

EUROPEAN SECURITY SYSTEM IN TRANSITION
by Professor Adam Daniel Rotfeld
Under-Secretary of State, MFA (Poland)

Introductory remarks

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank you for inviting me to take part in this conference. As I understand, the main objective of our meeting is to openly exchange our views and search for the answers to a few fundamental questions:

- First of all, it is worth considering the factors determining the nature of the new international security environment. To what extent do the events of September 11 and the present state of Euro-Atlantic relations influence the shaping of the European security system?
- The answer to the first question is directly connected to the second issue: are the existing international security structures, including the OSCE, adequate to the new times – and if they are, then to what extent? Do they respond to the new needs and are they an effective instrument for preventing and countering new threats?
- And, last but not least, what should be done to avoid the marginalization of the OSCE after the next wave of NATO and European Union enlargement?

In other words, what are the expectations and prospects for the process of

security and cooperation in Europe initiated in Helsinki 30 years ago and redefined in the '90?

I am aware of the fact that these questions are not new. They must have been repeatedly debated in this room. However, it is worth bringing them up once again, at least to realize where we are and where we are heading for. It is essential not to lose sight of what is most important amidst the rough and tumble of the daily whirl. We must not fail to see the wood for the trees. Our ability to redefine in an adequate way the mandate of our Organization depends on how we understand the nature of the new challenges and threats.

1. Experience of the past

Mr. Chairman,

The role of the OSCE in the past was determined to a greater extent by the capacity to think in a creative and an innovative way and by an unconventional approach to the new emerging reality rather than sticking to stringent rules and conventional forms and ways of acting. As a result, its impact on the peaceful change and the shaping of the new security system was much greater than the influence of the institutions, organizations and structures which referred exclusively to the instruments of the international law. Let me put it bluntly: the rank and the meaning of the OSCE process was determined increasingly by the fact that in its activities the Organization paid equal, if not greater attention to the relations within the states than between them. Since the

sources of threats and instability are mostly of an internal nature, it is necessary to focus on the respect for law and the observation of commitments within the countries.

Effectiveness was a pivotal issue in the process initiated in Helsinki. This concerned in practice all decisions – from the Helsinki Final Recommendations, adopted 30 years ago to the CSCE Final Act (1975), the Paris Charter for a New Europe (1990) to the decisions of the successive OSCE summits over the last decade (Helsinki – 1992, Budapest – 1994, Lisbon – 1996 and Istanbul – 1999). The respect for human and minority rights, political pluralism, building of the state of law and the support for democracy and the institutions of civic society in particular were of key importance in the last decade for the settlement of disputes and conflicts, crises management and eradicating the sources of tensions and potential new conflicts. It goes without saying that the new mandate of the Organization, adopted in Paris in 1990 and supplemented two years later in Helsinki (1992) fully reflected the new needs and challenges.

At that time none of the conflicts in the OSCE area took on the form of an aggressive war between states; these were frequently civil wars and bloody conflicts connected with secession, disintegration of multinational federations and attempts at deterring the nations from the implementation of their right to self-determination. It should be considered as a great achievement that the majority of the newly established states managed to gain independence without the use of force. It is hard to overestimate the role that the OSCE played in this

process of peaceful transformation - it showed in many places the way to manage changes.

This experience teaches us that in order to adapt the mandate of the Organization to the new needs it is important to anticipate and understand the nature of the emerging threats.

2. New Security Environment

Mr. Chairman,

The beginning of a new epoch in Europe, the dismantling of the “iron curtain” and the shaping of the new Euro-Atlantic security environment has been marked by two dates: the year 1989 – the first non-communist government in Poland and the fall of the “Berlin wall” followed by the unification of Germany, and 12 years later – on September 11, 2001 – terrorist attacks in New York, Washington D. C. and Pennsylvania. These two dates opened a new chapter in the security issues on a global scale. It is necessary to counter threats which by their nature and scale are qualitatively different from the threats of the past. September 11 generated a shock. It turned out that the territory of the superpower that was believed to be the most secure (a sort of sanctuary in the sea of insecurity) can be a target of attacks. Moreover, the attack was effected by a non-state structure in a non-conventional way, not from outside, but from the territory of the United States, and the purposes of the attack were never divulged

publicly¹. In short, a crucial element in the assessment of the events of September 11 was the target and unpredictable nature of the attack.

This has been elaborated by many. Without indulging in detailed deliberations – let us note that the main threat to the international security today are dictatorial and criminal regimes (mainly outside the OSCE area) that support, finance and shelter international terrorist networks – on a global as well as regional and local scale. The access to weapons of mass destruction by such criminal regimes or terrorist groups is, in fact, the most urgent challenge for the whole community of democratic states – within and beyond Europe. It is a paradox of our times that the main source of instability for Europe and the world are, along dictatorial and criminal regimes, weak and failed states, and not - as it was the case in the last century – aggressive great powers whose strategies were defined by the totalitarian ideologies of fascism or communism. The states that are unable to control the events on their territories in fact only provide a shelter or a sort of asylum to powerful terrorist groups; they become a launching pad for international terrorism financed by the income generated by illegal trafficking in weapons, drugs and human beings. These are the pirates of the 21st century. They pursue their rogue dealings in the mountains and caves of Afghanistan, on the desert areas of Iraq, in the densely populated cities of the Near and Middle

¹More on this topic – Adam D. Rotfeld : Global Security After 11 September 2001. “*SIPRI Yearbook 2002: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*”. Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 5.

East and in many other regions of the world. They are a menace to the whole international community – all over the world.

The security of states usually stems from the real threat and the perception of threat. The latter factor is decisive for the definition of the security policy of states. Recent years have brought a change in the perception of threats within the Euro-Atlantic community. Many share a popular conviction that the United States and certain European countries differ fundamentally in their perception of the world after September 11. A simplified vision of one of American authors describing the God of War Mars as a symbol of the American policy, whereas the Goddess of Love Venus as a symbol of the European security policy has attracted a broad public. A famous German philosopher ascribes to the Americans a “hegemonic unilateralism”, whereas to the Europeans an “egalitarian universalism”². Others believe that for the American administration the highest priority in its security policy is the principle of effectiveness, whereas the European governments submit their policies to the principle of legalism³.

The differences go much further. I could easily evoke the opinions of many eminent American thinkers whose views on the way politics should be

² J. Habermas, J. Derida: Unsere Erneuerung. “*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*” from May 31, 2003.

³ Jürgen Habermas: Letter to America. “*The Nation*”, Dec. 16, 2002.

pursued are much closer to the orientation ascribed to Europe than America⁴. However, we cannot escape the fact that there is a prevailing conviction in Europe and America that the relations between the European Union and the United States are determined mainly by rivalry and competition and, as a result, are currently in a state of crisis.

The author of the book *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the XXI Century* predicts that Europe will inevitably become the main rival of America. What is more, he believes that unless Europe and America prepare themselves for the times after the *Pax Americana*, the clash of civilizations will not take place between the West and the rest of the world, but within the divided West⁵. This conclusion is probably supposed to play the role of a self-abolishing prophecy. It is beyond doubt that divergences in positions of states belonging to the democratic community are a normal phenomenon and that they will also occur in the future, however what is decisive are common interests and values. One of the best known Russian politicians drew attention to this fact in his recently published book *The World after September 11*.⁶

⁴ Np. Joseph Nye: *The Paradox of American Power. Why the World's Only Power Can't Go It Alone*. Oxford University Press 2002. Henry Kissinger: *Does America need a Foreign Policy. Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century*. Simons Schuster New York 2001.

⁵ Charles A. Kupchan: *The End of the West*, "The Atlantic Monthly", Nov. 2002. The book *The End of American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-First Century* by Charles A. Kupchan. Publisher Knopf, New York 2002.

⁶ Yevgenij Primakov: *Mir posle 11 sentiabria (The World After September 11)*, Publishing House "Mysl", Moskwa 2002. His prognosis of the unfolding of the relations between Russia and the USA: "Now that the vast areas of convergent interests exist, one of them being the prevention of the activities of the terrorists, the situation has changed fundamentally. This leads to the shaping of a broad platform enabling the completion of many global tasks, but at the same time it requires a correction in the realization of these tasks, particularly in a sphere as sensitive as security." pp. 156.

The division in the Euro-Atlantic community has come to light against the background of the Iraqi issue. The Iraqi crisis, however, is not the source of these negative phenomena. It is merely the trigger that brought these differences to everyone's attention.

These divergences were disclosed because war is always a matter of utmost importance for every nation state. They were disclosed and debated in public due to the lack of one clear and imminent threat, like the Soviet one was, which would unite the Euroatlantic community even if it differed on some issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Three fundamental topics are on the agenda:

Firstly – the future of the system of international security. The issue of the intervention in Iraq is a catalyst of sorts in the process of the emergence of the new system. The question is: what are the international circumstances and determining factors of the system? In other words – what are the risks and threats that the system should address?

Secondly – what is the place of the United States and what role should Europe play in such a system: will the relations of the United States with Europe be of a partner-like character, or will Europe recognise American leadership in the world. And if so – what would be the practical implications of that?

Thirdly – whether we like it or not, we have to keep redefining our role in a world that is constantly changing. This has not only been determined by the events of September 11, which brought home to Americans that they do not live in a secure sanctuary, immune to outside threats.

Let me begin with the first issue: the transformation of the international system. The political landscape after the Cold War dictated caution. Stabilizers were needed to ensure that the situation did not slip out of control. Such a role was played, among others by multilateral regional and sub-regional institutions. The new tasks of the OSCE were redefined in Paris; in parallel the new NATO institutions were established: Partnership for Peace and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, replaced by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. The political philosophy of inclusiveness - demonstrated by the open door policies of NATO and the European Union - was applied in practice.

Enlargement, by overcoming the division of Europe, was precisely the key element complementing the transformation of European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance. As the tasks change – so do the structures of both the EU and NATO and their role and function within the European security system.

3. OSCE after the NATO and EU Enlargements

Two years ago – at the end of April 2001 – then as the Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) - I organized a conference of politicians, diplomats and researchers. A question was posed to its participants: what are the consequences of enlarging NATO and the EU for European security?⁷ The results of the discussion can be comprised in the following conclusions:

Euro-Atlantic relations will be affected by the redefinition of the borders of the EU and NATO. Although the final map of Europe “whole and free” is uncertain, both structures are likely to be substantially larger in 10 to 15 years. The prospect of an enlarged NATO, coupled with an increased US emphasis on Asia, may lead to some strains and tensions. This may result from a different US approach that stresses a distinction between the US military structure, designed

to conduct military operations with a high technological content, and a type of organization, for the alliance and the EU, less advanced technologically, which would be devoted mainly to crisis management.

The fundamental problem in Euro-Atlantic relations does not concern specific issues so much as it concerns the structure and style of politics on both sides of the Atlantic. The foundation of a Grand Strategy for the 21st century already exists. It consists of two main elements: implementation of the post-1990 agreements that established a common security framework in Europe; and the extension or “globalization” of the framework to other regions.

The Euro-Atlantic community faces three large tasks in turning this design into reality:

- (a) bringing Russia into Europe, rather than attempting to exclude it;
- (b) making the USA understand that staying engaged in Europe is in its own interest; and
- (c) transforming the European Union into a more accountable, democratically controlled and security oriented institution.

Two years ago, the participants in the debate perceived the role of the OSCE – in the context of the Euro-Atlantic security – as marginal. The issue of the place and role of the OSCE has, since then, been the topic of many debates. A few months ago, at the International Security Forum in Zurich a question was raised⁸: What are the goals and what are the reasons behind keeping alive such an organization, especially if so many OSCE functions and tasks are carried out

⁷ The materials from this conference were published in a work entitled *The New Security Dimensions. Europe After the NATO and EU Enlargements. Report of the Frosunda Conference* (Ed. By Adam Daniel Rotfeld). SIPRI – Stockholm, June 2001.

⁸ Adam D. Rotfeld: *Does the OSCE Have a Future?* Paper presented at the OSCE Cluster of Competence Annual meeting (Sept. 2002) and at the ISF Meeting (Zurich, 14-16 Oct. 2002).

by other European security institutions, particularly by NATO, the European Union and the Council of Europe?

In search of a brief answer to such a question one can say that the role and position of the OSCE within the European security architecture was determined by three factors:

Firstly, a comprehensive approach to different dimensions of international relations.

Secondly, flexibility understood as an ability to adapt to a changing international environment and to undertake new challenges.

Finally, the fact that, the OSCE provides a framework for a partnership between 55 states of Europe, Central Asia and North America. In other words, contrary to the European Union or the Council of Europe, the OSCE legitimizes political presence of the United States in the OSCE area. Thus the OSCE is, in fact a Euro-Atlantic organization that stabilizes the whole region, from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Some of the OSCE member states probably will not join in a foreseeable future the Council of Europe or the European Union. On the other hand, NATO will not take over all the tasks that are carried out by the OSCE. However, for the OSCE future the most urgent necessity is to redefine its tasks in order to adapt to an evolving security environment.

What does it mean in practice?

4. Agenda Ahead

The specific and strong position of the OSCE among the European security structures is defined by its ability to search for pragmatic *ad hoc* solutions, instead of sticking to stringent procedures bound by a bureaucratic cast. In the case of many issues that the OSCE dealt with in the past – there were no defined rules or precedents. The framework defined by the OSCE legitimized the principle of efficiency and effectiveness. Such an approach offered a priority to a consensus and legitimacy over the legal norms and creation of new institutions which incidentally did not always stand the test of life. For example, the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration is a case in point here. Despite the fact that this institution was created 10 years ago (on the basis of 1992 Convention on Conciliation and Arbitration), it has never live up to the ambitious expectations. In fact it played no role at all in the strengthening of security in Europe.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE played a considerable role in the past and will also be able to play a role in the future under one fundamental condition. The participating states must ensure that the norms and procedures, as well as institutions and mechanisms that are at the disposal of the OSCE meet their needs. The assessment of the various multilateral international structures is frequently flawed in one respect. The governments and the public opinion perceive these institutions in an abstract way, separately from the political will of states.

Multilateral security structures can fulfil the tasks entrusted to them only provided that the states are interested in making good use of the structures.

Security is not a state but a dynamic process. On the contrary, the institutions and organizations have a static nature. It is crucial to timely adjust the OSCE institutions to the needs and requirements of the time. This means in practice that in the future the OSCE as the broadest Euro -Atlantic structure may be able to respond to the needs of the Euro -Atlantic community of states more adequately than many other institutions and organizations. In the face of new threats and challenges as well as new security policy priorities this geopolitical factor alone has a considerable strategic significance that cannot be overestimated. The reason for this is that the epicenter of the potential and existing upheavals is not in Europe, but on its peripheries and in the areas directly adjacent to Europe and Central Asia.

Secondly – the OSCE has a unique experience in settling internal issues. It plays a pioneering role in this regard. If the main threat to peace on a global scale is terrorism pursued by non-state structures, the presence of the OSCE should be strengthened in the areas of Northern Caucasus and Central Asia where the threat exists with particular intensity. In Europe, the OSCE has still a considerable role to play both in Belarus and the Transdniestrian region. There are signs indicating that the process, initiated 10 years ago, can open the way for the implementation of the adapted CFE Treaty. It will also accelerate the

drawing up of a political and legal basis ensuring the special status to the Transdnistria within Moldova.

Thirdly – the OSCE plays an important role in combating terrorism. The scope of its activities can be extended, encompassing the tasks that go beyond the competence of NATO and the EU. It is not only the question of a broader geographic scope, but also of the specificity of activities and the experience in building democratic institutions and the state of law.

Fourthly, the terrorist attacks on the United States proved that the distinction between internal and external security is blurred. It is true that the headquarters of the terrorist network that planned the attacks was outside the United States. However, the attacks were performed from inside of the United States. The added value of using the OSCE framework, procedures and mechanism in fighting terrorism is that norms, forms and ways, through which the organization acts, affect mostly the domestic situation in member states. This is not the case of many other international security organizations that are still developing their activities through observing the principle of non-intervention or non-interference in internal affairs.

Fifthly, nowadays essential for maintaining international security is to fight efficiently against such phenomena as money laundering, drug trafficking and corruption. They undermine the rule of law and trust in public administration, justice and local government and are like cancer within the body of civil society.

And, finally, one has to go beyond the traditional area and traditional limitations. One has to think about Afghanistan bordering on the OSCE states of Central Asia, on the one hand and the states of the Mediterranean region, on the other. It is not so much the question of intensified dialogue with the states of the region only, but a new task of active inclusion of these two regions in the political and social spheres, as well as in cooperation on the issue of migration, respect for the binding OSCE principles and norms and the application of confidence and security building measures wherever possible.

A trade-mark for the OSCE area in the field of security was in the past its attitude towards human rights, political liberties and freedom of expression, as well as the support for a democratic transformation as an integral part of the European security system. Joint efforts of NATO, the European Union and the OSCE to strengthen democracy and the rule of law should be the main tool to redefine the Euro-Atlantic partnership. As *The SIPRI Frosunda Report on the New Security Dimensions* concluded two years ago: “democracy as the new organizing principle of global security stands for the kind of relationship between states that takes account of their divergent interests but eliminates, by its very nature, the use of force as a means of settling conflicts of interest”⁹.

Mr. Chairman,

The post-cold war security system is over. In fact, it was more a description of what the new political reality was not, rather than of what it was. The OSCE

contributed greatly to the process of peaceful change. Today, we are witnesses to the emergence of a new system. Its constituent features are not yet known. There is nothing deterministic about the shape of a new security system. The question is open to what extent the OSCE will serve as the institution adequate for the new regime of security in and for Europe.

Thank you, for your attention.

⁹See – note 8.