

'The Security of Each Is the Security of All'

Following are excerpts from the speech of Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, Feb. 10, 2007. The translation is by Kremlin.ru, edited by EIR against the Russian transcript. The headline and sub-heads have been added.

Thank you very much dear Madam Federal Chancellor, Mr. [Horst] Teltschik, ladies and gentlemen! I am truly grateful to be invited to such a representative conference, at which politicians, military officials, entrepreneurs, and experts from more than 40 nations have assembled.

The conference format allows me to avoid excessive politeness and the need to speak in roundabout, pleasant, but empty diplomatic terms. This conference format will allow me to say what I really think about international security problems. And if my comments seem excessively polemical, or imprecise, I would ask you not to get angry with me. After all, this is only a conference. . . .

It is well known that the field of international security goes well beyond issues of military and political stability. It involves the stability of the world economy, overcoming poverty, economic security, and the development of a dialogue among civilizations.

This all-encompassing, indivisible character of security is expressed in its fundamental principle, that "the security of each is the security of all." As Franklin Roosevelt put it in the first days after the outbreak of the Second World War, "When peace has been broken anywhere, peace of all countries everywhere is in danger." These words remain topical today. The theme of our conference, "Global Crises, Global Responsibility," exemplifies this.

Only two decades ago, the world was ideologically and economically divided, and world security was provided by the enormous military might of the two superpowers. That global stand-off pushed extremely acute economic and social problems aside, to the margins of international relations and the world agenda. And, like any war, the Cold War left us with unexploded ordnance. I am referring to ideological stereotypes, double standards, and other habits of thinking in terms of blocs.

A Unipolar World Is 'Ruinous' for All

The unipolar world that was proposed after the Cold War did not come into being.

Of course, there have been periods of unipolarity in human history, and attempts to achieve world rule. And what hasn't there been in world history?

What, however, is a unipolar world? However people might try to pretty up the term, ultimately it means just one thing in practice: one center of power, one center of force, one decision-making center. It is a world with one master, one sovereign. And that is ultimately ruinous, not only for everybody who is within that system, but also for the sovereign itself, because it is destroyed from within.

And that, of course, has nothing in common with democracy. Because, democracy means the power of the majority, with consideration for the interests and opinions of the minority. Russia, we, by the way, are constantly being instructed in democracy. But the people doing the instructing, for some reason do not want to learn it themselves.

I think that the unipolar model is not only unacceptable for today's world, but also impossible. And this is not only because there would not be enough military, political, and economic resources in today's world—specifically, in today's world—for a sole leader. What is even more important, is that the model itself doesn't work, because it is not built upon any moral foundation for modern civilization, nor could it be.

At the same time, what is happening in the world today, and now we have only just begun to discuss it, is the consequence of attempts to introduce precisely this concept into world affairs—the concept of a unipolar world.

What is the result? Unilateral, frequently illegitimate actions have not solved a single problem. Moreover, they have generated new human tragedies and hotbeds of tension. Judge for yourselves: The number of wars, of local and regional conflicts, has not diminished. Mr. Teltschik mentioned this very gently. And no fewer people are perishing in these conflicts; rather, even more than before. Significantly more, significantly more!

Today we can see the virtually unrestrained, overblown use of force in international affairs—of military force, force that is plunging the world into an abyss of conflicts, following one after another. As a result, there is not sufficient strength to achieve a comprehensive settlement of any one of these conflicts. And it is becoming impossible to settle them politically. We see greater and greater disdain for the fundamental principles of international law. More than that: certain practices, or, essentially, virtually the entire system of law of one country, above all, of course, of the United States, has overstepped its national borders in all areas: the economy, politics, and cultural and educational affairs, and it is being imposed on other countries. Well, who is happy about that? Who is happy about that?

In international relations we increasingly encounter the desire to resolve certain issues, proceeding from so-called political expediency, based on the current political climate. And this, of course, is extremely dangerous. As a result, no-



Antje Wildgrube

President Putin addresses the Munich Conference. “The United States,” he said, “has overstepped its national borders in all areas: the economy, politics, and cultural and educational affairs, and it is being imposed on other countries.”

body feels secure. I want to emphasize this: No one feels secure! Because no one can take cover behind the stone wall of international law. Of course, such a policy stimulates an arms race.

The dominance of the force factor inevitably fuels the desire of a number of countries to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, essentially, significantly new threats have appeared, which were known earlier, but today they have become global, like terrorism.

We Are at a Decisive Moment

I am convinced that we have come to the decisive moment, when we must think seriously about the entire architecture of global security. And the point of departure needs to be the search for a reasonable balance among the interests of all the players that interact internationally. This is all the more so, considering that the international landscape is changing so rapidly and noticeably, through the dynamic development of a number of countries and regions.

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

There is no doubt, that the economic potential of the new centers of world growth will inevitably convert into political influence, and will reinforce multipolarity. In connection with this, the role of multilateral diplomacy is significantly increasing. The need for principles such as openness, transparency, and predictability in politics is uncontested, and the use of force should be a really exceptional measure, comparable to

using the death penalty in the judicial systems of some countries.

Today, though, we are witnessing the opposite, namely, a situation in which countries that forbid the death penalty even for murderers and other, dangerous criminals readily go and take part in military operations that it is difficult to call legitimate. And people, hundreds and thousands of civilians, are dying in these conflicts!

But, at the same time, the question arises of whether we should be indifferent and aloof to various internal conflicts inside countries, to authoritarian regimes, to tyrants, and to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction? This was at the heart of our colleague’s, the honorable Mr. Lieberman’s question to the Federal Chancellor. [To Senator Lieberman] I understood your question correctly, didn’t I? And, of course, it is a serious one! Can we be indifferent observers? I shall try to answer your question, as well. Of course not.

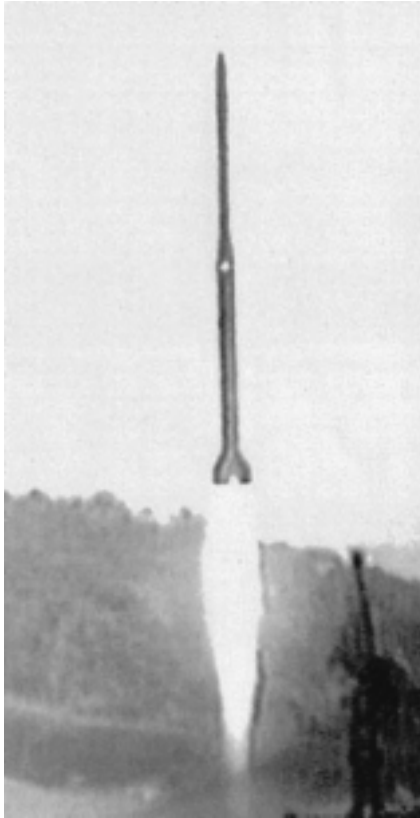
But do we have the means to counter these threats? Of course we do. Suffice it to remember recent history. Did not our country have a peaceful transition to democracy? Indeed, there was a peaceful transformation of the Soviet regime—a peaceful transformation! And what a regime! With what a number of weapons, including nuclear weapons! Why start bombing and shooting now, at every available opportunity? Do we really, in the absence of the threat of mutual destruction, lack the political culture, and respect for democratic values and the law?

I am convinced that the only mechanism for decision-making about the use of military force, as a last resort, is the United Nations Charter. And in that connection, either I did not understand what our colleague, the Italian Defense Minister, just said, or he expressed himself imprecisely. In any event, what I heard him say was that the use of force can be considered legitimate, only if the decision is taken by NATO, the EU, or the UN. If that is what he really thinks, then we disagree. Or, I misheard him. The use of force can be considered legitimate, only if the decision is taken on the basis and in the framework of the UN. And neither NATO nor the EU should be substituted for the UN. When the UN truly unites the forces of the international community, which can really react to events in individual countries, and when we get rid of this disdain for international law, then the situation can change. Otherwise the situation will simply result in a dead end, and the number of serious mistakes will be multiplied. Along with this, of course, it is necessary to work for international law to have a universal character, in both the understanding, and the application of its norms.

And it must not be forgotten, that acting democratically in politics necessitates discussion and meticulous work in preparing decisions.

Disarmament Is Stagnating

Ladies and gentlemen! The obvious stagnation in the area of disarmament is also a factor in the potential danger of



U.S. Department of Defense

North Korea's ICBM. To think of launching one at U.S. territory, across Western Europe, "would be like using your right hand to reach your left ear."

destabilization of international relations. Russia supports the renewal of dialogue on this important question.

It is important to preserve the international legal framework for disarmament, ensuring continuity in the process of reducing nuclear weapons.

We and the United States of America agreed to reduce our strategic nuclear missile capabilities to 1,700-2,200 nuclear warheads by Dec. 31, 2012. Russia intends to strictly fulfill the obligations it has assumed. We hope that our partners will also act in a transparent way and will refrain from laying aside a couple of hundred extra nuclear warheads just in case, "for a rainy day." And if today the new American Secretary of Defense declares to us, that the United States will not hide these extra weapons in its stockpiles, or under the pillow, or under the blanket, I propose that we give him a standing ovation. It would be a very important announcement.

Russia strictly adheres to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the multilateral supervision regime for missile technologies, and will continue to do so. The principles incorporated in these documents are universal.

In this connection, I would like to recall that in the 1980s the U.S.S.R. and the United States signed a treaty on destroying a whole range of small- and medium-range missiles, but this was not a universal document. Today, many other countries have these missiles, including the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, India, Iran, Pakistan, and Israel. Many countries are working on these systems and plan to incorporate them as part of their weapons arsenals. And only the United States and Russia bear the responsibility to not create such weapons systems. It is obvious that, in these circumstances, we are obliged to think about ensuring our own security.

At the same time, the appearance of new, destabilizing high-technology weapons must not be permitted. And I need not even mention measures to preempt new areas of confrontation, especially in outer space. Star Wars is no longer science fiction; it is a reality. In the mid-1980s, already, our American partners carried out an interception of their own satellite.

In Russia's opinion, the militarization of outer space could provoke unpredictable consequences for the international community, no less so than the beginning of the nuclear era. And we have repeatedly put forward initiatives, aimed at keeping weapons out of outer space.

Today I would like to inform you, that we have prepared a draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Deployment of Weapons in Outer Space. In the near future it will be sent to our partners as an official proposal. Let us work on this together.

Plans to deploy certain elements of an anti-missile defense system in Europe cannot help but disturb us. Who needs the next spiral of the arms race that will be inevitable if that happens? I deeply doubt that the Europeans themselves need this.

Not one of the so-called "problem countries" has missiles that really pose a threat to Europe, with a range of five to eight thousand kilometers. And they will not have them, it is not envisioned that they will have them in the foreseeable future. And a hypothetical launch of, for example, a North Korean missile at U.S. territory, across Western Europe, obviously contradicts the laws of ballistics. As we say in Russia, it would be like using your right hand to reach your left ear.

NATO Expansion and Russia's Security

Being here in Germany, I cannot help but mention the situation of crisis around the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe. The Adapted Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty was signed in 1999. It took into account a new geopolitical reality, namely, the elimination of the Warsaw bloc. Seven years have passed since then, and only four states have ratified this document, including the Russian Federation. NATO member countries have openly declared that they will not ratify this treaty, including the provisions on flank restrictions (on deploying a certain number of armed forces in the flank zones), until Russia has removed its military bases from Georgia and Moldova. Our troops are leaving Georgia, even on an accelerated schedule. We and our Georgian colleagues resolved these problems, as everybody knows. There is still a group of 1,500 servicemen in Moldova, carrying out peace-keeping operations and protecting warehouses with ammuni-

tion left over from Soviet times. We constantly discuss this issue with Mr. Solana, and he knows our position. We are ready to further work in this direction.

But what is happening at the very same time? At the very same time, so-called flexible frontline American bases, with up to 5,000 men in each, are appearing in Bulgaria and Romania. It turns out that NATO has put its frontline forces on our borders, while we, strictly observing the Treaty, do not react to these actions at all.

I think it is obvious that the process of NATO expansion is not at all related to the modernization of that alliance, as such, or to ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it represents a serious provocation, which reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask: Against whom is this expansion intended? And what happened to the assurances our western partners gave after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? Where are those declarations today? No one even remembers them. But I will allow myself to remind this audience of what was said. I would like to quote the speech of NATO Secretary General Mr. Wörner in Brussels on May 17, 1990. He said at the time, "The very fact that we are prepared to refrain from placing NATO troops outside the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany gives the Soviet Union a firm guarantee of security." Where are those guarantees?

The stones and concrete blocks of the Berlin Wall have long ago been scattered as souvenirs. But we should not forget that it could come down, thanks to a historic choice—one that was also made by our people, the people of Russia—a choice in favor of democracy, freedom, openness and sincere partnership with all the members of the big European family.

And now there are attempts to impose new dividing lines and walls on us; they may be virtual walls, but they nevertheless divide, and cut through our continent. Will it really once again take long years and decades, as well as several generations of politicians, to "disassemble" and "dismantle" these new walls?

The Nuclear Issue

Ladies and gentlemen! We are unequivocally in favor of strengthening the non-proliferation regime. Existing international legal principles allow us to develop technologies to process nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes. And many countries, with every good reason, want to create their own nuclear power industry as a basis for energy independence. But we also understand that these technologies can be quickly transformed into nuclear weapons. This creates serious international tensions. The situation surrounding the Iranian nuclear program serves as a clear example. And if the international community does not find a reasonable solution for resolving this conflict of interests, the world will continue to suffer similar, destabilizing crises, because there are more threshold countries than simply Iran. We all know this. We shall constantly run up against the threat of WMD proliferation.



The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. "The stones and concrete blocks of the Berlin Wall have long ago been scattered as souvenirs," said Putin. "But we should not forget that it could come down, thanks to a historic choice—one that was also made by our people, the people of Russia. . . ."

Last year Russia put forward an initiative for the establishment of international uranium enrichment centers. We are open to such centers being created not only in Russia, but also in other countries where a legitimately based civilian nuclear power industry exists. Countries that want to develop nuclear power could be guaranteed fuel supplies through direct participation in the work of these centers, of course, under strict IAEA supervision.

The latest initiatives put forward by American President George W. Bush are in conformity with the Russian proposals. I think that Russia and the U.S.A. are objectively and equally interested in strengthening the non-proliferation regime for WMD and their delivery systems. Our countries, with our leading nuclear and missile capabilities, must act as leaders in developing new, stricter non-proliferation measures. Russia is ready for such work. We are engaged in consultations with our American friends.

Overall, this ought to mean the creation of a whole system of political means and economic incentives, that would make it not in the interest of countries to create their own nuclear

fuel cycle capabilities, but they would still have the opportunity to develop nuclear power, strengthening their energy industry capacity.

Energy Cooperation

In this connection, I shall talk about international energy cooperation in more detail. Madam Federal Chancellor also spoke about this briefly, touching on this theme. In the energy sector, Russia is oriented toward creating uniform market principles and transparent conditions for all. It is obvious that energy prices must be determined by the market, rather than being the object of political speculation, economic pressure, or blackmail.

We are open to cooperation. Foreign companies participate in all of our major energy projects. According to various estimates, as much as 26% of the oil extraction in Russia—please think about this figure—as much as 26% of the oil extraction in Russia is done by foreign capital. Try, just try to give me a similar example, where Russian business participates that extensively in key economic sectors in western countries. Such examples do not exist! There are no such examples.

I would also mention the ratio of foreign investment in Russia to Russian investment abroad. It is approximately 15 to 1. There you have a clear example of the openness and stability of the Russian economy.

Economic security is an area, in which everybody has to adhere to uniform principles. We are prepared to compete fairly. The Russian economy has more and more opportunities to do this. Experts, as well as our western partners, evaluate these changes objectively. Thus, Russia's OECD sovereign credit rating has improved, with our country moving from the fourth group to the third. And I would like to take this occasion, here in Munich, to thank our German colleagues for their help in the adoption of that decision.

As you know, the process of Russia's joining the WTO has reached its final stages. I would point out that, during the long, difficult talks, we more than once heard words about freedom of speech, free trade, and equal opportunities, but, for some reason, exclusively in reference to the Russian market.

Double Standards

And there is another important theme that directly affects global security. Today people talk a lot about the struggle against poverty. What is actually happening here? On the one hand, financial resources are allocated for programs to help the world's poorest countries—and sometimes these are substantial financial resources. But to be honest—and many people here also know this—they are linked with concessions to companies from the donor countries. At the same time, on the other hand, the developed countries maintain their agricultural subsidies, and limit others' access to advanced technologies.

Let's call things by their names: It turns out that one hand is distributing "charitable assistance," while the other hand not only preserves economic backwardness, but also collects profit. The social tension that arises in these depressed regions inevitably results in the growth of radicalism and extremism, and feeds into terrorism and local conflicts. And if all this happens in, say, the Middle East, where there is an acute sense that the world at large is unfair, then there is the risk of global destabilization.

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

Ladies and gentlemen, speaking at the Conference on Security Policy, it is impossible not to mention the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). As is well known, this organization was created to examine all—I emphasize this—all aspects of security: military, political, economic, humanitarian and, especially, the relations among these spheres.

What do we see in practice today? We see that this balance has clearly been destroyed. There are attempts to transform the OSCE into a vulgar instrument for promoting the foreign policy interests of one country, or a group of countries. The OSCE bureaucracy, which has absolutely no connections with the founding nations, has been retooled for this purpose. The decision-making procedures have been tailored for this same purpose, as well as the use of so-called non-governmental organizations. The latter are formally independent, but they receive earmarked financing, so they are controlled.

According to its founding documents, in humanitarian affairs the OSCE is supposed to assist member countries, at their request, with observing international standards for human rights. This is an important task. We support it. But this does not mean interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, and especially not imposing on them how they should live and develop. It is obvious, that such interference does not promote the development of democratic nations at all. On the contrary, it makes them dependent and, consequently, politically and economically unstable.

We count on the OSCE's being guided by its primary tasks and building relations with sovereign states based on respect, trust, and transparency.

Russia's Independent Foreign Policy

Ladies and gentlemen! In conclusion, I would like to note the following. We very often, and I personally very often, hear calls from our partners, including our European partners, for Russia to play an increasingly active role in world affairs. I shall permit myself to make one little remark, in this connection. We don't really need to be nudged and given incentives for this. Russia is a country with a history of over a thousand years, which has almost always enjoyed the privilege of hav-

ing an independent foreign policy. We are not about to change that tradition today. At the same time, we are well aware of how the world has changed, and we evaluate our own capabilities and our own potential realistically. And, of course, we would like to interact with responsible and like-wise independent partners, with whom we could work to build a just and democratic world order, ensuring security and prosperity not just for a select few, but for all.

Thank you for your attention.

Questions and Answers (excerpted)

On NATO expansion.

I already mentioned the guarantees that were given, and that are not being observed today. Do you think this is normal practice in international affairs? But all right, forget it. Forget these guarantees. With respect to democracy and NATO expansion, NATO is not a universal organization, unlike the UN. It is, first and foremost, a military and political alliance, military and political! Well, ensuring one's own security is the right of any sovereign state. We are not arguing against this. Of course we are not objecting to this. But why is it necessary to put military infrastructure on our borders during this expansion? Can someone answer this question? Unless the expansion of military infrastructure is connected with fighting against today's global threats? Let's put it this way, what is the most important of these threats for us today—the most important for Russia, for the U.S.A. and for Europe—it is terrorism and the fight against it. Does one need Russia to fight against terrorism? Of course! Does one need India to fight against terrorism! Of course! But we are not members of NATO, and other countries aren't, either. But we can only work on this issue effectively by joining our forces. As such, expanding infrastructure, especially military infrastructure, to our borders is not connected in any way with the democratic choices of individual states. And I would ask that we not mix these two concepts.

On whether or not Iranian missiles threaten Europe.

You are mistaken. Today Iran has—Mr. Gates is here today and certainly knows this data better than I do, and the Russian Defense Minister is also here—missiles with a range of 2000 kilometers—

Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov: 1,600-1,700 kilometers.

President Putin: 1,600-1,700 kilometers. Only. Well, count how many kilometers there are between Munich and the Iranian border. Iran has no such missiles. They plan to develop some with a range of 2,400 kilometers. It is not known if they have the technology to do so. And with respect to 4,000, 5,000 or 6,000 kilometers, then I think that this would

simply require a different economy. So, it is improbable in general. And Iran is not threatening Europe. With regard to the idea that they are preparing to use nuclear warheads, we do not have such data.

On strategic weapons and antiballistic-missile defense.

[In past decades] there was an equilibrium and a fear of mutual destruction. And in those days one party was afraid to make an extra step without consulting the other. And this was certainly a fragile peace, and a frightening one. . . . Today, it seems that peace is not as reliable. Yes, the United States is ostensibly not developing an offensive weapon. In any case, the public does not know about it. Though they most likely are developing them. But we aren't even going to ask about this now. We know that the R&D is proceeding. But let's pretend we don't know. So: They are not developing them. But what is it we do know? We know that the United States is actively developing and already going operational with an anti-missile defense system. Today this system is ineffective, and we don't know for sure, whether or not it will be effective some day. But, in theory, that is what it is being created for. So, hypothetically again, we assume that a time will come, when a possible threat from our nuclear forces will be completely neutralized. Russia's present nuclear capabilities, that is. That means a complete upset of the balance, such that one of the sides will feel totally secure, and its hands will be untied not only in local conflicts, but possibly in global ones. We are talking about now, with you. I would not want to suspect anybody of having aggressive intentions. But the system of relations is like mathematics. It lacks any personal dimension. And we, of course, must react to this. How? Either build a multibillion-dollar anti-missile defense system, like you, or, in view of our present economic and financial possibilities, give an asymmetrical response. So that everybody can understand: Yes, there is an anti-missile defense system, but it is useless against Russia, because we have weapons that can easily overcome it. And we shall proceed in this direction. It is cheaper for us. And this is in no way directed against the United States itself.

I completely agree, if you say that the anti-missile defense system is not directed against us; and our new weapons are not directed against you. And I completely agree with my colleague and friend—you know, I am not afraid of that word, and despite all of our disagreements, I consider the President of the United States my friend. He is a decent person, and I know that in the United States these days he may be blamed for everything happening internationally and at home. But I know that he is a decent person, and it is possible to talk and reach agreements with him. And when I talk with him, he says his premise is that Russia and the U.S.A. will never be opponents and enemies again. I agree with him. But I repeat once again, in this symmetry and asymmetry, there's nothing personal. It is simply a calculation.