III MOSCOW CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Conference Proceedings

Under the General Editorship of Ambassador A. I. Antonov,
Deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation

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I welcome the participants and guests of the International Security Conference to Moscow.

Your forum, which is being held by the Russian Ministry of Defense for the third time, is steadily gaining authority and becoming an acclaimed venue for committed and detailed discussion of global and regional security problems and the search for optimum ways to resolve them. Key to this success is the participation in the work of the conference of senior representatives of the defense departments of many states, the heads of international organizations and leading academics and experts.

The agenda of your meetings has particular significance in the present context. The process of establishing a new multipolar system of international relations is not without its difficulties and has been accompanied by an exacerbation of global instability. There has been no substantial progress to date as regards the creation of a single space of peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region. The situation remains tense in the Middle East and North Africa. There are grave risks linked to the situation in Afghanistan. Today’s challenges and threats clearly call for the archaic logic of geopolitical games that achieve nothing to be repudiated, together with attempts to impose home-grown formulae and values on other peoples, including by means of “color revolutions”.

The entire world community now needs to pool its efforts, relying on the principles of equal and indivisible security, the rules of international law and the central coordinating role of the UN. I am counting on substantive discussions at this conference promoting greater trust and mutual understanding between our countries and peoples. May your work be productive and successful.

President of the Russian Federation
Vladimir Putin

Moscow, May 23, 2014
I would like to express my appreciation to the Russian Ministry of Defense for hosting this event. The Moscow Conference on International Security provides a useful forum for exchanging views on a range of ongoing and emerging crises.

The focus of this year’s gathering on the situation in Afghanistan and developments in the Middle East is timely, particularly in view of the close links between the political and security dynamics in each region. In Afghanistan, the political transition process is gaining momentum. More than seven million Afghans cast their votes in the first round of presidential elections last month, demonstrating courage and commitment in determining their country’s future. It will be critical to ensure that the run-off supports, rather than undermines, national unity.

With no major security incidents, the April elections demonstrated the progress made by Afghan security forces. Nevertheless, the security and economic challenges in Afghanistan remain daunting, and the continued support of regional and international partners will remain essential.

This is also a crucial moment for the Middle East. I strongly urge Israelis and Palestinians not to take unilateral steps that would further complicate efforts to return to negotiations. The Syrian conflict continues to deteriorate, bringing immeasurable suffering to the population. The United Nations and the international community must vigorously seek to promote openings to a political solution.

Many of today’s conflicts and crisis situations feature weak or non-existent state institutions, transnational criminal threats, radicalized groups and spoilers employing asymmetric tactics. To be effective in these less predictable, high-risk environments, we must be able to adapt and respond rapidly, with sound analysis and flexible operational capacities tailored to the situation on the ground.

United Nations peacekeeping has progressively evolved and our Missions are now executing increasingly robust and multifaceted tasks. More broadly, we are working to synchronize mandate implementation with domestic political processes to ensure steady national ownership of state-building efforts. We are also strengthening institution-building, rule of law assistance, preventive diplomacy and the inclusivity of peace and reconciliation efforts.

Success depends on political will and the availability of critical capabilities, such as aviation assets, intelligence, engineers and medical experts. Our peacekeeping operations are testing new technologies, such as unarmed, unmanned aerial vehicles in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to improve our ability to anticipate, deter and respond to threats. In a major advance for civilian protection, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan is providing shelter at its bases for more than 80,000 people threatened by violence.

On these and other security challenges, both old and new, I look forward to exploring practical ways in which we can work together. Please accept my best wishes for a successful conference.

Secretary-General of the United Nations
Ban Ki-moon

New York, May 23, 2014
PLENARY SESSION

Global security and regional stability
Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to welcome you to this international security conference. It has become traditional for the Russian Federation Defense Ministry to have the pleasure of inviting leading experts from nongovernmental organizations working in the field of security to Moscow in May.

The growing interest in this forum gives us great satisfaction. This year, when circumstances are so complex, the conference has brought together around 300 guests from more than 40 countries and five international organizations. We propose to focus today on the problems of so-called “color revolutions” and regional conflicts affect global security.

The “color revolutions” phenomenon is becoming a major factor in the destabilization of the situation in many regions of the world.

Foreign values are being imposed on peoples under the guise of expanding democracy.

The socio-economic and political problems of individual states are being exploited in order to replace nationally-oriented governments with regimes which are controlled from abroad.

These in turn ensure that their sponsors have unimpeded access to the resources of those states.

The “color revolutions” are increasingly taking the shape of armed struggle and unfolding according to the rules of the art of war, deploying all available means in the process, primarily the resources of information warfare and special forces.

Full-scale military force may be used for greater effect. This is evidenced by the war against Serbia, strikes against Libya and interference in the conflict in Syria. The pretexts for external interference have been different in each specific scenario but there is a universal pattern in its implementation: information action — military pressure — a change of political leadership and an alteration of the state’s foreign-policy and economic thrust.

In a country where regime change proves impossible, the conditions are created for armed confrontation aimed at further undermining the undesirable government. The “color revolutions” experiment may be applied in any part of the world. The pattern has already been tried in the Middle East and North Africa.

We remember attempts to implement the “color revolutions” concept in the space of the former USSR. In the recent past, this happened in Central Asian countries and Georgia. Now it is Ukraine.

After the forcible removal from power of the incumbent president with the active involvement of external forces, the country hurtled towards civil war.

A seat of tension has been artificially created in Europe. Its appearance has had an adverse impact on global security, too.

Similar processes are now under way in Venezuela, where the legitimate leaders are being opposed by a so-called democratized opposition, fueled from abroad.

Analysis shows that the results of the “color revolutions” often differ substantially from their instigators’ plans.

Long-term destabilization is one result of interference. Countries with shared borders are drawn into regional confrontation.

Regional instability has an extremely negative impact on global security. Despite the efforts of the international community, the number of seats of tension remains, unfortunately, as high as ever.

The “Arab Spring” resulted in the serious destabilization of the situation in the Middle East and North Africa. Substantial conflict potential has been built up in the countries of the Sahel. A number of African states are on the verge of collapse.

There is no let-up in the conflict in Syria. The range of forces drawn into the confrontation is expanding. The region is becoming the source of a permanent terrorist threat.

Fighters return battle-hardened from Syria to their places of residence, some of them in Europe, and are ready to travel to any part of the globe at a moment’s notice.

Yet another zone of instability is Afghanistan. The International Security Assistance Force completes its withdrawal in 2014. Responsibility for stability in the country will devolve in full to the Afghan army and security structure. In this respect, there are concerns about the possibility of a growing terrorist threat from Afghanistan.

Regional instability may be advantageous to specific states. It can be very conveniently exploited to justify the large-scale transformation of the current security system.

An obvious example is the deployment of the U.S. missile defense system in Europe and the Middle East, for which the pretext was the nuclear missile programs of Iran and North Korea, which allegedly threatened the security of the U.S. and NATO.

We are convinced that regional conflicts can only be settled through extensive international cooperation. Only together can we deliver responses to new challenges and threats, including those from the “color revolutions”. We are playing an active role in tackling urgent international security problems. We have, for example, given substantial support to the initial phase of establishing a new Afghan state.

Together with our allies in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and our partners in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, we are engaged in work that seeks to enhance the potential of the armed forces in that region. This involves training
personnel, equipping the armed forces, and improving the command structure of the state’s military organization.

Efforts have recently been made to strengthen Russia’s military bases in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The numbers of the air force element at the Kant Airbase have been increased and the 201st Russian Military Base has been brought up to divisional size. The task is simple — to neutralize the threat to military security for the CSTO countries in the event of the unfavorable development of the situation in Afghanistan and a heightened terrorist threat. Separate mention should be made of the fact that large-scale military intervention in the Syrian conflict was averted through the vigorous peace initiatives of Russian Federation President V. V. Putin. Since the start of the international operation to destroy the chemical weapons withdrawn from Syria, the Russian Federation Defense Ministry has provided that country with appropriate and diverse support. All in all, it has been possible to create effective mechanisms for coordinating international efforts.

Together with the naval forces of a number of countries, the Russian Navy has played an active role in anti-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa, which has safeguarded regular maritime traffic in that part of the world. What matters now is not to lose the experience that has been amassed and to use it in other situations.

Ladies and gentlemen, I invite you to an open exchange of views. We welcome any constructive ideas. I wish you success. May your discussions be productive.
Sergey Kuzhugetovich, Ladies and Gentlemen, colleagues, the III International Security Conference, organized by the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, is a good opportunity to assess events around the world and to shape strategic opinion about global development in its various aspects.

The agenda of the conference proposes focusing primarily on the prospects for settlement of conflicts in the regions of the Near East, Middle East and South Asia, as those creating serious risks for international security and stability. Unfortunately, this acutest problem has remained in the shadow of the Ukrainian crisis in recent months. In other words, the European continent, which created two global military disasters in the previous century, instead of demonstrating an example of peaceful development and broad cooperation to the entire world, is once again drawing the attention of the international community in terms of crisis settlement to itself.

Such a state of affairs cannot but concern us, even more so given that it is not a mere coincidence, but rather a predictable result of the development of events in Europe in the last twenty-five years. Our Western partners did not use the truly historic opportunity to build a Greater Europe without dividing lines, preferring the usual logic of “zero-sum games”, the promotion of xenophobic, neo-Nazi attitudes, the dangerous superiority complex Helmut Schmidt recently called a “delusion of grandeur”, when he characterized EU policy towards Ukraine. If we wish to avoid a repeat of such crises in the future, then we should learn the lessons of the events in Ukraine and start practical implementation of the principles of equal and undivided security in the European Atlantic region and the creation of a common economic and humanitarian space stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok, as the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin said, as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, schemes based on the protection of personal exclusiveness, the use of double standards and the aspiration to find unilateral geopolitical outcomes from crisis situations are widely used not only in Europe, but also in other regions. This disrupts the effectiveness of efforts to settle crises. Absolutely different approaches are used in similar situations. In fact, in some cases, forces receive support, as it was in Libya, when our NATO colleagues actively supported opponents of the regime, but in other cases the same forces face an armed confrontation, they are declared terrorists, as was the case in Mali, where the same people who overthrew Muammar al-Gaddafi first confronted the French and then other international forces. As a result, parties to internal state conflicts are tempted to inspire an armed intervention in order to achieve their goals, which frequently have nothing to do with the fight for democracy and human rights.

Regime change operations in sovereign states, various “color revolutions” initiated from outside, are clearly harmful to international stability. The attempts to impose personal recipes of internal transformations on other peoples, without consideration of their traditions and national specifics, the “export of democracy”, destructively affect international relations and multiply the number of trouble spots on the world map. The acuteness of challenges to regional and international stability generated by different regional crises is not subsiding. The state of affairs in Afghanistan remains tense. There is a threat that the situation will get worse in the area of security after international forces are withdrawn. The Taliban announced the beginning of another “summer attack”. We are concerned about the degradation of the situation in the northern provinces of Afghanistan, from where terrorist activities flow into neighboring countries of Central Asia and countries that are allies of the Russian Federation.

We believe that when a new NATO mission is planned, which requires the approval of the UNSC, all the factors affecting the situation in Afghanistan should be taken into account. Particular attention will be paid to the Afghan drug threat. As for the fate of the agreement on cooperation between Afghanistan and the United States in the area of security, we expect that the new President of Afghanistan will take a decision on this issue based on the interests of the Afghan people and region-wide stability. Assistance to Afghanistan will also continue within the ambit of the SCO, where all its neighbors are members or observers, but Afghanistan is an observer in this organization. The potential and practical experience of the CSTO will also be used. As for the Middle East and North Africa, Russia continues to support the aspiration...
of the people of this region to a better life to ensure the implementation of democratic reforms and to take the path of sustainable development. At the same time, the preference for evolutionary, non-violent transformation, based on a dialogue aimed at the achievement of nationwide consent, is evident.

We support collective action in all cases. It was collective actions that allowed us to make progress on Iran’s nuclear programme and the chemical disarmament of Syria. We believe that there is no alternative to a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis. The attempts to use the humanitarian crisis or other aspects of this conflict to justify external interference by force are counterproductive. Such attempts are being undertaken. Yesterday, our Western partners at the UNSC tabled for a vote a draft resolution that with reference to the humanitarian crisis in Syria, proposed to apply Chapter VII of the UN Charter to this situation. There are no doubts that this would be the first step to justify external interference — this was clear from the comments made by the co-authors of this resolution at the UNSC. Understanding the whole danger of this, Russia and China imposed a veto on the entire resolution; it was not passed.

We appeal for the renewal of the Geneva negotiation process, the continuation of the inter-Syrian dialogue in accordance with the agreed agenda, the first item of which is an end to violence and the fight against terrorism. Let me remind you that last year, at the summit of the G8 at Lough Erne, the leaders of eight states adopted a Statement, which contains an appeal to the government and the opposition to combine their efforts in combating terrorism without any conditions. This obligation, undertaken by the states of the G8, should be implemented in practice and we are seeking this. It is especially topical given the activity of terrorist groups operating in Syria, on the territory of Lebanon and other states. When discussing issues relating to the transition period between the Syrian parties, they should search for compromises based on mutual consent rather than ultimatum requests for a change of regime. An important point is that the delegation of opposition groups at the negotiations must be truly representative in nature.

Unfortunately, our Western colleagues and some countries in the region of North Africa and the Middle East do not agree that it is time to renew efforts to continue negotiations and are continuing to bank on military solutions. I am convinced that this outcome has no prospects. For our part, we propose to use the positive experience of local cease-fires such as the one when Homs was liberated from militants, based on agreements between them and government forces. We are convinced that this practice can be successfully disseminated to other regions. For this we need the support of external players, and they must recognize that the regime, which they are blaming for all the troubles, is widely supported by a significant part of the population. There is and can be no other way than to organize a dialogue with the participation of Bashar al-Assad’s government.

Concerns regarding the destabilization of the situation in Libya are growing. It is evident that the situation in this country has reached a deadlock, and no “friend” of Libya can lead it out of the situation on its own. The final breakdown of the country would lead to the creation of another point of constant tensions and threats in the Sahara-Sahel region. We support the disposition of the Egyptian leaders in their constant implementation of the “road map” of the political process. We are interested in seeing Egypt continue to play a stabilizing role in the Middle East, and in the Arab and Islamic world, contributing to the reinforcement of regional security and stability, contributing heavily to the solution of problems related to the Middle East peace process. We are convinced that the need to respond adequately to the development of the situation in different countries in the region should not distract from the task of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Now it is important to keep the chances open for the renewal of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. The experience of the last year has demonstrated that unilateral efforts are not sufficient here and we need to return to collective work for the purposes of achieving a comprehensive, fair and stable solution of the Palestinian problem on the available basis in international law, which is envisaged to ensure security, good-neighborliness and a decent future for the people of Palestine, Israel and all the other countries of the region.

In a situation when joint efforts are required in all aspects of the crisis settlement, it is hard to understand the logic of those who take decisions concerning the restriction of cooperation with Russia, when responding to common challenges and threats. Of course, we can take the path of scaling back our interaction, but this will hardly contribute to the fight against terrorism, against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to overcoming the consequences of natural and man-made disasters and to the creation of barriers to extremism. The President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, emphasized a few months ago that he will consider Russian-Chinese interaction, which is based on respect for mutual interests and effective work for the benefit of the peoples of our countries and the entire international community, as a model of interstate relations. The new polycentric system of international relations should be based on such a foundation in all its components, including multilateral cooperation for the reinforcement of regional stability. The coordination of common principles of crisis settlement, which would not allow double standards, would play a positive role. We have been promoting this initiative for several years in the CSTO to develop such a list of principles of crisis management. I primarily mean confirmation of the main responsibility of the UN for supporting international peace and security, based on basic principles of international law, ensuring secure protection for civilian populations, recognition of the legal interests of all parties to conflicts, organizing an inclusive nationwide dialogue, as well as consideration of the interests of all political, ethnic and religious groups. Respect for the right of people to determine their fate independently, without external interference, should be the basis of the efforts to contribute to the settlement of crisis situations. Equal partnership between different cultures and civilizations is a key condition for a fair and democratic world order, which, I believe, we all aspire to have.

I wish participants of this conference successful and fruitful work.
The destruction of the bipolar world order brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union has not made the world any safer. Having retained and increased its own potential, the U.S. cannot countenance the formation of new centers of force, since it is positioning itself as the only international entity with the right to set the rules of the game in the international arena in order to ensure that its own interests are met. To do so, an extensive arsenal of tried and tested methods are employed, including the use of sanctions and the provision of humanitarian, financial and military-technical assistance to pro-Western opposition forces. Military force is the deciding factor set out in the UN Charter has allowed the U.S. and other Western countries to justify open military intervention in the affairs of sovereign states. The bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, for instance, began on the pretext of the need to defend the Kosovo Albanians from “genocide by the Belgrade authorities”. In Afghanistan in 2001, the military operation was presented as a “war against international terrorism”. “Preventing the proliferation of chemical weapons” that were never subsequently found served to justify the coalition forces’ invasion of Iraq in 2003. The stated aim of guaranteeing peace and stability was not achieved in any of the cases listed. On the contrary, military action resulted in the escalation of tension, the exacerbation of antagonisms, the growth of armed violence and civil war, and the deaths of civilians. The U.S. and its allies have spent more than 800 billion dollars on Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Even so, they acknowledge that the situation in that country has not normalized and there is no prospect of a positive solution in the near future. Local law-enforcement agencies are not capable of ensuring stability. A large proportion of the territory of the state remains under the control of various armed groups. A network of rebel training camps continues to operate. There is a risk that the activities of Islamic extremists will be transferred not just to the entire region but beyond it as well. During the more than 10 years that the International Security Assistance Force has been in Afghanistan, illegal drugs production has risen 30-fold. The U.S. and NATO, posing as defenders of democracy and adherents of the rule of international law, frequently do not inconvenience themselves with tight control over or liability for the appropriate use of military force in conflicts. There are instances of multiple allegedly “accidental” bombardments of civilian population by alliance aircraft, drones and military per-
As a result of drone strikes since 2002 to the present day alone, more than 2,500 civilians have died in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Yemen. We are now seeing completely different approaches from Western countries to promoting their own national interests and those of the coalition. On the pretext of disseminating democratic values, the employment of non-military resources and the adaptive use of military force to remove undesirable regimes have become common. “Color revolutions” are becoming the main means of achieving their political ambitions. In the opinion of the initiating parties, these are supposed to lead to non-violent regime change. They are based on political strategies that envisage external manipulation of a population’s potential for protest, combined with political, economic, humanitarian and other non-military measures. During the past decade, a wave of these “color revolutions” has been instigated by the U.S. in the post-Soviet space, North Africa and the Middle East. This has affected the military-political situation in these regions and the world as a whole. Regime change occurred almost without violence in Georgia and Ukraine in 2004. The beginning of the “Arab Spring” was marked by the victory of “color revolutions” in Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Yemen, and a number of other countries. Violence was limited to riots and clashes with the law-enforcement agencies. At the same time, further progress of the “Arab Spring” showed that “color revolutions” are not an absolute means of political transformation and, under certain circumstances, may degenerate into large-scale military action. The events in Libya and Syria are good examples. They clearly demonstrated an adaptive approach to the use of military force, consisting of the minimum required covert or overt military intervention in the situation depending on the situation on the ground. In the initial phase of the conflict in Libya, the covert use of military force by NATO...
countries resulted in increased assistance to the opposition in the form of weapons, ammunition and materiel. This did not, however, shift the balance of forces in favor of the opposition. Furthermore, a breakthrough in the conflict appeared thanks to effective action by Libyan troops. The situation began to escape the control of the parties interested in regime change in Libya. It was decided that international forces would carry out a military operation. UN Security Council Resolution 1973 of March 18, 2011 was used as the pretext for invasion. This envisages the creation of a no-fly zone over Libya to protect the civilian population from air raids by government troops.

This is one more example of the U.S. and the countries of the North Atlantic Alliance interpreting the rules of international law in their own interests. Essentially, adopting this resolution freed the hands of Western states to engage in overt military intervention in a domestic armed conflict on the side of the opposition. At the same time, states that might have intervened on the side of Libya’s leaders found they had a restricted range of political options for resolving the situation.

Unlike the Libyan scenario, in Syria, the countries supporting the opposition have not used overt military force to date, despite a degree of success by government troops of late. They are counting on a constant influx of mercenaries and radical fighters and on providing anti-government forces with large consignments of weapons.

Syria today is a training hub for terrorists and “soldiers of fortune” not just from the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, but from perfectly trouble-free European states as well. Essentially, a Syrian internal armed conflict has been transformed into war on a sovereign state by radical Islamist forces from virtually the entire world.

At the same time, the possibility of a military operation against the Bashar al-Assad regime cannot be ruled out. In order to create the requisite conditions, an extensive propaganda campaign is currently under way, based on the West’s interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution 2118 on Syria, which justifies a military operation in the event of problems to do with chemical disarmament.

In the light of Libya’s experience, protecting Syria’s civilian population and guaranteeing the security of foreign citizens could form the pretext for overt military intervention from abroad.

In the opinion of U.S. and NATO experts, the approach to the use of military force adopted in Libya and Syria is an adaptive one from the point of view of both military policy and that of the art of war. They claim that it makes it possible to rule out major spending on military operations and to avoid massive human casualties. That said, overt use of the armed forces is regarded as a measure of last resort.

The question naturally arises, in turn: is this approach to the use of military force adaptive when it comes to ensuring international security? We can obtain an answer by analyzing the post-conflict situation in Libya, which is now more than two years old.

Military aid to the Libyan opposition led to the emergence of an uncontrolled armed force on Libyan territory. Opposition detachments have not yet been disarmed. Competent law-enforcement agencies have not been created. The state’s territory, including its capital, has effectively been divided into zones of influence of the major tribes. Tribal military formations hold complete power at the local level and have their

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own armies, with heavy weapons, aircraft and air defense assets. The forcible Islamization of the country is under way. Armed clashes between combat detachments of Islamists and armed groups not subject to government control are gaining in scale. The growing crisis of power has resulted in the almost complete breakdown of the work of the oil and gas sector. Weapons captured from military depots or supplied to the opposition from abroad in the course of military action are falling into the hands of terrorists, extremists and criminal groups all over the world. There is particular alarm at the illegal trade in man-portable air defense systems. Terrorists in Lebanon, Mali, Tunisia and Chad are already reported to be in possession of these defense systems. Libya has become a base for various terrorist organizations, some with links to Al Qaeda. Their mission accomplished, they look for “work” outside the country and do not confine themselves solely to the North Africa region. In connection with this, Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia are taking steps to prevent Libyan extremists penetrating their territory.

Libya is not safe for foreign citizens. The whole world was shaken by the attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, during which the U.S. ambassador was killed. I do not think anyone is in any doubt that all this has substantially extended the range of threats to regional and global security. At present, the new Libyan authorities have effectively been left to face their problems alone, since not one of the countries that gave support to the opposition has assumed responsibility for a post-conflict settlement. An equally sad forecast may be made regarding Syria. What then might happen should the ruling regime fall? In all probability, radical Islamists will come to power, among whom there is no unity even now. The country will most probably become a staging post in the export of terrorism, extremism, weapons, and drugs from the Middle East to Europe and other parts of the world. We are currently witnessing yet another “color revolution” — this one in Ukraine. Unlike the country’s earlier “Orange Revolution” or Georgia’s “Rose Revolution”, this conflict moved into an intrastate armed confrontation and almost degenerated into civil war, which is a source of great anxiety. A decisive role in the seizure of power
in Ukraine, as in the events of the “Arab Spring”, was played by extremist organizations, which contained trained and well-equipped fighting groups. These groups are now taking part in a so-called “antiterrorist” operation in Ukraine’s south-eastern regions.

Unlike the Arab states, where government troops engaged in military action against armed opposition formations, in Ukraine the armed forces have been used against their own unarmed people, who expressed a lack of confidence in the illegitimate authorities. In order to suppress protest, a group of troops was created, equipped with military hardware, artillery assets, multiple launch rocket systems and combat aircraft. There have been instances of private military companies taking part in events in
Ukraine. This confirms the steady trend towards employing an adaptive approach to the use of military force that has already been observed.

The dynamic of events in Ukraine does not allow for a conclusive forecast of how the situation there will continue to develop. It is possible to assume with some confidence that an increase in the military force factor and the scale of its application will be decisive in resolving the Ukrainian crisis and will surely have an adverse impact on the state of European security.

Events in Ukraine have aggravated the military-political environment in Europe. Individual Western states have ratcheted up their anti-Russian military rhetoric. NATO’s joint armed forces groupings in the Baltic states, Poland and Romania are being boosted, as is the bloc’s military presence in the waters of the Baltic, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea.

The notice periods of NATO rapid response forces are being revised downwards. The intensity of operational and combat training of alliance troops in the vicinity of Russia’s borders is being increased. Under these circumstances, we cannot remain indifferent to what is happening. We must take retaliatory measures. The curtailment of military cooperation between Russia and NATO as a result of the sanctions imposed on our country makes measures to guarantee regional and global security less effective.

It is becoming clear that the new approaches to the role of military force and its use in conflicts are not as flawless as they might appear. Their implementation could have serious consequences for the world community.

Conflicts within states are ceasing to be solely internal and increasingly acquiring an international character. There is active outside interference in the process of resolving intrastate conflicts, from “color revolutions” to armed invasion.

The use of non-state armed formations as the main instrument of force in conflicts leads to the growth of uncontrolled force in the world. This consists of terrorism, extremism, cross-border organized crime and institutionalized mercenary activities. Entire regions descend into chaos. Force of this kind is equally dangerous to those it is aimed against and to those who created it. In addition, the “color revolutions” are one of the main causes of its occurrence. And we must be aware of that.

It is now becoming obvious that regional and global security problems are becoming increasingly multilateral in nature and can no longer be tackled solely from a position of force. We must be equally aware of our responsibility for world security and not take an us-
and-them approach to the attendant problems. More is required than the parties merely being prepared to discuss these problems. Targeted joint action to improve the international security system is also needed. Only constructive and equal cooperation in this field can ensure that the security of all countries is guaranteed. In conclusion, I want to stress that any conflict is a failure to understand one another and to reach agreement. For this reason, we must not make our own ambitions the key issue in tackling security problems; the key should instead be clear recognition of the consequences of the steps being taken and responsibility for one’s own actions.
Ladies and gentlemen, traditionally, every May, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation organizes a discussion of transnational issues in the form of an applied-knowledge conference. Undoubtedly, this quorum is a valuable platform for testing the optimality of landmark decisions related to the military security of our states and for harmonizing the sometimes diametrically opposed positions of various countries and international organizations. At the moment, the subject of the Moscow conference is as relevant and topical as ever. Recent developments and the related actions and reactions of practically all the players in the international arena point to what is still a high probability of the use of military force in resolving not only transnational, but also internal conflicts on all continents.

I completely agree with my Russian colleagues in their assessment that today it is virtually impossible to find an armed conflict that is exclusively internal. A conflict may be bounded by the territory of a single state, but in fact it represents a cauldron boiling over with the colliding interests not just of the political, ethnic, and religious groups of one nation, but also the interests of neighboring countries, the alliances of multiple countries, geopolitical power centers, and non-governmental actors.

Recent events in North Africa and the Middle East are a clear illustration of this. Chechnya is another example. Our Russian colleagues know better than anyone else that Khattab and his soldiers certainly did not possess Russian Federation passports. And who can say how many Malians fought in the recent armed conflict in Central Africa? What is the percentage of Syrian citizens in the ranks of the Syrian rebel army? All this testifies to the internationalization of contemporary domestic armed conflicts.

They are often based on ideas formulated at the end of the last century by the American political scientist Gene Sharp, namely the strategies of “a non-violent overthrow of the government” or, to give it a more modern name: the “color revolutions”. Of course, the general principle of “divide and rule” is as old as the world. In today’s world there are many “frozen” conflicts, existing because of and fuelled by geopolitical fault lines. Activating them requires a specific catalyst. Implemented in practice, the theory of “color revolutions” could not be more perfect for this role. It is precisely this theory that allows for the attainment of goals such as the full or partial disintegration of the target state, a qualitative shift in its domestic and foreign policy courses, and the establishment of external control over the country.

Today, in order to effect a change of power in an “objectionable” country — in fact, to engineer a coup d’état — various organizational, financial, methodological, and technical measures are widely used, their efficiency virtually independent of the socio-economic and political situation in the target country. Proof of this is the fact that the people of Libya, Egypt, and Syria were clearly not poverty-stricken, with large social-welfare programs active in all three countries.

Practice shows that it is possible to “break apart” both a poor and a rich country. At the same time, there is a rule that applies consistently: those states without solid state power or a clear feedback mechanism between the people and the power structure, with rampant corruption in the echelons of power, and the substitution of the primacy of state interests with that of personal gain, tend to be more prone to destructive centrifugal forces. Another rule of thumb: most susceptible to the “color revolutions” are those countries trying to lead a “double” game in the international arena, declaring their non-alignment with existing blocs.

That is why Belarus sees its participation in intergovernmental organizations such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Customs Union, the Union State, and other integrative associations as an effective factor in combating unconventional risks, challenges, and threats to military security in the form of “color revolutions”. Creating security mechanisms such as the Collective Rapid Reaction Force and collective peacekeeping forces, ensuring the effective functioning of the regional grouping of armed forces of Belarus and Russia, as well as the united regional air defense system of the armed forces of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation, as part of the framework of the Federal Union, are the most effective antidotes to destructive forces. It is precisely for this reason that the President of Belarus, while watching the recent military exercises of Russia’s strategic nuclear forces, voiced the idea that our strength lies in unity. While Russia and our allies are strong, we are strong as well.

As already mentioned, all “color revolutions” have been carefully prepared from outside. The first step is to create in advance and to educate the “leaders” and organizers of the protests, which serve as a lever for the change of regime. If this goal is not achieved via information and psychological pressure on the authorities, mass riots are provoked using weapons — riots that then develop into a so-called internal armed conflict. For a description of the
For some years now there has been much discussion in various fora and in the press about the inadequacy and failure of international security institutions. Much arguing has taken place about the sluggishness and inertia of the decision-making mechanisms of the United Nations and the “double standards” of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Assessing the effects of “color revolutions” in terms of protection of basic values and human rights, it must be said that there is certainly an element of veracity in these statements.

Enshrined in Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, the classic use of military force to maintain or restore international peace and security clearly no longer corresponds to today’s changed conditions. During “color revolutions”, peacekeeping mechanisms become ineffective as, in these military conflicts, there is seldom a clear line dividing the opposing sides. Among the fighters there are insurgents and legitimate armed forces, but also mercenaries working for private military companies, militants belonging to radical parties and youth organizations, and soldiers of fortune fighting as part of international terrorist organizations. In other words, apparent state control over and monopoly on the use of military force disappears.

Moreover, illegal armed groups can be used by either party to achieve military superiority; they can also themselves be one of the sides in a military conflict. As for multinational irregular armed groups, citizenship or ethnicity cease to be a determining factor or, really, to play a role of any significance. In such circumstances, the UN’s decision to grant a mandate for the separation of warring terrorist groups or mercenaires would be quite illogical. Furthermore, the UN’s amorphous position in relation to the legitimacy of “color revolutions”, and the lack of clear criteria for assessing the legality of certain nations exercising their rights to independence and self-determination using measures of armed conflict, does not allow for an assessment of the validity and legitimacy of the use of military force by either the state itself or the international community with the aim of preventing or de-escalating internal armed conflicts.

The role of the armed forces — which are intended to protect the independence and territorial integrity of the state from external threats — in the prevention of mass unrest within the territory of a state experiencing a “color revolution”, encouraged and supported from abroad and accompanied by the large-scale use of arms and military equipment, becomes blurred and unclear. A striking example of such an international legal vacuum is the events in Ukraine,
where, with active external support, an internal armed conflict — in fact, a civil war — has been unleashed, with people, including civilians, being killed. An important aspect that characterizes the dangerous consequences of “color revolutions” for international and regional security systems is the high probability of losing control over the security of weapons and military equipment via the illegitimate coming to power of certain entities. “Revolutionary chaos”, lawlessness, and looting contribute to compromised military warehouses and depots, and an unprecedented increase in the illicit arms trade. Ultimately, it may lead to the fact that weapons of mass destruction and the technologies for their manufacture could fall into the hands of terrorist groups. It is sufficient to recall the example of Syria, where evidence of the use of chemical weapons caused an unprecedentedly strong reaction from the international community. In these “post-revolutionary” conditions, state control of arms is not the only thing that is lost. Most significantly, what is destroyed is the intergovernmental system of control over military activities, rooted in international treaties. One of the negative consequences vis-à-vis building a system of European regional security is the existence of so-called “gray areas” or areas of states that are not subject to arms-control measures. This applies to the position of the Baltic States in respect of arms control within their national borders. The “post-color revolution” formation of new territorial entities and states that do not participate in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe could mean that these territories and countries become completely unrestricted springboards for the concentration of troop formations and advanced weapons. In addition, these areas carry a high likelihood of hosting bases for the training of militants comprising irregular armed groups, which poses a high potential military threat to the entire international community. Suffice to recall the plans of jihad-preaching international terrorist organizations to create an Islamic state in Central Asia. The consequences of the use of military force during “color revolutions” should also be linked with the probability of humanitarian catastrophes, which lead to an unprecedented increase in migration and the number of refugees. All this creates fertile ground for human trafficking, cross-border crime, and the activity of drug cartels. During “color revolutions”, information warfare is conducted on an unprecedented scale, and not only — and not so much — by parties to an externally triggered internal armed conflict, but rather by geopolitical power centers with a vested interest in the conflict. Information warfare conducted by the parties to the conflict spurs the growth of nationalist sentiment and xenophobia on both sides, the most dangerous trend being the growth and legalization of neo-Nazi organizations encouraged by the leadership of individual states. As someone from a country that lost one in ever four citizens on the fields of World War II, I feel complete bewilderment at the inactivity of Europe and the lack of any sort of meaningful European sanctions against this activity.
In a global sense, information warfare during a “color revolution” leads to a military-political confrontation and war hysteria on the part of geopolitical power centers. Individual states significantly increase their military budgets in order to support the information campaign. In turn, a spur in military production and the growth of strategic, long-term military spending determine the foreign policy vectors of states, based on military solutions to problems that arise. This is a road to nowhere, leading to nothing but a resumption of the Cold War and the arms race.

Especially alarming is the fact that, as part of this intensified activity, the number of NATO troop formations grows, new military bases are created, and there is intensive growth in the military transport infrastructure, while military airfields and ports in Eastern Europe continue to be modernized. Also significant is an increase in the intensity and scope of NATO military exercises in this region, specifically concerning operational and combat training. The main goal of ongoing and planned activities is to test the readiness to repel the so-called “threat from the East”. It is, however, unclear what sort of security is possible, as, at this moment alone, in Poland and the Baltic countries, as well as in the Baltic Sea, five multiservice, multilevel Joint NATO Forces exercises unified by a single concept are being held simultaneously. Thus, we can say that, as a result of Ukraine’s “color revolution”, the peace initiative that was put forward by Russia and Belarus several years ago and was aimed at strengthening European security cannot be adequately assessed today by our partners among NATO member countries. This is too bad, since this initiative was aimed at avoiding large-scale military operations on the CSTO–NATO border. Unfortunately, today the intensified operational and combat training measures of NATO in the Republic of Poland and the Baltic countries, as well as attempts at understating their magnitude, point to the opposite, i.e. a continuous process of creating a source of tension in Europe.

In summary, it is clear that the consequences of “color revolutions” can potentially be very destructive to existing global and regional military security. They are able to generate a number of threats, plunging the world into a new round of military confrontation in the form of a cold war. It is precisely not in the disintegration but the fostering of ties between defense departments as part of international military cooperation that we see a unique window of opportunity. After all, it is precisely professional military personnel who can appreciate better than anyone else the catastrophic consequences of the use of military force, first and foremost as part of “color revolutions”.

Increasing international military cooperation at all levels and in all areas will facilitate the fostering of contacts and the reaching of compromises. Platforms for this already exist. These are: the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Vienna Document, the Open Skies Treaty, et al. Another issue is that they already no longer fully reflect the current needs in the area of European security. They still make use of the bloc approach left over from the cold war — this despite the fact that Astana saw the
signing of a declaration on the indivisibility of the European security space.

Nor are the guidelines on strengthening confidence and security laid down in the Vienna Document adequate for modern realities; they are in need of updating. At the same time, the proposals to improve it put forward by some states are, due to their fundamental nature, more declarative than anything else. Today it is simply unrealistic to achieve real consensus on such proposals as a significant reduction in the thresholds of observed military activity.

The first step towards the modernization of agreement-based relationships — when, due to objective reasons, it is not possible to reach a consensus within the broad format of the OSCE — would be to search for acceptable solutions at the regional level. In our opinion, the interaction of two military-political blocs per the “NATO plus CSTO” formula would correspond both to the interests of the alliance as well as the interests of the CSTO.

Joint exercises have proven to be effective in strengthening international and regional mechanisms for ensuring military security, partnership and trust. Teamwork in the course of exercises to counter military threats posed by “color revolutions”, to fight against transnational crime, to ensure border security, and to eliminate the use of arms, will allow members to find common ground in countering terrorism and extremism, the activities of soldiers of fortune, and other irregular armed groups. In addition, it will help to determine the appropriate forms and methods of using armed forces in military conflicts generated by “color revolutions”. In the end, it should help find a point of balance between the need for an adequate response to military threats born of “color revolutions” and the inadmissibility of the use of the army against civilian populations.

An important role in determining the forms and methods of the use of military force is played by strong government power, which should be ready to use all available means to resolutely fight for a country’s independence, constitutional order, and territorial integrity, with the active support of the UN and the international community.

The responsibility for war crimes is a case apart. The effectiveness of ensuring criminal liability worldwide using Interpol’s systems has been proven. The same mechanism is necessary in the military sphere, provided that all states without exception participate in it. To create it, it is necessary that the UN clearly identify the nature of war crimes that may occur during internal armed conflicts provoked by “color revolutions”, and compile a list of such possible crimes.

At the conclusion of this report, I would like to note that the Republic of Belarus is open to cooperation in all aspects of developing regional and global security systems, with the single significant condition that these systems take into account the interests of all participants on the basis of the principles of mutual trust and understanding.
Your Excellency General Sergey Shoigu, Defense Minister of the Russian Federation, Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, First Deputy Minister of Defense, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. At the outset, I would like to thank you, on my behalf and on behalf of the Govt. of Pakistan, for inviting me to attend the 3rd Moscow Conference and honoring me by allowing me to share my thoughts on problems of regional security. This distinguished forum is undoubtedly an opportunity for the countries in the region, including the Russian Federation, to understand the problems in the defense and security fields and find solutions for durable and lasting peace in the region.

As regards South Asia, it stands at a crossroads in terms of its security and stability environment. The entry into Afghanistan by U.S.-led NATO / ISAF Forces after 9/11 and the ensuing war on terror, which has entered its 13th year, is going to culminate with the withdrawal of U.S.-led NATO Forces from Afghanistan by December 2014. During this period the world has witnessed a number of tumultuous events in the South Asian region, which has been regarded as a hub of the world’s economic activity. On the one hand, there have been growing threats of terrorism and extremism to regional stability, while, on the other hand, we have noticed the shifting of global economic and financial interests from the former centers of economic excellence to this region, which is blessed with natural geographical connectivity as well as unparalleled energy reserves. The booming economic developments have entailed increased energy reserves demands and competing interests among regional as well as global players. This implies that instability in this region cannot be just a local phenomenon; rather it has serious global ramifications.

The ongoing war on terror in Afghanistan and its failours continue to haunt regional stability. While troop drawdown is round the corner, the present security situation in Afghanistan remains challenging, with the Afghan Government facing a number of problems, including an increase in opium production, which helps finance the insurgency.

The Afghan National Army, entrusted with providing an enabling security environment, is a combination of people with diverse and incompatible ethnic and political backgrounds. Its efficacy in dealing with the planned transition and its aftermath is, therefore, ambiguous. The militant groups in Afghanistan continue to gain strength, with frequent attacks in some areas at the same level as has been witnessed in previous years. The post-2014 Afghanistan situation, therefore, becomes of vital importance not only for the future and security of Pakistan but for the region as a whole. It is clear that the process of stabilization in Afghanistan would make substantial progress if all the countries in the region support common objectives. Afghanistan’s immediate neighbors, as well as others in the region, are apprehensive about the spillover effects of militancy, drug trafficking, arms proliferation and refugee outflows. On the positive side, the possibilities of greater regional economic cooperation, including cross border connectivity, communications and energy links, can help reinforce efforts for peace and stability in Afghanistan. These factors provide some of the potential common ground on which to develop a regional approach to Afghanistan for 2014 and beyond. Needless to say, the historical adversarial relations between Pakistan and India have gravely impacted the regional stability. Despite the resumption of the Composite Dialogue process, the trust deficit between the two neighbors continues to persist and core disputes, including the Kashmir issue, are yet to be resolved. Increased Indian military spending has led to wider conventional disparity. Furthermore, the nuclearization of South Asia has added a new dimension to the security and stability of the region. One of the disturbing elements is the discriminatory treatment of the nuclear issue in the region by the global powers. It needs to be acknowledged that the mishandling of this particular security aspect has more global implications than any other regional issue. While it calls for restraint by the regional nuclear players and an avoidance of asymmetry in the conventional domain, it also demands of major powers that they complement the regional efforts for lasting peace.

In today’s world, the concept of security transcends the traditional concept of border security. Due to the increase in population in the underdeveloped and developing regions of the world, we witness a more complex form of security paradigms emerging out of national and regional mindsets. Countries and regions are trying to secure their future by exploring new avenues of energy resources, water resources, adequate food and health safeguards for their populace. These socio-economic imbalances have resulted in the mass movement of illegal migrants and refugees to other countries, thus compounding the already fragile security environment.

The stability in the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) has also been jeopardized due to a number...
of factors. The menace of piracy, though an old phenomenon, has emerged as an existential threat in the entire expanse of the Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. Since 2008 the issue has gained a global image as a severe threat to seaborne trade and safety of navigation. Although apparently emanating from the Horn of Africa, its roots and benefits are linked to various capitals around the world. Drug trafficking, gun-running, human smuggling and incidents of maritime terrorism have made the region more volatile than ever. The situation becomes even more complex with the presence of extra regional maritime forces for protection of their maritime interests. The Indian Ocean, with the three most important choke points, that is, the Strait of Hormuz, the Malacca strait and Bab-al-Mandab, remains a strategic highway for the global sea trade. Any interruption or interference to supply routes has far-reaching implications for the global economy. It is therefore imperative to work for lasting stability in the maritime domain as well.

We have witnessed the emergence of a complex power matrix on the international plane, with implications for the region. We see a reduction in the strategic space for the states and a compulsion to manage security interests within a cooperative framework, while remaining relevant to key international players. Despite a gradual shift towards multi-polarity, the USA will continue to exert itself as a predominant power and pursue its global interests. However, with the emergence of the Russian Federation and China on the global scene, there is a likelihood of countries around the globe seeking to form regional alliances to safeguard their economic and security interests. The role played by China and Russia in the recent crisis in Syria, along with the thaw in relations between the West and Iran, can be regarded as emerging signs of bi-polarities with regional dimensions. The existing regional alliances like ASEAN, SCO and SAARC would continue to play a major role in safeguarding the economic and strategic interests of their member-countries. These organizations therefore need to be strengthened.

Having discussed the regional stability problems, allow me to apprise you on the role Pakistan has played in improving domestic, regional and global stability. Your excellencies, Pakistan, which has been at the forefront of the war against terror for more than a decade, has played a pivotal role in securing and ensuring world peace by fighting terrorism and extremism. This has resulted in the loss of more than fifteen thousand precious lives, besides economic losses of over $100bn. As we speak today, over 150,000 troops are deployed on our western border along Afghanistan.

The country that has suffered the most due to instability in Afghanistan, Pakistan has the greatest stake in a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. As such, it is in Pakistan’s interest to engage constructively with regional countries with a view to ensuring that they reinforce Pakistan’s endeavors for Afghanistan’s stabilization. Pakistan has been following a policy of constructive engagement with the Afghan Government. The Prime Minister has underscored two key principles of Pakistan’s policy: non-interference and “no favorites”. An effort is under way to strengthen the bilateral relationship with Afghanistan, with emphasis on trade and economic partnership. Simultaneously, Pakistan has been extending support to Afghan peace and reconciliation through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process.

Rather than being stuck in the past, Pakistan’s Afghan policy has pragmatically evolved in harmony with the existing circumstantial realities in Afghanistan, at home and in the wider region. Overcoming current and future security risks emanating from the Afghan conflict and benefiting from trade and energy opportunities in South and Central Asia in the long run are the hallmarks of its Afghan rethinking and “regional pivot” approach. It is within such currently and futuristically valid factors that Pakistan’s interest in Afghanistan and the region can be properly contextualized and explained.

Pakistan, for its part, has been taking a number of initiatives in line with its aspirations to promote its desire of economic cooperation in South and Central Asia. Pakistan has been following a policy of building and stabilizing relations within its immediate region and pursuing policies that guarantee enhanced trade relations and energy cooperation. Pakistan’s strategic pivot has four main objectives: normalization of political relations with its neighbors, increased trade with neighbors, access to Central Asian energy resources and making Pakistan a land bridge for trade and energy transportation from Central to South Asia. These aspirations cannot be realized unless there is peace in the region. This is evident from Pakistan’s proactive pursuit of the peace process with India, rapid progress in its relations with Russia and Central Asian States and trade and energy-centric ties with China and Iran respectively.

It needs to be realized that events like 9/11 have shown the magnitude of the havoc that can be wreaked by non-state actors who have a trans-border, trans-cultural, trans-religious and transnational outreach. While we accept the potential benefits accruing out of the concept of today’s globalized world, yet the potential for destabilization of all the region due to a single terror incident cannot be ignored, as seemingly distant regions are interlinked and interconnected due to the commonality of commercial and economic interests.

In the present fragile political, security, economic and social environment, it is imperative that the world community at large and regional countries in particular do not interfere in the internal political and security dynamics of Afghanistan, and should instead stay focused on bringing social sector reforms to ameliorate the sufferings of ordinary Afghans. Regional countries need to play a responsible role to ensure that the economic potential is accrued from a stable Afghanistan. It is only through generation of economic activity that we can ensure a stable and prosperous Afghanistan that would, in turn, ensure regional peace and prosperity. Afghanistan’s security and political transition still revolves around a host of ifs and buts, including whether or not the international community will retain its current commitment to Afghan security and economy for a decade after 2014, reconciling the currently competitive but potentially conflicting security interests of regional countries in Afghanistan.

In the regional perspective, it is incumbent upon regional players to adopt a policy of co-existence and resolve disputes through
peaceful means. On the global plane, the world needs to have a new set of socio-economic and socio-cultural values which should not only address the aspirations of the people but also safeguard their rights to benefit from their resources. The time has come to invest in human capital by adopting a just and equitable distribution of ever shrinking global resources. Thus the important factor in ensuring global peace and security is the future role of global powers in the stability equation of the regions of the world, including South Asia. I once again thank General Sergey Shoygu, Defense Minister of the Russian Federation, and the organizers of the III Moscow Conference, and do hope that such Seminars and Conferences will help the neighboring countries in evolving joint strategies to overcome common threats and security problems.
It is an honor for me to speak at this important forum in my capacity as the Minister of Defense of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Esteemed delegates, the Islamic Republic of Iran is a state whose defensive strategy is based on the key principle of relying on internal forces as well as mutual relationships with friendly and interested countries — a paradigm in which there is no place for aggression, but under which aggressors will without a doubt be powerfully repulsed. In accordance with this strategy, at the source of which are the views and religious dictates handed down by The Supreme Spiritual Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the production and deployment of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear or chemical, are considered a prohibited act, and are therefore rejected. At the same time, defensive capability based on conventional weapons, which are meant to create a system of effectively containing any aggressor — who, armed with similar weapons, would dare to attack the Islamic Republic of Iran — is an indubitable priority. Thus, allow me, on the basis of these principles, to again announce my country’s readiness to carry out its regional, international, and mutual obligations before other countries and governments of the world and its regions, and to express our position as regards the major threats to international security.

**Terrorism**

In my capacity as the Minister of Defense of a country that itself is the victim of blind, mercenary terrorism, which, unfortunately, enjoys support and protection from those who present themselves as “fighters against terrorism” and “defenders of human rights”, I hereby declare that the government and people of Iran are, as they have always been, against any form of terrorism, especially state terrorism. Today, terrorism — due to strategic errors and the generous support of the United States of America and its allies, as well as their military-financial and educational assistance — has gone from being a security threat to a dangerous situation, to a military threat, and that is why doing battle with terrorist acts and organized terrorism is a serious task for all responsible states. The necessary fight against the areas serving as cradles for terrorists, whose roots are in injustice, discrimination, despotism, and the exploitation of dispossessed and oppressed nations, and the efforts aimed at stopping the large-scale activities of those who have made themselves known as part of aggressive armed extremist groups, are impossible unless there is the precondition of a comprehensive readiness to act. I would like to take this opportunity to address certain countries in the region that are fooling naive and fanatically-minded people by promising them an eternal life in heaven, while sending them in the direction of eternal hell, and also to the ignorant people who believe that it is possible to walk into the kingdom of heaven over the corpses of completely innocent people in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and other parts of the world. They are hereby warned that this is a road to nowhere, a path that is in stark contradiction to the methods and wills of all celestial prophets, especially the last one — the prophet Muhammad.

**Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction**

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the threat of using them in those cases when governments have a limited and short-sighted view of their security and the global community, as in the case of the threats of the Clinton government to use nuclear weapons and the military activities of Bush in Afghanistan and Iraq under the empty premise of fighting terrorism and the presence of weapons of mass destruction, demonstrate how dangerous it can be to ignore international law and norms, especially if it is done by those governments that strive to be known as fighters of terrorism and the weapons of mass destruction. I am the Minister of Defense of a country that has experienced in full measure the harmful and merciless consequences of the use of chemical weapons by the Baathist government and the army of Saddam, which occurred numerous times while the international community and its power structures maintained a strained silence. Barbaric attacks, of which the Iranian people were not the only victims, but also the Iraqi people in Halabja, led to many tortured deaths, and their consequences will spill over into future generations.

I am convinced that the fight against weapons of mass destruction and the ubiquitous indiscriminate control over their proliferation, especially in the Middle East, is a guarantee of the institutionalization of questions of security and the effective fulfillment of international laws and norms among the members of the international community. Based on this, I hereby announce the complete support of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the continuation of talks with the “5+1” Group, and hereby plea in favor of the removal of cruel sanctions and the annulment of resolutions which were passed under baseless pretexts by the UN Security Council as regards my country.

**Political Meddling**

A third factor that is a threat to the peace and security of the international commu-
nity is the political meddling of the United States and some of its major allies in the internal affairs of other countries, the harmful results of which we can witness by casting our eyes towards any point on the globe. As the Minister of Defense of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I declare that we are absolutely against the incendiary policy of the United States and its allies, based on the misuse of sacred and hard-won concepts such as freedom, independence, democracy, and the fight against totalitarianism in order to overthrow lawful governments and to isolate countries striving for independence. We see these methods as comprising one of the primary factors threatening the world and international security, and as the main reason for the growth and development of terrorism, and are convinced that the meddling of governments on the heels of their gain-seeking and anti-humanitarian aims will inevitably lead to consequences such as the birthing of crises and the destabilization of situations.

Organization Responsible for Security
There is yet one more sad circumstance. Many organizations that have been entrusted with responsibility for security in the region and the world have unfortunately not been able to take effective measures to shut these crises down fairly and once and for all. Many of the existing organizations responsible for matters of security have been shown to be incompetent, and at times were a factor in the escalation of conflicts. Most conflicts we mentioned earlier are ones that cannot be resolved without the presence and active participation of regional governments, whereas the meddling of these organizations for the most part occurs on the basis of the following thinking, “the logic of force, not of social and local logic”.

Matters of security in the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia, related to stable historical and social realities and the people of the region, are least amenable to solutions via imperial policies by governments or organizations far removed from the region. NATO’s activity in Afghanistan has proven the truth of this. These days, the volume of drug manufacture and sales has grown many times over, the power of the Taliban in various regions of the country has also increased, and so it is unlikely that on the day NATO exits the region it will be leaving greater security in its wake.

The fact that the subject of terrorists in Iraq is of continuous, daily concern shows that security matters cannot be resolved by remotely located organizations, and that the only effective solution is the participation of regional governments acting within the framework of “a policy aimed at the search for cooperation in the sphere of defense and security”, with the aid of their own and local mechanisms of fighting common threats.

The greedy, self-seeking policies of security organizations far removed from the region, and their advancement to the East, which is occurring at the price of splitting the region, causing forced conflicts between various states, will be of no help in promoting security in the region.

Abiding by Principles and Respecting International Values
In order to provide for global security, it is necessary for the governments that make declarations about putting international laws and norms into effect to abide by international principles and values even more so than others. Violations of laws by them is possibly not being investigated in any tangible way, yet the role of these violations in the destruction of values and the putting up of barriers to their institutionalization in the international community is quite conspicuous. Ignoring the personal and national immunity of states with the aid of modern-day instruments of espionage and computer programs is a violation of international law and a threat to global security.

The use of double standards when approaching matters of international import as well as regional and global difficulties is an example of a type of pernicious maneuver that leads to the worsening of global problems.

Ladies and gentlemen, respected delegates, although I know that the topic of international security is not exhausted by the five aspects mentioned, and in this respect many other issues could be listed, still, I believe that focusing on these five topics is of the greatest benefit. As my presentation comes to a close, please allow me to declare that the Islamic Republic of Iran, which in the past three decades has made greater efforts than any other country to bring into existence regional and international stability and security, and in connection with this took important steps in order to defuse crises and problems to do with security in Central Asia, in the Caucasus, in Iraq, in Syria, in Lebanon and in Palestine, will continue these efforts uninterruptedly. I am convinced that, although each one of us has come to this forum from a country with a culture and ideology different from those in other countries, and each one of us possesses a unique, personal point of view, yet we can all agree that security is something all of humanity desires, and that using force is an unacceptable and expensive way that not only harms security, but also leads to new hatred and violence.

The fight against the policy of violence, against extremism and terrorism is necessary and inevitable in order to ensure global security. At the annual UN summit in 2013, the President of the Islamic Republic proposed a plan for “a world free of violence and extremism”, which was approved and accepted by the overwhelming majority of the members of that organization. In order to strengthen security and to promote regional cooperation, greater attention than before needs to be paid to possibilities within the region. In order to make this happen, we can, here and now, plan meetings in order to have negotiations and consultations, and create the appropriate organizations. Thus, it would be commendable if we made these fundamental principles the basis for our mutual actions aimed at defusing disagreements and reaching a mutual understanding, thus directing our efforts at transforming differences in our view of our ostensibly varying interests into a basis for hearing each other’s words and aiding in achieving a mutual understanding and continuing efforts to find stable ways towards achieving peace and security in the world.
The element of force is acquiring ever greater weight in the foreign policy toolbox of the U.S. and the West. Coercive intervention in states’ internal affairs is carried out using not only the armed forces but extremist marginal groups with complete disregard for the rules of international law. In order to legitimize military action, attempts are frequently made to lobby for the adoption of UN Security Council resolutions (former Yugoslavia, Libya, Syria).

The extensive application of the policy of sanctions. At the beginning of the 21st century, U.S. economic sanctions alone operated with regard to 75 countries that were home to more than half the world’s population.

Powerful media pressure on states subject to external intervention. The specific features of information campaigns are emerging ever more clearly. They are based on notorious double standards and on hushing up or distorting the facts in order to create the information background their organizers require. Essentially, a full-scale information war has been launched in the global information space. And an information war has rules of its own. Well-known U.S. fantasy writer Robert Sheckley once said: “The saddest fact is that, in an information war, the one who tells the truth always loses. He is limited by truth, while the liar can proclaim whatever he wishes”.

The use of foreign mercenaries is a reality in states targeted for the inculcation of so-called Western democratic values. This “assistance” has been and is being experienced in Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. The actions of mercenaries can currently be seen in Ukraine. The popular German weekly news magazine “Der Spiegel” wrote that, on April 29, the German Intelligence Service informed the German government that around 400 elite troops from the well-known U.S. military company “Academi” were taking part in military action in the east of Ukraine.

One way of further increasing military potential with the aim of achieving military supremacy is a cherry-picking approach to implementing existing arms control treaty regimes. The collapse of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the unilateral withdrawal of the U.S. from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty are the most striking examples of this policy.

There have been no changes to plans for NATO expansion (with the possibility of Georgia and Ukraine joining the alliance still in place). It is alarming that Brussels’ desire to acquire an advantageous geostrategic space in the East dominates this process and the loyalty of applicants outweighs the need to comply with NATO’s fairly tough membership criteria.

There is every reason today to talk about a radical change in the military-political environment in the Euro-Atlantic region and the world as a whole. No one is in any doubt any longer as to the staged and managed nature of almost all recent events in the world, linked to the violent overthrow of state regimes and the reorientation of those states’ policy lines, that are together known as “color revolutions”.

Their geographical range is extremely broad. The former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan and a number of post-Soviet states have been subjected to the West’s so-called “humanitarian
interventions”. Syria and Ukraine are on the brink of intervention.

The motivation behind the policy can be explained. The drastic heightening of antagonisms between the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian civilization order is clearly marked today.

The Western economic model, in which the U.S. is the undisputed leader, is in profound crisis.

For Europe, the optimum route out of the impasse could be to strengthen the Eurasian thrust of economic development, including ties with Russia.

This perspective is totally unacceptable to Washington since a break with Europe would deprive the U.S. of the opportunity to control the European market and inevitably result in the further deterioration of the U.S. economy. The situation can only be saved, in the view of a number of Western experts, by isolating Russia from Europe.

A fairly cynical remark by celebrated U.S. politician and Russophobe Zbigniew Brzezinski serves to confirm this approach: “The new world order under U.S. hegemony was created against Russia at the expense of Russia and on the ruins of Russia”. Ukraine is now the main theatre in the struggle to drive Russia to the fringes of European civilization.

What is happening in that country today fits perfectly into the logic of the ambitions being pursued by the West. Their connection to events in Yugoslavia in 1999 and the Georgia-Ossetia conflict of 2008 can be clearly discerned.

In every instance, tried and tested methods of carrying out “color revolutions” were employed — the leaders of opposition parties and groups loyal to the West were put in power and the states’ foreign policy lines redirected. The gravest consequence of these transformations has been the partitioning of states, achieved, moreover, through the use of military force.

Typically, despite the condemnation of the West’s power politics by Russia and the CSTO member states, it is Moscow that is unjustifiably presented as being mainly to blame for instigating the conflicts. The work of the whole “old” and “new world” media industry is aimed at stirring Russophobic hysteria among ordinary people and spreading false information about Russia’s aggressive designs and actions.

For the CSTO member states, the threats dictated by their specific geostrategic position (at the interface between the civilizations of Europe and Asia) are still extremely relevant.

The political and economic transformation processes which are rapidly developing here create a breeding ground for conflict situations between the power structures and opposition groups keen to take power.

The possibility remains of protests against the backdrop of the global economic crisis and heightened social and economic problems.

There is still a risk that social problems will degenerate into intrastate conflicts, some engineered from abroad.

Conflicts with states bordering on the CSTO may be caused by problems to do with unregulated state borders, the lack of transport isolating countries in the region and a shortage of water and energy resources.

The situation in the CSTO’s area of responsibility is adversely affected by the volatile situation in countries that make up, for example, the “arc of instability”: Syria, Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, Iraq and Pakistan, the ongoing tension over Iran and the problems of Afghanistan.

Fundamentalist religious organizations are engaged in propaganda actively and with some success.

Ideas about creating the so-called “Islamic Caliphate” to replace secular civil society in the states of Central Asia, which are advocated by such well-known extremist organizations as Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Islamic Movement of Turkestan (formerly the IMU), are supported by a section of the population of the Central Asian states and the republics of the North Caucasus, especially their young people.

The operations of these organizations are well coordinated and generously funded from Afghanistan, Pakistan and a number of Persian Gulf countries.

Afghanistan undoubtedly occupies one of the main positions in the list of threats to the security of CSTO member states.

Fighters undergo intensive training for action in CSTO states at specialist training centers in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Priority is given to post-Soviet state nationals when selecting potential trainees.

The flow of drugs from Afghanistan is not abating. According to figures from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 30% of all drugs produced in Afghanistan every year, and that is more than 1,200 tonnes, are exported via the territory of CSTO member states.

What are now traditional threats and challenges to security are not receding, such as the illegal drugs trade, international crime, illegal migration and people trafficking, illegal arms and ammunitions exports and the spread of extremist and terrorist activity.

In the present context, in which the world order that took shape over the past twenty years or so has become suddenly unbalanced, finding ways to avert an escalation of tension is critical.

The world has reached a line. Crossing it is fraught with catastrophic consequences of global proportions.

A situation has arisen similar to the one that came about at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, when the leaders of the two powers that were at opposite ends of the bipolar security system recognized that any further increase of tension would be disastrous and agreed unprecedented accords to defuse it.

An absolute imperative for the normalization of the situation today is a broad-format international dialogue under the auspices of an authoritative arbitrator.

The UN or OSCE could be optimum forums for this dialogue on condition that the principles of objectivity and impartiality in elaborating decisions were unfailingly observed.

The dialogue must be preceded by an appeal from the world community to conflict participants to demonstrate caution and restraint in their actions.

We are profoundly convinced that it is now time to resume work on implementing Russia’s initiative to frame and sign a universal, legally binding European Security Treaty. An international treaty of this kind could concentrate in itself all that is positive and useful in the existing treaty mechanisms and regimes which regulate the basic principles of creating a pan-European security system, confidence building and arms control.

In the future it could become an example of and the basis for creating similar security systems in other parts of the world.
Ladies and gentlemen, the Middle East region is undergoing a period of critical danger, especially after the outbreak of the “Arab Spring revolutions”, in the light of the multiple crises and issues the region suffers — and the failure of attempts to resolve most of them [Palestinian Issue — Syrian Crisis — The Situation in Libya and Sudan and South Sudan] and the spread of terrorist and extremist elements as never witnessed before in the region.

The overall facts of the regional situation and the possibilities of their development are creating more challenges and threats — to regional security and stability, and creating direct consequences for Egypt’s national security, which is undergoing domestic and foreign challenges never previously witnessed, related to the fact that Egypt was in the middle and in the focus of the ongoing events.

All that necessitates intensifying all cooperation and solidarity efforts to overcome these consequences — and to support development and security, fulfilling common interests and goals.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce the effect of terrorism on regional countries’ development and Egypt through the following key elements:

- Terrorism as a global phenomenon and its effect on international peace and security;
- Characterizing the nature of the phenomenon of terrorism in Egypt;
- Terrorism affecting development plans in Egypt and the countries of the region;
- The Egyptian point of view on dealing with the phenomenon of terrorism and containing its fallout.

Terrorism as a Global Phenomenon and its Effects on International Peace and Security

The phenomenon of terrorism has come to represent one of the key features in the World Order. It covered all scenes and spread into various communities, despite its levels of emergence differing from one place to another due to environment, causes and reasons.

The hard truth is that terrorism has become more dangerous than war — it’s not related to one’s homeland or race or religion, and it’s not differentiating between the developed countries and the developing ones.

Terrorism at the present time became a severe crisis — imposing itself over international community, after dimensions of it has become not limited with the terrorism incident itself, but including direct and indirect reactions and attempts of some parties to benefit from it, serving their own interests.

In spite of all achievements till now under the counter-terrorism campaign — still all clues confirm that the elements of terrorism are expanding geographically, and new generations of it appear and are working in non-central manner in ways that are difficult to detect and identify. That situation demands collective cooperation to handle the real causes of terrorism and deal with its elements by all means.

With all the hits against the main terrorist organizations, specially in Afghanistan — last of which was killing the leader of Al-Qaida organization Osama Bin Laden, evidence shows that Al-Qaida went on forming new bases in regions that are far from control of the governments, or in areas suffering crisis, where the African Sahel region in the desert and Somalia and Syrian Iraqi borders represent a typical examples for such an activity.

The terrorist groups and organizations have several motives to achieve their goals under various covers, but the key purpose for each is still related in its essence to achieving political ambitions. The covers are as follows:

- Religious cover — Using religion is considered the easiest way to reach inside brains of the individuals in terrorist groups/organizations, by changing correct religious interpretations to other false and erroneous ones. Those who reject such interpretations are declared takfir (i.e. excommunicated from Islam). The groups that use religion are considered the most dangerous and aggressive. They recruit their followers and collect finances by means of using the false interpretation of the religion.
- The cover of the armed struggle — It is one of the reasons used to commit terror acts. The armed struggle now is a developed form compared to what it was in the Colonial era, but it developed by moving the battle field to countries that are not related to the case of the struggle in any way, like blowing up embassies there for example. The armed struggle is also transformed from targeting the colonial forces to hit civilians.

- Poverty [Poverty of countries/poverty of individuals] — There is no doubt that poverty is one of the key elements of the actual fuel for people committing terrorism acts, because poverty is the entrance to the weak souls heating up their hatred for both the community where the poor live, and for the rich countries. In our experience with terrorism in Egypt, it was found that most people that committed suicide were actually from the bottom of the society.

Studying the phenomenon of terrorism, aggression and security environment in the Middle East shows the following facts:

- Rise of terrorism threats in the Middle East — in the situation of resentment and frustration that people of the region
live under. That is related to the failure in finding fair solutions for the key issues, and because of the double standard policy in dealing with region’s problems, and the fallback of the economic and living conditions there. [That was mentioned in the calls of Al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri to support the mujahidin].

- Some countries of the region turned into an attractive environment for all terrorist elements — the local, and the foreign multinational ones, and that increases the risk of infiltrating their threats through borders to the neighboring states, and threatening to expand the range of confrontations, turning it into regional military conflict.

The split of main acting powers in the region to three main vectors — as follows:

- The first vector is led by moderate powers working through negotiations and peaceful and balanced solutions to reach fair settlement to the chronic problems in the region [Egypt—Saudi Arabia—UAE—Kuwait—Bahrain—Jordan...].
- The second vector is parties seeking to develop their regional role through supporting the streams of the Political Islam, or by depending on a religious cover, in addition to the cooperation with armed groups and ethnicities and minorities in the region that have goals and interests meet with the ones of the powers of the 2nd vector, in a way leads to threaten domestic stability in some countries and to infiltrate these threats to the regional neighbors.
- The third — Jihadi/Takfiri organizations that seek to overthrow some regimes in the region, and to spread their extremist religious beliefs to control Arabic communities, through widening the range of their terrorist operations without paying any considerations to the geographical territories of their operations, in the framework of their ideas to form an expanded Islamic emirate [ISIS or ISIL in Iraq — Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb — Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula] not excluding moving their threats to other regional stages including the western ones.
- The expansion of the geographical range of terrorist and extremist elements’ activities on the most main vectors in the region — and emerging Al-Qaida capabilities in supporting those elements in training and planning and moving... as well as the availability of the means of communication and control using modern electronic devices of high technology, and also the Internet.
- Emerging new groups of terrorists in the region that didn’t exist before — of which [ISIS or ISIL in Iraq — Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb — Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula] are the most prominent.
- The African Sahel region on the borders of the Arabic countries to the north west of the continent — is a typical example for the key terrorist formations to establish their new bases in the regions there, which are far from governments’ control.

Characterizing the Nature of the Phenomenon of Terrorism in Egypt

Many security challenges were formed due to the nature of the security environment surrounding Egyptian national security circles, in light of middle and high intensity armed disputes and conflicts on most strategic directions and their depth, in addition to the climate in which Egypt lives because of the revolutionary activity caused by 25th of January and 30th of June revolutions outbreak. Described security challenges come under following dimensions:

1. Egyptian stage is witnessing waves of terrorism after the failed experience of Political Islam stream that reached power in the country, specially after making alliances with the Salafi and Jihadi streams and Al-Qaida organization and anarchist movements to get their support in a desperate attempt to restore power. The terrorist activities Egypt is undergoing can be separated as following according to their danger on security:
   - Takfiri formations — seek to spread the extremist ideological thought according to conception of establishing the extremist Islamic emirate. Their activity concentrated in [Rafah — Sheikh Zuweid — Al Arish] triangle in Sinai, including formations of [Tawhid and Jihad, Al-Takfir wal Hijra, the Mujahideon Shura Council, Ansar Bayt Al-Maqdis, the Salafist jihadist, Ansar al-Sharia]. They seek targeting all the vital facilities and to fight against security forces [Army-Police] to take control over their regions of influence and establish an independent Islamic emirate in Sinai. Now those formations are united under the wing of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis except the group of Al-Takfiri Hijra.
   - Armed jihadi formations — They adopt radical Islamic ideology and link it with liberating territories from both occupying forces and ones that do not implement Islamic Sharia in their radical point of view. Also, they seek to commit acts of armed aggression and assaults against neighboring countries [Israel] and to open new fronts to ease the burden over Gaza Strip. Some examples of them: [Army of Islam — Jeish Muhammad—Jaljalat — ...].
   - Terrorist elements/groups/cells — that belong to international organization of terrorist group of the Muslim Brotherhood, which the so called Al-Azhar Militia group formed and supervised its training, besides forming organized groups and small cluster cells of 2-3 people, that were named [The Lone Wolves].

2. After overthrowing the Muslim Brotherhood organization in the 30th of June revolution, the organization is still insisting on practicing terrorist acts to terrorize the citizens and to target security headquarters and [army-police] and their private properties. In addition to targeting some vital targets, cooperating in all this with takfiri and jihadi armed formations, with concentration on the following:
   - Committing acts of killing and destruction and burning public and private properties under the cover of the protests, to create a state of chaos in the Egyptian society.
   - Committing planned terrorism acts targeting army and police and burning security headquarters and police camps.
   - Committing terrorist operations inside universities and burning educational facilities and perpetratering riots to destroy public and private properties and working against security forces to disrupt the educational process in the country, showing this way state’s disability in taking control over the security situation.
• Continuing supporting takfiri and jihadi formations inside the country and abroad and cooperating with them and sending its own members to the train camps abroad [Gaza Strip–East of Libya] to form trained cadres, as an attempt to exhaust Egypt state’s strength and to impose political will by terrorist methods and means.

Terrorism Affecting Development Plans in Egypt and Countries of the Region:

Due to accurate researches for the phenomenon of terrorism and its effects on economic situation overall and development plans and resources and economies of peoples and countries in the region, the following facts show up:

1. Risks of terrorism hit the national economies, which is the lifeline of the societies. For example, damaging [airports and seaports — tourism — Oil facilities] leads to a total partial paralysis, destruction of the community, ceasing development process and effecting manpower of the state.

2. Data, statistics and lots of researches confirmed that international terrorism directly affects economic security, where its consequences reach out the targeted state to many other countries, reflecting lots of economic variables, like [inflation — unemployment — investments — currency exchange rate — financial markets — state’s budget — insurance — tourism — transportation …].

3. Key reasons of the underdevelopment in many developing countries come from political and security and social disturbances those states suffer from. The most important effects of terrorism are the rise of unemployment, inflation, decline of investments and the fall in financial markets, bankruptcy of companies and insurance and tourism sectors, instability in national currencies’ exchange rates against international ones, increased imbalance in the balance of payments. All that is a direct result of the following factors:

• Imposing more pressures and burdens on state’s budgets in light of increased rates of spending on the war on terror, at the expense of humanitarian development projects and essential structures, like roads construction and hospitals and schools to serve all citizens. That makes the political and economic and development programs and plans with no results.

• Large national capitals flee offshore, and some sectors get damaged directly from terrorism acts, like tourism sector, which is usually vital and important for the society, gives benefits for millions of families helping them to improve their living conditions. Besides, affecting security environment, that must be available to improve economic performance rates.

• Reluctance of biggest companies and multinational ones to establish investment projects that creates jobs in the developing societies, because those companies fear their capitals might be damaged by terrorist organizations, despite the fact that the material and legal infrastructures in the countries affected by terrorism are available, and in spite of the economic and social circumstances offered to the businesses there.

• Preventing society from benefiting from both domestic and foreign experiences and competencies in various specializations, and that damage is not limited to some sectors like [universities — centers of scientific researches – hospitals – companies and various productive sectors].

• Fewer jobs become available and the level of the professional training and rehabilitation and preparation for local workers degrades, comparing with the case, when it’s normal and stable situation in the country.

• More defects occur to the trade balance between countries, and that reduces chances for legitimate competition between these countries and economic blocs they associated with.

4. In this context, there must be confirmation on that the international community should realize that terrorism affects the global economy in general and national economy in particular. Also, it’s very important not to overestimate the fallouts of the terror acts to show like the society lives in a state of war. Because spreading fear and instability is one of terrorism purposes, and considered enough to achieve goals of those who stand behind terrorism, even if there is no actual terror acts.

Egyptian Point of View about Dealing with the Phenomenon of Terrorism and Containing its Fallouts:

1. How do we face terrorist ideology and acts: Eliminating terrorism requires forming a global strategy aimed at lifting up the level of international and regional cooperation vectors, and concentrating on understanding peoples’ psychology and dealing with it and with the key reasons for the growth of the terrorism phenomenon, and in this context, I see that there is an international framework to contain terrorism, and another local one.

The international framework:

• Supporting dialog between civilizations instead of confrontation, to make peoples’ points of view closer to each other, and to help understanding religions correctly, not like terrorist organizations interpreting religion, trying this way to get use of it, because disrespecting religions and insulting the prophets serve only terrorist organizations, but not the case we work on.

• It is time to put an end to what left of the colonized spots or occupying territories illegally, because there is no doubt that peace and security of countries are linked to ending the conflicts all over the world.

• It’s very important to deal with issues of all nations in one standard, specially, from the side of the major countries, because this way those countries would give an ideal and a role model to whole the world, which turned into a small village because of the advance of the communication means.

• Creating an international program financed by the rich countries to help the poor states standing on feet and developing.

• Establishing an international system to cooperate in counter-terrorism, starting from exchanging information and joining efforts in resisting terror acts, and quickly removing effects of the terror activities in the countries damaged, and prosecuting groups standing behind terrorism, and making sure those crimes will not be outdated, and bringing the criminals to justice,
besides the importance of drying up the sources financing terrorists.

Domestic counter-terrorism framework:
• Working in the international system of cooperation by means of exchanging information and experiences... etc.
• Deterrence — by denying any of terrorists’ demands and conforming that in media.
• Uniting efforts — between all the intelligence services in the state with the counter terrorism services.
• Securing counter measures — with secrecy in planning, and with using methods of force and surprise factor.
• Preventive security — By putting plans in advance to face terror acts, and continuously pursuing centers of terrorism, and watching situation accurately to abort any terrorists’ attempts to reactivate.

2. Allow me to introduce quickly the Egyptian strategy for counter-terrorism (as a model for one of the Middle East countries). Egypt adopts a long-term strategy, in which all institutions of the mentioned state are involved in immunizing society [by developing people and economy] and expanding the base of cooperation on various levels [national — regional — international] to establish database and to use it in pursuing leaders and groups of terrorists, and in cooperating between security services and the public to eliminate terrorism, and in cooperating with services our friends have to capture escaped terrorists and get them back, and to reduce chances of them getting a safe haven by working on several directions, domestic and foreign — in the following way:

Domestically:
• Depending on the support for the country’s measures in counter-terrorism from the grassroots, and lying on the strong ties people have between them in their all communities.
• Using directed media programs in cooperation with the clergy to raise awareness about the danger and motivations terrorist organizations have, with opening the door for constructive dialogue with more moderate elements, giving them the helping hand to turn back to the proper behavior and participating in building the society.
• Enlarging circle of interests about social and economic reforms, and paying special care for providing new jobs for the youngsters [by encouraging investments in the regions with lower standards of living] through offering many privileges (for investors in remote areas).
• Security authorities should intensify preventive measures and provide hard strikes against VIPs and leaderships of terrorism and extremism, and adopting policy of possessing initiative in dealing with these streams, and achieving success in pursuing their financing sources, with tightening grip on the border crossings.

Outside the country:
• Intensifying diplomatic efforts to reach many international security agreements to fight this phenomenon [information exchange — detaining and exchanging criminals involved in terror acts — ...].
• Positive participation in the international efforts to put legislations and treaties to counter the phenomenon of terrorism. Probably the most bright one in that contest is the Egyptian draft resolution introduced in the 9th United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime Conference held in Cairo, besides the proposals in Arab interior ministers’ conferences in Tunisia, along with undergoing Egyptian efforts in the United Nations to reach specific definition for the phenomenon of terrorism.
• Foreign ministry of Egypt is particularly careful about containing acts of the states supporting terrorism inside Egypt, and inside countries of the region in general, using civilized methods that do not use aggression for aggression method as an approach, in context of being careful about the nature of the relations that join peoples of the nations, in addition to Egyptian true will about adopting policy of dialogue in dealing with various issues, and refusing the concept of intervention in the internal affairs for any of the countries.

This strategy is extended and a long-term one in facing this phenomenon. It realizes the importance of going on with the confrontation policies to uproot terrorist and extremist elements, at the same time, when cooperation and international coordination base to counter this phenomenon is expanding.

Finally, eliminating the phenomenon of the terrorism requires a global strategy keen to maximize the international and regional cooperation, and using all methods [political – economic – security – judicial – intelligence], without limiting efforts by using only the force to eliminate systems and organizations and elements supporting this phenomenon.
General L. Changcai
Political Commissioner of Lanzhou Military District, Chinese People’s Liberation Army

Challenges of Global Security and World Development in China’s Policy

Minister of Defense Shoygu and Chief of the General Staff Gerasimov, ladies and gentlemen, I am very glad to be in Moscow, along with representatives of all the countries of the world and international organizations, for this conference on international security. First of all, on behalf of Member of the State Council of the DRC, Minister of Defense, General Chang Wanquan, on behalf of all members of the delegation of the PLA, may I congratulate you on the successful opening of the conference, and sincerely thank the Russian side for all of your hard work in preparing for the conference and ensuring excellent working conditions.

China and Russia are friendly neighbors. In May 2014, during the CICA summit and official visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to China, he and Chinese President Xi Jinping jointly participated in the opening ceremony of Sino-Russian naval exercises. This testifies to the determination and will of the armies of the two countries to jointly counteract new threats and challenges, and to ensure the security and stability of our regions.

The advancement of economic globalization is occurring apace. The interconnectedness and interaction of different nations, regimes, and civilizations are growing more and more intimate. No country can develop — and especially provide for its own security — without cooperation with other countries. The threats to international security affect the interests of various parties. Given this, holding a Conference of Ministries of Defense that allows for a broad discussion of important issues of international security is of paramount importance.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to share our views on the security situation in the world and in [our] region, as well as on China’s peaceful development. In today’s world, peace, development, cooperation, and mutually beneficial situations seem to be the trend of the era; but the international systems is not yet stable, the conflicts of the day are constantly being escalated, and international politics is due a correction. The uncertainty and instability affecting the global and regional status quo are multiplying. The task of ensuring world peace and development assistance is not yet solved.

In a certain country in the region, the trend towards right-wing politics is becoming more apparent: the negation of the results of World War II, an embellishment of a history of aggression, the attempted violation of the postwar order, and the grave wounding of the feelings of people in countries affected by the Nazis. Some other countries provoke debate on the issues of ownership of islands, and rights and interests on the sea. This greatly threatens stability in the region. This year, Afghanistan is in an important transitional period. After the withdrawal of international forces from the country, it faces a serious test of the degree to which it can effect a politically and economically secure transition. The process of peaceful settlement in Syria is difficult and tortuous; it will take vast efforts to find a broadly accepted path.

The situation in Ukraine is worrying, as the Ukrainian crisis has complex historical and contemporary reasons. The only way of defusing a complex situation is dialogue and negotiations. China hopes that all parties will seek comprehensive political solutions to this crisis on the basis of the Geneva accords, in order to achieve stability in Ukraine as soon as possible. There is still a difficult situation in the fight against international terrorism. The terrorist attacks in China and Central Asia show that terrorism and extremism remain the main threats to security in the area. In recent centuries the Chinese people have suffered greatly from war and poverty, and these historical lessons have made us cherish peace and growth. We learned that growth is based on, and depends on, peace. Without peace, there is no development or growth, and without growth, it is not possible to achieve true peace.

China unswervingly adheres to the path of peaceful growth. Over the 30 years that have passed since its policy of reform and opening up began, China has attained second place in the planet in terms of overall economic performance. At the same time, our country has a population of more than 1.3 billion. An impressive national GDP divided by the number of China’s people yields a modest per-capita GDP number. In a country with a large population, it is not so easy to solve the problem of ensuring the people’s prosperity. This is why it is so important to create a peaceful environment conducive to growth.

China’s economic and social progress is achieved thanks precisely to continuous adherence to peaceful growth. On the one hand, China’s development depends on peace in the world, and on the other, China’s development contributes to peace around the world. This path, emanating from ideas that are at the root of Chinese civilization, takes into account the concepts and conditions for achieving growth in our country, and global growth trends. China firmly adheres to a defensive military policy. The history of China and its army speak to the fact that the main goals of strengthening the defense infrastructure are to protect the sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity — and to ensure the peaceful growth and development — of a
China calls for a new concept of security in Asia: based on comprehensive, common, prolonged, and uninterrupted security. Security is a comprehensive concept which includes not only military security, but also economic security, information security, energy security, space security, etc. Security should be effected via equal-rights-based cooperation, and should be of collective use to all stakeholders, not something that is one-sided.

As one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council, China unswervingly adheres to the basic principles and provisions of the UN Charter, protects its authority and role in international affairs, actively participates in tasks such as peacekeeping missions, the fight against piracy, joint convoys, etc. China has consistently adhered to the integration of Europe, and we hope that the EU plays a constructive role in international affairs, and is willing to continue to deepen this comprehensive strategic partnership in order to advance friendly military co-operation between China and European countries. Since the establishment of the SCO, cooperation in the spheres of politics, security, economic and humanitarian affairs has made significant strides and has also played an active role in the cause of peace, security, and stability in the world, promoting common growth and development.

At present, the Chinese people are fighting for the implementation of a great dream — the renaissance of all Chinese people. To realize this dream, we have started on a new course of comprehensive reform, which should liberate the thought process, foster productive forces, and promote harmony and stability among all people. For the countries of the world these are not challenges, but opportunities. China's development will contribute greatly to global development and peace on Earth. China is ready to be in the same boat with all the peace-loving peoples of the world, and to create a brilliant future together.
A. K. BISHNOI
Deputy Minister of Defense of the Republic of India

INDIA AND REGIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation Valery Gerasimov, Deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Anatoly Antonov, let me begin by conveying the felicitations and good wishes of the Ministry of Defense on the convening of the Moscow Conference on International Security. It is therefore my privilege to be representing the Ministry of Defense of India here today. We thank you for the invitation and are honored to be present here to deliberate with our colleagues the major security challenges facing the region and the world and to discuss the way forward. We all recognize that at the present time, global and regional peace and stability are being shaped by a number of dynamic factors. Major geopolitical and economic developments are transforming the global security scenario into one of uncertainty and volatility. Over the past decade, globalization has built complex economic interdependencies amongst states, even while concurrently fostering rivalries in the security domain. This interdependence also creates opportunities for fostering stability. However, in the face of economic crisis, the overhang of challenges to national, regional, and global security needs to be negotiated carefully and cautiously in order to be able to steer the primary objectives of national, social, and economic development.

Threat of Afghan Terrorism

In terms of the magnitude of the challenges, the most serious is — without question — that of the continuing impact of terrorism on the peace, stability, and security of our region in particular. There is scarcely a country represented here that has not experienced this kind of terrorism. India has been urging that the global regime against terrorism needs to be standard, and that the global community needs to take strong action to uproot and dismantle terrorist sanctuaries, safe havens, and networks of financial and logistics support to such groups and elements. We have repeatedly stressed that no country should allow its territory to be used by terrorist groups against any other country. There is a need for a true consensus and commitment on this and a strong international pressure to be built up to enforce this. As nations increasingly face the threats posed by non-state actors and a wide spectrum of conventional and non-conventional security challenges, there is need for greater cooperation and useful confidence building.

In this connection, I would like to mention Afghanistan. Peace and stability in Afghanistan and the prosperity and development of its people have been adversely affected by the activities of terrorists functioning from sanctuaries and safe havens beyond Afghan borders. This year, we will see many challenges in Afghanistan — in terms of the political transition, drawdown of international combat forces, and the full burden of national security transferring to the Afghan security forces. The international community, and we in the region, should continue our efforts to assist the government of Afghanistan to manage this transition in any manner in which it seeks. India has enjoyed traditional brotherly relations with Afghanistan and with the Afghan people and is also profoundly affected by developments in Afghanistan. We have been contributing to reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, and we will continue our endeavor to assist and partner with the Afghan government and people in their nation-building efforts.

Security Issues in the Asia-Pacific

The Asia-Pacific region is witnessing increasing contestations, as reflected in power rivalries, new military postures, and territorial disputes. All of it has aggravated the security situation in this region. Against this backdrop, the emergence of multilateral forums, such as East-Asia Summit, ERF, and the ADMM-Plus, provide an opportunity to address contentious issues through dialogue and consensus. India supports initiatives to build inclusive security architectures, which will foster a spirit of consensus on all issues that have common resonance. We have consistently opposed the use or threat of use of force, and hope that parties to disputes should work towards the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law. India is also concerned by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region, and particularly in the context of the DPRK’s nuclear program. We support the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the resumption of the Six-Party talks. West Asia continues to face volatility and instability in the wake of developments brought about by the so-called “Arab Spring”. The number of non-state actors has mushroomed, and sectarian fault lines have deepened in the region, thereby disturbing the stability and internal cohesion of various countries in the region. India supported calls for the stopping of violence and resolution of conflicts through political means. Continuing the turmoil in West Asia could not only imperil energy security, but also become a crucible for radicalism, terrorism, arms proliferation, and sectarian conflict that could touch
countries beyond the region. The maritime domain has been a source of multiple security concerns arising out of factors like piracy, terrorism, human trafficking, and competition over maritime resources. Maintaining the security of the sea lanes and upholding the freedom of navigation are vital to our security and prosperity, and this calls for all nations to act in accordance with the accepted principles. As factors of instability and conflict continue to challenge us and pose impediments to the larger national development challenges that we seek to address, to ensure the prosperity of our people, the need for dialogue, for the sharing of information and experience, and for confidence building, is even more important. The convening of this security conference is, in that sense, a timely initiative, which has enabled us to gather here today to share views and enhance mutual understanding on the important challenges of our time.
PANEL DISCUSSION

Finding ways of stabilization in the Middle East and North Africa
MODERATOR

V. V. NAUMKIN
Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies

SPEAKERS

GENERAL V. B. ZARUDNITSKY
Chief, Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation

AMBASSADOR M. L. BOGDANOV
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CORPS GENERAL M. ABDUL WAHAB SHAWA
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U. DEKEL
Deputy Director of the Institute for National Security Studies, State of Israel

BRIGADIER GENERAL E. FADEL
Chief, Lebanese Army Military Intelligence and Counterintelligence

K. BARZEGAR
Director of the Institute for Middle East Strategic Studies, Islamic Republic of Iran
The wave of “color revolutions” has caused major changes in world politics and the balance of forces in the world and the regions. There has been a real change in the nature of military threats and challenges to security, as well as in the ways and means of countering them. The West views “color revolutions” as a means of expanding democracy, consisting of the non-violent overthrow of “undemocratic” regimes.

However, a military analysis of the events that have occurred in the Middle East and North Africa makes it possible to claim the reverse — that military force is an inalienable feature of “color revolutions”. It is present at every stage of the escalation of the “revolution” and the domestic national conflict it provokes. From the beginning, the military potential of the coalition of countries behind the overthrow of an undesirable government is openly used to put it under pressure. This pressure aims to prevent the use of the state’s law-enforcement agencies to restore law and order.

Next, as the opposition rolls out military action against government troops, foreign states provide military and economic support to the insurgents. For example, the war in Syria has been going on for nearly three years. Throughout that time armed opposition detachments and mercenary formations have been constantly supplied from abroad with ammunition, weapons and other materiel required to wage war. It may only be surmised how many countries’ economies are working to further this war.

Subsequently, the coalition of countries taking part in the overthrow of a legitimate government may conduct a military operation aimed at defeating government troops and helping the opposition forces and mercenary detachments to seize power.

In this connection, it would be incorrect to present the military actions that are the consequence of “color revolutions” solely as an internal armed conflict. Behind oppositionist insurgents there are always the military and economic potential and financial resources of countries with an interest in removing a regime they don’t like.

Another reason to reject the peaceful and non-violent nature of “color revolutions” is that the condition of countries that have suffered military aggression as classically understood and of countries experiencing “color revolutions” is almost identical. Indeed, in the classical understanding, the aims of war by one state against another, as a rule, are as follows: to change the military and political leadership of the

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**Aims of aggression**

1. To change the military and political leadership of the target country and to draw it into the intended sphere of influence
2. To decrease its economic and military potential
3. To impose the aggressor’s military presence
4. To gain access to the resources of the defeated country

**Outcome**

1. Never-ending civil war, terrorism
2. Decreased status of the country in the region and the world
3. Partial loss of control over the territory
4. Ruined economy, lost control over the economic resources
5. 15-20-year setback in the development of the country

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**Aggression in the form of a “color revolution”**

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Aims of Aggression
country subjected to aggression and to draw it into the aggressor’s sphere of influence, to reduce its economic and military potential, to impose the aggressor’s military presence, and to give the aggressor unimpeded access to the resources of the defeated country.

If we look at the countries where “color revolutions” have won the day, it is scarcely possible to say that political regime change has put them on the road to prosperity and stability, or that regional security has been substantially consolidated. As a result, we are seeing countries rent asunder by internal disagreements, their peoples fragmented, an endless series of coups, a drastic rise in criminality, and heightened terrorist activity. Politically, they are unstable and dependent, and their prospects for economic development are increasingly doubtful.

Thus, “color revolutions”, particularly in the format applied in Libya and now in Syria, amount to masked aggression using new technologies to defeat undesirable states and remove them from the political arena. The technologies of “color revolutions” are based on the fact that the state is morally vulnerable in today’s era of globalization. Its meaning and authority have been weakened. As a result, it is easier to bring down a state from within than to subdue it by force of arms. The engine of aggression consists of the aggressor state (or coalition of countries) dividing its prey from within. To achieve this, existing internal disagreements are orchestrated and kindled in every possible way, no matter what kind they are — ethnic, religious, social or territorial. Thereafter, these disagreements are transformed into open confrontation between opposition forces and the government. Should the ruling regime attempt to retain power, the next phase will be civil war.

The insidiousness of “color revolutions” lies in the fact that the country that is prey to aggression which is led and supported from outside puts itself to death. In the course of domestic armed conflict the state’s human resources are destroyed, its economy ruined, and its political independence lost. The population of the country prey to aggression becomes completely disoriented in terms of its “us and them” frame of references. Instead of uniting in the face of external aggression, part of the population enters the field against another part of its own people.

Meanwhile, the aggressor takes the role of “protector” of one side in the internal conflict it has engineered.

The countries that fall prey to aggression are defeated often without even knowing who the aggressor is, and their development is set back 15-20 years. There is a dual nature to the hostilities conducted as part of “color revolutions”. On the one hand, they have innate features of classical warfare. So, hostilities in Libya amounted to a modern military operation. It comprised broad-based action by armed opposition formations, air strikes, missile strikes, naval action, and action by the special operations forces of the states involved.

As the head of the military command authority responsible for Russia’s force employment planning, I am able to say that organizing action by such disparate forces, including air and naval forces, special operations forces, opposition detachments,

### Comparative Analysis

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gangs and private military companies, is a highly complex matter. It is only possible for a highly trained command authority with state-of-the-art technical capability and planning experience. On the other hand, the hostilities brought about by “color revolutions” differ significantly from those of classical hostilities. I am going to focus on these specifics. Above all, in these hostilities the boundary between defense and attack, strategy and tactics is erased. There is no front or rear. Military actions unfold not in a defined area or specific direction but across the country’s entire territory according to the network principle. Rather than the classical concentration of forces on the main axis, regular troops are forced to conduct military action in dispersed tactical groups, to use the types and methods of action used by the insurgents, and to adjust their organizational structure.

Another specific feature is that hostilities are mainly conducted in residential areas. Mercenary detachments and gangs deliberately use the civilian population as a “human shield”, resulting in heavy casualties among civilians who are not involved in the conflict. A third specific feature is that hostilities go beyond the framework of humanitarian law and acquire the nature of a war without rules. “Color revolutions” create conditions in which the rules of international law which regulate warfare need not be observed. This is because armed opposition and mercenary formations are not state formations and are therefore outside the bounds of law and assume no liability for infringements of international law. Failure to comply with the laws and customs of war make it extremely cruel and ruthless.

A fourth specific feature is the criminalization of warfare. Criminal structures take an active part in this. Since there is impunity and there are no holds barred, military action is conducted by criminal and terrorist methods. Moreover, terror acquires mass proportions. Religious treasures are systematically and deliberately plundered and cultural and historical monuments destroyed. This directly facilitates the destruction of the people’s national identity and their historical memory.

The final specific feature lies in the extensive use of private military formations and special operations forces. When the technologies of “color revolutions” are used to wage war on states, the need arises for military formations which enable the explicit intervention by one state in the affairs of another to be concealed. In these conditions, there is an increase in the role of special operations forces performing sabotage and reconnaissance missions. Moreover, there is extensive involvement of private military companies posing as mercenary formations. I would point out that the military actions they conduct are distinguished by indiscriminate resources and the great number of civilians killed or wounded.

Altogether it has to be said that wars initiated as part of “color revolutions” are waged by the very basest methods. From the point of view of international law and morality, they are more appropriate to the Middle Ages than the 21st century. Everyone is aware of this. Nevertheless, the geography of “color revolutions” is predicted to expand. They enable regional powers to be crushed in pursuit of political and economic objectives with a minimal drain on resources and limited use of the aggressor’s armed forces.

The key question is: in what direction will “color revolutions” travel next? Where will the “arc of instability” lie and who will it embrace? In other words, who’s next? “Color revolutions” are most likely in economically weak states where there are serious social conflicts.
The main criterion for deciding the next target for the export of a “color revolution” is the national interests of the specific countries behind the next coup. Consequently, revolutions are, as a rule, organized in countries rich in natural resources; in countries with an important strategic position in a region and pursuing a relatively independent policy; in countries whose destabilization would make it possible to change the balance of power in a region.

In conclusion, I would like to note that “color revolutions” are a relatively new phenomenon in international life. They require comprehensive study, including political and military analysis. It is extremely valuable in this respect that at this conference we have the chance to hear a variety of views on the role of “color revolutions” in international life and their influence on global and regional security. Ultimately, this will promote the growth of understanding and trust between the countries represented by the conference participants.
Vitaliy Vyacheslavovich, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, it is difficult, of course, to set out and shed light on all the problems experienced by a region, in this case, the Middle East and North Africa, in only 10 minutes. Certain key problems have in any case been touched upon by Russian Federation Foreign Minister Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov in his speech. I will, however, endeavor to single out some, perhaps, key points. I am aware that we will perhaps be able to continue setting out the details during questions and answers. As has already been said here, however, for more than three years, complex transformational processes have been under way in the vast geopolitical space of the Middle East and North Africa. There are a whole series of objective causes.

Causes and Conditions of Socio-Political Changes in the Middle East

Already by the start of the 21-st century it was clear that the previous model of development for societies in the Middle East had run its course. Signs of stagnation were increasingly clear in the Arab countries. Opposition parties and the institutions of civil society had occupied marginal positions in recent years. Economic life was imprisoned by administrative-command mechanisms and state-of-the-art knowledge-intensive industries had not been developed. The middle class was increasingly disillusioned with the outlook for social and political processes. Demographic transitions were of major significance. These factors were reinforced by the consequences of the global financial and economic crisis. Despite these trends, the social explosion came as a surprise in many ways both to representatives of the ruling elites and to opposition leaders. In the opening phase of events in Egypt and Tunisia, the revolution had no guiding political forces, though a major role was played by contemporary media, the Internet and social networks. At the same time, it cannot be ruled out that certain influential international players and transnational power centers facilitated events taking a negative turn. Of course, I think that is what happened. Popular mass protest very rapidly led to the situation getting out of control, to upsurges of violence and the coming to power of Islamist organizations. It can be said, however, that none of the post-revolutionary countries has moved closer to resolving the deep-rooted problems that caused these dramatic transformations. The wave of revolutions added new challenges to previous conflict situations which had built up over decades. Specifically, the process of changing authoritarian regimes in the Middle East undermined the regional security system. Gray zones arose in various parts of the region, with fighters and weapons freely moving to and fro. Ethnic and religious relations became noticeably strained. The growing tension between Sunnis and Shias, fed by events in Syria, is becoming particularly resonant.

Syrian Conflict

Certain influential media, particularly but not solely in the West, present the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic as the Sunni majority’s fight for democracy against the ruling Alawite minority. In actual fact, we can see that terrorist groups, with connections to Al Qaida, such as Jabhat al-Nusra, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and many more, are active on Syrian territory. It is extremists who are to blame for disruptions to humanitarian aid supplies. The threat they pose to the good running of the operations to remove Syrian chemical weapons is one of the factors affecting the pace of their withdrawal from the country. The radical elements fighting in Syria also include people of Russian descent. A mass exodus from Syria of various ethnic and religious minorities, Christians above all, is under way.

The echo of the Syrian conflict is promoting the growth of religious intolerance in Lebanon and other countries in the Middle East. We take as a starting point the fact that the repercussions of the ongoing political and social upheavals in the Middle East will continue to be felt for a long time. Taking this into account, Russian diplomacy is painstakingly working to minimize its negative impacts both for our country and for the whole international community, including the Arab region itself. Understandably, in recent years, we have mainly focused on channeling the situation towards a political and diplomatic settlement and preventing coercive intervention in events in Syria.

A real threat of outside intervention arose in connection with the incidents of August 21, 2013, when chemical weapons were used in a south-eastern suburb of Damascus. The Russian side exerted vigorous efforts to prevent any attempts to exploit this episode as grounds for military intervention in the Syrian conflict. A key milestone was the conversation that took place on the sidelines of the G20 summit in St Petersburg in September last year between Russian President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and U.S. President Barack Obama, which set the objective of placing Syria’s chemical arsenal under international control and its subsequent destruction.

On September 10 last year, during a visit to Moscow, the Syrian Arab Republic’s foreign minister, Walid Mualllem, officially confirmed support for the initiative. In furtherance of our proposals, talks were held in Geneva in September last year by Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, which elaborated a framework accord whereby all components of Syria’s
chemical weapons program would be listed and destroyed by July 1, 2014. Following a tense dialogue with the Americans, the relevant decisions of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons were adopted, as was UN Security Council Resolution 2118. Largely thanks to our efforts to defuse the Syrian crisis, an international conference on Syria got off the ground in Montreux on January 22 this year and two days later inter-Syrian talks began in Geneva. You know that only the second round of these talks has been held to date. Despite the accords reached between Syrian government and opposition delegations on the agenda for the third round, it has not yet been possible to resume the Geneva talks. Meanwhile, as we know, the Syrian government in Damascus is willing to continue the dialogue but the opposition delegation to Geneva must acquire a more representative character in order to create the conditions for the negotiation process to move forward. The Syrian opposition must be genuinely focused on political solutions rather than endlessly asking its foreign sponsors to supply increasingly dangerous types of weapons. On May 13 this year, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon accepted the resignation of Special Envoy to Syria Lakhhdar Brahimi. We in Moscow pay due credit to the efforts made by this respected Algerian diplomat to resolve the Syrian crisis. We are ready to continue paying the utmost attention to humanitarian problems in the context of the Syrian crisis. On more than one occasion, special Russian Emergency Ministry flights to the Syrian Arab Republic and neighboring countries have delivered freight and humanitarian assistance for Syrian citizens and Syrian refugees in the region. We also believe it is essential to support the practice of local truces in Syria as an important prologue to a subsequent and comprehensive ceasefire. Russian diplomacy has made considerable efforts to achieve accords between the Syrian authorities and the opposition on humanitarian access to areas held by fighters or blocked by government troops, particularly in Homs in February this year, and to evacuate civilians. With regard to the forthcoming Syrian presidential elections on June 3, we are pursuing our own policy, beginning from the premise that it is essential to maintain Syria’s state institutions. The deterioration of state structures and its exacerbation will only worsen the situation in the country.

Political Processes in the Arab Republic of Egypt
We are not decreasing our focus on the developing situation in the friendly country of Egypt. We support the Egyptian leadership’s intent consistently to implement the road map for a political process in the Arab Republic of Egypt. We hope that the forthcoming presidential and parliamentary elections will make it possible to create effectively functioning institutions of power and to bolster the country’s national unity on a platform of implementing programs for the social and economic modernization of Egyptian society. We are committed to Egypt continuing to play a stabilizing role in the Middle East and in the Arab and Islamic world as a whole and contributing to strengthening regional security and stability. We support Cairo’s antiterrorist activities, including its efforts to normalize the situation in the Sinai Peninsula.

Libyan Crisis
The situation in Libya is a striking example of an ill-considered policy by NATO countries. As a result of the bloody civil conflict that was the consequence of illegal actions by foreign players, the country’s state administration has been completely dismantled, its army and law-enforcement forces destroyed and the balance of inter-tribal relations disturbed. The government does not currently control the situation in the greater part of the country’s territory and is unable to make the former revolutionary brigades, which are increasingly resorting to the use of force to achieve their objectives, surrender their weapons. In recent years, there has been a massive rise in the crime rate, terrorist threats have intensified and the problem of safeguarding Libya’s weapons is unresolved. There is disarray in the government itself. The question of a successor to Prime Minister Ali Zeidan has not been resolved since his forced resignation in March this year. Many Libyan forces dispute the legitimacy of parliament’s election of the so-called new Prime Minister, Maiteg, at the beginning of May this year. Against this background, there is grave concern at the escalation of tension in Benghazi on May 16, which saw large-scale military action between local military formations, using heavy military hardware, artillery and aviation. There are reports of dozens killed and hundreds wounded. On May 18, military clashes also occurred in Tripoli. Libya’s General National Council suspended work as a result of an armed attack. We believe it is essential to strengthen international support for Libya with the aim of normalizing the country’s domestic political situation and moving the political process forward. On these grounds, we played an active part in the Rome conference on Libya on March 6, which sent the Libyans a clear signal of the world community’s willingness to help them resolve their urgent issues.

Israeli–Palestinian Conflict Settlement
We are convinced of the need for an appropriate response to the new challenges and threats emerging from the Middle East area, and that these must in no way obscure efforts to resolve long-standing regional conflicts and the Arab-Israeli conflict above all. In the summer of last year, Russia gave its active backing to the resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli talks, which went on until April this year. Unfortunately, they achieved no positive results. Nor was it possible to narrow the gaps in the positions of the Palestinians and Israelis. There was a lack of understanding on almost all points: the borders of a future Palestinian state, security, the status of Jerusalem, refugees, and water resources. The Israelis were categorical about maintaining their, essentially, unlimited military presence in the Jordan Valley even after the signing of an eventual peace agreement. Lastly, they have become particularly insistent in their demand that the Palestinians recognize the so-called Jewish character of the state of Israel. Ongoing construction in the occupied Palestinian territories seriously blighted the situation at the talks. A few days before the talks were due to end, the Israeli side decided to suspend them, linking this among other things to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’s request to be party to a number of inter-
national treaties and conventions, as well as to make progress towards Palestinian unity. In this context, Mahmoud Abbas’s statement at a sitting of the Palestine Liberation Organization’s Central Council in Ramallah on April 26, that the future Palestinian technocratic government will be committed to the principles of rejecting violence and recognizing the state of Israel and to earlier Middle East settlement agreements, appears significant.

It is already known that on April 22, during a visit to the Gaza Strip, a PLO delegation, made up primarily of Fatah and other Palestinian groups, reached an understanding with Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Hamas government of the Gaza Strip, on forming a technocratic government. These accords were later confirmed when Mahmoud Abbas met representative of the Hamas political bureau Khaled Meshaal in Doha. As it happened, I was in the Qatari capital at that time and met both Palestinian leaders. We got the impression that they were both entirely serious in their intent to implement the inter-Palestinian accords. It is possible that the concrete results of this process will soon be visible. Moscow has always proceeded on the basis that, without consolidating Palestinian ranks on the platform of the PLO and the Arab Peace Initiative, it will not be possible to achieve the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people or a just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian problem.

As for the immediate prospects for the development of the situation regarding the Palestinian-Israeli talks in the long haul, it is vitally important at the present dramatic moment not to allow the situation to be aggravated and to keep the two-state solution afloat. This requires that the sides refrain from unilateral measures that could further worsen the state of affairs. Primarily, this relates to Israeli settlement activities and Tel Aviv’s freeze on customs duties and tax receipts owed to the Palestinians. Russia will continue working to restore the peace process both through bilateral channels and at international forums, above all within the format of the Middle East “quartet” of international mediators. We are seeing a certain increase in quartet activities and, on May 20, the latest session took place in Brussels at the level of the quartet’s special envoys.

**Christians in the Middle East**

In conclusion, I would like to touch on the important topic of the position of Christians in the Middle East. The deterioration in their situation is basically connected to the chaos arising as events get out of hand in the “Arab Spring” states and the entry of radically inclined Islamist forces into the political arena. The meeting of Russian President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and Pope Francis in November last year helped place this issue more firmly on the international agenda. In furtherance of these ideas, a delegation from the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, led by Sergey Vladimirovich Stepashin, visited the Vatican at the end of February this year. The contacts they made, including a brief conversation with the pontiff, demonstrated the closeness of our approaches. They agreed to cooperation with the Vatican in defending the human rights of Christians in the Middle East. Syrian Christians are in a particularly complex position. Because of the ongoing civil war, before which around two million Christians lived in that country, up to half a million of their number have been forced to leave their places of residence. A considerable number of churches and monasteries belonging to the various Christian denominations have been destroyed or damaged. There have been attacks on a number of holy places common to all Christians, including the town of Ma’loula, home to almost the only people for whom the Aramaic spoken by Christ remains a living language.

Russia is engaged in complex, multifaceted work to improve the position of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa. Particular emphasis is being given to drawing the international community’s attention to the complex situation in which Middle Eastern Christians find themselves and to the need to take steps to counter Christianophobia, guarantee religious freedom and develop an international dialogue.
This conference takes place in exceptional, very challenging circumstances that threaten international security and stability. The threat is the unprecedented growth of terrorism. Terrorism is a threat to all countries without exception, but in our region it takes a more acute, dangerous, and bloody form, which threatens not only the security of our countries and people, but also their very existence. Our countries are experiencing a rise in extremist terrorist ideology and unprecedented growth in the number of criminal gangs and organizations fully supported by a number of Arab, regional, and Western governments, which carry out the recruitment and training of terrorist groups to be used as tools for the destruction of states and overthrow of regimes espousing different political and ideological beliefs.

Perhaps the most striking example of this is what is happening in Syria — an Arab country that was a paragon of security and stability, as well as of the coexistence of different various religious communities; a country which for more than three years now has been subjected to the most brutal war of aggression in the history of mankind. The reason for this aggression is her failure to accede to American and Zionist dictates, and her commitment to an independent position, which has led to the decision to overthrow her at any cost. As a result of all this, a vast conspiracy and cruel aggression have been perpetrated against my country, which is subjected to a comprehensive military, political, economic, and media war on the part of governments and organizations that disburse funds to support this unjust war against our people. Criminals have been drawn from more than 84 countries, and then transported, with weapons, to Syria across the borders of neighboring countries, which provided them with every kind of help and support, along with instructions to carry out the most savage criminal acts against the Syrian people and the Syrian state. Terrorism is growing at an increasing pace, having reached unprecedented proportions. Thousands of intentional attacks using mortar shells and car bombs have been perpetrated against residential areas, schools, hospitals, Islamic and Christian religious sites. In addition, gangs massacre civilians every day around their home bases simply because they have different outlooks on the world.

Despite the cruelty and crimes to which we have been subjected for more than three years, the Syrian leadership has been and continues to make huge efforts, carrying on full cooperation with all parties interested in finding the sort of political solution to the crisis in Syria that would meet the aspirations of our people and would not be contrary to our sovereignty and independence.

Hence our participation in the second Geneva Conference, where we confirmed the need to respect the points of the first Geneva Conference, and especially the fight against terrorism. However, countries that support terrorism in Syria have rejected a political solution, demanding that the criminal gangs escalate the conflict. The only choice for our army and our security apparatus was to fulfill their constitutional duty to protect the people by completely defeating terrorists, wherever in Syria they might be. Terrorism recognizes no faith, no identity, no borders; it multiplies, and, if it hit Syria today, tomorrow it may pounce on other states — its threat is universal. This is the essence of terrorism.

To the friendly Russian Federation belongs the merit of understanding and determining the nature and dangers of terrorism. She has always said and says still that terrorism threatens all, and that the fight against and victory over it is only possible by combining the efforts of the entire international community. On this basis, the Russian Federation adopted a number of measures; however, in most cases, the reaction of Western countries to such measures by the Russian Federation to combat terrorism was completely negative. On the contrary, they extended the NATO zone to the East, committed aggression against Yugoslavia and also supported terrorism in the Caucasus. Certain officials in London and Washington organized meetings with Chechen terrorists and openly conducted negotiations with them. These same people are now trying to spread confusion and instability in Ukraine by attempting to interfere in its internal affairs and promote discord and strife among the fellow citizens of a single state — going as far as fomenting a civil war in that country. Yet all the above did not distract our Russian friends from their continued determination to focus all efforts on fighting and routing terrorism.

The countries of the colonial West-partners in the development of terrorism, have recently realized that the terrorism they created yesterday, the same one they are supporting these days in Syria, will affect them in the future. This much has been stated by these countries’ intelligence agencies, which have warned of the dangers of terrorism in Syria, expressing fear of the return of foreign terrorists to the countries from whence they came, subsequently committing terrorist acts in those countries. This made a number of these countries, particularly in Europe, take harsh measures to prevent the return of these criminals, and to arrest and strip them of their citizenship should they return. Before such an increasing threat of takfiri terrorism in Syria, international and regional cooperation to combat and eliminate terrorism is inevitable. It requires:

- The adoption of punitive measures against state sponsors of terrorism in
Syria, pursuant to relevant resolutions on counter-terrorism;
• The closing by all neighboring countries of their borders with Syria when terrorists are on the move locally, and the adoption of measures to prohibit their accommodation and the transfer of arms and funds to terrorists into Syrian territory;
• The termination of instances of an information campaign against Syria and the closing of all media that support the takfirist extremist ideology of terrorism;
• The revision by states and organizations of their positions against the Syrian government, which would be a form of contribution to the fight against terrorism.

Aggressors against the Syrian government thought that they would be able to overthrow it in a short time due to the massacres they have committed and are perpetrating still, due to destructive and subversive action. But they faced the resistance of our people and our brave army, as well as the positions of friendly countries, those on Syria’s side, helping it find a way out of the crisis. These States are the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Venezuela, and other governments, organizations and society. Our people will never forget how the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China have repeatedly used the veto in the Security Council against Western draft resolutions aimed at the destruction of Syria and the overthrow of Syrian government. These positions will remain forever in the memory of our people. With this support from you, our dear friends, our army and our people were able to repulse the terrorists and their supporters, and to expose their plans, causing their defeat.

Our army continues to stand firm in the face of terrorism, and will do so until victory is achieved for Syria. Syria’s victory is a victory for all the nations of the world against terrorism and terrorists; a victory for the values of justice and equality. We all need to support Syria in its fight against the terrorists, in defense of the whole world.
U. DEKEL  
Deputy Director of the Institute for National Security Studies, State of Israel

Israel is confronting a wide range of regional security challenges. I will focus on the four main ones:

**Nuclear Iran**  
The negotiations being conducted between Iran and the P5+1 on an agreement to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear capabilities have created an Iranian nuclear program that can be illustrated as a “car that has stopped but is parked near nuclear capability”. We must recognize the fact that Iran is a nuclear threshold state, a distance of months from the bomb. In principle, Israel supports the international community’s efforts to obtain a permanent settlement that will move Iran back to years away from military nuclear capability. However, if it becomes clear that the interim agreement and the negotiations for a permanent settlement are an Iranian trick and are fraudulent, Israel expects the United States and the rest of the world to commit to using the option of force. In order to persuade Iran to accept the terms of a tolerable agreement as well (which would allow it limited enrichment, to a low level of up to 5 per cent, with tight supervision and limitations on the number of centrifuges and the amount of material stored in Iran), it must be convinced that both the U.S. and Israeli military options are real. Russia has a crucial role to play, in accordance with international standards. The turmoil in the region is reflected in the loss of governability in various countries and has given a greater voice to the Arab public. In addition, it has led to the free migration of weapons and terrorists by virtue of porous borders. Most of Israel’s borders today abut areas without governance or with weak governance. A conspicuous example is the border in the Golan Heights, which is no longer controlled solely by the Syrian army, but by a collection of terrorist groups and organizations. In Syria today, there are some 30,000 global jihadi activists. The country has become a magnet for such activists from all over the world, but they will not stay there forever. Al-Qaeda is gaining a foothold in western Iraq; in northern, eastern, and southern Syria; in Lebanon; and in northern Jordan, and global jihadi elements are gaining a foothold in the Sinai, Gaza, and the West Bank. The civil war in Syria is strengthening the most dangerous trends in the region. It is feeding the strength of radical Islam, especially Al-Qaeda, fueling the conflict between Sunnis and Shiites, and allowing Iran to expand its influence. This is a struggle whose end is not in sight and whose consequences are not yet clear. Societies in the Arab world will eventually be free, but they will become free gradually and in their own time. This process has already begun, from the bottom up, and it is leading to political freedom. It cannot be accelerated by pushing Western ideas on them from the outside.

**Regional Environment**  
The situation in the Middle East is changing at a very rapid pace as a result of the turmoil in the region. This requires a systemic, conceptual change in the approach to security, since there are more arenas and different challenges than in the past. There are 170,000 missiles and rockets aimed at Israel. They are more dispersed, more accurate, and more lethal, and most are held by non-state actors who lack state responsibility and do not operate in accordance with international standards. The turmoil in the region is reflected in the loss of governability in various countries and has given a greater voice to the Arab public. In addition, it has led to the free migration of weapons and terrorists by virtue of porous borders. Most of Israel’s borders today abut areas without governance or with weak governance. A conspicuous example is the border in the Golan Heights, which is no longer controlled solely by the Syrian army, but

**Palestinian Issue**  
At the annual conference of the Institute for National Security Studies, Prime Minister Netanyahu emphasized that “the formula for a peace settlement is a demilitarized Palestinian state that recognizes the Jewish state”, “two nation-states and mutual recognition between them”, and “stable security arrangements with a long-term IDF presence along the Jordan River”. The last round of negotiations ended without a breakthrough, with “blame games” and mutual recriminations over the failure of the process. This reinforces the need for Israel to formulate additional options for the diplomatic process. In the event of Palestinian refusal to return to the negotiating table and to discuss a permanent settlement or transitional arrangements, these options will enable Israel to shape a two-state reality independently, while retaining freedom of action in security matters.

**United States and the Middle East**  
Although the coming challenges for the United States are centered in China and Asia due to the direct economic and security implications, it is unlikely that the United States will sever its ties with the Middle East, since there is no one that can step into its shoes in the region and act as the “responsible adult”. Coordination between the United States and Russia will likely bring about more calm and stability in the region, as illustrated by the CW agreement in Syria, rather than mutually challenging each other’s policies.
Your Excellency Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Army General Sergey Shoigu, your Excellency Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces and First Deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, Army General Valeriy Gerasimov, dear honored colleagues, thank you for presenting me with this opportunity to share with you, in my short intervention, the LAF’s views toward a more stable Middle East and North Africa.

While admitting that this is a very broad and encompassing topic that could not be addressed in a holistic approach and in such a short time, however, I have no doubts that there is an awful lot of agreement among us here that instability in the Middle East and North Africa has had, and continues to have, an enduring negative impact on the overall international security. Accordingly, I thought that it is of great importance to identify the key problematic areas and issues in that region, and I hope that — by the end of this conference — we will, altogether, have redefined those issues in light of the numerous events and changes of the past few years; and subsequently, we will all have a better understanding of the overall situation; all in all, this could set forth better conditions for comprehensive approaches to the issues at stake.

The key issues that I have chosen to speak about are: the Palestinian Question, The Sunni-Shiite Conflict, Extremist Islamic Terrorism, and Uprisings.

**Palestinian Question**

In May 2014 Palestinians worldwide, increasingly in the Diaspora, commemorated the 66th anniversary of the Nakba, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were uprooted from their homeland. Undoubtedly, the Palestinian question was at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict; similarly, it was a root cause of instability and turmoil in the Middle East in general, and a catalyst for civil conflicts in some countries, as was the case in Lebanon and Jordan. Palestinians’ rights to an independent state and their right of return did not fade away with time. I have a profound conviction that only a just solution to the Palestinian issue will lead to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict and achieving a comprehensive peace in the region.

**Suni-Shiite Conflict**

This is a serious threat, not only to regional security but to international security as well. We see an utmost urgency to calm down this strife between Islam’s two largest sects, which is felt in many Arab countries and, increasingly, in the wider Muslim world. Politics and power struggles viewed through sectarian lenses, in our region, are more likely interpreted in a negative way. More than ever before, wise and responsible leaders, from both sides, are required to preach tolerance, promote peaceful inter-communal relations and seek rapprochement with each other. Indeed, this is a daunting challenge, but unless Sunnis and Shiites have a better common understanding of their past, it will be difficult to envision a better future than their present.

**Extremist Islamic Terrorism**

The transnational threat of Al Qaeda’s decentralized network and its affiliates in MENA has been flourishing in an unprecedented manner over the past few years, particularly in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and North Africa. Large ungoverned areas in troubled countries throughout the region are providing Al Qaeda affiliates with enough space, time and resources to consolidate their powers, and expand their geographic strongholds. Such areas are turning into magnets attracting foreign fighters from all four corners of the world. Al Qaeda-inspired terrorism is fueling the aforementioned Sunni-Shiite conflict into a conflagration. Returnees from jihadi theaters pose a real and direct threat to their home countries. No country can defend itself against Al Qaeda-style terrorism single-handedly. It is crucial that we converge our efforts and elevate our cooperation and coordination between competent agencies in our countries to a whole new level in combating extremist Islamic terrorism.

**Uprisings**

Volumes have been written and said about uprisings across MENA, and about the socio-economic and political dynamics that drove peoples to revolt against governments in different Arab countries, yet it will take some time before we fully understand the overwhelming change still unfolding, and the history still in the making. However, and regardless of the twists and turns in the history and politics of each affected country, uprisings in general have highlighted and emphasized the need for change that younger generations throughout the region are looking forward to have, mainly in: 1) more representative governments, 2) prevalence of the rule of law, 3) socio-economic development, and 4) functioning institutions that are relatively free of corruption and nepotism. Moreover, additional efforts need to be exerted by influential regional and international players to encourage civil society, religious tolerance, and the protection of religious and ethnic minorities.

To recap, I have a deep conviction that addressing the aforementioned issues accordingly among relevant states at the international, regional and sub-regional levels will yield encouraging and long-term positive effects on regional and international security and stability. Finally, allow me to say that Lebanon is committed to being an effective partner in countering the transnational threat of terrorism, and to contributing its share in this regard.
Ever since the Cold War ended, I think that in the Middle East, the word “security” has been regionalizing. That means that the preservation of security in different regions somehow constitutes the word “security”. In that sense, I believe that the “Arab Spring” is a turning point. If you consider the geopolitical implications of the “Arab Spring” on Middle East security, I would say that security and stability in the Middle East with the “Arab Spring” developments is in further regionalization. But why? I think there are three reasons.

Causes of the Influence of the “Arab Spring” on the Security of the Middle East
First is the role of masses in the Arab world. We have increased the role of the Arab public and masses in shaping the geopolitical and security rivalries of states these days. I think this is a new development because, before that, we did not have this element in shaping the foreign policies of states. This is new — that the Arab masses and the Arab Street are, in the realities on the ground, trying to shape the politics of the Arab world. I think that this was not existent before the “Arab Spring”, because the situation was more impacted by the role of elites as well as the role of foreign actors. These elements somehow shaped the geopolitical relations of states in this region. This is one point. The second point is the strengthening of the state system with more independent and nationalistic characteristics. Some might say that the “Arab Spring” brought a social contract to the geopolitical rivalry of the states and some incompetence of some governments here. But, this is the dominant view in the Western countries — that there are gaps between states and nations these days. The reality is that, at the same time, by going through the context of the “Arab Spring” developments, we see more focus on the role of the states, a state-centric characteristic. Security and stability are becoming very much important these days. There was some excitement at the beginning of the “Arab Spring”, but step-by-step we see that there is more focus on keeping the state system in the region. Perhaps this is for two reasons. First is the disappointment of regional countries regarding the role of foreign actors in solving state problems in the region. I think nations are focusing on their own capability through regional cooperation. This is very important. We see how much nations are trying to focus the power of their own states and governments these days, despite the previous expectations that came from the “Arab Spring”. The second issue here is the spread of extremism and terrorism. This is important because everyone — every actor — is worried about the civil war, the collapse of the state system these days, because terrorists in nature are different; they are anti-nation-state, they are against political borders, they are against international rules and regulations. Of course, they are monopolized and would like to hold all the power; and, of course, they are ideological. These are against the state system. And this worries a lot of nations of the region and all our actors. I think the nations of the region are trying to strengthen a new kind of a state system and nationalism, and this is the second implication of the “Arab Spring’s” geopolitical impact.

The third issue is the impact of those two elements on the role of regional players in solving regional issues. There is no doubt that the role of regional players is much more substantial than foreign players, players from the Western countries in the region. That’s something that is quite clear. I think that, although for some regional rivalries between some regional actors — like between Iran and Saudi Arabia — this is a challenge, at the same time we see the capability and capacities of regional cooperation being strengthened. This is a new thing coming from the “Arab Spring’s” geopolitical impact. In terms of policy implications, I think this is very important, because it relates to the debate about the presence or absence of regional actors in regional issues and the degree and the nature of foreign actors’ presence in regional issues.

Consequences of the “Arab Spring”
Perhaps the dominant view in America is that the United States must come to the region and try to preserve security and stability in the region. But I think with the “Arab Spring” we see, day-by-day and step-by-step, that, by encouraging cooperation, we can better achieve regional stability and security. I think that the crises of Egypt and Syria are good examples to describe the conceptualization I just mentioned. I think a state-centric situation is being strengthened, with the “Arab Spring” development, and after two or three years, I think the key issues are still stability and security. Of course social contracts issues are important, but, as we see in Egypt, people are again backing into a state-centric situation with a more nationalistic and independent situation for their own state. I think that we are going towards a kind of regionalization of stability and security in the region. If we consider that the world’s security is being regionalized, if we compare that we started with the Iraqi crisis in 1991, the Afghanistan crisis in 2011, the Iraqi crisis in 2003, and the Syrian crisis in 2011, we see the legitimacy of getting to a political solution is being strengthened in the region. That shows that we are going to see more regional aspects for establishing security in the Middle East. If you consider the implication of the Syrian crisis’s geopolitical impacts, I would say
that now the legitimacy of a political solution is somehow being accepted. That was very difficult at the beginning. Now we see the necessity of political consensus between different actors in the region. Now we see the need for a balance of interests between actors in the region and of course between regional and trans-regional actors. Here I think there was no such thing at the beginning of the Syrian crisis. These are the geopolitical implications of the Syrian crisis. I can tell you that, from the beginning of the crisis, the war was to fill the power vacuum. But that has shifted to the battle against terrorism. It was the war to change the Syrian government at the beginning; now it is the war to change the individual and the leadership. At the beginning, it was a war based on finding a military solution to everything; now it is a war for changing things using diplomatic solutions.

It was mentioned in the morning conference by all officials how much this concern about terrorism is important for all actors. My conclusion is that the most important geopolitical impact of the “Arab Spring” is regionalization of stability and security in the Middle East. I think this will bring a lot of geopolitical impact for world security. In my belief, regional cooperation is key to establishing international security.
AMBASSADOR S. A. RYABKOV
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

I would like to take a somewhat different tack from the previous speakers in this panel discussion. In view of the topic of this event, it would probably make sense for us to exchange opinions about the prospects for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East. We all realize that this issue has a long history, and it is linked to many political and diplomatic tasks. In many ways, this issue goes beyond the framework of regional security. The entire project may seem unrealistic. Nevertheless, I am sure that we will have to work on this issue very energetically over the coming years. Part of the reason is that, in our estimate, stability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and stability of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, depend on progress being made in this area. Russia has been working consistently at various multilateral platforms and in bilateral contacts with partners in the region to implement the agreements reached at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. It is working to facilitate the convening of an international conference on a WMD-free zone. I would like to emphasize one new circumstance that arose in the Middle East region in the past few months. We are on the verge of the completion of the process of eliminating Syria’s chemical weapons potential. In fact, the only major thing that has yet to be done is to complete the removal of one of the precursors of chemical agents. Once that is done — and we hope this will be done literally in a matter of days — the task will have been accomplished. We will have accomplished the task of eliminating Syria’s chemical weapons capability.

What does that mean for the region as a whole? In my view, it means that the other countries that have yet to do so are now under an obligation seriously to consider officially joining the Chemical Weapons Convention. In my view, Israel could consider the possibility of ratifying the convention. Egypt could sign and ratify... well, I am not going to name every single country. Let me just say that this is one of the results of the successful elimination of Syria’s chemical weapons capability.

To return to the question of a WMD-free zone and of the conference on this issue, we believe that the event must be held before the end of this year. If we fail to achieve this, the countries in the region — well, it is up them of course, but not only countries in the region, but also the co-sponsors of the conference, i.e. the NPT depository states, will have failed to implement what was agreed in 2010. This will overshadow the upcoming NPT Review Conference in 2015. I would like the delegates, especially from the Middle Eastern states, to tell us what they think about this whole situation. What is needed for the participants in this process, especially countries in the region itself — what must they do to produce an agenda that would be acceptable to all, and finally to agree on the terms of holding that conference?
The Middle East and North African Region currently remains a key source of global threats and challenges linked to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery. Taking into account the fact that the region is in a state of ferment, with a high degree of internal instability, and full of intraregional conflicts, it should be noted that the risks related to WMD proliferation beyond the region and to terrorism making use of WMD components (WMD-terrorism) have increased of late and show no signs of abating.

Iraq and the Non-Proliferation of WMD

One of the most alarming trends of the past decade and a half has been “non-proliferation missionary work”, when incursions and regime change have taken place on the pretext of combating proliferation. This was most blatant in Iraq (2003). And yet, after the U.S. invasion, no WMD could be found in Iraq. In this way, the very values and principles of the non-proliferation regimes were discredited. At the same time, using the fight against proliferation as a screen, the United States carried out a geopolitical task of its own by placing Iraq under its control.

However, the international operation in Iraq, carried out after the First Gulf War (1991), which had the appropriate UN Security Council mandate and involved inspectors from the IAEA and two commissions — UNSCOM and UNMOVIC — was an example of international, balanced and thought-out efforts to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and their means of delivery, or biological weapons and their means of delivery.

Intervention in Libya

Another alarming trend was the intervention of NATO forces in Libya. In this instance, on the basis of secret accords between the U.S., Great Britain and Muammar Gaddafi, elements of Libya’s mock WMD programs had been previously eliminated or minimized, after which embarking on intervention and regime change caused no problems. The Libyan situation taught an important lesson to states (like, for example, North Korea) which have or intend to create WMD-potential of their own: do not agree to talks and, if you do, do not make unilateral concessions or abandon the WMD you already have because in that case it will be easier to destroy you after such voluntary “disarmament”.

Israel and the Proliferation Problem

From the point of view of non-proliferation, the main problem in the Middle East region is Israel’s refusal to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and, what is more, to admit openly that it has a nuclear arsenal of its own even though there has been no doubt about this of late. Israel’s completely non-transparent nuclear arsenal, aimed against its neighbors in the region, is a source of great tension, while Israel’s conduct to date has prevented an international conference being called on creating a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Near East. Abandoning nuclear weapons, dismantling them along South African lines and acceding to the NPT as a non-nuclear state are in Israel’s long-term interests. It must, however, be said that this point of view is not shared by Tel Aviv. The international community, primarily in the person of Israel’s main ally and sponsor, the United States, must make additional efforts to change Israel’s position on this issue. Israel’s neighbors in the region must make a contribution as well, of course, by treating Israel’s regional security concerns with greater understanding.

Iran’s Nuclear Program

Iran is an influential and independent player in the regional and world arenas, administering its own sovereignty and, thereby, protecting its own interests. As far as may be judged, Iran has never taken the political decision to develop nuclear weapons. Certainly, there has been some non-systemic work of an applied military nature but its initiation was motivated by the fact that Iran’s adversary in the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, used WMD — chemical weapons — against Iran, to which the international community basically turned a blind eye. Beginning in the mid-1990s, the United States and Israel have subjected Iran to immense pressure not to engage in developing civil nuclear energy — its passport to the leading ranks of the technologically-developed states of the 21st century. To Iran’s honor, it has resisted this pressure. Moreover, Russia has come to the aid of its partner on numerous occasions over this matter — in the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant and in the search for mutually-acceptable diplomatic solutions to the Iranian nuclear problem. At the same time, the lack of transparency of some of Iran’s actions did not meet with understanding from Russia, although it could probably be explained at least in part by Iran’s desire to safeguard its civil nuclear program from outside influence. It was and remains in Russia’s interests to see an Iran without nuclear weapons, a predictable Iran with outside influence. It was and remains in Russia’s interests to see an Iran without nuclear weapons, a predictable Iran with outside influence. It was and remains in Russia’s interests to see an Iran without nuclear weapons, a predictable Iran with outside influence.
futile and if the parties to the negotiations begin to come unstuck over demands for further concessions from Iran, the entire architecture of accords developed to date will crack or simply collapse. At present, however, the search for solutions to the Iranian nuclear problem is a rare positive example of the possibilities of multilateral diplomacy in the non-proliferation sphere.

**Syria’s Chemical Weapons**

The destruction of more than 90% of Syria’s chemical weapons is another example where diplomacy succeeded, even if only temporarily, in getting the better of the trend towards military solutions. Russian proposals formed the basis for decisions about the destruction of chemical weapons in Syria. They made it possible to avoid external intervention, an escalation of the Syrian conflict and its acquisition of an international nature. The Syrian leadership showed consistency in acceding to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and ensuring that decisions on the destruction of chemical weapons were carried out in conditions of an ongoing civil war. However, questions remain regarding the diplomatic decisions on Syria. First, how stable are they? Might it not be that, in renouncing its chemical weapons arsenal, Syria’s current government has lost its final trump card and is approaching a final hour which has merely been postponed but not revoked? Second, what was behind last year’s accusations that the Syrian leadership had used chemical weapons against its own population? Were these not acts of provocation, cleverly played out and successfully influencing public opinion? Inquiries have not enabled a definitive conclusion. Such an analysis is called for, however. Third, why, when Syria has ratified the CWC [Chemical Weapons Convention], has its neighbor — Israel — still not taken the same step? Double standards have always existed in the Middle East and should come as no surprise. They are, however, disasters waiting to happen.

**Saudi Arabia and Nuclear Capabilities**

To date we know only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to cooperation between Pakistan (Dr. A. Q. Khan) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in the nuclear weapons sphere. The KSA has neither nuclear weapons nor the technological capabilities for developing them. At certain times, however, the KSA has probably considered the possibility of obtaining service-ready nuclear ammunition from Pakistan for a generous financial payment; the delivery vehicles the Kingdom acquired at one time provide indirect evidence.

**CTBT Issues**

There are still a number of states in the region that have not ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). These are Israel, Egypt, and Iran. It should not be a great effort for these states to ratify this major treaty and this would serve to create a climate of trust in the region. At the same time, the unwillingness of a nuclear power, the United States, to ratify the CTBT understandably has an adverse impact on the readiness of non-nuclear states to do the same.

**WMD Terrorism Threats**

The fact that a great many conflicts arise in the region, the existence in the region of a number of “gray zones” where there are virtually no effective state institutions (Libya, Somalia) and the existence on the periphery of the region of extensive “gray zones” (in the Sahel and Afghanistan) make it possible to talk about considerable risks that non-state entities will emerge here, attempting to gain access to WMD components and chemical and biological weapons components above all. The most influential international terrorist organizations active in the region are interested in new kinds of acts of terrorism, unlike the ones that have gone before, which would have an even greater effect on global public opinion. The threat of WMD terrorism is by nature cross-border and supra-regional.

**Nuclear Energy Development**

A number of states in the Middle East and North Africa (Turkey, UAE, Jordan etc.) have begun moving in the direction of developing nuclear energy at home. Some experts view these steps with undoubted suspicion. I take the opposite point of view. The involvement of the states of the region in stable, state-of-the-art, high-tech energy solutions, as long as it is monitored by the IAEA, will bring them the benefits of the 21st century and reduce risks. The notion of a “proliferation chain reaction” in the region is wrong. Neither Turkey nor Egypt will develop nuclear weapons of their own just because of rumors that one or other of their neighbors is engaged in doing so. Coming up with answers to challenges to national interests is a far more subtle process. In my opinion, the development of nuclear power in the region offers its states the prospect of more opportunities for cooperation than for rivalry. For this to happen, of course, requires the elimination of a focus of destabilization in the Middle East — Israel’s nuclear weapons. Substantially reducing the risks connected to WMD proliferation in the Middle East and North Africa appears to be complicated at present. An effective practical measure, however, would be an international conference to discuss issues related to creating a WMD-free zone in the Near East. The decision to call this conference was taken by the NPT Review Conference in 2010. Unfortunately, progress has been minimal. Some movement towards calling such a conference has been observed, however. While not a panacea, the conference could launch a regional dialogue on the creation of a WMD-free zone — after all, precisely and only in that event will it be possible to talk about a substantial reduction of WMD threats in the region.

**Recommendations**

In this connection, I should like to outline the specific steps — there are 10 of them — that could bring nearer the emergence of a Middle East free of nuclear and other types of WMD. They are:

- A joint statement by all countries in the region in which they undertake to refrain from attacking one another’s declared nuclear facilities that have been placed under IAEA safeguards, and from threatening such attacks.
- The development of a “road map” pointing the way to gradually placing all facilities in the region’s nuclear infrastructure under IAEA safeguards.
- The Middle East countries’ ratification of the IAEA Additional Protocol.
- The creation of a permanent regional confidence-building mechanism in the
nuclear sphere and in the sphere of chemical and biological weapons and certain types of delivery vehicles.

- Ratification by all countries in the region of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.
- The agreement of accords to ban missiles with a range of more than 3,500 km.
- The formation of an inter-state commission to draft the text of a treaty on a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East. In the process of framing the treaty, all states in the region should accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.
- The internationalization and regionalization of the nuclear fuel cycle.
- Institutionalized cooperation in the nuclear sphere, creation of an integrated regional structure.
- The creation in the Middle East of effective early-warning mechanisms for nuclear incidents.

We are glad that these recommendations were supported by representatives of the UN, states in the region, and the NPT depositary States: Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. We believe that this process should be extended and the Conference should be convened before the end of this year.
PANEL DISCUSSION
Afghanistan and regional security
MODERATOR

AMBASSADOR A. I. ANTONOV
Deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation

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Ladies and gentlemen, in my contribution, I would like to present the results of the Main Directorate’s mathematical modeling of the three most likely scenarios for the military-political situation in Afghanistan, as well as of the progress of and prospects for the completion of ISAF’s withdrawal from Afghanistan territory.

In compiling our forecast, we took account not only of the instability factors that have been in evidence and have now become permanent, but also of the trends that have recently emerged.

In particular, the Taliban have interpreted the decision to reduce the size of the foreign military contingent in Afghanistan as an undoubted victory for them. This move has reinforced their plans to ensure that foreign military contingents are expelled from Afghan territory, and to seize power. That is precisely why the efforts of the United States, its allies and the Afghan leadership to organize a dialogue with the Taliban are failing to yield practical results. The movement’s leaders are convinced that a victory for them is inevitable, and believe there is no point in engaging in talks with their opponents.

It is certainly the case that the election of a new president is exerting a major influence on developments in Afghanistan. However, analyzing the programs of the main candidates vying to become Afghanistan’s president shows that, irrespective of who wins the second round of the election, there will not be any radical changes in Kabul’s military-political strategy. Afghanistan’s undeniable dependence on financial and military assistance from abroad ensures that boosting cooperation with the United States will be a foreign policy priority for the new Afghan government.

Additional factors affecting the development of the situation in Afghanistan are: increased propaganda activity by the Taliban and the absence of progress in the organization of a peace dialogue with the armed opposition.

In the light of these circumstances, the results of our research show that, in the medium term, the situation in Afghanistan may develop in line with the following main scenarios:

- the current domestic political alignment is preserved, in the presence of a limited foreign military contingent;
- the Taliban movement seizes power;
- Afghanistan disintegrates into ethnic enclaves.

Before moving on to examine the detail of the scenarios, I would like to note that the model takes account of more than 3,000 factors capable of influencing the situation to a greater or lesser extent. These include the potential and existing capabilities of various Afghan political forces, extremist groups, the interests of foreign states and their efforts in protecting those interests, and the specifics of Afghanistan, socioeconomically and in terms of physical geography.

If the current domestic political alignment is preserved, in the presence of a limited foreign military contingent, overall this will preserve the existing balance of interests, and the armed confrontation between the authorities in Kabul and the Taliban will continue. At the same time, the Islamists will make significant progress in boosting the number of combat groups at their disposal, and in extending their zone of influence into the country’s central and western districts.

The military presence maintained by the U.S. and its allies on Afghan territory will remain the principal condition guaranteeing the sustainability of the government in Kabul. Afghanistan will continue to be the source of an increased threat to all the states of Central Asia in terms of terrorism, religious extremism and the drugs trade. The probability of the situation developing in line with this scenario is 39%.

The Taliban movement seizing power is possible if foreign countries end their troop deployments in Afghanistan in full, or if the powers of foreign military contingents are significantly curtailed. If this happens, we forecast that the Taliban will extend their influence rapidly and expand the scope of their terrorist and subversive activities, which will allow them to establish control across almost the entire territory of the country.

If this scenario is realized, the considerable potential of illegal armed groups operating an extensive network of training camps for militants from international terrorist organizations will be preserved. This will pose a genuine threat that the Islamists will shift their combat operations onto the territory of neighboring states, primarily those in Central Asia, in order to seize power in these republics. The probability of the situation developing in line with this scenario is 27%.

Afghanistan may disintegrate into ethnic enclaves if the Taliban movement and its allies attempt to establish control across the whole of Afghanistan’s territory. If this happens, ethnic minorities, primarily Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkmen and the Hazara, who live mainly in the country’s northern and western districts, may mount an armed resistance against the Taliban, leading to the country’s territorial and political division and Afghanistan’s possible disintegration into various quasi-state entities. This situation will bring about an escalation in the “competition” to extend spheres of influence in Central Asia. The probability of the situation developing in line with this scenario is 31%.

At the same time, we have also analyzed the various ways in which the foreign military presence in Afghanistan may be reduced. This research shows that, by the end of this year, the members of the coalition need to withdraw at least 40,000 service personnel from Afghanistan, more than 40,000 armored and automotive vehicles and some 300
helicopters. The southern, central and northern communications routes will be used for this purpose. Our assessment of progress in the reduction of the ISAF contingent shows that, by the end of 2014, the Americans and their allies will only have managed to withdraw personnel. Western states are experiencing serious difficulties in withdrawing property and military equipment. If cargo continues to be dispatched to permanent deployment locations at the current rate, including via the northern supply route, the plans will be implemented in full no earlier than by 2017. If the central or northern communications routes are blocked, it may take until 2018 and 2020 respectively for all property to be moved out. And if the situation in Pakistan escalates and the southern route is closed, then it will take until 2022 at the earliest. Our findings show that, despite its high-profile statements, the United States will not manage to finish withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. In those circumstances, Washington will be forced to launch its latest information campaign, which will be designed to persuade the international community, and above all the U.S. American people, that the plans for a military presence on Afghan territory need to be adjusted. The pretext for this may be the supposed escalation of the domestic political situation in Afghanistan, resulting from an increase in the activities of the armed opposition. So we can confidently assert that the United States will retain a military presence in Afghanistan until at least 2024. This will not, however, exert a significant influence in terms of reducing the armed opposition’s combat potential. The radical Islamic groups operating on the country’s territory will continue to be the main source of terrorist threat for Central Asia.
Much is being said at the moment about the notorious “2014 factor”. The overwhelming majority of politicians, diplomats and analysts view this factor in the context of what may happen following the withdrawal from Afghanistan, at the end of this year, of U.S. combat units and the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). It seems to me that forecasts about what will happen after 2014 should be based on a clear understanding of what has and has not been done in the country over the past 12 years.

In the autumn of 2001, after launching air strikes on the military infrastructure of the Taliban, the United States deployed around 2,000 service personnel in Afghanistan. Taliban forces, numbering around 70,000 militants, fled, taking cover in villages and in neighboring Pakistan. In 2002, the Americans boosted their military presence to 5,000, constantly building up their headcount in order to fight the Taliban, whose combat potential was non-existent, but to create a counterweight to the armed units of the former Northern Alliance, which constituted the backbone of the Afghan armed forces. So engrossed were they with achieving this objective that they “overlooked” the revival of Taliban units in the southern provinces of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. By 2005, the U.S.-NATO contingent had ballooned to 40,000 soldiers and officers, while, in parallel, the Taliban’s sphere of influence had spread across several provinces in the south and east of the country. ISAF’s peak headcount, in 2012, was 150,000, while the Taliban wielded influence in more than 10 provinces, with up to 40,000 militants under arms (at present they are capable of mobilizing up to 70,000 militants). Thus, during the 12 years the West has had a military presence in Afghanistan, and despite the fact that over that period Washington has spent $600bn on the upkeep of its troops in Afghanistan, the Taliban have virtually restored their combat potential. One traditional source of pride for our Western partners is the fact that they have assisted in the creation of a 350,000-strong army, a police force and security services in Afghanistan. This raises a legitimate question: why do the national armed forces, which enjoy such numerical strength and the support of a foreign troop contingent currently numbering almost 50,000, remain incapable of suppressing an armed opposition that is one-fifth or even one-sixth their size? It could be that the Afghan army does not have an air force, but then nor do the Taliban. The national army and the national police are not particularly well-armed, but Taliban units are no better equipped. One cannot but think that the problem lies in the morale of armed forces personnel, unconvinced that they are fighting for what are genuinely national interests. With some, the belief among the Taliban that they are fighting a war of national liberation against infidel occupiers strikes a chord.

Let’s now take a brief look at the state of the Afghan economy and the social sphere, in which the U.S. is said to have invested more than $100bn. If you add in additional major investments from other Western countries, this figure is entirely comparable with what the Soviet Union spent between the 1960s and the 1980s on more than 140 large and medium-sized socioeconomic projects. Show me, if you can, just 10 of these facilities that have been funded by the Americans. We are told that the problem, so they say, is rampant corruption and a propensity for theft within the Afghan authorities. Let’s look at the facts. Up to 2012, only 20% of Western aid was passing through the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, under the supervision of foreign advisers, while the remaining funds were being distributed by the donors themselves through their own NGOs, who set up a wide-ranging and multilayered system of “kickbacks”. Ultimately, the drugs trade remains the only sustainable source of income for the Afghan economy. The reduction in the size of the foreign troop contingent is leading to a contraction in the service sector, with the result that Afghanistan’s GDP growth rate fell from 12% in 2012 to 3.3% in 2013. In other words, after 12 years, the West has failed to create the sort of viable economy that might deliver sustainable development.

Our Western partners love to talk about the hundreds of schools and clinics that have been built. At the same time, they keep quiet about the fact that most of these facilities have no teachers or healthcare staff. As a result of the economy stagnating, tens of thousands of university graduates are joining the ranks of the unemployed (who account for more than 60% of the labor force).

Western governments have been extremely fortunate with their taxpayers, who seem not to be interested in why the $1tr spent in Afghanistan has not resulted in a stable state with a self-sufficient economy and battle-ready armed forces.

The West has already announced its Afghan mission successfully completed and is hastily withdrawing its combat units, but it has no intention of leaving. Evidence of this is eloquently supplied by the draft Afghan-U.S. security cooperation agreement Washington has been trying unsuccessfully to sign with Kabul over the past year. Under the agreement, the U.S. would retain the right to use at least nine major military bases set up by them in the past, at Bagram, Kandahar, Shindand, Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Jalalabad, Khost and Shurabak. Should the need arise, the Pentagon would have the right to retain and use other infrastructure for its own purposes. In the past few days, NATO has also announced that it is prepared to deploy its personnel at these facilities.
This whole military engineering apparatus is being modestly portrayed as a network of training centers for the Afghan armed forces. Once this network’s objectives are clarified, however, it transpires that the only people who will be trained there are senior officers from the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan — likely, in total, to number fewer than 600. It seems to me that one medium-sized training centre would have been more than enough for these purposes. When we draw the attention of our partners to these oddities, they assure us, as was the case with their promises that NATO would not expand eastwards, that this infrastructure is not intended to undermine Russia’s security or that of other states in the region. I doubt that any impartial analyst would find it particularly difficult to conclude that such a powerful network will provide a convenient platform, should the need arise, for the fresh deployment of a large military contingent capable of addressing geostrategic objectives across an area running from the Persian Gulf, via the Caspian Sea and Central Asia, and over to China. This logic is entirely consistent with the plans Washington has announced to pivot the center of gravity of America’s military-political and economic strategy over to the Asia-Pacific region. It is no surprise, therefore, that Afghan President Hamid Karzai has refused to sign the Afghan-U.S. security agreement, as he would not wish history to record his association with this document. In public and on more than one occasion, he and many other Afghan politicians have cast doubt on the notion that the U.S. moved into Afghanistan in order to fight terrorism. The view is popular among Afghans that Washington is intentionally supporting internal instability in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in order to justify its military presence. Against the backdrop of recent threats that NATO should stop collaborating with Russia, it is worth using the example of Afghanistan in order to take a closer look at who has benefited from this sort of cooperation. We expected that granting the U.S. and NATO the right to move materiel across Russian territory, carrying out joint programs to train Afghan soldiers and police, and fulfilling an American order to supply a large consignment of Mi-17 helicopters, would help to stabilize the military and political situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and reduce the threat terrorism and the drugs trade pose to the interests of the Russian Federation and its allies in Central Asia. In actual fact, there is no point in talking about stability in Afghanistan and the end of the flow of drugs out of the country along the Northern Route. Two imposing bridgeheads, which are being used as bases by several thousand militants from extremist Islamist organizations preparing for deployment in Central Asia, have appeared along the northern sector of the Afghan border, in the provinces of Badakhshan and Badghis. In addition, the 30 helicopters we supplied are yet to be handed over to the Afghan army, and are being intensively used by the Americans exclusively to meet their own needs — and to such an extent that they will soon reach the end of their operational life and require an overhaul.

All these facts testify to the deceitful nature of the American theory that NATO’s military presence in Afghanistan supposedly amounts to an insurance policy against instability spreading into Central Asia, and meets Russia’s national security interests. The same can be said of the argument, favored by the Americans, that their departure from Afghanistan would lead to the complete collapse of the situation there. The existing Afghan realities show that the protracted U.S. military presence in this country has led to the revival of the military-political potential of the Taliban and other Islamic radicals. The retention of American military bases there will continue to serve as a “red rag” to inspire the activities of local and foreign extremists. A resolution in Afghanistan should be sought by supporting the development of a genuine process of national reconciliation among the Afghans themselves, without foreigners interfering. The international community can genuinely help Afghanistan by fulfilling its earlier promises to assist in the country’s socioeconomic development.
Ladies and gentlemen, first of all, I would like to greet the Conference participants, and also to thank the organizers, as represented by the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, for their invitation, and for the opportunity to exchange views on current problems in international security. Without doubt, stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan is a key problem for the international community as it seeks to combat new challenges and threats.

Kyrgyzstan is rigorously pursuing a course towards strengthening its foreign policy collaboration, as well as the coordination and construction of common approaches to the development of the current situation in Afghanistan.

In this context, our forum provides a good platform to coordinate positions and determine areas where interested parties and international organizations can undertake joint efforts in order to preserve peace and stability in Central Asia and in the world as a whole.

Dear conference participants, above all, I would like to note that last year, 2013, was a landmark year for the Kyrgyz Republic, specifically in terms of ensuring security. Our state chaired two international organizations at the same time — the OSCE and the SCO — and organizing and staging meetings of their charter bodies allowed us, at the very highest level, to coordinate our states’ positions on global problems. At the same time, the issue of preserving peace and stability in the region, in the light of the forthcoming withdrawal of the main International Security Assistance Force troop contingent, was one of the significant moments that required joint efforts among the various parties so that it could be resolved.

On the subject of the main preconditions for the predicted growth in tension in the region, I would like to identify the following as the most acute problems requiring an appropriate response on the part of the region’s states and international organizations:

- The increased scale of international terrorism and religious extremism, the activities of international drug-trafficking gangs and other organized crime groups;
- The intensification of hydroelectric energy problems;
- The incomplete international formalization of the state border.

I believe that one of the most important areas for us to act in addressing these objectives is to work in order to ensure a timely and appropriate reaction to minor changes in the military-political situation, and to take specific measures. This collaboration must be mutually reinforcing in nature and designed to achieve the following aims:

- Timely (pre-emptive) acquisition of reliable information on the intentions (designs) of international terrorist organizations;
- Timely decision-making;
- Timely joint action to neutralize and eliminate problems that may suddenly arise;
- Improved collaboration between uniformed agencies in jointly ensuring military security;
- Improved training for armed forces and other military units for use in combat etc.

Returning to the main theme of our conference, I would like to confirm our position that Kyrgyzstan supports the international community on matters relating to post-conflict arrangements in Afghanistan.

The threats emanating from this state’s territory give rise to certain fears among the region’s states that the situation will destabilize, and those fears are linked to the following principal factors:

- First, Afghanistan in itself is a hotbed of instability, and the well-armed terrorist groups operating on its territory and occasionally entering into confrontation with government forces are aggravating the situation;
- Second, training camps for militants, many of whom come from the states of Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan, are continuing to operate in Afghanistan;
- Third, the increase in drugs trafficking and the increased frequency of meetings between field commanders and drug dealers confirm that the financing of terrorist and extremist organizations is well-organized and uninterrupted;
- In addition, the planned withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan and the withdrawal of the transit center from Kyrgyzstan could be used by destructive forces for their own purposes;

All the factors listed above can only alarm us, since the peace of mind of peoples living not only in neighboring states in the immediate vicinity of the hotbeds of tension, but across the entire world, depends on these threats being neutralized effectively.

In this area, the outcome of the presidential elections is of no little importance, since it is only the presence of a strong Afghan government capable of influencing political processes and implementing measures targeted at the state’s socioeconomic rehabilitation that will facilitate progress in this state. It is important that the results of the elections of the President should allow Afghanistan to resolve its internal conflicts in the interests of the country’s development and in order to improve the well-being of the local population.

Despite this, the region’s states also need to take pre-emptive steps to ensure they provide an appropriate response to emerging challenges and threats, and to work to reinforce borders, strengthen their control over migration flows, establish collaboration between security services, law-enforcement agencies and other bodies, improve the mechanisms used for military-technical
cooperation and provide military-technical and other types of material support in the event of a crisis.

For our part, we are ready to carry out multilateral projects as well as our own projects, all designed to implement the tasks lying ahead of us.

In this area, in terms of foreign policy, security and defense, the Kyrgyz Republic is taking the following action:

- The Armed Forces are being reformed so that there will now be a single military command body — the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic.
- Measures are being taken to provide operational and combat training for the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic, independently, on a bilateral basis and under the auspices of international organizations.
- Areas of cooperation are being monitored and identified in respect of the most topical global and regional security issues, especially in Central Asia.
- Plans are being drawn up in anticipation of a possible escalation in the situation in the region, given the situation in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force.
- Military-technical cooperation is being developed with partner-countries to equip the armed forces with modern weaponry and military equipment.

I would like to conclude my speech by confirming once again that we are always ready for constructive and open dialog and for active involvement in measures to preserve international peace and stability.

I am confident that our joint efforts will allow us to find common solutions in the interests of stability and prosperity for Afghanistan and for the region as a whole.
Ladies and gentlemen, dear conference participants, please allow me to welcome you on behalf of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its Secretary-General, Dmitry Mezentsev, and to thank the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation for its warm welcome and the excellent environment it has created for our work. In the 13 years since it was set up, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has achieved notable successes, established itself as a respected international organization and become a factor in regional and global politics. The Organization has presided over the development of what is, in its own way, a unique form of multilateral cooperation. The system of cooperation that operates within the SCO affects almost every area of cooperation between SCO member-states in their efforts to ensure security and stability across the SCO region. The top priorities are mounting effective, combined efforts to combat global threats and challenges and ensuring sustainable socioeconomic development across the SCO region.

This includes battling systematically against the “three evil forces” — terrorism, separatism and extremism — and against drugs and arms trafficking and other forms of transnational crime and illegal immigration, something we will be discussing in greater detail and substance today. As new threats and challenges intensify, pooling our efforts against these “evil forces” confirms the Organization’s special relevance, and is gaining in importance. The situation in and around Afghanistan occupies a special place on the SCO agenda. At their summit in Beijing in 2012, leaders of SCO member-states decided to grant Afghanistan the status of SCO observer, bypassing the status of dialog partner. The decision taken by the presidents was, in its own way, unprecedented.

Meanwhile, the continuing escalation of the confrontation in Afghanistan, and the resulting terrorism, drugs trafficking and transnational organized crime, continue to pose serious threats to everyone. The member-states who are the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan’s direct neighbors, both geographically and historically, are paying special attention to the state of affairs in this country. We can only be worried about the uncertainty in Afghanistan, the fact that the national reconciliation plan has not been implemented, and the development of the situation following the withdrawal of ISAF in 2014. The concluding documents of the annual meetings of the leaders of the SCO’s member-states invariably note that the Organization supports the development of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as an independent, neutral, peaceful and prosperous state. Securing peace and stability in Afghanistan is one of the main factors in ensuring regional and international security. The SCO proceeds on the basis that the deep historical, ethnic and demographic roots of Afghanistan’s multi-ethnic people, and their traditional and religious values, must be respected in full. SCO member-states are sure that the Afghan problem cannot be resolved exclusively by resorting to the use of armed forces and military assets and through increased militarization, without engaging the Afghans themselves in this process, or without a seriously considered and organized process of negotiation under the auspices of the United Nations, or without achieving consensus between the parties to the conflict and strengthening the vertical chain of political command.

In 2013, led by the Organization’s secretary-general, an SCO delegation took part in the OSCE Security Day on the “Afghan issue” in Vienna, took part in “an open debate” at the UN Security Council in New York and was represented at the 3rd Istanbul Process conference in Almaty. At its first meeting in September 2013, the SCO Diplomatic Club, set up in Beijing earlier in 2013 at the suggestion of Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Cheng Guoping, had the honor of inviting Islamic Republic of Afghanistan President Mr. Hamid Karzai to take part in an “expanded” discussion. This is also a serious sign of the attention the SCO is paying to the Afghan issue.

At present, the SCO is expanding its collaboration with the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the UN Development Program for the purpose of ensuring peace and stability in this country. The April 2010 joint declaration on cooperation between the UN and the SCO, and the November 2012 UN General Assembly Resolution on “Cooperation between the UN and the SCO”, are designed to bring about closer collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as part of the implementation of the provisions of the Protocol of Cooperation between the UNODC and the SCO’s Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure. Sustainable security in Afghanistan is, on the one hand, the result of certain agreements in Afghan society, and, on the other, the willingness of the majority to support not only the efforts of the authorities, but also the so-called “humanitarian” foundations of a peaceful resolution. It is important that the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan’s foreign partners should take account of and respect the historical, cultural and religious specifics of Afghan society and Afghan history.

“the SCO’s role in ensuring regional security: problems and prospects”, an international research and application conference focusing on regional security issues, took place in Dushanbe on 14-16 May. In June, experts from our countries, SCO member-states, SCO observer-states and SCO dialog partners will gather for the ninth time at the SCO Forum, the so-called “second track”, in order to discuss key issues not just in the life of the Organ-
We are convinced that at these expert forums, including today’s event, it is very important that the discussion of regional security and integrated approaches should be timely and substantial. It is specifically at these forums that there can be a detailed discussion about taking account of historical, cultural and religious traditions and social memory, which have been accumulated and preserved in an Afghan society that has lived for decades amid systemic instability and, on occasion, military action.

In conclusion, please allow me to stress once again that the issues included on the agenda of today’s Conference are extremely important to our Organization. I am convinced that the authoritative views of the defense ministry representatives, international organizations and non-governmental experts in attendance will also be in demand across the SCO region. I am convinced that all the proposals, assessments, approaches and initiatives that are discussed in the course of the plenary session and thematic discussions at the 3rd Moscow conference will make an important contribution to the search for answers to the key questions in global security, and to strengthening peace and stability in the interests of the peoples of our countries.
The initiative of fostering better relations Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif took to see a dawn of security and stability, and responsibly and skillfully, Afghanistan will transition. If these transitions are managed expected to be in place to help with the drawdown is phased and properly planned. Bilateral and regional mechanisms are crucial to the economic potential of Central Asia, South Asia, South West Asia and Asia Pacific to unleash itself at its optimal capacity. The future security and strategic stability of these regions are also dependent on peace in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is Pakistan’s immediate neighbor. We have common borders. Pakistan is home to more than 3 million Afghan refugees. The continuation of the conflict hurts Pakistan more than any other country, apart from Afghanistan itself. Peace on our western borders is, therefore, vital to our stability and economic development. Pakistan’s assessment about the situation in Afghanistan is based on realism and pragmatism. Afghanistan is undergoing three concurrent political, security and economic transitions up to 2014 before it marches into a decade of transformation. Smooth security and economic transitions are pivotal to stability in Afghanistan and the region. This time, there will be no precipitous disengagement of the international community from Afghanistan. The drawdown is phased and properly planned. Bilateral and regional mechanisms are expected to be in place to help with the transition. If these transitions are managed responsibly and skillfully, Afghanistan will see a dawn of security and stability, and so will the region.

Immediately after assuming office, Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif took the initiative of fostering better relations with Afghanistan. Following that, President Karzai visited Pakistan. That meeting laid the foundation of a post-2014 strategic partnership between the two countries. The international community has been expecting Pakistan to play a role in the Afghanistan reconciliation process. Pakistan has repeatedly said that this process has to be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned. Pakistan can provide whatever assistance Afghanistan requests us for whatever we can possibly do. Only the Afghan people and their government can craft a roadmap for national reconciliation and determine their future. Behind the scenes, Pakistan has neither been involved nor will it get involved. Pakistan has also been saying that regional countries should not support their favorites but instead help the Afghan government. They should play a facilitating role. Creating a peaceful external environment would help the country in looking after its internal problems.

Pakistan also believes that it is necessary that all of Afghanistan’s ethnic groups are consulted and included in the country’s future political system. Pakistan believes that all stakeholders in Afghanistan should engage in the political process. The best route is through a robust political process. Inclusiveness can guarantee success. All stakeholders have to be on board. In April of this year, the people of Afghanistan went to polls for the third time under the Bonn process to elect a new President and members of the provincial councils. These elections have been an Afghan affair, with relevant Afghan institutions in the lead. Despite threats from extremist groups, the voters in Afghanistan cast their votes in record numbers. The frontrunners in the Afghan Presidential election have a modern education and outlook. A lot will now depend on the new political dispensation in Afghanistan. Its priority should be to rally support for the government among the masses to create national unity by taking along all the different mindsets and factions with them.

Pakistan has welcomed the phased transfer of lead security responsibility from ISAF to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). 150,000 troops could not bring stability there and now this responsibility is being given to the ANSF. It is to be seen if the ANSF will be able to hold out against heavy odds. The international community will have to rely on the ability of the ANSF to keep Afghanistan stable and secure, which in turn will enable the political leadership in the country to focus on governance and other key sectors of economic and social importance.

ANSF will also require constant upgrading. One of the major challenges for the international community will be to ensure adequate funding for the upkeep and maintenance of 350,000 ANSF members. This force must remain intact beyond 2014. The international community must not let the ANSF disintegrate as it will have disastrous consequences for the country and the entire region. Russia has already pledged to continue to train the Afghan national army personnel and police and to supply them with small arms. Pakistan has also beefed up security by establishing more than 1,000 posts along its border with Afghanistan. More than 140,000 Pakistani troops are deployed on our side of the border, at huge financial cost.

The international community’s commitment to continue providing economic assistance to Afghanistan is also essential for establishing durable peace in the country. Almost 80 per cent of all governmental spending and 100 per cent of the cost of maintaining ANSF is being met through international aid. Financial commitments already made by international donors for the period beyond 2014 are required to be honored. The Tokyo Declaration pledges $16bn for Afghanistan until 2015. Any cutback in foreign assistance will have
disastrous consequences for the fragile Afghan economy. The international community will have to show patience until the economy stands on its own feet.

Peace and security in Afghanistan has been a major concern for Pakistan. Pakistan has all along remained engaged with the international community at bilateral, trilateral, quadrilateral and multilateral fora for the establishment of a lasting peace and for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan.

We do not as yet know who will form the government in Afghanistan, but irrespective of whoever forms the government, Pakistan will focus on building and enhancing bilateral relations. This is also in our self-interest because a peaceful and stable Afghanistan is essential for peace and progress in Pakistan. Besides, it would open up the way for economic cooperation, joint ventures and trade with Central Asia that we are very keen to enhance. Pakistan provides the shortest transit land route to Central Asian countries and beyond, through Afghanistan.

Peace in Afghanistan would pave the way for Pakistan to start importing much needed gas from Turkmenistan. The TAPI Agreement for the supply of 700 MW of electricity to Pakistan via Afghanistan from 2016. Pakistan is an energy-deficient country and we need these vital supplies, for which the security situation in Afghanistan will play a decisive role.

Like Russia, Pakistan wishes to see a prosperous and peaceful Afghanistan. Both countries are in favor of creating circumstances for the people of Afghanistan to achieve peace. Russia also believes as Pakistan does that Afghans themselves have to lead the process. Russia gives great importance to the capabilities of Pakistan in providing a transit route and connectivity to Central Asian states and towards east and west Asia. Pakistan also shares Russia’s desire to develop new transport and energy corridors in South and Central Asia for the economic development of the regional countries and to strengthen security in the region. Russia is keen on building the CASA-1000 electric grid, stretching from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan via Afghanistan to Pakistan and India. For all that to happen, peace must return to Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is an important member of the South Asian Association of Regional Countries. SAARC has a huge potential to initiate intra-regional trade and economic activity. Peace and security in Afghanistan, coupled with the resolution of outstanding disputes among South Asian countries, will make SAARC productive. While political, security and economic transitions are taking place in Afghanistan, there is little progress in South Asia on solving outstanding disputes between India and Pakistan.

Peace and security in South Asia will remain unstable as long as the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India remains unresolved. Pakistan seeks a peaceful, stable and prosperous neighborhood through the peaceful resolution of issues and economic cooperation. We also want to resume comprehensive dialogue with India in a purposeful and forward-looking manner to find a peaceful resolution of all outstanding issues. Pakistan is hopeful that the composite dialogue will lead to the peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues to the satisfaction of both sides. India is currently undergoing political transition. The electoral process is under way. Pakistan is looking forward to the establishment of a government in India with which Pakistan can engage quickly, meaningfully and comprehensively.

South Asia, to which Afghanistan belongs, is one of the world’s largest regions, with almost one-fifth of the world’s population. It is our firm belief that, without peace in and around our region, there can be no lasting stability, which is essential for achieving economic and social prosperity.
At the outset, I wish to express some views on India’s approach to the ongoing political standoff in Ukraine. The overall approach of India in this regard is based on the understanding of both historical and political realities of Russia’s position and its civilization obligations in the entire Eurasian space. From an Indian perspective, both in the government and outside, there are little doubts or even a debate about Russia’s core legitimate strategic interests and the role it has played in Ukraine.

Russia in the Politics of India
In fact, in many ways India’s own strategic interests seem majorly and critically tied to those of Russia. It should be therefore clear that India and Russia has a broad-based, expansive, multifaceted, and time-tested relationship continuing for decades. This relationship possesses the elements of depth and clear-cut vision. Moreover, the Indo-Russian partnership is founded on an emotional and historical legacy, admiration, mutual trust and confidence. They remain undiminished and instead they adapt to change according to changing needs. These carefully crafted relationships have contributed towards enhancing both regional and international peace and stability.

From my perspective, the West’s current policies, largely designed for regime change and escalated through media wars, are not only flawed but also irresponsible. They are policies aimed at stretching the boundaries of Europe to limit the influence of Moscow by leveraging internal Ukrainian divisions. I do not believe that such kinds of strategic pinpricks, initiated by the U.S.-EU together to undermine Russia’s legitimate interests while taking advantage of Russia’s weaknesses, bode well for world peace in the longer run.

If the escalation is aimed at entailing or bringing about some long-term geopolitical shift in Eurasia, then everyone should also fear the possible implications. In the past, a country like India, and perhaps the whole world including the West, withstood the worst of undermining the interests of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Many in the West must be regretting the folly of policies adopted for Afghanistan at the time. The Soviets were on a civilized mission in Afghanistan — something the Western world had failed to understand. Anyway, that is history now. If the USSR has long disappeared, what is the justification for continuing the ideological war by the West against Russia?

First, I do not think that the current level of confrontation is sustainable for long, mainly due to the imperative of economic interdependence. Russia is not Iran or Myanmar. Second, Russia is still being used as an ideological bogey or a punching bag by the elites of several failed or failing states. The elites in these states (mostly former Soviet republics) tend to attract Western interests and support on the pretext of Russian bullying. However, past experiences suggest that regime change, modeled through violent street protests, has not necessarily endured political stability or left behind good democracy, or above all loyalty of those countries, towards the Western world. The governments propped up by the West finally told the U.S. to shut down its military transit facilities.

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Third and most critically, there are still states which have mastered the art of playing the proxy game for the U.S. They constantly look to become strategically relevant to the West. The U.S. considers them allies and partners that are ever ready to play the conventional military game and benefit if not thrive in the process. This is an old and Cold War-era tactic.

Fourth, even if the standoff continues by applying the unconventional means like sanctions, political alliances such as the one applied over Iran, these sanctions could cause political and economic turbulences. In the past, the political and energy security interests of India have suffered due to such policies. Lastly and most importantly, India’s principle position is to reject any political standoff that is marked by an increasing number of violent incidents. India gives greater credence to political and diplomatic solutions that are built on the legitimate interests of all concerned. In any case, the use of force may not be the best way to deal with regimes, however bad and however anti-people they may be.

Situation in Afghanistan: Post 2014
Afghanistan and Central Asia are areas of paramount interest to both India and Russia. Both internal and external factors could shape future developments in Afghanistan. On both fronts, things are not so optimistic. On the internal front, there are no clear-cut signs of a decisive mandate for a strong President in Afghanistan. There seems to be no outright winner. Let us wait for the runoff election. However, any dispute over the outcome of the runoff could push the country into political chaos. The fear is that the lack of strong mandate may open the space for the Taliban to re-emerge on the front stage.

The election this time may not become a panacea for problems in Afghanistan. In fact, challenges may also stem from the same old factors of ethnic, political and social power bases of competing Afghan leadership. Given the backgrounds of both the candidates, Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani, their affiliation, positions on most issues, any easy power-sharing deal in the aftermath of the runoff seems difficult. I hope better sense prevails and they find a viable formula. We also do not know yet the new realignment among major Afghan ethnic groups, especially among Pashtuns, Hazaras and Turkmens of Karkin. However, the rivalry between Pashtuns and Tajiks may once again resurface in
the post-runoff scenario. In a situation like this, the Taliban will stand to gain. On the external side, one is not sure whether there is no linkage between the Ukraine crisis and the Afghan issue. Afghanistan could easily become another battleground for a new type of geopolitical game that has started after the “Arab Spring.” Any security vacuum after 2014 could possibly open the gate for a new proxy war, like the one being played out in Syria and elsewhere, that would mainly be fought in Afghanistan. There is a growing paranoia among the Sunni world about the rehabilitation of Iran by the Western world. Surely, the Iranians have their legitimate interests in Afghanistan as well. However, if the sectarian battleground is enlarged to the Eurasian space, it could entail a chain of effect across Asia. There are almost 100 million Muslims, mostly Sunni Hanafis, living in the Eurasian region, including western China and western Mongolia.

In recent years, the countries in the region, including China and Russia, have suffered increased terrorist attacks. Terrorism and violent crime have become frequent in parts of China especially. In Central Asia, the radicals are penetrating through populated river valleys with weapons. External elements are seeking an opportunity to provoke and exploit Islamic sentiments against Russia. Suicide bombings in Russia early this year have raised the specter of expanded activities among radicals in the Caucasus and other parts of the Russian Federation.

The Afghan transition is taking place at a time when confrontation between the U.S. and Russia is taking place on several geopolitical fronts, including in Ukraine, which can be exploited by forces antagonistic towards Russia in nexus with radical elements. The start of any covert war in Eurasia could be catastrophic for the whole region. After all, many powers, directly or through allies, continue to retain assets across southern Russia. However, the West should particularly fear that the use or misuse of radicals could blow back, as happened after the anti-Soviet military campaign in Afghanistan.

**Role of Regional Powers**

Apart from the internal political aspect, the issues and interests that may gain momentum in Afghanistan in the transition process could include the motivation among regional powers for a) security and b) economic engagement. Inevitably, every regional power has its stake in Afghanistan after 2014. Instability there and in Central Asia could jeopardize economic stakes, including that of Pakistan. These could include the cancellation of billions of dollars in trade, energy and transport connectivity through projects like the TAPI gas pipeline, CASA-1000 electricity transmission projects and the New Silk Route projects proposed by both the U.S. and China. Pakistan may especially suffer more than any other country, particularly its trade potentials with Afghanistan and Central Asian states.

From India’s perspective, the objective is clear and constant. India wants to see a strong, stable and independent Afghanistan. To achieve these goals and let the Afghans stand on their own feet, India has maintained a consistent policy of focusing on the “capacity building” to increase Afghanistan’s internal strengths and capabilities on both the economic and security fronts.

On the security front, no viable option seems to exist once the NATO-led coalition forces leave by the end of this year. We do not know yet when the U.S.-Afghanistan Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) will come about. Of course, much will depend on the post-election scenario. However, for various political reasons and in the interests of avoiding an escalation of the regional conflict, the option of having regional security forces deployed in Afghanistan is being ruled out. India, too, strongly opposes foreign interference in Afghanistan and strongly acknowledges the ramifications of putting its own boots on the ground in Pakistan. Therefore, everyone including the U.S. acknowledges that the only option for sustainable peace and security is to strengthen the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). It is here that India wants to play a catalyst role in achieving this goal. India’s Strategic Partnership Agreement (2011) with the Afghan government includes assisting in training, equipping, and capacity-building programs to boost the ANSF. However, India is fundamentally opposed to supplying lethal weapons as well as sending military trainers onto Afghan soil. However, the Afghan Army personnel could receive training in special operations and counter-terrorism operations in India. Cooperation in communication and logistics could contribute to the strengthening of the ANSF.

In this regard, cooperation with Russia to outsource arms supplies to the ANSF should be considered a step in the right direction. There are several merits in the mechanism that has evolved through careful understanding of technical, financial, logistical and political dimensions. Moreover, the funding of the supply of Russian-origin weaponry to Afghanistan is an option or a route chosen transparently, taking into consideration both domestic and foreign policy angles that constrain New Delhi from supplying arms to Afghanistan directly.

One hopes that cooperation with Russia should cover the refurbishing and refitting of Russian-made weaponry, including tanks in Afghanistan. It is not just Russia but countries of Central Asia like Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan that could contribute in this exercise. Repair and maintenance workshops should readily be available in Chemkent, Kara-balta, Astana and other facilities in Central Asia where the repair and refitting of armored vehicles, including tanks, can be undertaken. In the process, the Central Asian countries could also earn revenue to upgrade their defense industries. India continues to contribute substantially to the growth of defense firms such as Dastan (Kyrgyzstan), Kiro Mashzavod (Kazakhstan) and others.

At the political level the trilateral consultations between India, China and Russia to coordinate their views on the situation in Afghanistan are an important step that will contribute to regional diplomacy and Afghan reconciliation. The role of the SCO is no less important.

On the economic front, India has contributed substantially, around $2bn, in development assistance, to Afghanistan. A consortium of Indian companies has won the rights to invest in the Hajigak iron ore reserves in Afghanistan. India hopes to continue assisting Afghanistan to build its internal economy and contribute to the reconstruction process. Besides India, both China and Russia have huge internal and external security concerns
and they are also well placed to play a key role in Afghan reconstruction beyond 2014. China’s role will particularly have a moderating impact. Similarly, the image of Russia in the eyes of the Afghans may not be the same as was there two decades ago. Many Afghans still appreciate and recall the genuine and useful development infrastructure projects undertaken by Soviet engineers and economists in Afghanistan. It is known that the Russian Embassy in Kabul has identified a list of 140 Soviet-era projects such as the Kabul House-building Factory and other manufacturing units that could be restarted and modernized. Regional countries could make a positive contribution to stabilize Afghanistan. It is here that cooperation between Russia, China, and India will become critical after 2014. Equally, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan should play an important role. All have huge economic stakes in Afghan stability. In fact, Afghanistan could become a hub or a crossroads for regional cooperation, instead of regional competition. It is time, and it is imperative, that all countries must start to de-link Afghan policy from their bilateral political impulses. India feels that Afghan security is a separate issue altogether. However, in a worst-case scenario, where the return of the Taliban to Afghanistan could destabilize the entire region, Russia, India, Iran and others should not hesitate to rebuild and muster their support for the Northern Alliance as an antidote to the Taliban. To be sure, much will depend on which external forces will support the Taliban and the kinds of agenda the militia may pursue.
I believe that it is not without reason that a special panel discussion has been devoted to Afghanistan at this conference. What is happening there stands out from a number of other conflicts discussed today, such as the conflicts in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, and Syria, primarily because the operation in Afghanistan was carried out based on a UN Security Council resolution, for which Russia voted. Russia has played a huge role in the successful military phase of this operation, in organizing the Northern Alliance, in supplying it with weapons and equipment, and by working in many other areas as well, including the organization of the Afghan transit, which was of huge importance. I think it is no exaggeration to say that Russia’s role in this operation has been greater than the role of any one of Washington’s allies directly deployed on the ground, although Russian troops were not directly involved in this operation. The major blow to the entire Afghan operation was dealt by the United States’ ill-considered incursion into Iraq, in the economic, political, and moral senses. That incursion undermined the antiterrorist coalition, encouraged terrorists and Islamic radicals, wasted huge amounts of money, and sacrificed thousands of NATO troops and tens of thousands of Iraqis. This is the root of the problem that we now face as a result of what was essentially an unsuccessful, unproductive operation in Afghanistan.

There are many military personnel and civilians here with very extensive experience dealing with terrorists and armed extremists — for example, Army Gen. Makhmut Gareev — as well as many others. I do not pretend that my modest experience could in any way be compared to theirs, but I would like to say a few words about the Islamic extremists whom the world now faces, particularly in Afghanistan, where they will have to be faced after the contingent of peacekeeping forces is withdrawn. This is a very powerful and dangerous opponent — one whom it would be a grave error to underestimate. First of all, these extremists are, for the most part, fanatical people who do not fear death, while regular troops, with whom they deal, clearly do not want to die, especially in a place like Afghanistan, while performing peacekeeping functions. Terrorists have extensive combat experience; essentially, Afghanistan has been living in a state of permanent war for several generations. Regular troops, especially a conscript army, cannot boast of such experience, and even a professional army would still possess more limited experience than the terrorists, who also possess an almost unlimited reserve of manpower — one limited only by their ability to control and manage these groups, as well as to supply them, as well as to know the landscape and the specifics of military operations. Obviously, a regular army does not have an unlimited reserve of manpower. Terrorists give no thought to losses among their number or among the civilian population. Moreover, their tactics are often aimed at ensuring that civilian casualties are as large as possible. It is clear that a regular army cannot ignore losses of personnel, while collateral damage in the form of civilian casualties is a very serious problem that undermines the moral foundations and the global political support for such operations. Terrorists may also conduct combat operations unfettered by limitations of time. A regular army cannot remain in an area of hostilities indefinitely — precisely what we are seeing now in Afghanistan. Terrorists also enjoy a huge inflow of funds, whereas a regular army does not have the same advantage, since countries contributing troops have many other tasks before them. Finally, the extremists are optimally armed for the type of fighting that they do, while choosing the time and place for their strikes. A regular army is usually burdened with vast quantities of standard weapons and equipment, management system and logistics, which are of no use in operations against militants. We should in no way underestimate the moral and political implications of a new victory for Afghan Islamists. Worldwide, political Islam will celebrate this triumph with tremendous enthusiasm: after one victory over the Soviet nuclear superpower in 1989, here is another victory — over NATO, the most powerful military-political alliance in history, and even over the UN, which authorized the operation in 2001. And so, in preparation for the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, there is much to do in the coming years. I do not in any way claim to have an exhaustive list of these events and activities, but I will mention some that I think are the most important. I believe the countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and BRICS should participate in the creation of a forum or a conference in the foreseeable future. Diplomats would agree on the format of the conference, taking into account all the subtleties and nuances that exist between these three respected organizations. I think that this kind of broad forum, with the inclusion, of course, of the Afghan side, would be useful in developing a common strategy for the period after the withdrawal of NATO contingents. As for the United States and NATO, they, of course, could be invited. I think they are unlikely to agree, but that’s their decision. If they don’t agree, it will have to be done without them. Furthermore, within the framework of the CSTO, which would play the leading role here, it seems to me that the rapid-response forces would not be sufficient to deal with the possible consequences of the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan if a Taliban resurgence occurs.
That they will go to the north and try to destabilize Central Asia is something that is, in my view, a certainty. Larger forces will be needed in order to counteract this. Organizing and managing these forces within the CSTO should be a significant task.

Furthermore, in the past, a special group of Russian border troops on the border of Tajikistan and Afghanistan played a large role in the fight against Islamists and the flow of narcotics. Now, it’s not there. I understand that, politically, it would be difficult to imagine it being revived, but some new forms of more effective cooperation within the CSTO to protect the border of Tajikistan and Afghanistan, as well as the other two borders that separate Russia from this region, would be very important in terms of the security of Central Asia and Russia itself.

There is another matter. It would be a good idea to look again at the state armament program, which has been planned now through 2024, and to understand — based on the experience of Soviet troops and U.S. troops in Afghanistan — what part of it would need to receive special attention in terms of financing technical-development projects and the procurement of arms and equipment. I’m not sure that what is now planned within the framework of this program takes into account our troops’ needs that may arise after NATO troops are withdrawn and the forces of the CSTO are directly facing the Islamists.

One last point. This has already been discussed, and I just want to bring it up one more time. A major program of military-technical cooperation with Afghanistan, aimed at arming the Afghan army with Russian weapons, and the search for appropriate means of financing, would be very important. What is now being done, of course, is not enough. We will need to do much more to supply the needs of Afghan government forces, which are the first line of defense against the Taliban’s offensive units.
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