of OSCE programs does not reflect the comprehensive approach and is devoted to the humanitarian sphere to the detriment of the other baskets. We have repeatedly drawn attention to these distortions, which must be removed.

Speaking about the human dimension, we must not forget that there is also the Council of Europe, where an array of European conventions has been produced that in contrast to the political documents of the OSCE are legally binding and thus constitute a single, common legal humanitarian space of the continent. Incidentally, these conventions are open to all those wishing. Why in the context of the Corfu Process, as one of the solutions to humanitarian issues, not appeal to all OSCE members to join these conventions? This will benefit all.

The Council of Europe has fundamental legal documents – the Statute, the European Convention on Human Rights. There is the "executive authority" in the person of the Committee of Ministers. There are the Court, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, and the Parliamentary Assembly. In other words, it is in the realm of "soft security" that a pan-European structure has long been established and works quite well, ensuring compliance with the commitments in the field of human rights and freedoms. Above all, there are mechanisms in this structure to ensure compliance with these obligations. In the sphere of "hard security" there is no organization which on the same legally binding principles would provide a single politico-military space in Europe.

We all need an OSCE which actually enhances security and cooperation on the continent on an equal basis in all dimensions, bringing "added value" in terms of its real comparative advantages. Russia wants to see the OSCE a strong and effective organization, based on international law.

Therefore, we actively backed the Greek OSCE Chairmanship in its initiative to launch the Corfu Process, which demonstrated awareness of the need to revive in full the Helsinki Decalogue and a truly all-round approach to security. Continued dialogue will help, we hope, to develop ways to enhance, comprehensively, the capacity of the OSCE, to remove the serious distortions in its activities and to convert it into a full-fledged international organization.

Of course, the comprehensive approach should not be quietly substituted by artificial linkage tactics. After all, if someone refuses to discuss "hard security" until he is satisfied with the human rights situation, then someone else can take a similar stand, but with opposite sign, not wishing to speak on humanitarian subjects without prior agreement on politico-military or economic issues. And then we all will find ourselves at an impasse.

We ought to proceed from the equivalence of all dimensions of security, each of which is essential and should be considered with a view to achieving the best possible arrangements, but not on the principle of the lowest common denominator.

In this case, we are actively in favour of reaffirming, including as part of the Corfu Process of course, all the fundamental documents of the OSCE in all areas and of reviewing the progress on all previously adopted commitments. We are particularly interested in a commitment to ensure freedom of movement in the OSCE space. For some reason, everyone is now trying to avoid it, although for our people, people across Europe it is a key issue.

It is encouraging that the agreed Corfu Process agenda highlights the need to increase the effectiveness of the Organization, which implies a serious discussion of the questions of its reform. The Corfu Process should primarily result in the creation of a legal foundation of the OSCE on which to build agreement on matters of substance.

In putting forward the initiative on European security, we wanted to include in the Draft Treaty all major aspects of politico-military issues: arms control and confidence-building measures and conflict resolution and response to contemporary threats and challenges. But, after listening to our colleagues, we agreed to include them in the Corfu Process. All practical issues connected with politico-military security are already included in the Corfu Process agenda. On many of them there are Russian initiatives, including those advanced jointly with other OSCE members. And in the Draft Treaty we have left no practical things, but only one principle – the principle of the indivisibility of security. This is a kind of test. If we continue to believe in what our leaders declared and subscribed to in the 90s, why cannot we make the same things legally binding. If, however, this principle is no longer supported, we want to hear why. But if it is supported, let's take this decision and confirm that we were all sincere when we in the 90s said that none of our countries would secure themselves at others' expense. That's actually all. The idea is extremely simple, minimally necessary to advance along the path of confidence building measures, and absolutely not contradictory. Therefore, when we hear people say that they find the idea interesting but that they need to understand what Russia wants, then we answer that we do not hide anything. We honestly say that we want to confirm in a legally binding form what was already declared.

Today in the Euro-Atlantic area we see a qualitatively new moment coming forth: a kind of convergence of national interests, which objectively creates the conditions for solving on a de-ideologized basis the fundamental task of strengthening the position of European civilization in a globalizing, polycentric and increasingly competitive world. By overcoming the bloc-based Cold War approaches in the European architecture, and the derivative fears they arouse with regard to "spheres of influence," we will provide the new quality of mutual trust that Europe so desperately needs in contemporary conditions.

The main question: Will the pan-European space be a truly, in legal terms, single space? Or will it be divided into "spheres of influence" and areas in which different standards are applied in terms of military and political security, humanitarian obligations, access to markets and modern technology and so on? It's a hugely important issue, a kind of test of the members of the Euro-Atlantic "family" for maturity, for their ability to adequately perceive what is happening in the world.

A speech delivered at the MSC 2011 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov

I would like to express my words of gratitude to the organizers of the Munich Conference, which in recent years has been included in the category of leading discussion “platforms” on topical issues of international security. In Russia, with constant attention are related to its work - on October 20 last year, the participants of the second (Moscow) retreat of the Munich conference activists were received by the President of Russia Dmitry A. Medvedev.

In 2010, the leaders of the Euro-Atlantic states managed to significantly improve the atmosphere in European affairs. Security relations are radically transformed, with less and less manifestations of confrontation and more elements of cooperation. Spheres of interests coincide. There has been a real advancement towards our common goal - ensuring stability and prosperity in Europe, where everyone will equally feel protected, where everyone’s security will be guaranteed, regardless of participation in military-political alliances. Much of what we spoke at last year’s Munich Conference is embodied in practical foreign policy actions.

To a large extent, this is the result of a broad discussion on the problem of reforming the architecture of the continent, which began in response to the initiative of President Dmitry Medvedev to conclude a Treaty on Euro-Atlantic Security.

We are satisfied that the invitation made by Dmitry A. Medvedev to an open dialogue - and this, in fact, is the essence of our initiative - was accepted. Our partners responded by putting forward a whole range of their own ideas about the future of European security, on the whole consonant with our initiative. In particular, French President N. Sarkozy proposed a new format of interaction between the European Union and its neighbours, including Russia, Ukraine, and Turkey. In June last year in Meseberg, German Chancellor Angela Merkel proposed, and President Dmitry Medvedev supported the creation of the Russia-EU Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, which would translate Moscow-Brussels cooperation in the international arena into a new quality - from simple discussion to develop joint solutions, including in the field of crisis management.

Another sign of change - we already talked about this today - US Secretary of State H. Clinton will literally exchange the instruments of ratification of the START Treaty in an hour, which was also born thanks to an understanding of the counterproductive unilateral approaches to security. The principles of equality, parity, equal and indivisible security laid down in the Treaty create a solid foundation for modern Russian-American cooperation in various

fields. The Treaty that will enter into force from that day will have a beneficial effect on international stability.

Encouraging signals were given by the recent summit of the Russia-NATO Council (NRC) in Lisbon. I will highlight the adoption of the Joint Review of Common Security Challenges. With his approval, the logic of negative interdependence, based on the confrontation of power potentials, on threats and counter-threats, is overcome, an ascent to the logic of positive interdependence begins. Since there are common security challenges, it means that we have common interests and tasks, which means that we all recognize the indivisibility of security in the Euro-Atlantic space. The goal in Lisbon is to bring the relations of CPH members to the level of strategic partnership. The main thing is that it does not remain on paper.

The OSCE summit, held on December 1-2, 2010 in Astana, which continued the tradition of an open and equal political dialogue between the heads of state and international organizations, confirmed the growing demand for cooperation in Euro-Atlantic. In addition to the final Summit Declaration, Russia, together with the majority of other OSCE participants, was ready to adopt a detailed action plan. Unfortunately, this did not succeed: the plan became a hostage of one-sided ideologized approaches in the spirit of a zero-sum game.

Nevertheless, as the OSCE summit showed, there are quite good prospects for the modernization of the Vienna Document on confidence-building measures, and there have been shifts in the process of overcoming the impasse on the issue of control over conventional weapons in Europe. If you hear each other's legitimate concerns, you can succeed.

It is in our common interest to cope with the long-standing conflicts that are still a source of suspicion and discord. To do this, we will have to abandon double standards, objectively approach each situation, fully take into account the positions of all parties.

In general, we are satisfied that the Russian initiative on the European Security Treaty helps to formulate a weighty program of action, the implementation of which will contribute to the creation of a truly Greater Europe. In essence, this is the final elimination of the legacy of the "cold war" - in the minds, in politics, in affairs. It is important to take advantage of the "window of opportunity" that has opened and to establish such cooperation in countering new threats that would be resistant to all sorts of ideological prejudices, once and for all would eliminate the danger of dividing lines - now in areas of common interest.

The key project from this point of view is a joint EuroPRO project. At the NRC summit in Lisbon, we agreed to analyse the possibilities of its creation. President Dmitry A. Medvedev proposed our vision of this project on the principles of equality, connecting the potentials of Russia and NATO countries, without creating any problems for each other, based on mutual

consideration of interests and the need to collectively counter common challenges in the field of missile proliferation.

Collaboration begins. We expect that it will be conducted honestly, taking into account the task set to enter a strategic partnership. If the dialogue with Russia will be used to divert attention from the US-NATO missile defence, then we risk missing a unique chance.

I think everyone understands that the agreement to discuss in the NRC ways of establishing cooperation in the field of missile defence does not in any way mean Russia's prior consent to join the NATO program being developed without its participation. The "take it or leave it" scheme does not work here.

Unfortunately, for the time being it turns out that NATO, in its internal elaborations on the topic of missile defence, is going to go a step, or even two ahead of what we are going to do in the NRC in this area. In any case, the decisions of the NATO Lisbon Summit are aimed at this. Still, I hope that we will not again be trying to confront the *fait accompli*. Otherwise, we will not avoid new complications.

For everyone, Russia's position should be self-evident in favour of maintaining strategic parity in the context of solving the ABM problem. Professionals are well aware that the implementation of the third and fourth stages of the American "phased adaptive approach" (namely, it is the basis of the discussed NATO missile defence) will mean reaching a strategic level directly affecting the effectiveness of the Russian nuclear deterrent forces. If our concerns are not taken into account, if joint equal work does not work out, then, willy-nilly, we will have to compensate for the resulting imbalance. Such a scenario, unfortunately, is fraught with a return to the logic of the past, which the Russian leadership has openly warned about more than once. Failure would seriously reduce cooperation opportunities not only in countering missile risks, and across the entire spectrum of threats to our common security. I emphasize that this would not be our choice.

Joint defence against common threats is the highest, essentially allied, form of security cooperation. Therefore, our ability to create a joint European missile defence system with the participation of Russia and NATO will be a test of the sincerity of declarations of readiness for partnership, for a radical transformation of the strategic context of relations, for creating in practice an indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community.

The key point: everything we do in the NRC, including cooperation on missile defence, should not "designate enemies", damage global strategic stability, giving rise to new dividing lines - now between the NRC and the rest of the world. This would undermine the urgently needed efforts to build inter-civilization harmony.

Of course, there are still a number of areas where confidence and predictability are required. In this regard, I would note that NATO's hypertrophied emphasis on "collective defence" against the background of speculations about certain "threats from the East" does not, of course, please us. He will constantly generate "search for the enemy", inflate tensions. We noticed that the section on "classic threats" was written out in the new Strategic Concept of NATO from conservative, ideologically motivated positions. But we hope that the decisions taken in the NRC will prevail.

It should be obvious to everyone that there are no states in the Euro-Atlantic that have reasons, plans or intentions to threaten NATO members. With this objective reality, it would be necessary to harmonize the mechanisms for implementing Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, including the process of military planning of the alliance in its doctrinal and material aspects. There is no need to camouflage the obvious: the alliance, like Russia, needs partners, including, if not above all, in ensuring security from the trans-border threats of terrorism, drug trafficking, proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery from outside the Euro-Atlantic. We are ready for such cooperation on the basis of the principles of international law enshrined in the UN Charter at the initiative of the great powers, which today play a leading role on the world stage.

In the Euro-Atlantic region, for sure, there will still be those who, for one reason or another, are not comfortable with reducing the demand for conflict, who are afraid to take a decisive step from the past to the future and still sometimes try to turn world politics backwards. Much remains to be done to irrevocably overcome the accumulated historical clichés, phobias and suspicions. So that the principle of the indivisibility of security proclaimed in our joint political declarations can be translated into practical joint projects.

We are ready for the most serious collective work in this most important area of Euro-Atlantic and global politics. The time has come to make a choice between common strategic interests and short-term conjuncture of political expediency.

A speech delivered at the MSC 2012 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov

Dear Mr Wolfgang Ischinger, ladies and gentlemen,

I am glad to once again be in Munich and participate in this authoritative forum. In recent years, at our meetings in this format, we have already tried to find common approaches to the problem of strengthening security in the Euro-Atlantic area that would meet today's realities. However, our discussion today, in my opinion, has a significant difference from the previous meetings.

This, I think, is due to the fact that 2011 brought numerous new evidences of the depth and radical nature of the transformations taking place in international relations and the increase in the speed of historical processes. In other words, there are more and more reasons to believe that today we are witnessing a really sharp turn in history that can lead to radical changes in the geopolitical landscape.

The process of global redistribution of power and influence, the strengthening of new poles of the emerging polycentric international system, has made great strides forward. The most obvious manifestations of these transformations are the rise of China, in general, the strengthening of the economic power and political influence of the states of the Asia-Pacific region. Against this background, there is a relative narrowing of the influence and capabilities of countries that are commonly attributed to the historical West, weakening their role as a “motor” of global development. I don't want to say that Russia has some kind of gloating about this, if only because the European Union is our main trade, economic and investment partner. But this is a fact that cannot be ignored. An understanding of this reality is reflected in the topic of our discussion today.

Another aspect that I would like to mention in this regard, and which has become even clearer as a result of the global financial and economic crisis, is that competition in international relations is increasingly acquiring a civilizational dimension. This conclusion is confirmed by recent events in the Middle East and North Africa, where the search for their identity by the peoples is increasingly taking religious shape. Many states of Asia, as well as other continents, unfold to their cultural and religious roots. Under these conditions, the task of strengthening the partnership of civilizations from the field of academic discussions moves into the sphere of big politics. And, in a direct sense, security depends both on its solution, both globally and in the Euro-Atlantic region.

If all this is true, then the futility of attempts to comprehend the rapidly changing international situation, based on the old political stereotypes, becomes understandable, it becomes clear the

absurdity of the attitude of doing things as before, as if the world had only one or two poles of influence.

The OSCE summit in Astana in December 2010 formulated the task of forming a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community, free from dividing lines, conflicts and zones with different levels of security. Unfortunately, when discussing ways to implement it, we continue to encounter approaches infected with the zero-sum games virus, which defined European policy in the 19th and 20th centuries. At the same time, an increasing number of people who are trying to honestly comprehend what is happening, are thinking about the possibilities of transferring to a new qualitative level the partnership of countries and peoples united by common roots and values of Christianity and having a similar “cultural matrix”. Of course, not with the aim of opposing oneself to other cultures and religions, but on the contrary - for more effective participation in the dialogue of civilizations.

I have repeatedly been able to express the idea that, in a broad sense, Russia and North America are the eastern and western branches of European civilization. If you look at history from this angle, the end of the “cold war” should not mean the mechanical movement of dividing lines to the east, but the restoration of the continuity of processes disturbed by the tragedies of the 20th century and the strengthening of the foundation of the all-European partnership.

Looking at the world map, you understand that today, probably, there is no other territory that has the potential for economic development, which is as large-scale as Russia. I mean, first of all, the transfer of the Russian economy to innovative rails and the use in this work of the enormous opportunities of Siberia and the Far East. Speaking recently on Sakhalin, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin stressed that the development of these vast regions, including the development of high-tech fuel and energy complex, the creation of new industrial centres, the laying of transport corridors, the creation of comfortable conditions for people’s lives, is a national task for us. I think that Europe should be interested in the success of this project - just as it supported the reforms of Peter I in its time. Therefore, we consider that the Partnership for Modernization program launched by Russia and the European Union has good prospects. But if we want to achieve truly significant results, we must act much more decisively and quickly. We invite to cooperation not only Europeans, but also the states of the Asia-Pacific and other regions. Our proposals are described in detail in the program article of President Dmitry A. Medvedev “Integration for Development, Innovation for Prosperity”, devoted to the forthcoming September. APEC Summit in Vladivostok.

Recently, one often hears opinions on the intellectual crisis that impedes the advancement of really large-scale ideas that would correspond to a crucial stage in the development of

international relations. Political thought quite often remains in captivity of small families and fragmented approaches to problems. In this series there are still encountered attempts “on the accounts” to determine what the “dogmatic bases” of rapprochement between Russia and our western partners should be.

The theses on the “incorporation” of Russia into the “expanded West” without taking into account the centuries-old traditions of the foreign policy independence of our country are being put forward again and again. Russia is moving along the path of comprehensive renewal, including the modernization of its political system. But the pace and nature of the democratic processes in our country will be dictated solely by internal needs, and not by outside advice.

We do not consider justified the cautious, even suspicious attitude of the European partners to the steps and plans for the development of Eurasian integration. We have repeatedly said and explained that the decision of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan to set an example of deepening integration processes in the post-Soviet space is not aimed at isolating itself from the European Union, but on the contrary - expanding the horizons of mutually beneficial cooperation, creating stronger and more convenient relations between Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

At the summit of the Russia-NATO Council in November 2010 in Lisbon, the leaders spoke in favour of building a truly strategic partnership in this format. And now concrete actions are needed to overcome the “patchwork” nature of guarantees and security mechanisms operating in Euro-Atlantic. Europe needs a peace pact that draws a line under the era of the Cold War, since broad cooperation can only be built on a platform of trust. And since everyone remembers the well-known Russian-American wisdom “trust, but verify”, such a pact should be legally binding. It was these considerations that prompted us to put forward in 2008 the idea of concluding a European Security Treaty (EST). Equal and indivisible security for all - it is difficult to argue with this, if you remain true to the principles of justice.

In order to recognize the new realities, awareness of historical responsibility, political foresight and outstanding courage are necessary, but we must make this choice if we do not want to remain in the history of temporary affairs. I am convinced that by making such a choice, we will be able to cope with the whole spectrum of security problems on the continent, from conventional arms control to missile defence.

I would not like to think that we will miss another historic chance, as happened after the Second World War or in the early nineties of the last century. An alarming "bell" becomes the problem of the European missile defence system, which threatens to drive a wedge between the branches of European civilization. At its root, by the way, is the same unwillingness to provide equal and indivisible security in a legally binding form. At the same time, the experience of joint struggle

against terrorism and piracy, the search for joint responses to the challenges posed by regional conflicts, climate change, and developmental fragility testifies to the reality of a new level of trust and cooperation, based on the principles of equal rights and consideration of each other's interests.

At the same time, it should be extremely clear that Russia will not support schemes capable of initiating a new round of confrontation in international relations. We will not participate in constructions designed to deter China, which is our good neighbour and strategic partner. Building alliances opposing each other is a recipe for a past era, which in modern conditions can turn into a slide to a global catastrophe. We also consider counterproductive the ideas of the NATO-centred construction of global security by creating certain "bridges" between the North Atlantic Alliance and its partners in various regions. These ideas also contain grains of confrontation, which, incidentally, is already evident in the Asia-Pacific region.

We are convinced that the time has come for "network diplomacy", which implies ensuring, on a non-block basis, equal and indivisible security in Euro-Atlantic while building reliable security structures and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and other regions.

In the future, one could lead to the formation of a common, extensive security space consisting of regional segments connected in a "ring", the participants of which would be bound by a complex of legal and political obligations. One such segment would be the coverage area of the proposed EEB (OSCE participating States), within which it would be very useful to establish practical cooperation between NATO and the CSTO, in favour of which we have been speaking for many years, but we can't reach a clear answer. The task of building a security architecture in the APR is becoming more and more relevant, and we are counting on a substantive discussion of the relevant initiative of President Dmitry Medvedev and President Hu Jintao, launched in September 2010 in Beijing. Other potential regional segments include Afghanistan and its surroundings (with the elaboration of "consecrated" UNSC cross-guarantees of non-interference in the internal affairs of neutral Afghanistan and its neighbours). I will also mention the Persian Gulf region, the Middle East (based on the achievement of an Arab-Israeli settlement under international guarantees), as well as the South Caucasus (with collective guarantees of Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia on non-use of force) as promising security zones.

Of course, such an approach assumes that all agreements within the framework of regional segments will be based on the same principles of international law enshrined in the UN Charter. In fact, it would be about implementing the concept of creating a collective security system laid down in the Charter.

Of course, the issue of the actions of external players in connection with domestic conflicts is also relevant to this topic. Military-political instability in certain regions should not become a “magnet” for the application of force in the context of weakening the usual levers of influence of the leading states on international events. We do not exclude situations where the world community is forced to intervene in order to prevent or suppress threats to international peace and security. But this should be done in strict accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Support for one of the parties in an internal conflict, an attempt to impose foreign schemes to the political structure of a state or the scale of its reforms is a dangerous path leading to the expansion of instability zones and strengthening elements of chaos in international relations. There is no need to go far for examples.

On the whole, we are convinced that the “window of opportunity” in terms of creating a Euro-Atlantic, Eurasian security community remains open. We are ready to continue an equal, honest and productive dialogue with partners, based on respect for the principles of the rule of law and democracy in international affairs.

Thanks for attention.

A speech delivered at the MSC 2013 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov

Dear Chairman,

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to attend the Munich conference again, which has firmly consolidated itself as most authoritative site for open conceptual discussion of European and international politics problems.

It is impossible to overlook the symbolism of the date of today's meeting. 70 years ago, one of the most difficult, bloody, and crucial battles of World War II – the battle of Stalingrad – was over. Hundreds of thousands of my compatriots who gave their lives for this victory on the banks of Volga were not only defending the Motherland, but also fighting for the attainment of universal peace, just as all our allies were doing.

The diplomacy efforts were also aimed at the purpose of not permitting the tragedy of world war to repeat. They resulted in the creation of the United Nations Organization. However, soon afterwards the "cold war" drew the dividing lines in Europe, putting off the opportunities for building a system of collective security, which is embodied in the UN Charter, for a long time. I speak of this not to provoke another search for the guilty ones. Stirring up the past is not for credible politicians. As the Russian president Vladimir Putin stressed in December letter to the Federal Assembly, Russia is only going ahead, only into the future. That's why the meaning of our participation in Munich conference we see above all in trying to find a joint approach to building a security community based on authentic strategic partnership. That is the very aim that was put by the leaders of Euro-Atlantic countries in 2010 at OSCE summits in Astana and Russia-NATO Council in Lisbon.

Certainly, it would be a mistake to state that nothing is done at all for achieving this noble aim. Russia and USA concluded the START, many-sided cooperation in combating terrorism, narcobusiness, piracy, threats from Afghanistan, is developing. The rejection of "cold war" era psychology is officially proclaimed. Russia and NATO members declared that they are not seeing each other as enemies.

However, we are not here to shower praises and compliments upon each other, but to understand the ways that need to be coordinated for the successful solving of the remaining problems.

With this in view, we all have to admit that not in word but indeed we are still nowhere near the truly collective Euro-Atlantic architecture, which would be based on solid international legal foundation. Still present is a tendency of building relations on military-political affairs in

Europe not on the base of principles proclaimed in OSCE and NRC, but by advancing NATO-centric security structure as a single option.

We consider such a narrow-bloc approach to be of no avail and difficult to conceive with the help of objective, rational considerations; it is hardly applicable to building politics in today's global world, when we share the threats. It is time to take a broad and comprehensive look at the whole complex of relations in Euro-Atlantics and try to define the identity of approaches and the remaining discrepancies between us, including with regard to conflict situations in other parts of the world that influence our mutual security.

When looking at today's most restless region – Near East, North Africa, Sahel zone – it is hard to get rid of the feeling of some kind of a curved space. Many questions arise in connection with approaches applied by some of our partners in the conditions of the "Arab Spring" process. Does the support of speeches for the change of regimes allow justifying terrorist methods? Are you able to make war in one conflict situation against those whom you support in another conflict situation? How to make sure that the weaponry you illegally supplied to a zone of conflict is not directed against yourself? Who among the rulers is legitimate, and who is not? When is it acceptable to cooperate with authoritarian regimes (both civil and not that much civil), and when is it allowed to support their violent overthrow? In what cases is it needed to acknowledge the forces that came to power as a result of a democratic election, and in what cases – to refuse contacting them? What are the criteria and standards determining all this?

It is important to seek joint honest answers to these questions, especially as Euro-Atlantic countries have much more common points than disagreements in respect of ultimate goals of the efforts on resolution of crises. In the Near and Middle East, North Africa and African continent, as well as in other regions, we all want the stability to be secured, conditions for sustainable development to be created, the people of the states located there to be able to advance towards democracy and prosperity, human rights and uninterrupted supply of hydrocarbons, as well as another essential resources, to be guaranteed.

If these are our common aims, then we would probably be able to agree on transparent and clear "rules" which should be followed by all external players in their practical actions. Agree that we all will be supporting the democratic reforms in states undergoing transformations and not imposing an outside value scale but acknowledging the variety of development models. Agree that we shall be supporting the peaceful settlement of the inner state conflicts and stopping of violence by creating conditions for an inclusive dialogue with involvement of all national political groups. Agree that we shall refrain from outside interference, especially by force, without a clear mandate from the UN Security Council and from arbitrary application of

unilateral sanctions. That we will consistently and firmly fight extremism and terrorism in all forms, will demand observation of rights for ethnic and confessional minorities. I'm sure that if all of the "Action Group" meeting participants in Geneva on 30 June 2012 together honestly fulfilled jointly formulated approaches, then today's tragic and horrible situation Syria may not even be. But for this it is necessary to honestly fulfil what has been agreed upon and not to extract or add anything. For that purpose, we have been suggesting for a long time to hold a new meeting of the "Action Group". We hope that Lakhdar Brakhimi who is present here will try to advance this initiative in his work.

On the whole, in respect of the "Arab Spring" processes, it's high time to withdraw from simplified schemes and slogans, to weigh the situation and its development scenarios from responsible positions. Understanding this makes its way. I'll particularly mention the recent article of Wolfgang Ishinger in "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" where very interesting ideas that have something in common with our situation assessment are stated.

If we are interested in joint actions for the benefit of all, then we need to see the world as it is. To accept that forceful operations (no need to look far for examples) lead to chaos strengthening in international relations and can cause waves of instability that no "stability island" will shelter from. History continues to gain speed and ahead there are many crossroads where it will be again necessary to choose between unilateral geopolitical aims and partnership, between zero sum games and joint efforts to find answers to today's challenges.

Many of these crossroads are seen already now. For instance, it is a question of the future of Pan-European organization – OSCE. Today the disagreements within it are deepening because of the attempts to dictate one's standards to others, transform it in sufficiently confrontational polemic platform, escalating in this way the systemic crisis of the Organization. The uniting projects are needed that will cement the European space and help build consensus on fundamental security questions. "Window of opportunities" still exists: last year in December CFM OSCE in Dublin has resolved to start the "Helsinki+40" process. We would like to hope that by 2015, when this anniversary will be celebrated, a truly joint agenda would be successfully made, reflecting our mutual determination to concentrate on the solution of the common strategic goals on the basis of putting into life the principle of security indivisibility, and not an exchange of claims.

ABM problem became an important conformity test of real business with solemn declarations of commitment to this key principle. We are all risking to lose another real chance to build a single Euro-Atlantic space. Russia proposes a simple and constructive way – to coordinate strict guarantees of undirectedness of US global ABM against any OSCE member country and

develop clear military-technical criteria allowing to estimate the conformity of ABM systems with the stated aims: neutralization of missile threats that come from outside of Euro-Atlantic region.

It's also important to clarify the definition of NATO's mission in new conditions, not for interfering in this process, but for making it clear for us. Advance to an authentic partnership between Russia and the North Atlantic Alliance is still slowed down by the attempts to exploit the thesis about the Soviet threat, which is now already transforming into the thesis about the Russian threat. Phobias are very enduring, and we see how a military planning process is built under this thesis. Even in the conditions of deficit of financial resources an increase in military activities is observed in the north and centre of Europe, as if in these regions the security threats are mounting. Advancement of projects for NATO's further expansion and advancement of bloc's military infrastructure to the East is continuing – as if there were no top-level statements on fatality of preserving dividing lines on the continent. Speaking of this, some of our European partners are now inventing new dividing lines, begin trying to artificially divide integration projects into "good" and "bad", "friendly" and "alien".

Today the conception of the "clever defence" is discussed in NATO. I lay aside the question about from whom specifically they are going to defend. More important is to realize the objective demand for a new, modern, "clever" foreign policy aimed at the most effective use of the emerging opportunities of cooperation instead of their inexcusable squandering. If the leading economies of the world within the scope of "Group 20" were able to arrange joint efforts for overcoming the global financial and economic crisis, so why it cannot be done in politics? Last year Russia became the full member of WTO, which was created first of all for fighting protectionism in the trade and economic relations. We are grateful to USA, EC and all who supported this process. But if we try to analyse the situation with preserving bloc thinking, then this thinking is probably the protectionism in the military and political sector? In that case it's evident that it's in the direct contradiction with the today's demands which dictate the necessity of the formation of the open systems of equal security for everyone.

Our proposals about how to make a principle of security indivisibility, repeatedly declared in OSCE and NRC, legally binding, working in practice, are still on the "bargaining table". The codification of the commitments not to enhance own security at the expense of others' security approved on the highest political level would help improve military and political climate in Euro-Atlantics and would favour closer relations between all countries and realization of the strategic goal to create the united economical and humane space from Atlantics to Pacific Ocean.

The aspiration for elaborating joint approaches for securing genuinely equitable architecture in Euro-Atlantics is more and more clear not just in case of reasonable politicians, but also on the level of civil society. We welcome the collaboration of the centres of politology in Germany, Poland, Russia, and France on preparing recommendations regarding problems of Euro-security, which was approved in OSCE. We want to stimulate such contacts and processes in every possible way. We welcome this work.

No doubt that we are living at the turning point of the history, which means that the decisive and large initiatives are needed. It is time to mutually write off the historical debts and issue each other the "anti-recessionary" credit – the credit of trust and partnership.

In advance of the speech I was asked to comment the Russian-American relations, but deep down, I agree with today's words of Joe Biden – a good friend and colleague of mine. We really have a very vast and positive agenda, but in the relations between such major states the opposing views and discrepancies, sometimes serious ones, are inevitably retained. You all know them. We shall fundamentally consider every question in Russian-American relations as subjected to agreement, if being guided by the principles of mutual respect, equality and mutual respect for interests. But regarding the questions where we are able to cooperate for our countries goodness and international security, we are, no doubt, already working and will continue doing this.

I would like to finish with a reference to President Barack Obama who said during his inaugural speech that USA will seek to resolve disagreements with other countries by peaceful means – not as a result of naivety, but because the cooperation is the most sure remedy for eliminating suspicions and fear. In its foreign policy Russia stably abides exactly such an approach which is based on strict observance of principles and norms of international law. We decidedly count on reciprocity.

Thank you for your attention.

A speech delivered at the MSC 2014 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to congratulate the organisers of the Munich Conference on its 50th anniversary. It has been a long time. It is important that the conference is maintaining its reputation firmly and confidently.

Others have already mentioned anniversaries and 50 years of the Conference. The Berlin Wall, a symbol of division of Europe, was dismantled 25 years ago, and created hope for a common European home. We remember these talks, the inspiration many people were overtaken by. We have not managed to make this dream come true, but nevertheless we remember some of those important decisions here today, including the joint statement at the NATO-Russia Council summit in Lisbon in 2010. The OSCE summit was held in the same year in Astana. Important documents which had set the goal to create a common European, European Atlantic and Eurasian security community were adopted at these forums. We still have this goal, nobody has cancelled it, however it seems that we are not moving towards it very fast – many people even say that there is movement, yet it is in the other direction.

On the eve of the recent EU-Russia summit, our colleagues from Brussels proposed putting pending business aside and focussing on the strategic aspects of interaction of the two largest partners in the European space. We immediately agreed, even more so that we consistently speak in favour of sincere, straight from the mouth and omission-free discussion of the most complicated problems with any partners, including the EU, NATO and the United States.

The Eastern Partnership programme promoted by Brussels has recently been considered the symbol of difference in political views of Russia and the EU. From the very beginning, when this project was started, we were for dialogue, transparency and consideration of each other's interests in relations between Russia, the EU and all our neighbours. It is good that the European Union has started to talk about this right now.

However, to search for mutually acceptable agreements, we need to answer some fundamental questions, arising, in particular in connection with the situation in Ukraine and, primarily, about the relation between the stirring of street protests which become more and more violent, and the promotion of democratic principles. Why don't we hear condemning voices addressed to those who have occupied and still hold administrative buildings, attack policemen, set them on fire, use racist, anti-Semitic and Nazi slogans? Why do many prominent European politicians

actually support such actions, even though they immediately and strictly stop any deviations from the letter of the law?

Just a while ago, the President of the European Union Herman Van Rompuy stated from this rostrum that the Ukrainian people should make their choice, and immediately added that the future of Ukraine is in the European Union. My friend, NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen also spoke about the need to give Ukraine freedom of choice. However, all of us understand how this choice was predetermined for Ukraine at the NATO summit in 2007. Later, common sense seemed to prevail. I will also cite the words used by the spokesperson for the U.S. Department of State, which are engraved on my memory: "The United States hopes that a government will be formed in Ukraine that will ensure political unity and economic prosperity backed by the IMF and meeting the aspirations of the Ukrainian people for a European future". If this is a confirmation of freedom of choice, then freedom of the Ukrainian people is interpreted in rather a strange way, because the choice is in fact imposed, while Russia does not want and will not engage in such things.

If we look at the root of this problem, it is important to understand whether our partners from the European Union and in the West in general are ready to base their beliefs on principles of equality, mutual respect, consideration of each other's interests in their relations with Russia and our neighbours. Today, when the European continent is not the focus of global politics any more, we should not divide it into spheres of influence, but decide how each and all the countries of Europe can occupy winning positions in this highly competitive world. Will everyone "sail" alone or would it be more reasonable to combine efforts and comparative advantages of the European Union, Russia and other European states? Today many people on the continent share the opinion of one of the most authoritative French politicians, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who thinks that Europe may become a pole in the new international system only through the development of its partnership with Russia.

Making a speech several days ago in Brussels, the President of Russia Vladimir Putin confirmed that Russia would like to build cooperation with the EU on the basis of large, ambitious, equal and mutually beneficial projects and tasks. It is primarily about the combination of European and Eurasian integration processes with the outcome of a common economic and humanitarian space stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. There is no doubt that we can only implement such a concept gradually, however, there is nothing unachievable here, because both integration models are built on similar principles, they are based on WTO norms and might effectively supplement each other. Vladimir Putin proposed studying the possibility of the

formation of a free trade zone between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union created by Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan by 2020 as a first step.

Consent in such strategic tasks would allow the removal of the problem of selecting the vector of development of the states located between Russia and the EU. Hardly any European people would face the "or-or" situation, if we were moving along the path of construction of a common European home, like I have spoken about at the beginning of my speech, and which was the object of so many fine words at the end of the 1980's – the beginning of the 1990's. Unfortunately, the logic of maintaining and deepening dividing lines, based on the principle "those who are not with us are against us", still prevails.

It seems to me that we have approached the moment of truth in this philosophy, therefore we specifically welcome the decision reached at the EU-Russian summit in Brussels on the 28 January to conduct an expert, depoliticised analysis of compatibility of EU and Eurasian integration processes.

The security area still shows a lack of strategic vision and trust. We are still unable to overcome the phobias of the past epoch, the aspiration to see the state of affairs through the "friend-or-foe" lens. In conditions, when military confrontation in the European continent has become unimaginable, the renewal of talks about the threat from the East is perplexing, to say the least, even more so that these are not just talks – military infrastructure keeps growing on the eastern borders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, there are exercises, the goal of which is not to fight terrorism (as Russia does with its partners), they are based on Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The situation around the plan to create the European segment of the US ABM is a test of readiness to build an equal security system in Atlantic Europe. Anders Fogh Rasmussen spoke about this trying to convince me that this was a defensive system. However, I think that military men understand well that the ABM is part of the strategic arsenal of the United States, which is an integral component of the entire strategic stability. When we add a "nuclear-missile shield" to the "nuclear sword", the temptation to use these attack and defence opportunities becomes rather high, depending on which leaders may come to power in the country having such opportunities. We do not avoid dialogue, although we do not see any changes in the position of our partners. They just offer us the option to take their word for it that the European ABM is not aimed against Russia. Quite frequently, we have quoted the statement by one of great Germans who said that not the intent, but rather the potential, is important in military arts. Everybody understands what I am talking about.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen mentioned many issues related to arms control: nuclear, non-strategic nuclear, usual nuclear arms. We met in Brussels just recently, and I asked the NATO Secretary

General all the questions I have to put to NATO and mentioned today. He did not tell me the aspects, which he presented here. If they are interested in talking seriously, they need to do this within the framework of direct contacts in the NATO-Russia Council and within the ambit of our regular meetings with the NATO Secretary General, which we value greatly, rather than through an audience.

We are convinced that the principle of indivisibility of security must become a universal law, the obligation of each country to take into consideration and respect all the legal interests of its neighbours in Atlantic Europe. In fact, this is a military and political implementation of the well-known moral imperative – treat other people the way you want to be treated.

This year we celebrate 100 years since the beginning of the First World War and 75 years since the beginning of the Second World War. It is important to avoid using these dates for information wars (we are already seeing such attempts), but to use them to seriously think over those internal springs of the processes, which have brought Europe and the entire world to disaster at times in the last century. The accumulation of elements of instability and chaos in economics and politics makes me draw a parallel with the development of events at the beginning of the XX century and between wars not only on the European, but also on a global scale. We need to remember where attempts to ensure personal security at the expense of the security of others, the following of narrow egoistic interests, and the logics of national exclusiveness, can lead us to.

I would like that the Helsinki Plus 40 OSCE discussions become a serious attempt to rethink complicated processes in the European space, to move away from bloc schemes, to find joint answers to common challenges. We can't fail to see that only together we can handle acute problems of the modern time.

We view the breakthrough decisions reached in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons, the convention of the Geneva-2, as well as developments in the Iranian issues, as collective successes. Now it is important to maintain these positive advances and appease the situation in the region located in the direct vicinity of Europe, by joint efforts.

By emphasising the lack of alternatives to collective actions for these issues and to achieve final results in all these directions, I would like to respond to the question I was asked: "What can Russia do to resolve the Syrian crisis?" Russia cannot do anything alone. It is important that all the external players do not attempt to promote the Syrian representatives they "patronise" as the only legal representatives of the Syrian people, but to make the Syrian parties stay in Geneva and continue their talks rather than slam the door. We welcome the modest yet promising results reached by the Special Envoy for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, over the last week. We expect them

to deepen and develop at the next round of talks. Russia actively supports the initiated dialogue which should become truly representative as soon as possible. This is an inescapable rule of success. All those having influence on the opposition must bring the entire spectrum of Syrian society to the negotiation table. This request is included in UNSC resolution 2118, which approves the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012 and supports the conference to bring it to life.

The long bloody conflict in Syria has turned the country into a stronghold of extremists and terrorists from all over the world, and nobody knows how they will use their skills, when they return home. Their atrocities against Christians and other minorities in Middle Eastern countries convey bad suggestions.

We are grateful to all our partners, who have demonstrated their solidarity with Russia in connection with the recent explosions in Volgograd, which were a rough reminder of the global nature of the terrorist threat, the need not to ease our efforts in our joint fight and counteract radicalisation of the public mood. To that end I recall the words of Helmut Schmidt, patriarch of German politics: "Trends of nationalism, which have appeared again everywhere, in my country as well, are directed at the past, they do not lay a road to the future. Nationalist nostalgia can only weaken Europe".

It is hard to overestimate the significance of the intercultural, interreligious, intercivilisational dialogue in the formation of a stable and democratic global management system backed by international law and the central role of the UN.

"The structure of world peace cannot be the work of one man, or one party, or one nation... it must be a peace which rests on the cooperative efforts of the whole world." These words by Franklin Delano Roosevelt are engraved on the memorial in Fairbanks (Alaska) honouring the Russian and US pilots who flew aircraft as part of the Lend-Lease program during World War II. I don't think that there is any need to wait for such large-scale turbulences to set up a truly collective world to reinforce European and international security.

To end, I should respond to item 6 which is the ideas proposed by Frank-Walter Steinmeier in his speech, having asked (probably me) what do Russia and Europe share and asked to present our vision of this issue to the public. We share a lot with Europe – I can mention only a few moments. Firstly, we share the UN Charter, which proclaimed the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference in domestic affairs, settlement of all disputes in a peaceful way, inadmissibility of the use of force or threat of force. Secondly, we share the Helsinki Final Act and many other documents adopted at high level in the OSCE. They set out the principles all the Atlantic European states should be guided by, including the principle of indivisibility of

security and freedom of movement, as well as the principle of "closed doors", the President of the Council of Europe was talking about, which cannot be found in OSCE documents or documents of other bodies.

We also share many conventions of the Council of Europe, including the European Convention on Human Rights. We hope that the European Union joins this convention following its member-states. Of course, we share the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is a kind of canon in the human rights area and clearly states the code of conduct of states in different situations, including the one Ukraine is facing now. This document clearly states that any protest moods in the context of freedom of expression cannot breach the law. Riots, violent actions serve a sufficient reason to restrict such freedoms. We should not forget about this. We all know well how they restrict disorders in various European cities, including the United Kingdom, France and Germany. A state should be strong to be democratic.

Thank you for your kind attention.

A speech delivered at the MSC 2015 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov

Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr Wolfgang Ischinger has included the issue of the collapse of global development on the agenda. One has to agree that events have taken a turn, which is far from optimistic. But it is impossible to agree with the arguments of some of our colleagues that there was a sudden and rapid collapse of the world order that had existed for decades.

To the contrary, the last year's developments confirmed the correctness of our warnings against profound, systemic problems in the organisation of European security and international relations in general. I would like to remind you of the speech delivered by Russian President Vladimir Putin from these stands eight years ago.

The structure of stability, based on the UN Charter and the Helsinki principles, has long been undermined by actions of the United States and its allies in Yugoslavia, which was bombed, as well as in Iraq and Libya, NATO's expansion to the east and the creation of new lines of separation. The project of building a "common European home" failed because our western partners were guided by illusions and beliefs of winners in the Cold War rather than the interests of building an open security architecture with mutual respect of interests. The obligations, solemnly undertaken as part of the OSCE and the Russia-NATO Council, not to ensure one's own safety at the expense of others' remained on paper and were ignored in practice.

The problem of missile defence is vivid evidence of the powerful destructive influence of unilateral steps in the development of military capabilities contrary to lawful interests of other states. Our proposals on joint operation in the anti-missile field were rejected. In exchange we were advised to join the creation of global US missile defence, strictly according to Washington's templates, which, as we underlined and explained based on facts a number of times, carries real risks for Russian nuclear deterrence forces.

Any action undermining strategic stability will inevitably result in counter measures. Thus, long-term damage is inflicted upon the entire system of international treaties dealing with control over armaments, the feasibility of which directly depends on the missile defence factor. We do not even understand what the United States' obsession with creating a global missile defence system can be connected with. With aspirations to indisputable military supremacy? With faith in the possibility to resolve issues technologically, whereas these issues are in reality political? In any case, the missile threats did not become weaker, but a strong irritant emerged in the Euro-Atlantic region, and it will take a long time to get rid of it. We are ready for this.

Refusal of the United States and other NATO members to ratify the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which buried this treaty, was another destabilising factor.

At the same time, our US colleagues are attempting to lay the blame on Russia in each complicated situation they themselves created. Let's take the discussions, which have revived recently, on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (the INF Treaty). Specialists are well aware of the United States' actions, which are in conflict with the spirit and the letter of this document. For instance, as part of the creation of a global missile defence system, Washington commissioned a large-scale programme of creating target missiles with characteristics similar or close to land-based ballistic missiles, prohibited by the aforementioned treaty. Unmanned fighting vehicles, widely utilised by the US, fall within the treaty's definition of intermediate-range cruise land-based missiles. The treaty directly prohibits ABM launchers, which will soon be deployed in Romania and Poland, because they can be used to launch intermediate-range cruise missiles.

While refusing to acknowledge these facts, our US colleagues assert they have some "substantiated" claims against Russia with respect to the INF Treaty, but diligently avoid specifics.

With due account of these and many other factors, attempts to narrow down the current crisis to last year's developments, to our mind, means falling into dangerous self-deception.

There is a pinnacle in the course pursued by our western colleagues in the past quarter of a century on preserving their domination in world affairs by all possible means, on seizing the geopolitical space in Europe. They demanded of the CIS countries – our closest neighbours, connected with us by centuries economically, historically, culturally and even in terms of family ties – that they make a choice: "either with the West, or against the West." This is a zero-sum logic which, ostensibly, everyone wanted to leave in the past.

The strategic partnership of Russia and the European Union failed the test of strength, as the EU chose a path of confrontation over the development of mutually beneficial interaction mechanisms. We cannot help remembering the missed opportunity to implement Chancellor Merkel's initiative put forward in June 2010 in Meseberg, to create an EU-Russia Committee on Security and Foreign Affairs at the level of foreign ministers. Russia backed that idea, but the European Union rejected it. Meanwhile, this constant dialogue mechanism, if it were to be set up, would allow for solving problems faster and more effectively, and for resolving mutual concerns in a timely manner.

As for Ukraine itself, unfortunately, at each stage of the crisis' development, our American colleagues, and under their influence, also the European Union, have been taking steps leading to escalation. This happened when the EU declined to involve Russia in the discussion of the consequences of implementing the economic block of the Association Agreement with Ukraine, which was followed by direct support of a coup d'etat, and anti-government riots prior to that. This also happened when our western partners kept issuing indulgences to the Kiev authorities, who, rather than keeping their promise to launch nation-wide dialogue, began a large-scale military operation and labelled "terrorists" all those citizens who defied the unconstitutional change of power and the rule of ultranationalists.

It is very hard for us to explain why many of our colleagues fail to apply to Ukraine the universal principles of settling internal conflicts which presuppose, above all, an inclusive political dialogue between the protagonists. Why do our partners in the cases of Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, Yemen, Mali and South Sudan, for instance, urge the governments to talk with opposition, with rebels, in some cases even with extremists, whereas in the Ukrainian crisis, our partners act differently, in fact, encouraging Kiev's military operation, going so far as to justify or attempt to justify the use of cluster munitions.

Regretfully, our western colleagues are apt to close their eyes to everything that is said and done by the Kiev authorities, including fanning xenophobic attitudes. Let me quote: "Ukrainian social-nationalism regards the Ukrainian nation as a blood-race community." Which is followed by: "The issue of total Ukrainisation in the future social-nationalist state will be resolved within three to six months by a tough and balanced state policy." The author of those words is Andrey Biletsky, the commander of the Azov regiment, which is actively engaged in the military activities in Donbass. Some other activists who gained a position in politics and power, including Dmitry Yarosh, Oleg Tyagnibok and the leader of the Radical Party in the Verkhovna Rada Oleg Lyashko, publicly called a number of times for an ethnically clean Ukraine, for the extermination of Russians and Jews. Those statements failed to evoke any reaction in the western capitals. I don't think present-day Europe can afford to neglect the danger of the spread of the neo-Nazi virus.

The Ukrainian crisis cannot be settled by military force. This was confirmed last summer when the situation on the battlefield forced the participants to sign the Minsk Accords. It is being confirmed now as well, when the next attempt to gain a military victory is failing. Yet regardless of all that, more loud calls are being made in some western countries to step up support of the Kiev authorities' vector towards militarisation of society and the state, to "infuse" Ukraine with

lethal weapons, to drag it into NATO. There is hope in the increased opposition in Europe to such plans, which can only make the tragedy of the Ukrainian people worse.

Russia will continue strive for establishing peace. We are consistently calling for the cessation of military activities, the withdrawal of heavy weapons and the start of direct talks between Kiev and Donetsk and Lugansk on practical steps to restore the common economic, social and political space within the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Numerous initiatives by President Putin were dedicated to exactly that within the Normandy format, which helped launch the Minsk process, and our further efforts on its expansion, including yesterday's talks in the Kremlin between the Russian, German and French leaders. As you know, these talks are ongoing. We believe that there is every possibility we will reach results and agree on recommendations that will really allow the parties to untie the knot of this conflict.

It is crucial that everyone should be aware of the real magnitude of the risks. It is high time we abandon the custom of considering every problem separately, unable to see the forest for the trees. It is time to give a comprehensive assessment of the situation. The world is now facing a drastic shift connected with the change of historical eras. The "labour pains" of the new world structure are manifested in increased proneness to conflicts in international relations. If short-sighted practical decisions in the interest of the nearest elections at home will prevail with politicians over a strategic global vision, the risk will emerge of losing global management control.

Let me remind you that at the onset of the Syrian conflict many people in the west advised not to exaggerate the danger of extremism and terrorism, stating that the danger will somehow dissipate by itself, while attaining the regime change in Damascus was a key priority. We see what has come out of it. Huge areas in the Middle East, in Africa, in the Afghan-Pakistani area are dropping out of legitimate government control. Extremism is spilling into other regions, including Europe. Risks of WMD proliferation are intensifying. The situation with the Middle East settlement, and in other regional conflict areas, is acquiring an explosive character. No adequate strategy on curbing those challenges has been worked out so far.

I would like to hope that today's and tomorrow's debates in Munich will bring us closer to understanding the level of efforts on searching for collective answers to threats which are common for all. The talk, if we want a serious result, can only be equal, without ultimatums and threats.

We are still confident that the overall complex of issues could be resolved much more easily, if the largest players agreed on strategic landmarks in their relations. Recently H el ene Carr ere d'Encausse, permanent secretary of the Acad emie fran aise, whom I hold in high esteem, said

that a real Europe may not exist without Russia. We would like to see if this perspective is shared by our partners, or if they are inclined to keep deepening the split in the common European space and setting its fragments in opposition to each other. Do they want to build a security architecture with Russia, without Russia, or against Russia? Of course, our American partners will also have to answer that question.

We have long been proposing the creation of a common economic and humanitarian space from Lisbon to Vladivostok, based on the principles of equal and inseparable security that would encompass both members of integration unions and those nations that are not part of do them. Setting up reliable interaction mechanisms between the EAEU and the EU is especially topical. We welcome the emerging support for this idea by responsible European leaders.

On the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 25th anniversary of the Charter of Paris, Russia calls for infusing documents with real life, for preventing the substitution of the principles they contain, for ensuring stability and prosperity in the whole of the Euro-Atlantic space based on true equality, mutual respect and consideration for each other's interests. We wish success to the OSCE-formed "Group of Wise Men," which should reach a consensus in its recommendations.

As we mark the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII, one should remember the responsibility each of us bears.

Thank you for your attention.

A speech delivered at the MSC 2016 by the Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished colleague Mr Valls, distinguished Mr Ischinger, my speech will be of a more general nature, but I hope it will be useful.

The first cold war ended 25 years ago. This is not long in terms of history, but it is a considerable period for individual people and even for generations. And it is certainly sufficient for assessing our common victories and losses, setting new goals and, of course, avoiding a repetition of past mistakes.

The Munich Security Conference has been known as a venue for heated and frank discussion. This is my first time here. Today I'd like to tell you about Russia's assessment of the current European security situation and possible solutions to our common problems, which have been aggravated by the deterioration of relations between Russia and the West.

Before coming to this conference, I met with President Putin. We talked about his speech at the Munich conference in 2007. He said then that ideological stereotypes, double standards and unilateral actions do not ease but only fan tensions in international relations, reducing the international community's opportunities for adopting meaningful political decisions.

Did we overstate this? Were our assessments of the situation too pessimistic? Unfortunately, I have to say that the situation is now even worse than we feared. Developments have taken a much more dramatic turn since 2007. The concept of Greater Europe has not materialised. Economic growth has been very weak. Conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa have increased in scale. The migration crisis is pushing Europe towards collapse. Relations between Europe and Russia have soured. A civil war is raging in Ukraine.

In this context, we need to launch an intensive dialogue on the future architecture of Euro-Atlantic security, global stability and regional threats more than ever before. I consider it unacceptable that this dialogue has almost ceased in many spheres. The problem of miscommunication has been widely recognised both in Western Europe and in Russia. The mechanisms that allowed us to promptly settle mutual concerns have been cut off. Moreover, we've lost our grasp of the culture of mutual arms control, which we used for a long time as the basis for strengthening mutual trust. Partnership initiatives, which took much time and effort to launch, are expiring one by one. The proposed European security treaty has been put on hold. The idea of a Russia-EU Committee on Foreign Policy and Security, which I discussed with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Meseberg, has not materialised. We believe that NATO's policy towards Russia remains unfriendly and generally obdurate.

Speaking bluntly, we are rapidly rolling into a period of a new cold war. Russia has been presented as well-nigh the biggest threat to NATO, or to Europe, America and other countries (and Mr Stoltenberg has just demonstrated that). They show frightening films about Russians starting a nuclear war. I am sometimes confused: is this 2016 or 1962?

But the real threats to this small world are of an absolutely different nature, as I hope you will admit. The term “European security” is now more embracing than it used to be. Forty years ago, it concerned above all military and political relations in Europe. But new issues have come to the fore since then, such as sustainable economic development, inequality and poverty, unprecedented migration, new forms of terrorism and regional conflicts, including in Europe. I am referring to Ukraine, the volatile Balkans, and Moldova that is teetering on the brink of a national collapse.

The cross-border threats and challenges, which we for a while believed to have been overcome, have returned with a new strength. The new threats, primarily terrorism and extremism, have lost their abstract form for the majority of people. They have become reality for millions in many countries. As Mr Valls has just mentioned, they have become a daily threat. We can expect an airplane to be blown up or people in a café to be shot every day. These used to be everyday events in the Middle East, but now it's the same the world over.

We see that economic, social and military challenges have become mutually complementary. But we continue to act randomly, inconsistently, and in many cases exclusively in our own national interests. Or a scapegoat is appointed in an arbitrary manner.

I am offering you five theses on security as such.

First, the economy.

We have approached a change in paradigm in international economic relations. The traditional schemes are no longer effective. Political expediency is taking priority over simple and clear economic reason. The code of conduct is revised ad hoc to suit a specific problem or task or is bluntly ignored. I'll just point out how the International Monetary Fund adjusted its fundamental rules on lending to countries with overdue sovereign debt when the issue concerned Ukraine's sovereign debt to Russia.

Talks on creating economic mega-blocs could result in the erosion of the system of global economic rules.

Globalisation, which was a desired objective, has to a certain extent played a cruel joke on us. I personally talked about this with my colleagues at the G8 meetings when everyone needed them. But times change rapidly. Even a minor economic shift in one country now hits whole

markets and countries almost immediately. And global regulation mechanisms cannot effectively balance national interests.

The energy market remains extremely unstable. Its volatility has affected both importers and exporters. We regret that the practice of unilateral economic pressure in the form of sanctions is gaining momentum. Decisions are taken arbitrarily and at times in violation of international law. This is undermining the operating foundations of international economic organisations, including the World Trade Organisation. We have always said, I have always said that sanctions hit not only those against whom they are imposed but also those who use them as an instrument of pressure. How many joint initiatives have been suspended because of sanctions! I have just met with German businessmen and we discussed this issue. Have we properly calculated not only the direct but also the indirect costs for European and Russian business? Are our differences really so deep, or are they not worth it? All of you here in this audience – do you really need this?

This is a road to nowhere. Everyone will suffer, mark my words. It is vitally important that we join forces to strengthen a new global system that can combine the principles of effectiveness and fairness, market openness and social protection.

Second, the crisis of the global economic development model is creating conditions for a variety of conflicts, including regional conflicts.

European politicians thought that the creation of the so-called belt of friendly countries on the outer border of the EU would reliably guarantee security. But what are the results of this policy? What you have is not a belt of friendly countries, but an exclusion zone with local conflicts and economic trouble both on the eastern borders (Ukraine and Moldova) and on the southern borders (the Middle East and North Africa, Libya and Syria).

The result is that these regions have become a common headache for all of us.

The Normandy format has helped us launch negotiations on Ukraine. We believe that there are no better instruments for a peaceful settlement than the Minsk Agreements.

We welcome France's balanced and constructive stance on Ukraine and on all other acute international issues. I fully agree with Mr Valls that the Russian-French dialogue never stopped, and that it has produced concrete results.

It is true that all sides must comply with the Minsk Agreements. But implementation primarily depends on Kiev. Why them? Not because we are trying to shift responsibility, but because it's their time. The situation is very unstable, despite progress made in a number of areas (heavy weaponry withdrawal, the OSCE mission and other issues).

What is Russia's biggest concern?

First and most important, a comprehensive ceasefire is not being observed in south-eastern Ukraine. Shooting is routinely reported at the line of contact, which should not be happening. And we must send a clear signal to all the parties involved, in this regard.

Second, amendments to the Ukrainian Constitution have not been approved to this day, although this should have been done by the end of 2015. And the law on a special status for Donbass has not been implemented.

Instead of coordinating specific decentralisation parameters with the regions, and this is the crucial issue, Ukraine has adopted so-called "transitional provisions," even though the above requirements were put in black and white in the Minsk Agreements.

Third, Kiev continues to insist that local elections be based on a new Ukrainian law. Furthermore, Kiev has not implemented its commitment on a broad amnesty that should embrace all those who were involved in the developments in Ukraine in 2014-2015. Without being amnestied, these people will be unable to participate in elections, which will make any election results questionable. The OSCE will not endorse this.

As I said, the Minsk Agreements must be implemented in full and this is Russia's stance on the issue. At the same time, being reasonable people open to discussing various ideas, including a compromise, we, for instance, accepted the initiative of Mr Steinmeier on the temporary application of the law on special status as soon as the election campaign begins. After the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights recognises the election results, this law must be applied permanently. But there's still no progress here, despite the compromise suggested.

Of course, the humanitarian situation is extremely alarming. The economy of south-eastern Ukraine is deteriorating, that part of Ukraine is blockaded, and the German Chancellor's initiative on the restoration of the banking system in the region there has been rejected. Tens of thousands of people are living on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe.

Oddly, Russia seems to be more concerned about this than Ukraine, why is this so? We have been sending and will have to continue sending humanitarian convoys to southeastern Ukraine. I must say that Russia has shown and will continue to show reasonable flexibility in the implementation of the Minsk Agreements where this doesn't contradict their essence. But we can't do what is not in our competence. That is, we cannot implement the political and legal obligations of the Kiev government. This is under the direct authority of the President, the Government and the Parliament of Ukraine. But unfortunately, it appears that they don't have the will or a desire to do it. I think this has become obvious to everyone.

As for Syria, we have been working and will continue to work to implement joint peace initiatives. This is a difficult path, but there is no alternative to an interethnic and interreligious dialogue. We must preserve Syria as a union state and prevent its dissolution for denominational reasons. The world will not survive another Libya, Yemen or Afghanistan. The consequences of this scenario will be catastrophic for the Middle East. The work of the International Syria Support Group gives us a certain hope. They gathered here the day before yesterday and coordinated a list of practical measures aimed at implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 2254, including the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians and outlining the conditions for a ceasefire, except for terrorist groups, of course. The implementation of these measures is to be led by Russia and the United States. I would like to emphasise that the daily work of the Russian and American militaries is the key here. I'm talking about regular work without the need to seek incidental contacts, day-to-day work, everyday work.

Of course, there should be no preliminary conditions to start the talks on the settlement between the Syrian government and opposition, and there is no need to impend anyone with a land military operation.

Third, we sincerely believe that if we fail to normalise the situation in Syria and other conflict areas, terrorism will become a new form of war that will spread around the world. It will not be just a new form of war but a method of settling ethnic and religious conflict, and a form of quasi-state governance. Imagine a group of countries that are governed by terrorists through terrorism. Is this the 21st century?

It is common knowledge that terrorism is not a problem within individual countries. Russia first raised this alarm two decades ago. We tried to convince our partners that the core causes were not just ethnic or religious differences. Take ISIS, whose ideology is not based on Islamic values but on a blood-thirsty desire to kill and destroy. Terrorism is civilisation's problem. It's either us or them, and it's time for everyone to realise this. There are no nuances or undertones, no justifications for terrorist actions, no dividing terrorists into ours or theirs, into moderate or extremist.

The destruction of the Russian plane over Sinai, the terrorist attacks in Paris, London, Israel, Lebanon, Pakistan, Iraq, Mali, Yemen and other countries, the grisly executions of hostages, thousands of victims, and endless other threats are evidence that international terrorism defies state borders. Terrorists and extremists are trying to spread their influence not only throughout the Middle East and North Africa but also to the whole of Central Asia. Unfortunately, they have so far been successful, mostly because we are unable to set our differences aside and to really join forces against them. Even cooperation at the security services level has been

curtailed. And this is ridiculous, like we don't want to work with you. Daesh should be grateful to my colleagues, the leaders of the Western countries who have suspended this cooperation. Before coming to this conference, I read much material, including some by Western experts. Even those who don't think positively about Russia admit that, despite our differences, the "anti-terrorist formula" will not be effective without Russia. On the other hand, they sometimes frame this conclusion in an overall correct, but slightly different way, saying that a weak Russia is even more dangerous than a strong Russia.

Fourth, regional conflicts and terrorism are closely related to the unprecedentedly large issue of uncontrolled migration. This could be described as a great new transmigration of peoples and the culmination of the numerous problems of modern global development. It has affected not only Western Europe but also Russia. The inflow of migrants from Syria to Russia is not very large, but the inflow of migrants from Ukraine has become a serious problem. Over a million Ukrainian refugees have entered Russia over the past 18 months.

Wars and related deprivations, inequality, low standards of living, violence, and fanaticism force people to flee their homes. Unsuccessful attempts to spread Western models of democracy to a social environment that is not suited for this have resulted in the demise of entire states and have turned huge territories into zones of hostility. I remember how my colleagues once rejoiced at the so-called Arab Spring. I literally witnessed it. But has modern democracy taken root in these countries? Looks like it has, but in the form of ISIS.

Human capital is degenerating in the countries the refugees are leaving. And these countries' development prospects have taken a downward turn. The ongoing migration crisis is rapidly acquiring the features of a humanitarian catastrophe, at least in some parts of Europe. Social problems are growing too, along with mutual intolerance and xenophobia. Not to mention the fact that hundreds and thousands of extremists enter Europe under the guise of being refugees. Other migrants are people of an absolutely different culture who only want to receive monetary benefits without doing anything to earn them. This poses a very real danger to the common economic space. The next targets will be the cultural space and even the European identity. We watch with regret how invaluable mechanisms, which Russia also needs, are being destroyed. I am referring to the actual collapse of the Schengen zone.

For our part, we are willing to do our best to help address the migration issue, including by contributing to efforts to normalise the situation in the conflict regions from which the majority of refugees come, Syria among them.

And fifth, let's be as honest as possible. The majority of these challenges did not develop yesterday. And they were definitely not invented in Russia. Yet we haven't learned to react to

these challenges properly or even proactively. This is why the bulk of resources go into dealing with the consequences, often without identifying the root cause. Or we invest our energy not in fighting the real evil, but in deterring our neighbours, and this problem has just been voiced here. The West continues to actively use this deterrence doctrine against Russia. The fallacy of this approach is that we will still be debating the same issues in 10 and even 20 years. Provided there will be anything to debate about, of course, as discussions are not on the agenda of the Great Caliphate.

Opinions on the prospects for cooperation with Russia differ. Opinions also differ in Russia. But can we unite in order to stand up against the challenges I mentioned above? Yes, I am confident that we can. Yesterday we witnessed a perfect example in the area of religion. Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Pope of the Catholic Church Francis met in Cuba following hundreds of years when the two churches did not communicate. Of course, restoring trust is a challenging task. It's difficult to say how long it would take. But it is necessary to launch this process. And this must be done without any preliminary conditions. Either all of us need to do this or none of us. In the latter case, there will be no cooperation.

We often differ in our assessments of the events that took place over the past two years. However, I want to emphasise that they don't differ as much as they did 40 years ago when we signed the Final Helsinki Act and when Europe was literally divided by The Wall. When old phobias prevailed, we were deadlocked. When we managed to join forces, we succeeded. There is much evidence to support this. We managed to agree on the reduction of strategic offensive weapons, which was a breakthrough achievement. We have worked out a compromise solution regarding Iran's nuclear programme. We have convinced all sides in the Syrian conflict to sit down at the negotiating table in Geneva. We have coordinated actions against pirates. And the Climate Change Conference was held in Paris last year. We should replicate these positive outcomes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The current architecture of European security, which was built on the ruins of World War II, allowed us to avoid global conflicts for more than 70 years. The reason for this was that this architecture was built on principles that were clear to everyone at that time, primarily the undeniable value of human life. We paid a high price for these values. But our shared tragedy forced us to rise above our political and ideological differences in the name of peace. It's true that this security system has its issues and that it sometimes malfunctions. But do we need one more, third global tragedy to understand that what we need is cooperation rather than confrontation?

I'd like to quote from John F. Kennedy, who used very simple but the most appropriate words, "Domestic policy can only defeat us; foreign policy can kill us." In the early 1960s the world stood at the door of a nuclear apocalypse, but the two rivalling powers found the courage to admit that no political confrontation was worth the human lives.

I believe that we have become wiser and more experienced and more responsible. And we are not divided by ideological phantoms and stereotypes. I believe that the challenges we are facing today will not lead to conflict but rather will encourage us to come together in a fair and equal union that will allow us to maintain peace for another 70 years, at least.

Thank you.

A speech delivered at the MSC 2016 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov

Russian President Vladimir Putin has been addressing many international issues lately. I'm sure that there are professionals here and that they are aware of our stance, all the more so as Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev spoke this morning. I won't repeat myself. I would only like to add a few points.

In the past few years, each February in Munich, we have expressed the fact that European security, like the global situation in general, is developing in an unsatisfactory manner. We discuss steps that could improve the situation, but no fundamental changes ever happen.

Of course, we manage to accomplish certain things - that's true. But often agreements are not carried out due to some of the participants' attempt to revise them retroactively to gain unilateral advantage to the detriment of the seemingly achieved balance of interests.

Yesterday marked one year since the adoption of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, a document approved by UN Security Council resolution. However, the implementation of the key political provisions has not even started - mainly due to the Ukrainian authorities' unwillingness to honestly make this effort and their eagerness to find pretexts to avoid the commitments they entered. It is positive that the US and Europe seem to have come to realise that such behaviour is unacceptable, as John Kerry's speech indicated, even given all his specific political correctness in line with the tendency for Russophobia in certain countries.

Another urgent issue is the long-running crisis in Syria. Here, cooperation has resulted in creating the International Syria Support Group and adopting UN Security Council Resolution 2254 that approves key parameters for settling the issues through negotiation between the government and the full spectrum of opposition, including the demand that the Syrians should be able to decide the nation's future themselves. However, in violation of this resolution, part of the opposition is presenting ultimatums and conditions for the negotiation process - well, they certainly know who to learn from - and are attempting to create discord within the International Syria Support Group.

One cannot fail to see the degradation in the Middle East and North Africa over the past five years, which began with the start of the so-called Arab Spring and has led to Europe's migrant crisis and carries the threat that the terrorists could seize vast areas of the Middle East, North Africa and other regions. Unprecedented terrorist aggression has been seen in Europe, the United States, and the countries that are our allies under the Collective Security Treaty

Organisation in Asia - all this presents a serious threat to international security. Unfortunately, despite certain success in the fight against ISIS, the al-Nusra Front, and the like, we have failed so far to create a truly efficient anti-terrorist front, substantially due to certain countries' inability to put aside nonentity matters and intentions to use the situation for changing political regimes and implementing other geopolitical ambitions. I hope that the results of the International Syria Support Group's meeting on February 11 in Munich will help change this attitude. A true union of the leading nations against international terrorism is also necessary to prevent the collapse of Iraq, Libya, Yemen and Afghanistan, whose territories, along with Syrian territory, is being infiltrated by ISIS, who are using the lack of an efficient unified international strategy to their advantage.

Recently the situation on the Korean Peninsula has abruptly become more tense due to the irresponsible and absolutely unacceptable actions by North Korea. But here again, there is still a tendency to take unilateral steps to punish Pyongyang, in circumvention of the UN Security Council, and to boost foreign military presence in the region to the detriment of mutual efforts to de-escalate the situation through existing negotiation mechanisms.

I think it is obvious to everyone that the baffling complexity of entwined conflicts and expanded conflict areas require a coherent mutual approach. However, joint efforts are being hindered by artificial restrictions, much like NATO and the EU's refusing full cooperation with Russia, creating the image of an enemy, and arms deployment to harden the dividing lines in Europe that the West had promised to eliminate. It appears that old instincts die hard. Today, the level of interaction between Euro-Atlantic organisations and Russia in certain spheres is even lower than during the Cold War period, not to mention the returning shibboleths of an ideological confrontation, whose conceptual basis ceased to exist a quarter of a century ago. Mixing the propaganda with real politics to the detriment of the prospects for solving key international issues has become a sign of our times.

Attempts to overcome this abnormal situation are being undertaken - for instance, by creating the "Group of Wise Men" under the Helsinki +40 process. However, consensus was never achieved as the group's report (as well as the report prepared for the current conference) turned out to be NATO-centric and the Western countries are presented in the documents as the "keepers" of the international system's stability, which they apparently want to keep unshakable. But this won't happen. In any case, a reform of the world order should be negotiated, because such NATO-centric egotism, which reflects political near-sightedness, does much damage to seeking solutions to real, not invented, threats.

At the same time - and this was mentioned earlier today - last year's events again proved that when one's idea of exceptionalism is put aside, the world's top nations - the US, the EU, China, Russia, as well as other leading countries - can manage to achieve breakthrough results. I'm talking about the Iranian nuclear programme settlement and Syria's chemical demilitarisation. It is certain that this method can be successfully applied to the other azimuths of global politics, including the settlement of the situation in the Middle East and, primarily, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But to apply such collective approaches and such efficient methods, you need to get used to working as a team and not make decisions for everyone and then punish those who do not agree with such a dictate.

I believe that the Munich Conference platform can be used for a serious discussion on ways to return to the culture of dialogue and not threats, and the art of compromise and not ultimatums. I am convinced that the professionals present here have enough experience, wisdom and skill to help make diplomacy the priority, the position that it should take during this period of developing a system for stable and lasting global governance - if we are interested not in swimming with the tide to the waterfall but in overcoming negative international trends and satisfying the expectations related to our cooperative efforts.

A speech delivered at the MSC 2017 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov

Ladies and gentlemen,

Ten years ago, President of Russia Vladimir Putin addressed this conference with a speech that many in the West saw as a challenge and even a threat, although what his message emphasised above all was the need to renounce unilateral action in favour of honest cooperation based on mutual respect, international law, joint assessment of global problems and collective decision-making. Unfortunately, the warnings he sounded then about the negative consequences of attempting to obstruct the emergence of a multipolar world have become reality.

Humanity stands at a crossroads today. The historic era that could be called the post-Cold War order has come to an end. Its main result, as we see it, was the complete failure of the Cold War institutions to adapt to new realities. The world has become neither 'Western-centric', nor a safer and more stable place. This is evident in the results of 'democratisation' in the Middle East and North Africa, and in other places too.

NATO expansion has created a level of tension in Europe unseen in the last thirty years. Yet this year marks the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Russia-NATO Founding Act in Paris, and 15 years since the Rome Declaration on a new quality of Russia-NATO relations was adopted. These documents' basic premise was that Russia and the West took on a joint commitment to guarantee security on the basis of respect for each other's interests, to strengthen mutual trust, prevent a Euro-Atlantic split and erase dividing lines. This did not happen, above all because NATO remained a Cold War institution. It is said that wars start in people's heads, but according to this logic, it is also in people's heads that they should end. This is not the case yet with the Cold War. Some statements by politicians in Europe and the United States seem to confirm this particularly clearly, including statements made here yesterday and today during this conference.

I mentioned NATO expansion just now. We categorically reject the allegations of those who accuse Russia and the new centres of global influence of attempting to undermine the so-called 'liberal world order'. This global model was pre-programmed for crisis right from the time when this vision of economic and political globalisation was conceived primarily as an instrument for ensuring the growth of an elite club of countries and its domination over everyone else. It is clear that such a system could not last forever. Leaders with a sense of responsibility must now make their choice. I hope that this choice will be made in favour of building a democratic and fair world order, a post-West world order, if you will, in which each

country develops its own sovereignty within the framework of international law, and will strive to balance their own national interests with those of their partners, with respect for each country's cultural, historical and civilizational identity.

Russia has never hidden its views and has always been sincere in advocating work based on equal footing in order to create a common space of security, good-neighbourliness and development from Vancouver to Vladivostok. The tensions of recent years between North America, Europe and Russia are unnatural; I would even say they go against nature.

Russia is a Eurasian state with a variety of cultures and ethnicities. Predictability and goodwill in relations with all countries, primarily, its neighbours, have always been inherent to our policies. This line of thinking underlies our close work within the CIS, the Eurasian Economic Union, the CSTO, the SCO, and BRICS.

Good-neighbourliness and mutual benefits underlie our relations with Europe as well. We are part of the same continent, we wrote our history together, and we were successful when we worked hand-in-hand to achieve prosperity for our peoples.

Many millions of Soviet people gave up their lives for the freedom of Europe. We want to see Europe strong, independent in international affairs and taking good care of our common past and future, while staying open to the world around it. We are appalled by the fact that the EU is unable to muster enough strength and give up its Russian policy based on the least denominator principle where fundamental and pragmatic interests of its member states are being sacrificed to Russophobic speculations out of sheer "solidarity." We look forward to seeing common sense take the upper hand.

What kind of relationship do we want to establish with the United States? We want relations based on pragmatism, mutual respect, and understanding of our special responsibility for global stability. Our two countries have never been in direct confrontation with each other. Our history is steeped in friendliness more than confrontation. Russia did a lot to support the independence of the United States as it proceeded to become a united powerful state. Constructive Russia-US relations are in our common interest. Moreover, America is our close neighbour, just like the European Union. We are divided by just 4 km of the Bering Strait. The potential of our cooperation in politics, the economy, and the humanitarian sphere is enormous. But, of course, it has to be tapped. We are willing to go ahead and do so inasmuch as the United States is prepared to do so on its part.

Today there is no shortage in evaluations of the genesis of global challenges such as terrorism, drug trafficking, or the crises that engulfed territories from Libya to Afghanistan, leaving countries such as Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen bleeding. Certainly, the Munich debate will

provide an opportunity to review in detail all these issues, as well as the continuing conflicts in Europe. Most importantly, a settlement cannot be achieved by military means.

This fully applies to the internal Ukrainian conflict. There's no alternative to complying with the Minsk Package of Measures through a direct dialogue between Kiev, Donetsk and Lugansk. This is a firm position adopted by Russia, the West and the UN Security Council. Importantly, the Kiev authorities should embark on that path and honour their obligations.

Today, more than ever, we need a dialogue on all complex issues in order to find mutually acceptable compromises. Actions based on confrontation and the zero-sum-game approach will not cut any ice. Russia is not looking for conflicts with anyone, but it will always be in a position to uphold its interests.

Our absolute priority is to use dialogue to achieve our goals and mutually beneficial consensus. It is appropriate to quote a directive which Chancellor Gorchakov, back in the times of imperial Russia, sent to Russian Envoy in the United States Eduard von Stoeckle in July 1861: "there are no such divergent interests that cannot be reconciled through zealous and hard work ... in the spirit of fairness and moderation."

If everyone could subscribe to such an approach, we'd be able to quickly overcome the post-truth period, to reject hysterical information wars imposed on the international community and to proceed to keep up the honest work without being distracted by lies and falsehoods. Let this be a post-fake era.

Thank you.

A speech delivered at the MSC 2018 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

Now that international relations have entered a period of radical change, which has overturned the thesis about “the end of history,” we should remember what happened in the relatively recent past. As Russian historian Vasily Klyuchevsky said, “History (...) punishes us for not learning its lessons.”

Eighty years ago, in 1938, an agreement on the division of Czechoslovakia was signed in Munich, which led to the Second World War. During the Nuremberg Trials after the war, the leaders of the Third Reich tried to justify the Munich Pact by saying that its aim was to push Russia out of Europe. For example, this is what Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel said.

The tragedy of the Munich Agreement highlighted the main pressure points of that period, including belief in one’s exceptionalism, disunity and mutual suspicion, reliance on sanitary cordons and buffer zones, as well as open interference in the internal affairs of other countries. This memory is especially alarming when superimposed on modern realities, the underhanded attempts to distort the truth about World War II and the events preceding it, as well as the rehabilitation of Nazis and their accomplices. Some EU countries have laws equating Nazis and their accomplices with those who liberated Europe and allow the demolition of monuments to those who defeated Nazism.

The experience of WWII and the subsequent polarisation of Europe during the age of bipolar confrontation should have shown European nations that there is no alternative to building a common European home where people will not be divided into “us” and “them.” The very integration project of the European Union is rooted in a desire of the founding fathers to prevent the revival of the logic of confrontation, which was the reason behind many disasters on the continent.

For many years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany, in which Russia played a crucial role, we did our best to build a system of equal and indivisible security in the Euro-Atlantic region. We dramatically decreased our military capability on our western borders. We advocated the strengthening of common European institutions, primarily the OSCE, and the coordination of an international framework of treaties on European security.

Regrettably, our calls for an equal dialogue and for realising the principle of indivisible security fell on deaf ears.

Contrary to the promises made to us in the 1990s, as documents from the US National Archives have recently confirmed again, NATO continues its eastward expansion. NATO troops and military infrastructure are accumulating on our borders. The European theatre of war is being systematically developed. The implementation of US missile defence plans in Europe is undermining strategic stability. Purposeful propaganda campaigns are underway to engender hostility against Russia among the European public. It has nearly become politically correct in the establishment of many countries to say either bad things or nothing about Russia.

When people in the West speak about Russia's growing influence, they mostly do so in a negative way. The authors of a report for this conference encountered this as well. I would like to remind you that when Russia was weakened and facing historical trials, our partners said that they wanted Russia to be strong and that any actions by Russia's neighbors outside the region and other countries are not directed against our interests. We have been given promises regarding the EU Eastern Partnership project. We hope they will be fulfilled and that Brussels will cut short any attempts to transform this project into a Russophobic narrative. Looking at the situation in Europe from the perspective of a zero-sum game can have extremely dangerous consequences.

One such consequence is the internal conflict raging in Ukraine, which was forced to choose between the West and Russia during the preparation of the Association Agreement. It is highly regrettable that the EU, which subsequently agreed to act as guarantor for the February 21, 2014 agreement between the Ukrainian Government and the opposition, proved unable to ensure its implementation and actually supported the anti-constitutional coup. And now Ukraine, a country with huge potential and talented people, has been reduced to a situation where it cannot govern itself. Russia has a greater interest in the settlement of the internal Ukrainian crisis than anyone else. We have the legal framework for this – the Minsk Package of Measures, which was drafted by Russia, Germany, Ukraine and France with Donetsk and Lugansk and approved by the UN Security Council. This agreement must be implemented strictly and in full. However, Kiev is openly sabotaging this in the Contact Group and within the framework of the Normandy format. Moreover, Kiev officials are talking about a military scenario. I am sure that the EU is aware of the dangers of this U-turn.

Regrettably, fresh attempts are being made to force the countries that border Russia and the EU, be they in the CIS or the Balkans, to choose between the West and the East. The German newspaper Die Welt has recently published an item titled "The EU or Putin: Who Gets the Western Balkans?" [EU oder Putin – wer bekommt den Westbalkan]. And this is far from the only example of public indoctrination in keeping with the "us or them" philosophy.

The renunciation of collective Russia-EU cooperation mechanisms, such as summit meetings, the Permanent Partnership Council and industry dialogues, and reliance on pressure have not made Europe a safer place. On the contrary, the conflict potential has grown visibly, and the number of problems and crises is growing in Europe and around it.

The developments in the Middle East and North Africa have shown that the policy of replacing undesirable governments across the ocean and forcing alien development models on other countries not just creates chaos in vast areas but also strikes back with very real problems imported to Europe, primarily a spike in international terrorism, tidal waves of illegal migration and all other related problems.

All this must be taken into account to understand the genesis of the current relations between Russia and the European Union. The Russian authorities invested hard work and political capital in developing mutually beneficial relations between Russia and the EU. But the goal of a truly strategic partnership and a reliable and stable system of relations, which would enhance the joint competitiveness of Russia and the EU, has not been attained. But for this we are not to blame.

I believe that the EU has been unable to find the golden mean in relations with Russia over the past decades. In the 1990s, Russia was seen as a disciple who must be tutored in the Western ways consistently and contrary to its protests. The predominant myth now is the alleged “omnipotent Russian threat,” the traces of which they are trying to find everywhere from Brexit to the Catalan referendum. Both stereotypes are profoundly mistaken and point to the lack of common sense and understanding of Russia. We note that more and more people in the EU feel uncomfortable about the abnormal situation in our relations. Respected experts openly admit that diplomatic paralysis is the price they have to pay for demonstrations of illusory EU unity. Russia has not changed its policy approaches to cooperation with the EU. We would like to see the EU united on the basis of respect for the fundamental interests of its member states. They must be free to determine how to develop their economies and foreign economic relations, for example, whether to meet their energy needs based on pragmatic, commercial approaches or under the influence of political and ideological considerations.

We proceed from the assumption that the EU can play an active, responsible and, let me stress it, independent role in international affairs. I have taken note of Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger’s interview with the Bild newspaper, in which the respected Chairman of the Munich Security Conference speaks about the need for the EU’s higher foreign policy profile. We welcome his idea of cooperation between Russia, the EU, the US and China in creating a

security architecture for the Middle East. A similar approach could be applied to the Persian Gulf.

It is in Russia's interests to have a strong and predictable European Union for a neighbour, an EU that would be able to act as a responsible member of international life in the polycentric world that is becoming reality right before our very eyes.

It is time to stop trying to swim against the tide of history and to start working together to renew the system of international relations on an equitable basis and with reliance on the central coordinating role of the UN, as stipulated in the UN Charter. Russia is open to an equal partnership with the EU based on mutual respect and a balance of interests in order to find effective responses to modern-day challenges. We are also willing to promote our relations with the United States and all other countries on these principles.

It is important to make good use of the potential of Russia-EU cooperation so as to create a common space of peace, equal and indivisible security and mutually beneficial cooperation in the area from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. At the strategic level, I would like to draw your attention to the initiative of President Vladimir Putin on promoting a greater Eurasian project that would combine the efforts of all members of the integration structures within the CIS, the SCO and ASEAN. I see no reason why the EU could not join in this work, for example, by starting with the establishment of professional contacts with the EAEU. I hope this day will come very soon.

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