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Ladies, gentlemen and colleagues,

I am grateful for the opportunity to address this distinguished audience on an extremely important and somewhat complex issue. Whenever the issue of nuclear disarmament in Europe arises, oddly enough this problem is raised, or on the contrary sunk, in the depths of the American administration. Europeans come to life when a new American initiative makes its appearance. Thus in my view today's discussion has its starting-point in the Prague speech by President Obama in 2009. As I understand it, the Europeans' approaches to nuclear disarmament issues in Europe diverge quite widely, and the approach by Germany, France and England to the American initiative is far from consistent. From the Russian viewpoint, the issue of nuclear disarmament in Europe involves a considerable number of concomitant issues, but the main point is that nuclear disarmament in Europe certainly cannot remain outside the context of bilateral relations between Russia and the United States, and cannot be divorced from the process of nuclear arms reduction between those two countries. The problem of nuclear disarmament in Europe can be examined only in the context of the present state of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the amended version of which has been ratified only by Russia; the problem of the tactical nuclear weapons which the United States and Russia deploy in Europe is attributable to this. The existence in the American arsenal of highly accurate weapons and the continuing intention of the United States to move NATO's nuclear missile infrastructure nearer to the frontiers of Russia are connected with this problem.

Incidentally, oddly enough President Obama's disarmament initiative takes no account of the fact that there are two major nuclear powers among the official military allies of the United States: Great Britain, whose nuclear policy has been dependent on the United States from the outset, and France, which is returning to the military structure of the North Atlantic Alliance after a long break. Their potential must be taken into account as a supplementary factor in the nuclear superiority of the United States over the Russian Federation. In quantitative terms this potential is still appreciably less than the Russian potential, but is at a high level in terms of quality.

As President Obama stated in his speech in Prague on 5 April 2009 “the Cold War has disappeared but thousands of those weapons have not. In a strange turn of history, the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up. As the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act. We cannot succeed in this endeavor alone, but we can lead it, we can start it. So today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons”.

Why this increased attention today to nuclear disarmament issues? Because of traditional fears about the nuclear arsenals of Russia and the United States, which may, as during the years of the cold war, lead to a nuclear conflict between them, with catastrophic consequences for the whole world? Or because of the same traditional views of strategic offensive armaments as the driving force in Russo-American relations, which must bring with it a solution to other questions of bilateral dialogue? Perhaps it is the hope that new decisions will make it possible somehow to influence other nuclear powers, both *de facto* and *de jure*? Or simply the inability to look at the situation anew and realistically assess the role and place of nuclear weapons in today's world in general and in Russo-American relations in particular? It is hardly possible to give a single answer to all these questions.

Certainly today, in a period of global changes in civilisation, there is no answer to the main question, without which there is hardly any point in talking about the prospects of nuclear disarmament: what exactly are nuclear weapons now and in the future – only the most terrible embodiment of military might of a bygone epoch or the prototype and basis of weapons for a future age? Have military ways of resolving inter-state conflicts exhausted themselves, and if not will nuclear weapons remain and consequently also nuclear

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deterrence as an effective way of settling differences and defending national interests? Will coercive deterrence of enemies and competitors go from the arsenal of foreign policy resources?

Unfortunately, as yet there is no talk about a realistic, not fictional, role and place for nuclear weapons in the twenty-first century, about the importance of military force, about effective international machinery for ensuring security, about whether there is still even one such status-conferring (if judged from the positions of last century) attribute of a state as nuclear weapons? And why do so many countries strive to possess them? Why has it come about that the list of official nuclear powers (according to the Non-proliferation Treaty) coincides with the list of permanent members of the UN Security Council? And in general what is the role and place of nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence in today's world?

In particular, not everyone in the United States shares the opinion that further nuclear disarmament is essential and on the exclusion of nuclear deterrence from the arsenal of means of ensuring state security. Thus James Schlesinger, a former US Defence Minister, states that there is no value in rejecting nuclear weapons because that is not in the interests of the United States and the rest of the world: «The United States' nuclear umbrella has had and continues to have an important role in non-proliferation. Without it some of our allies, and possibly a considerable number, would feel the necessity to create their own nuclear weapons. If, by some miracle, we were able to eliminate nuclear weapons, what we would have is a number of countries sitting around with breakout capabilities or rumours of breakout capabilities for intimidation purposes.»

According to him, the United States uses nuclear weapons every day to deter potential enemies and to provide guarantees to allies in Asia and Europe: “If we were only defending the North American continent, we could do so with much less weaponry than we have today. We will need a strong deterrent for at least several decades, and in my judgement more or less indefinitely”.

As for the Europeans, they have differing views regarding a future American nuclear “umbrella”. Several countries, led by Germany, have opened this issue to public discussion, proposing to take American tactical nuclear armaments out of Europe, which has led to wide-ranging discussion of NATO’s nuclear policy. Paris in turn is insisting on discussion of this issue within the North Atlantic Alliance and the preservation of NATO’s strategic dimension. France is opposed to a unilateral withdrawal of American tactical weapons and thinks that similar steps must be demanded of Russia.

Having regard to what has been stated above, for the present it can be boldly stated that progress in nuclear disarmament in Europe has reached the level of incomprehensible intra-NATO discussion. It is sensible for Russia not to rush to conclusions and to wait for the moment when the results of this discussion become an item on the agenda of meetings of the NATO-Russia Council. I would very much wish the participants in current discussions of the American disarmament initiative to correlate it with the draft European Security Treaty proposed by President Medvedev. And I would NOT want this draft to suffer the same fate as the “five principles of foreign policy” proclaimed by President Medvedev immediately after the conflict with Georgia, namely:

- observance of international law;
- multipolarity;
- development of friendly ties with “Europe, the United States and other countries”;
- protecting the lives and dignities of Russian citizens “wherever they are”;
- the existence of regions where Russia has privileged interests.

In Europe only the last two points have attracted attention. The principle, natural for a state, of protecting its own citizens was understood to mean the justification of future aggressive behaviour towards neighbouring countries in whose territory Russians are living, and the provision on zones of privileged interests was taken to be the proclamation of a Russian “Monroe doctrine” – the recognition of an exclusive right for Russia to interfere in the affairs of neighbouring states. In fact all that was meant was that particular regions are of greater importance for Russia, not only the contiguous states – such regions can be singled out in the foreign policy of any state. A stereotypic perception of the language of Russian diplomacy gives rise to excessive *a priori* “securitisation” of interpretations of the Russian position.

In this connection I would like those participating in discussion of nuclear disarmament in Europe to acquaint themselves in detail with the article by Ambassador Ishinger in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung of 20 June this year, entitled “A secure roof over Europe?”. Both the spirit and the letter of this article fully reflect those approaches to European security which call for twenty-first century challenges from us.

In conclusion I wish to emphasise my firm conviction that in resolving any problem of European security, including nuclear disarmament, Russia can be only the subject, but in no way the object, of discussions, decision-making, and especially action.