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Uta Zapf

**PNND Adviser on Inter Parliamentary Organisations
Former Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
(Germany)**

Prevent a New Cold War, Build a New European Security Architecture

The crisis over Ukraine threatens to bring Europe on the brink of a (new) cold war. The annexation of the Crimea against international law by Russia as well as the possible annexation of East and South Ukraine is not to be accepted. This would lead to a deep crisis of the relations of Europe and NATO with Russia. We still remember the war in Georgia.

We have to support all diplomatic endeavors to resolve the crisis by peaceful means.

In addition we have to realign the European security architecture. This is true for all involved institutions. This applies to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as well as to the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) and to NATO.

While the current crisis is going on, all participants should refrain from sharp rhetoric or military action, in order not to stoke up the political atmosphere. All participants should refrain from military exercises and redeployment of troops. Instead the dialogue between Russia and NATO should be continued in the context of NATO-Russia Council.

The OSCE is the institution in Europe we need to strengthen.

In 1975 the Helsinki Final Act was finalized after a long negotiation process in the framework of the CSCE process. Between the states of the Warsaw Pact and NATO the main principles of international law were agreed upon and signed. This was the beginning of the end of the cold war. At the same time the foundations for the most important treaty for disarmament in Europe were laid, the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE). This treaty entered into force in 1992 and was completely implemented.

A follow-on treaty was signed in 1999 but only ratified by Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. NATO member states refused to ratify out of reasons not contained in the treaty. Russia in 2007 suspended implementation of the CFE Treaty.

The dispute about missile defenses and about new US military bases in Romania and Bulgaria contributed to the eroding of cooperation, confidence-building and transparency. If governments do not counteract we could see a new cold war and an arms race.

OSCE is the organization dedicated to securing peace, indivisible security, confidence-building, arms control, disarmament and human rights. The Helsinki Final Act in 1975 defined the principles and standards of coexistence in Europe: Inviolability of borders, no threat or use of force, territorial integrity of states, peaceful dispute resolution, human rights and freedom of expression.

All member states should respect, strengthen and advance these principles.

In the context of the OSCE it was possible to achieve the most important treaty on conventional disarmament, which led to substantial reductions of offensive weapons of war in Europe. This treaty is in danger to erode. In consequence we could see a new arms race. All member states to the CFE Treaty and the Baltic states should engage to negotiate a new conventional disarmament treaty for Europe.

The member states of the OSCE in 2010 could not agree to adopt the very useful action plan prepared by the Kazakh chairmanship. This action plan which was meant to develop an improved European security architecture should be revived and negotiated.

The Parliamentary Assembly should take up their responsibility to contribute to solving the conflicts in the area by passing resolutions supporting the preservation of the achievements of the organization. This is especially important vis-à-vis the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Act next year.

NATO

Since 1991 Russia and NATO cooperated on security issues. In 1997 the NATO-Russia-Council was founded.

The Founding Act of May 27 1997 vowed to “build together a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area on the principles of democracy and cooperative security.” NATO and Russia declared that they did no longer consider each other as adversaries. The common goal was to build a stable, peaceful and undivided Europe.

The values the Council is based upon are the values that have been developed for the Helsinki Charter of the OSCE and the following documents.

On this basis a broad range of treaties on arms control and disarmament have been possible – conventional and nuclear.

These achievements have to be saved. Without new initiatives for conventional disarmament, without a stop to an obvious new arms race and without a stop to nuclear modernization, we will not be able to reach our goal of Global Zero.

The dialogue in the Russia-NATO-Council has to be taken up to solve the Ukrainian crisis and in the long run to solve the problems of lacking cooperative security. Confrontations have to be reduced, cooperation must be fostered by confidence-building and transparency. In order to reduce mutual threat perceptions Russia and NATO must take up a dialogue on military strategies.

It is dangerous that NATO and some NATO-countries call for more military spending, more deterrence and no further reductions of nuclear weapons.

Most important, both sides must cooperate with missile defenses to avoid that Russia feels threatened by NATO and US plans and installations.

All participants should be aware that without organizing security together instead against each other, it will be extremely difficult to get rid of the scourge of mankind - nuclear weapons.

Stop the arms races

Many nations are building up their arsenals. They are modernizing their conventional weapons and the Nuclear Weapons States are modernizing their nuclear weapons notwithstanding their obligations out of the NPT.

Besides we cannot see endeavors to persuade the nuclear states not parties to the NPT to join the obligations out of Article VI of the NPT. On the contrary, by striking a nuclear deal with India, we support the buildup of its nuclear triad and reward it with possible membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group.