

„The importance of confidence building in international response to security challenges and threats in the 21st century”

First of all I would like to thank the host of our meeting, Minister Nikolai Patrushev, for inviting me and congratulate him on organizing already the second gathering in such a format. I wish your Excellency success in introducing this conference permanently on international agenda, which will contribute to building confidence in response to common security challenges and threats.

International security at the beginning of the 21st century is characterized by dynamic changes and unpredictability, asymmetry and network character. Security is no longer static, it is a dynamic process. It is impossible to maintain a *status quo* even by strength of treaties – one needs to manage a change.

No longer can any state counteract threats on its own. Hence, the importance of international co-operation is growing.

At the same time, such co-operation is complicated by periodic eruptions of extremism and crises fuelled by national hatred, religious intolerance and racism. Effective co-operation in such conditions depends in particular on mutual confidence and transparency. And so, we have reached the key topic of our conference, which is confidence.

It is precisely the principles of confidence, transparency and reciprocity that constitute the foundation of Poland`s security policy. We, in Poland, have special reasons to attach great importance to these values and principles. The great movement of “Solidarity” which triggered enormous peaceful transformation from communism to democracy is a good example of it. Without confidence a multi-million-strong movement would not have been established. A movement which brought together people of very different opinions, views, backgrounds, education etc.

Our historical experience shows that reconciliation and confidence can be built even between traditional – as it seems – opponents. In the past we fought bloody wars with Germany, including the tragic years of WW2. In the 1990s a historic Polish-German reconciliation took place. It was initiated by the 1965 letter of Polish Bishops addressed to German Bishops which featured the following words: „We forgive and ask for forgiveness”.

Whereas after the dissolution of the Soviet Union we were one of the first countries which recognized the independence of Ukraine, the Baltic States and Belarus. Contentious subjects coming from the common Polish-Russian past have been raised by us within the framework of the Group for Difficult Issues (the so called Rotfeld-Torkunov Group). Joint school-book committees bring their contribution to reconciliation between Poles and Ukrainians.

It no longer seems odd to anyone today that the leaders of Poland, Israel, Germany, Ukraine, Lithuania and Russia meet at the graves of victims of mass crimes in order to jointly pay tribute to the fallen. Unfortunately, the example of Central Europe still fails to be the rule. Critical review of the often tragic history and taking responsibility for the past is one of important examples of practical confidence building. What is even more important, is to look positively into the future, in the spirit of confidence and co-operation.

Such approach is expressed among others in our support for NATO’s openness toward enlargement and co-operation with partners, to make it capable of living up to new global challenges and threats.

This regards also relations between the Alliance and Russia. The Strategic Concept adopted in Lisbon includes clearly formulated provisions concerning the practical dimension of NATO – Russia partnership. In our opinion such partnership can benefit both parties and contribute to stability and peace on a global scale.

We count on deepening co-operation with NATO partners in areas such as fighting terrorism (including also defence against cyber attacks) and stabilization of Afghanistan.

Poland sees the threat connected with proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery, especially missile ones, as one of major challenges faced by international community. Another one being terrorism). We make a real contribution in counteracting those threats *inter alia* by participating in the construction of the NATO Missile Defense System. Co-operation between the Alliance and its partners in this area will support neutralization of common asymmetric missile threats. „Partnership“ should not mean avoiding difficult subjects – it is only by compromise that contentious issues can be eliminated.

We welcomed with satisfaction the ratification of Russian – American Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-2). The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and transparency procedures connected with it constitute probably one of the best measures of confidence building and maintaining of confidence in the sphere of military security created after WW2. It is regrettable that this said Treaty is not being fully implemented. We believe that now the right time is approaching to reach an understanding aimed at revitalizing this regime. Despite differences of opinions in matters such as flank limits or Russian presence in Moldova. Another area of confidence building should cover the issue of tactical nuclear weapons. Let me remind you that in this matter Poland and Norway presented an initiative of confidence building and transparency measures.

In the sphere of security, Poland supports such confidence building mechanisms as *Cooperative Airspace Initiative*. Its goal is counteracting terrorist attacks in airspace. One of the programme centres is based in Warsaw. In early June 2011 exercises with the participation of combat aircraft from NATO countries and Russia were successfully conducted in the Polish airspace.

As a state involved from the start in the activities taken within the framework of the *Proliferation Security Initiative*, established in Krakow, the so called PSI, Poland has actively supported its development as „a durable international institution“ to quote the expression used by President Barack Obama in Prague in April 2009. We consider PSI to be one of the most effective mechanisms of preventing the proliferation of WMDs. In our view, the European Union as a regional organization has significant competences (including customs policy, exports control) which can back activities taken under the aegis of PSI.

Shaping a stable and secure environment, solving protracted conflicts in the neighbourhood and strengthening energy security are among the priorities of the Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union. It is in this field that we see an area for a constructive dialogue and co-operation with partners from outside of the EU.

The contemporary Poland based on the foundation of „Solidarity” and resistance against totalitarian regimes actively supports democratization in the world, which has recently become even more valid as violent changes are sweeping through the countries of North Africa and the Middle East.

Let me conclude by stressing that today it is impossible to successfully face up to challenges and respond to contemporary threats, including extremism, national hatred, religious intolerance and racism, without confidence. Since such response must always be of collective nature. No state, not even leading global superpowers will succeed when acting on their own. And joint action without minimum level of confidence is not possible. I wish to thank once again Minister Nikolai Patrushev for providing us with conditions for an interesting discussion about these issues.