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The Munich Security Conference, 2019



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The Munich Security Conference Report 2019: An Evaluation

02/18/2019

By Robbin Laird

The recent Munich Security Conference was held shortly after I left Germany and provides a useful benchmark about conventional thinking about the global dynamics of change with regard to the security and defense challenges to the liberal democracies.

The report in effect is a statement about those states committed to the legacy global “rules based” order and how it can be preserved against the threats posed by Donald Trump, Putin, the Middle East explosions and other disruptive forces.

The efforts of the key European players are highlighted as crucial to keep the old order alive against the threats from those disrupting that order, and a great deal of attention is paid to the Trump disruption.

This is a conference which is focused on security and defense policies

And here is where the report faces its core challenges.

The first key issue facing the West is clearly what Paul Bracken calls the second nuclear age.

The report focuses largely on arms control treaties including the Iran agreement as important barriers to having to really think again about nuclear weapons.

But nucs have returned and the United States after the Obama Administration’s pursuit of a chimerical “zero” nucs world is seeing a more realistic Administration addressing this core problem

With regard to Europe, the nuclear challenge has returned and a good deal of thinking about the unthinkable will be necessary to shape an effective way ahead.

The United States will strengthen its nuclear forces, certainly without shaping a limitless build up and will debate and shape approaches the US might take to nuclear deterrence.

This is an important subject but even more so what role Europe will play in that reset.

It is not about preserving nuclear arms agreements; it is re-establishing nuclear deterrence against a Russia which has clearly both modernized its arsenal are threatened key allies with a nuclear threat if they don’t comply with the Kremlin’s wishes.

The second key issue is the return of direct defense against a power which recovered Crimea and seeks to pressure individual states thereby shredding any notion of collective defense.

But this requires a significant rebuild of European defense capabilities and finding ways to field forces in the next five years, not twenty years from now, to provide an effective and credible defense.

What are the short to mid-term forces which can be fielded and what kind of effective crisis management capability can be put into play?

My visits to the UK and to the Nordics have underscored that this is where there is serious thinking about the challenge.

And the new states take the Russian threats very seriously and no amount of debate over the failure of these states to abide by “European values” is going to help.

The third key issue is the inability to secure the borders of the European Union.

The agreement to allow the free flow of members of the European Union has been established but without an ability actually to secure those borders.

And without doubt, the revolt against a number of sitting governments has been generated by this failure.

If I take my list and then turn to the Munich Security Conference report what do I find?

A listing of the threats to the liberal democratic order and an aspirational pleas that the European Union persist in greater integration to sort all of this out.

In this context, both analysts and policymakers have called on the major liberal democratic allies of the United States to compensate for the lack of stable US leadership.

Countries usually mentioned are the other members of the G7 – Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom – as well as Australia, South Korea, and the European Union as a whole.

These actors have benefitted enormously from what is known as the liberal international order, underwritten by US power. Some of them are so perfectly adapted to this order – not only in security, political, and economic terms, but also intellectually – that it is hard for them to reckon and come to terms with a changing world....

Heiko Maas has repeatedly talked about an “alliance of multilateralists,” which he defines as “a network of partners who stand up together for the preservation and further development of the rules-based order, who defend multilateralism and who are willing to use political capital to this end because they understand what multilateralism truly means. (Page 13).

This is a nice aspiration but given the challenge of the new authoritarians, China, Russia, Turkey and radical Islam, I am not sure what this really means in concrete terms.

And with Europe facing significant economic challenges which almost certainly put them in a significant period of low economic growth, it becomes even more difficult to understand what the practical steps to enhancing security and defense add up to.

The United States is doing its part through various means; and the nuclear reconfiguration as well as the enhanced collaboration on new air combat systems and missile defense systems is a core backbone for defense, but the challenge to this “other members of the G7” will be to shape real defense capabilities and effective security policies or the Europe I also live in frequently will become more of zone of conflict than it is even now.

We need a report that gets real about the world we are in; not the world we might wish to go back to.

In a perceptive look at the Bush Administration and German unification, Frank Costigliola noted:

The Bush Administration’s self-congratulation on unification rested on rosy assumptions about the future: that future German governments would remain in NATO and want American troops, that the US would have the will and the resources to lead NATO, that Washington could use NATO as a tool for managing a variety of European issues, that Germany’s security interests would continue to mesh with those of its neighbours and of the United States, that transatlantic trade tensions would not attenuate security ties and, perhaps most problematic, that Moscow’s humiliating loss of East Germany and other parts of its empire would not spark a revanchist Russian nationalism.

Focusing Munich Multilateralism on a Real Threat: The Russian and Chinese Missile Buildups

By Richard Weitz

Much of this month's Munich Security Conference saw a reaffirmation of anti-Trumpism nostalgia.

This culminated in the poignant silence in the hall that followed Vice President Mike Pence's passing along President Donald Trump's greeting to the delegates.

But the European speakers did rally behind one good idea which clearly is of interest on both sides of the Atlantic.

Besides calling on Moscow to eliminate its 9M729 nuclear-capable cruise missile (also known as the SSC-8), which violates the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, several Western leaders appropriately pressured China to join the Treaty or accept comparable limitations on its growing missile power.

"Disarmament is something that concerns us all," German Chancellor Angela Merkel told the meeting, "and we would of course be glad if such talks were held not just between the United States, Europe and Russia but also with China."¹

Although China is unlikely to join the existing Treaty as written, given how the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is massively arming itself with such weapons to coerce Taiwan and Japan as well as threaten the U.S. military forces in Asia, pressing Beijing to limit its strategic weapons buildup is an important goal.

Not only is Beijing's unbridled defense buildup weakening regional stability, collectively aligning against China as well as Russia on this and other issues can reinforce transatlantic security solidarity.

It is certainly a better strategy for NATO leaders than fighting among themselves, as the allies were doing over the Iran nuclear deal and other Munich debates.

As a Russian business analyst has noted, whatever the anti-American sentiment among the European elite, they still see Russia and China as unsuitable partners "They were willing to put up with an authoritarian Russia but they'd never trust it to be a counterweight to the U.S. ... an undemocratic Russia is of no use to Europe. It is at worst a threat and at best unpredictable."²

At Munich, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg was especially deft in turning aside provocative questions from the audience about allied divisions over the Treaty. Citing Russia's Treaty violations,

Stoltenberg said that the U.S. withdrawal decision had the “the full support of all NATO Allies.”

A visibly frustrated audience member, Russian parliamentary leader Konstantin Kosachev, chastised the alliance for unreservedly backing Washington’s position instead of assuming a neutral position and giving the Russian arguments a genuine hearing.

Stoltenberg responded that, besides the 30 Russian-U.S. high-level meetings that occurred, many other NATO governments had also raised the issue.

He also reported that some of them had independently, through their own intelligence and verification processes, confirmed that Russia had violated the Treaty.

Explaining that the problem was that, “There are no new US missiles in Europe but there are more and more Russian missiles in Europe,” Stoltenberg saw the solution had to be either the elimination of the illegal Russian missiles or NATO military countermeasures.

These will involve collective allied actions—”not a bilateral arrangement...it will be measured... we need to find a balance between being strong, providing credible deterrence and defence, but not triggering an arms race.

Although Stoltenberg assured the Munich audience that the NATO response would not include the deployment of new U.S. nuclear-armed missiles in Europe, German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen had earlier declined to exclude that or any other response option.

“Precisely because we are at the start of the discussion,” she explained at the February 13 NATO Defense Minister’s meeting, “it is important that we do not start creating hierarchies or take out individual points but really leave the full lineup on the table.”³

The formal Chinese response to these proposals to join INF was, in the words of China’s State Councillor Yang Jiechi , a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and its de facto top diplomat, “China develops its capabilities strictly according to its defensive needs and doesn’t pose a threat to anybody else. So we are opposed to the multilateralization of the INF.”⁴

But at other times at Munich, Chinese defense experts provided a more realistic assessment of the potential for security bargaining with Beijing.

At the panel devoted to arms control, Retired General Yao Yunzhu, director emeritus of the Centre on China-American defense Relations, said that a new intermediate-range missile agreement must also encompass air- and sea-launched systems, where the United States and Russia remained superior, “because most of China’s military technology was ground-based and the country would not want to put itself at a disadvantage.”⁵

The U.S. speakers at the Munich Security Conference had an opportunity to exploit this opening to emphasize how Beijing’s aloof stand toward Russian-U.S. arms control was no longer tenable.

There is a clear opportunity to offer counterproposals regarding how China and other states might limit certain of their missiles, such as constraining their capabilities, imposing ceilings on their number, or restricting their deployment locations, as well as offer ideas for verification of these proposals.

President Trump has an opportunity to lead such a renewed dialogue, especially after he completes the trade negotiations with China and the nuclear talks with North Korea.

A fitting location for rolling out new U.S. initiatives could be at next month's German government-sponsored arms control conference in Berlin, which has become a hotbed of counter-productive anti-Trumpism.

FOOTNOTES

1. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-security-china/china-rebuffs-germanys-call-for-u-s-missile-deal-with-russia-idUSKCN1Q50NZ>
2. <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-02-18/trump-isn-t-even-enough-to-drive-europe-into-russia-s-arms>
3. <https://www.rferl.org/a/stoltenberg-nato-mulls-options-in-post-inf-world-doesn-t-wants-arms-race-with-russia/29768184.html>
4. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/02/17/asia-pacific/china-rebuffs-germanys-call-u-s-missile-pact-russia/#.XHZT0aB7nDc>
5. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/02/17/asia-pacific/china-rebuffs-germanys-call-u-s-missile-pact-russia/>

The Munich Security Conference: The European Blame Game

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By defense.info

This year's Munich security conference provided a look at the strategic positioning of key Western players within the new strategic context.

It has been interesting to watch for a new configuration of Western security agendas and players is clearly evolving, and neither great power competition nor multilateralism really describe the dynamics very well, although speakers tended to fall back on these two positions, presented as polar opposites

With the seizure of Crimea by the Russians in 2014, NATO recognized a new historical challenge: how to deal with the return of Russia as a direct threat to Europe?

But this is not the return of the Cold War, as the Warsaw Pact has dissolved and both the European Union and NATO have extended themselves to the Russian border. They have done so without adding new defense forces or capabilities, and indeed Europe has experienced a significant decline in defense expenditures.

At the same time new challenges have been added.

The Russians have used a new form of warfare, hybrid warfare, to achieve their objectives in Ukraine and have launched major cyber threats as well. NATO Europe has dismantled much of its direct defense infrastructure and now with the rise of the cyber challenge has a more comprehensive threat system to deal with.

The challenge of building a 21st century defense infrastructure and rebuilding NATO forces is significant and at the same time, Europe is now confronting the impact not only of the Russians but other authoritarian states and movements.

China is clearly expanding its influence in Europe and focused on European infrastructure and is doing so in a de facto alliance with Russia.

The radical Muslim threat represented by ISIS plus the increasingly authoritarian regime in Turkey both pose internal threats and challenges at the same time as Europe is dealing with direct defense threats as well.

For many Europeans, invoking the Trump word is a good way to express why the old order is gone and the need for European unity enhanced.

Or simply, something like having the Chancellor of Germany conjure up an image of herself as an exorcist to rid the room of Trumpisms.

But unfortunately, simply evoking “the Donald” is not enough.

Brexit is simply scratching the surface of European disaggregation.

In this piece by [Judy Dempsey](#) from Carnegie Europe, she looks at what she calls the “European blame game,” as a piece she wrote prior to the holding of the conference.

What would the Europeans do without President Donald Trump?

Ever since taking office over two years ago, Trump has become the punching bag for many European leaders, particularly from “Old Europe.”

Just look at the recent Pew Research Center poll published in the latest [Munich Security Conference Report](#). Ten percent of Germans are confident that Trump “will do the right thing regarding world affairs.” A whopping 35 percent place their bets on President Vladimir Putin and 30 percent on Chinese President Xi Jinping.

On his home turf, Trump is vilified by the liberal elites and by the Democrats, though his policy vis-à-vis China has won him [bipartisan support](#). Across the Atlantic, the Europeans blame Trump for dismantling, bit by bit, the post-1945 multilateral order. They are pinning their hopes on the Democrats’ ability to deprive Trump of a second term, as if former president Barack Obama was a great foreign policy strategist.

Even if Trump was to be defeated (and that’s a big if), a change in the White House is not going to fundamentally change the dynamics of what is happening in Europe, what is happening to the transatlantic relationship, and what is happening to the post-1945 liberal international order.

This is because Europe, embodied in the EU, lacks the strategic tools, the mindset, and the leadership to reshape relations with the United States in particular and the West in general.

It is these issues that are the subset of this year’s [Munich Security Conference](#). It will be attended, as ever, by leaders, defense ministers, and security experts from around the world—some of whom have a shocking record of [human rights violations](#), particularly Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

The participants will be given the MSC’s latest report: [“The Great Puzzle: Who will Pick Up the Pieces?”](#) Wishful thinking aside, it’s not going to be the Europeans.

After over seven decades of unflinching American support for Europe, the EU as a bloc is still not in any position to do foreign, security, or defense policy. Of all the regions or issues raised in the MSC report—from the Sahel and the Middle East to the Western Balkans and more crucially arms control—it’s hard to find the EU making a difference.

Moreover, the EU is not even in a position to deal with the onslaught of digitization. The latter is already the challenge that the West is facing. Digitization knows no borders, with North Korea possibly the only exception. Its impact on supply chains, on information flows, on diplomacy, on daily existence are immeasurable.

Closer to home, leaving aside the huge disruptive effects of digitization, diplomatically and politically the EU cannot even fix the Western Balkans.

It was American diplomats, not EU officials, who understood what was taking place in Macedonia just three years ago when civic activists, individuals, and nongovernmental organizations had enough of the corruption and the slide toward authoritarian rule under former prime minister Nikola Gruevski. That fact that he is now in Hungary evading arrest and protected by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán speaks volumes about the EU's inability to pressure Orbán.

The EU's record in stamping out corruption in Kosovo or trying to introduce a semblance of an independent judiciary there has been extremely poor. Brussels has also refused to interfere decisively in dysfunctional Bosnia and Herzegovina, or tackle address the widespread corruption and weak rule of law in EU-candidate member Montenegro.

In short, there's a glaring gap between the EU's values and what it practices. Values and principles and soft power are supposed to be the core of its policies. But they lack teeth if not backed up by strict conditionality and hard power.

This unwillingness to strengthen conditionality is already having a negative impact inside the EU. Several member states, including Poland and Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, have realized that once inside the bloc they can reap all the advantages, including access to generous structural funds.

At the same time, they can flout the EU's values that are anchored on the rule of law, an independent judiciary, and an independent, free press. Such disregard for the rules has a disaggregating effect on the EU as a coherent organization. The longer populist leaders or corrupt governments prevail and abuse the rules, the weaker the EU becomes.

Indeed, the EU is already disaggregating as the member states increasingly call the shots. The bloc's defense and security policies, for example, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Agency (EDA) are about aiming at the lowest common denominator. No wonder German Chancellor Angela Merkel signed up to PESCO. It avoids Berlin from taking decisions about hard power and strategic responsibility. No wonder President Emmanuel Macron created the European Intervention Initiative (EII), a defense coalition operating outside the constraints of the EU. He didn't believe PESCO was up to the job of creating a credible security and defense policy.

China is another example that shows diverging interests by the member states. Several have tightened their investment laws. They now recognize how China, after flouting intellectual property rights with regard to Western companies investing in China, has put its sights on acquiring important strategic assets in Europe.

To fend off Chinese influence, Merkel and Macron lobbied the EU to allow a merger between the German and French train manufacturers Siemens and Alstom. It was blocked by Margrethe Vestager, the EU's competition commissioner.

Her decision, while understandable, begs the question about the agility and flexibility of the EU to adapt to the changing geostrategic centers of power, whether it concerns China, the United States, or Russia's goal of weakening, if not severing, the Euro-Atlantic bond.

And that is the crux of Europe.

European leaders are doing themselves no favors in bashing Trump while ignoring what is happening to Europe's post-1945 architecture. It is slowly crumbling. No amount of scaffolding will hold it up until and unless European leaders recognize what the end of the post-1945 era means for their security, defense, and stability.

The new geosecurity challenge facing Europe is not just about the ebbing of the transatlantic relationship. The former can probably be fixed. Rather, it's the toxic combination of China and Russia's ambitions to divide and break the West.

How the Munich Security Conference Embodied the New Communications Approaches

02/19/2019

Social media, tweeting, and various other coms tools are largely being used either to shape and reinforce self-defined communities or to provide the means to attack “them” while we define “us.”

John Stuart Mill would not thrive in this environment.

He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that.

His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them.

But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion.

So we won't see JSM tweeting or gathering his like minded community in the current version of the us versus them club and celebrating the only version of truth – theirs.

And this thought clearly runs against the grain of today's “thinking.”

But the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the present generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it.

If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth, if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.

President Trump certainly has used tweeting and his rhetorical style to disrupt opponents and mobilize supporters.

But he did not create an age in which this is becoming more of the norm of discourse than its exception.

A clear example of this were several of the presentations at the Munich Security Conference whose entire goal was to reinforce and rally the troops against the evils of the world we live in.

Judy Dempsey, a nonresident senior fellow at Carnegie Europe and editor in chief of [Strategic Europe](#), provided a look back at the MSC.

She argued that the Munich Security Conference was more like the meeting of a nostalgia group meeting to remember the Old West rather than to debate and to disagree and to shape a way ahead for the world we are in.

Diplomacy didn't have much of a field day in Munich.

Nor did the West for that matter.

The absence of diplomatic tools and a sense of inquiry combined with sharp exchanges between the Europeans and some of the American delegation confirmed, more than ever, the weakness and disunity of the West.

This obsession with the “old” West during this year’s Munich Security Conference will delay any strategic realignment of its priorities as Russia and China, but also Japan and India, move on to define their interests. The West reacts as the rest of the world changes.

Blaming the Trump administration, lambasting Vice President Mike Pence’s anti-European speech, and waxing lyrical over former U.S. vice-president Joe Biden’s elegant and passionate pro-transatlantic speech will not equip the West with the essential tools to defend its values and interests.

If anything, in Munich there was a nostalgia for the old West of the post-1945 era. Back then, there was a certain predictability about the conduct of diplomacy, about spheres of influence, and about ideological certainties.

The wars in the former Yugoslavia, Russia’s invasion in Georgia and later in Ukraine, and the continuing violence and misery of the wars in Syria and Yemen should have surely convinced the West that the old parameters and narrative are long over.

Listening to Henrietta Fore, executive director of the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), speak in the main hall on Sunday about what was happening to women and children in Syria and other countries in the region was a world away from another discussion going on down the corridor.

The former debate confirmed the absence of strong, diplomatic tools to end the suffering. The latter was an elegant and worthy town hall meeting focused on a new publication: Defending Democracy and a Rules-Based Order. The gap in the language between both meetings was stark.

And that is what the MSC amounted to in the main hall: little listening. Too many polemics.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov railed against the United States but spared Europe. No wonder. The Kremlin must be savoring the weak dialogue in the transatlantic relationship. Pence didn’t hold back any punches about the hapless Europeans, and their continuing defense of the Iran deal. Russia was slapped hard, too.

And you should have heard Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif—his speech was one long tirade against the United States.

At least the BBC’s ace journalist Lyse Doucet did her utmost not to let him drift, compared to last year when he got away scot-free without any trenchant questioning. But similar to last year, Zarif was a stand-alone. There was no engagement with other regional players.

Zarif’s speech exposed the deep divisions between the United States and the Europeans over the Iran nuclear deal. Despite Chancellor Angela Merkel’s attempts on Saturday to explain why it was necessary to preserve the deal, while at the same time acknowledging Iran’s disruptive role in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Gaza, there was no meeting of minds between both sides of the Atlantic.

And since that is the case, how on earth are the Americans and Europeans going to work together—and with Russia—to save the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty?

How are Western leaders going to take stock that the idea of the old West, one of Atlanticism, needs to break out of this geographical setting and mindset?

This would mean creating a wider security, political, and economic architecture that could include Japan and South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, and African and Latin American countries.

It would be about widening and deepening democracy and its values. None of these issues were brought up in the main sessions.

And as for the West defending its values, it was really shameful how Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who was given the podium on Saturday, was not at all confronted by either the chairman of the MSC nor the audience about the widespread abuse of human rights, the disappearances, the torture, and the crackdown on civil activists.

Not forgetting the fact that the rubber-stamped Egyptian parliament approved measures that would allow him to extend his rule until...2034.

And yet, three interesting, optimistic trends that affect the traditional way of doing business by the West may have traction.

The first is the way in which Greek and Macedonian leaders managed to end years of dispute over the future name of Macedonia.

Besides paving the way for Macedonia to join the EU and NATO, the accord was about political will and immense leadership and courage shown by Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and his Macedonian counterpart, Zoran Zaev. They were backed by skilled and patient diplomats from both sides who made the deal possible.

The second, again outside the confines of this almost anachronistic MSC, is the way other countries, such as the Netherlands and Norway, are quietly mediating in conflicts in the Middle East.

And the third is how a group of retired diplomats, but also those in office, realize that the West is no longer the old West. It's about reaching out to democracies across the globe.

I've seen the likes of these "Declarations of Principles" before.

But they were confined to the Euro-Atlantic organizations of the EU and NATO. (And now look what's happening in Hungary and Poland).

This time it's about the bigger horizon that should define the contours of the West.

About using globalization and digitization to support values and democracy and humanitarian support for refugees.

Just another initiative, cynics would respond.

As it is, there's already too much cynicism and too little dialogue. Maybe it's time to really change the contours of the MSC itself.

Vice-President Pence Presentation

Ambassador Ischinger, distinguished guests, it is my honor to join you for the 55th Annual Munich Security Conference. And I'm grateful for the warm welcome.

I'm also honored to be joined by an extraordinary delegation of Americans, including Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan, and a distinguished delegation of senators and representatives from the United States Congress, led by Senator Lindsey Graham. Would

you join me in welcoming the largest American delegation in the history of the Munich Security Conference? (Applause.)

It's an honor to be here with them and with Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi. Madam Speaker, my greetings to you. (Applause.) We're grateful for Senator Graham's leadership of this delegation and grateful for the strong bipartisan American presence represented here. To them and to all of you, it's my great honor to speak to you today, on behalf of a champion of freedom and a champion of a strong national defense, the 45th President of the United States of America, President Donald Trump. (Applause.)

Two years ago, I stood at this podium and I told you that America's leadership in the free world would not falter, not even for a moment, and that America first did not mean America alone.

Later that same year, standing where we stood just a few short days ago, beside the Monument to the Warsaw Uprising, after reaffirming the United States' firm commitment to NATO and our mutual defense, President Trump spoke these words:

He said, quote, "The fundamental question of our time is whether the West has the will to survive." He went on to say, "Do we have the confidence in our values to defend them at any cost? Do we have enough respect for our citizens to protect our borders? Do we have the desire and the courage to preserve our civilization in the face of those who would subvert and destroy it?"

Today, as Vice President of the United States, I'm proud to report, under the leadership of President Donald Trump, the United States has answered that question – not merely with words but with actions. And today, America is stronger than ever before, and America is leading on the world stage once again. (Applause.)

With the support of strong bipartisan majorities in the United States Congress, President Trump has taken decisive action to make the strongest military in the history of the world stronger still, enacting the largest investment in our national defense since the days of Ronald Reagan. We released a National Security Strategy advancing peace through American strength. We initiated the modernization of our nuclear arsenal. And just last month, President Trump unveiled our nation's new strategy for missile defense.

A strong military, of course, depends on a strong economy. And under this President, we've taken decisive action to strengthen the American economy. We enacted the largest tax cuts and tax reforms in American history, rolled back regulation at a record pace, forged reciprocal trade deals, and unleashed American energy as never before. And the results for our country have been remarkable.

In just over two years, our nation has created 5.3 million new jobs. Our unemployment rate has reached its lowest point in nearly 50 years. Our stock market is soaring to new heights. And we've become the world's largest producer of oil and gas.

With this renewed American strength, both military and economic, President Trump has also been leading our NATO Allies to renew their commitment to our common defense. And we've seen extraordinary progress.

At President Trump's urging, in the past two years, the number of NATO members spending at least 2 percent of their GDP on defense has doubled, and the majority of NATO members now have plans in place to meet their financial obligations by 2024. As Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has said, thanks to President Trump's leadership, NATO has seen, quote, "real money and real results."

When I was at this conference two years ago, I remember a meeting I had with a leader of one of our NATO Allies. He was very candid with me. He told me he was worried that our new administration might represent a moment where America would pull back from our commitments. I remember he said that Europe needed America to be the leader of the free world. I told him I respected his opinion and I appreciated his candor. And then, I told him that when you hear President Trump ask our NATO Allies to live up to the commitments they've made to our common defense, that's what we call being leader of the free world.

The truth is, many of our NATO Allies still need to do more. And the United States expects every NATO member to put in place a credible plan to meet the 2 percent threshold. And, by 2024, we expect all our allies to invest 20 percent of defense spending on procurement.

With that renewed strength, America and our allies have stood strong. We've stood against efforts, as well, to divide our alliance through political interference or the use of energy resources. And the

United States commends all our European partners who've taken a strong stand against Nord Stream 2. And we commend others to do the same.

We've also made it clear that we will not stand idly by while NATO Allies purchase weapons from our adversaries. We cannot ensure the defense of the West if our allies grow dependent on the East.

The United States has also been very clear with our security partners on the threat posed by Huawei and other Chinese telecom companies, as Chinese law requires them to provide Beijing's vast security apparatus with access to any data that touches their network or equipment. We must protect our critical telecom infrastructure, and America is calling on all our security partners to be vigilant and to reject any enterprise that would compromise the integrity of our communications technology or our national security systems.

And so, with President Trump's leadership and a clear focus on our security, our transatlantic alliance is being defended and renewed.

And with that renewed strength, we've taken the fight to radical Islamist terrorists on our terms, on their soil. In Iraq and Syria, President Trump gave American commanders in the field the authority they needed to hit ISIS and drive them back. And thanks to the courage of our armed forces and the efforts of our 78 coalition partners, the ISIS caliphate has been decimated, and our troops – (applause) – have liberated 5 million Iraqis, Syrians, Arabs, Kurds, and Muslims – men, women, and children.

As I stand before you today, at this very hour, along the Euphrates River, the last mile of territory where the black flag of ISIS once flew is being captured.

In the wake of these gains, President Trump has announced that the United States will begin to hand off the fight to our partners in the region and to bring our troops home. But this is a change in tactics, not a change in mission. The United States will keep a strong presence in the region. We recognize it will not be enough to simply reclaim the territory of the caliphate. As we enter this new phase, the United States will continue to work with all our allies to hunt down the remnants of ISIS wherever and whenever they rear their ugly head. (Applause.)

Beyond Iraq and Syria, in the fall of 2017, President Trump announced our South Asia strategy. And with a renewed commitment of United States Armed Forces and our NATO Allies, we've taken the fight with renewed vigor to the Taliban, al Qaeda, ISIS Khorasan, and other Islamic extremist groups in Afghanistan. And thanks to their courageous efforts, the Taliban has come to the table and are in negotiations to reach a lasting political settlement that could bring peace and ensure that Afghanistan is never again used by terrorists to launch attacks against the United States, our allies, or any sovereign nation.

Under President Donald Trump, the United States will seize every opportunity to achieve peace. But we will approach every challenge with our eyes wide open. We will deal with the world as it is, not as we wish it to be.

For instance, under President Trump, we've been holding Russia accountable for its attempts to redraw international borders by force, approving the largest defense sale to Ukraine in years.

The United States has expelled 60 diplomats following a chemical weapons attack on a Russian exile on British soil. And after years of Russian violations of our decades-old treaty, the United States announced plans to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

We've also taken decisive steps to confront the greatest threat to peace and security in the Middle East. The Islamic Republic of Iran is the leading state sponsor of terrorism in the world. Iran has supported terrorist proxies and militias, Hezbollah and Hamas; exported missiles; fueled conflicts in Syria and Yemen; plotted terrorist attacks on European soil; and openly advocated the destruction of the State of Israel.

Anti-Semitism is not just wrong; it's evil. And anti-Semitism must be confronted wherever and whenever it arises, and it must be universally condemned. (Applause.)

Yesterday, my wife Karen and I paid our solemn respects to the martyrs of the Holocaust in our very first visit to Auschwitz. It was a scene of unspeakable tragedy but also a scene that marks the triumph of freedom.

As a close friend whose grandparents survived the Holocaust said to me, as we walked those grounds – the grounds of the Birkenau camp – he whispered, “Good always triumphs over evil.” And so it did, but at horrendous cost.

One lesson of that dark chapter of human history is that when authoritarian regimes breathe out vile anti-Semitic hatred and threats of violence, we must take them at their word.

The Iranian regime openly advocates another Holocaust and it seeks the means to achieve it. The Ayatollah Khamenei himself has said, “It is the mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to erase Israel from the map.”

Two years ago, President Trump made his first overseas trip to Saudi Arabia, where he convened a historic gathering of leaders from 50 nations across the region at the Arab Islamic American Summit. As President Trump said then, and I quote, “The birthplace of civilization is waiting to begin a new renaissance.” He challenged the nations gathered there to work together, as he said, to meet “history’s great test to conquer extremism and vanquish the forces” of terrorism.

This week, it was our privilege to travel to Poland to meet with many of those same leaders who came together around that great purpose. We gathered to discuss our mutual commitment to confront Iran and make the Middle East safe for peace, prosperity, and the advance of human rights. It was remarkable to see leaders from across the region agreeing that the greatest threat to peace and security in the Middle East is the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As I said at that gathering, the time has come for all of us to act. The time has come for our European partners to stop undermining U.S. sanctions against this murderous revolutionary regime. The time has come for our European partners to stand with us and with the Iranian people, our allies and friends in the region. The time has come from our European partners to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal and join us as we bring the economic and diplomatic pressure necessary to give the Iranian people, the region, and the world the peace, security, and freedom they deserve. (Applause.)

So while we’re standing with our allies, strengthening NATO, and standing up to aggression, President Trump’s leadership is also bringing about historic change in the Indo-Pacific. The United States

seeks an Indo-Pacific where independent nations boldly pursue their own interests, respecting their neighbors as equals; where societies, beliefs, and traditions flourish side by side; where individuals exercise their God-given liberties to pursue their dreams and chart their destinies.

But as President Trump has said, for years the United States has faced “tremendous tariffs” in our trading relations with China. Those actions have contributed to a \$375 billion goods trade deficit with the United States last year alone. To address that, at the President’s direction, the United States has taken decisive action. We’ve put tariffs on \$250 billion worth of Chinese goods and made it clear that we could more than double that number.

But as President Trump has made clear, we hope for better. As we gather here, negotiations are underway in Beijing to redefine our trading relationship. And our negotiations are not simply about the trade imbalance. Under President Trump’s leadership, the United States has also made it clear that China must address the longstanding issues of intellectual-property theft, forced technology transfer, and other structural issues in China that have placed a burden on our economy and on economies around the world.

President Trump has great respect for President Xi, and so do I. And the President remains hopeful that, as those negotiations continue, we’ll be able to make real progress and establishing trade between our two countries that is free, fair, and reciprocal.

Now, other issues will remain: the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, debt diplomacy, interference in domestic political affairs, and the rights of religious minorities in China. And Beijing knows where we stand.

And while America will keep standing strong, we’ll also keep remaining hopeful, as these discussions continue, that we’ll be able to take this first step to redefine our relationship based on reciprocity and mutual respect, and in so doing, make it possible to address other issues to the benefit of the United States and China, and the world.

China has an honored place in our vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific if it chooses to respect its neighbors’ sovereignty; embrace free, fair, and reciprocal trade; and uphold human rights and freedom. The

American people want nothing more, and the Chinese people and the entire Indo-Pacific deserve nothing less.

In one other respect, it's remarkable to think how far we've come under President Trump's leadership in the Indo-Pacific. When I stood at this podium two years ago, North Korea was engaged in regular nuclear tests, launching missiles over Japan, and threatening the United States and our allies.

Faced with this threat, President Trump rallied the world around an unprecedented pressure campaign. And the world has witnessed the results: No more nuclear tests. No more missiles being fired. Our hostages are home. And Karen and I had the privilege to be present in Hawaii as the remains of our fallen Korean War heroes began to come home.

And then, last year, at their historic summit in Singapore, President Trump received a commitment from Chairman Kim to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea.

Now, as we speak, President Trump is preparing for another summit with Chairman Kim in Vietnam in just a few weeks. And, again, President Trump is hopeful. He believes peace is possible. But our allies may be assured: We will not repeat the mistakes of the past. All nations must continue to stand together, enforce all U.N. Security Council resolutions, and hold North Korea to the commitments it made in the Singapore declaration. And I can promise you, America will as well.

And while we work for peace, we will continue to stand firm until we achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. We owe it to our children, to the Indo-Pacific, and to the world.

And so while the challenges before us loom large, with renewed American leadership on the world stage, together we're demonstrating every day that we can make the future of the free world brighter than ever before. And as we rise to meet these challenges in the days ahead, we should never underestimate our power to change the world for the better. For when we're strong and when we're united, there's nothing we can't achieve together.

In recent weeks, we've seen what happens when the free world and freedom-loving people unite around a single cause, as so many of the nations represented in this room have stood with us, and shoulder to shoulder with the Venezuelan people, in their struggle to reclaim their libertad.

The struggle in Venezuela is between dictatorship and democracy. Nicolas Maduro is a dictator with no legitimate claim to power, and Nicolas Maduro must go.

Maduro's socialism has shrunk their economy by nearly half. More than 9 out of 10 people live in poverty, in what was once one of the wealthiest countries in our hemisphere. The average Venezuelan has lost more than 20 pounds through deprivation and malnutrition. Thousands of Venezuelan children are starving at this very hour.

And rising desperation has fueled a mass exodus. More than 3 million Venezuelans have abandoned their beloved country. And if things don't get better, another 2 million are expected to follow them out before the end of this year.

Karen and I saw the hardship facing families in Venezuela firsthand when we traveled through the region last year. We met with families in a little church in Manaus, Brazil. And the compassion of that faith community and the compassion of the world was meeting the needs of people fleeing tyranny and deprivation.

We spent time with those families. We hugged their children. We heard of their hardship and their plight. And I'll – I'll never forget the father, standing beside his wife and two little boys, who told me how hard it was after a long day's work to return home and look your little children in the eye, and tell them, "We're not going to eat today." It is a tragedy that demands a response from the whole world.

Fortunately, as we gather, freedom is breaking out in Venezuela. (Applause.) This week, Interim President Juan Guaidó and his government hosted an international humanitarian conference at the Organization of American States, where 30 nations recommitted themselves to supporting the Venezuelan people and providing relief. Responding to this call, the international community has already pledged over \$100 million in humanitarian assistance. And in the days

ahead, the people of Venezuela will again take to the streets to raise their voices on behalf of democracy and the rule of law.

At President Trump's direction, the United States was proud to be the first country in the world to recognize Juan Guaidó as Venezuela's legitimate President. To date, 52 nations, including 30 of our European allies, have followed America's lead.

But it's time for the rest of the world to step forward. Once more, the Old World can take a stand in support of freedom in the New World. All of us must stand with the Venezuelan people until freedom and democracy is fully restored.

So today, we call on the European Union to step forward for freedom and recognize Juan Guaidó as the only legitimate President of Venezuela. (Applause.)

And so, under President Donald Trump's leadership, America is leading the free world once again. Thank you for the honor of participating in this important event. And thank you for this opportunity to reflect on the progress that we've made and the ties that unite freedom-loving people everywhere.

As President Trump said in that very same Poland speech in 2017, "Our freedom, our civilization, and our survival depend on these bonds of history, culture, and memory." And they also depend on a foundation of faith. And on that faith, I know, as the President concluded, in his words, "The West will never ever be broken. Our values will prevail. Our people will thrive. And our civilization will triumph." For I have faith in our people and in freedom-loving people everywhere. And I also have that faith, in those ancient words, that where the spirit of the Lord is, there's liberty. And when we hold fast to our faith in freedom and its eternal Author, freedom always wins.

Thank you. God bless you. And God bless the United States of America.

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov's Presentation

First of all, Wolfgang (*Ischinger*), thank you for your presentation and your kind words. There is yet another reason why I address [this conference] more often than anyone else: this is because you have kept your post for so long.

Today, the situation on the European continent and generally in the Euro-Atlantic region is, certainly, extremely tense. There appear ever more new rifts and the old ones grow deeper. I think that under these circumstances, it is relevant and even timely to turn to the European Home idea, no matter how strange this may sound in the current situation.

Many great modern day politicians realised the need for pooling the potentials of absolutely all European states. Let me mention Charles de Gaulle, who put forward the concept of Greater Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, a peaceful Europe without divides or bloc confrontations, which, in his opinion, made Europe “artificial and barren.” Chancellor Helmut Kohl and President Francois Mitterrand also spoke about the importance of the broadest possible partnership with Russia in the name of stability and security.

After the Cold War, these noble plans had every chance of being successfully implemented. But, regrettably, they still remain just good intentions. The choice has been made in favour of “NATO-centrism” and the “leader-wingman” logic. The illegal bombing attacks on Yugoslavia, its partition and the unilateral recognition of Kosovo independence, which recurred state borders on the continent for the first time after WWII, support for the armed coup in Kiev, the reckless expansion of NATO and the deployment of US ABM defences, the EU’s refusal to accept the reciprocal visa renunciation decision that had been coordinated between Moscow and Brussels, and the discrimination of Russian PACE deputies are like links in a chain. Let me add that Russia and the EU had officially approved roadmaps for forming four common spaces from economy and justice to science and education. To all intents and purposes, they have been forgotten and no one even recalls them, let alone work in these fields that, let me underscore, have been approved at the highest level. The same could be said about the commitment not to bolster up one’s security at the expense of others, which was approved at the top level in the OSCE and Russia-NATO Council documents. Not only has it been forgotten but it is also being grossly trampled upon.

So, what do we have as a result? A United Europe has not been built. The considerable potential of interaction between Russia and EU, its comparative advantage are not used. Problems that are of vital importance for all of us, from final extermination of terrorism to ensuring sustainable economic growth, are not being given fitting solutions.

While the Europeans have allowed themselves to be involved in a senseless confrontation with Russia and are sustaining billions in losses from the sanctions that have been handed down from overseas, the world continues to change rapidly. In practical terms, the EU no longer has the monopoly on the regional integration agenda. The balance of power is being modified on the huge Eurasian continent, primarily due to the new centres in the Asia Pacific region. The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) has become an inalienable part of the geopolitical landscape, as evidenced by both concrete results achieved by it and the desire demonstrated by dozens of states and associations to sign preferential agreements with the EAEU. The People's Republic of China, which has been promoting the One Belt, One Road concept, is making its own contribution to upgrading Eurasia. There are relevant open integration projects on the SCO platform as well.

I am sure that integration processes must not be compounded with confrontation and rivalry. We see the possibility of combining our potentials, for implementing various multilateral projects and for searching together for new growth points. Efforts to create a common Eurasian space have been taken through the alignment of the EAEU with the Belt and Road initiative. Ties are getting ever stronger between the EAEU and ASEAN and between these two organisations and the SCO. These processes are logically developing in keeping with the initiative which President Vladimir Putin advanced several years ago in support of the Greater Eurasian Partnership as a broad integration contour based on the values of international law, openness and transparency.

The above shows that we have started working in deed, not in word, to ensure the indivisibility of economic development on our huge as well as extremely rich continent. I believe that our European partners will benefit from joining this project. The creation of a common space from Lisbon to Vladivostok will enhance the competitiveness of all members in deed, not in word, especially in light of the increasingly egoistical behaviour of some countries on the global market and attempts to enforce their rules of the game on everyone everywhere in violation of the UN and WTO norms.

The technical matter of developing a stable dialogue between the European Commission and the Eurasian Economic Commission is long overdue. We are ready for this.

A growing economic connectivity in Eurasia could provide a solid foundation for the continent's architecture of equal and indivisible security. I would like to remind you that we are yet to implement the commitment, which was adopted at the OSCE summit in Astana in 2010, to create a free, democratic, common and indivisible security community in the OSCE area.

Contrary to speculations, Russia is interested in a strong, independent and open European Union. President Putin spoke about this in November 2018, when he said that the EU's striving for independence, self-sufficiency and sovereignty in defence and security is a natural and positive desire in the context of strengthening a multipolar world. It is another matter if the EU will be allowed to attain this goal.

The realities of the 21st century call for burying the remaining residues of colonial mentality and the philosophy of iron curtains and cordon sanitaire. The common European home needs serious repairs. The tasks we face are really huge. We can fulfil the jobs efficiently only together on a common basis. It has been suggested recently that work is more effective if it is not done on a common basis but through the so-called new multilateralism, which provides for creating special interest clubs. This would be a big step back from the goal we had in mind when we established the UN. It would amount to an attempt to replace a global organisation with clubs for the select few. We have seen this before. No good will come of it.

Thank you. I am ready to answer your questions now.

Question: What are Russia's expectations and approaches to extending the Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty)?

Sergey Lavrov: President of Russia Vladimir Putin has repeatedly stated that we are ready to start talks on extending the New START Treaty. It only expires in 2021, but time quickly flies by. We suggested that together with our US colleagues we start a discussion, given our concerns linked to the US decision to rearm their submarines and heavy bombers with Tomahawk cruise missiles. The New START Treaty allows for this possibility, provided the other party to the Treaty regards these changes as technically reliable. To this very day, we haven't received from the Americans any proposals on starting meaningful consultations. But we are not losing hope.

Question: Will we be able to keep cooperating in the Arctic region, despite the deterioration of East-West relations? I mean Russia and Norway, Russia and Western countries?

Sergey Lavrov: Where Russia is concerned, the reply is an unequivocal "yes." Of course, we are paying attention to NATO states' increased activities in the region. We have discussed this with our Norwegian partners. We want to understand what objectives NATO is pursuing in the Arctic?

To listen to statements made by the British Secretary of Defence, Gavin Williamson, one gets the impression that no one but NATO has the right to interests anywhere except within its own borders.

We have repeatedly made various constructive proposals at the Arctic Council and other regional organisations. We are confident that cooperation in the Arctic does not require any military component. I hope that our partners agree with this approach.

Question: Why is Russia not seeking a political solution to the Syria crisis? As for Idlib, how does Russia intend to rid the province of terrorists unless it launches a military offensive?

Sergey Lavrov: The answer to the first question is clear. In my opinion, there is no need to say why someone is seeking a peace settlement anywhere. I don't think I should dwell upon this.

Where Idlib is concerned, Russia and Turkey, as you may know, signed a memorandum back in September, under which Turkey has assumed commitments to separate opposition groups cooperating with Ankara from Jabhat al-Nusra, now part of a wider terrorist coalition known as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. But they have been unable to do that up to this day. Moreover, regrettably, the Nusra Front has imposed its control over 90 per cent of the de-escalation zone in Idlib.

Two days ago, the presidents of Russia, Turkey and Iran were meeting in Sochi and discussed this situation, along with other topics. They have reached an agreement that the Russian and Turkish military, with the Syrian government's consent, will try to act step by step creating several joint patrolling areas within the de-escalation zone. We will wait and see how it works.

Addressing a news conference in Sochi President Putin said clearly that we could not put up with "this hotbed of terrorism" forever. How to solve this problem is a question we should put to the military. I am confident that they will do it differently from how the terrorists were being destroyed in Raqqa, where bodies of peaceful civilians and mines are still lying in the open, with no one to attend to them. But it is the military that should draw up a plan in keeping with international humanitarian law requirements.

Of course, everyone can interpret international humanitarian law in his own way. As Belgrade was being bombed, the targets were a train moving on a bridge, or a television centre, and this was also regarded as normal. But we don't intend to follow these sorts of international humanitarian law interpretations.

Question: Elaborating on what The Washington Post correspondent has said, I would like to ask the following. Since Russia is a guarantor of security in Syria, can

you guarantee that the Assad regime will stop threatening the region and will end its atrocities against its own people?

Sergey Lavrov: No matter what I say in reply, you will write what you want. So, go on, write what you want.

Question: The Russian government attempted to interfere in the affairs of Greece and North Macedonia, pandering to the nationalist forces in these countries. How does this relate to your statements on supporting the European Union?

Sergey Lavrov: I will take up this question, although I could answer it in the same way as I did with the previous question.

Russia has been accused of interfering in the matter of changing Macedonia's name, but these accusations have not been supported with any clear or reliable facts. Yesterday, I talked with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and several other colleagues. Mr Stoltenberg, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and some of the American colleagues, I believe it was the US Defence Secretary – in all, five or six of the leading Western politicians – visited Skopje and publicly urged the people to vote for changing the republic's name in the referendum. They did this publicly and openly. Had we done one hundredth of what they did, new sanctions would have been imposed on Russia. But these "first class passengers" get away with anything.

When Kosovo seceded [from Serbia] and unilaterally declared independence, which the majority of Western countries recognised, we warned them about the possible consequences of this. Now Pristina does what it wants.

Our Western colleagues use the terms "international law" and "norms of international law" only rarely these days. Instead, they are talking about a "rules-based order" claiming that it is the same thing. However, they prefer using their own term rather than "international law." As I see it, they do not want to comply with international law as it is sealed in, say, the Chemical Weapons Convention, which has been ratified by all members of the international community. They only want to use the "rules" which they have invented themselves in order to interpret the convention in violation of its established procedures.

UN Security Council Resolution 1244 is international law and it, prohibits the establishment of a regular army in Kosovo. However, international law has been violated by a new rule according to which Kosovo can have its own army. And this rule is being upheld by the NATO Secretary General.

There are many other provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 that have not been implemented even despite the efforts of the European Union. The EU mediated the drafting of agreements between Pristina and Belgrade on the

Community of Serb Municipalities in Kosovo, as well as on a special court for those whom PACE member Dick Marty accused of organ trafficking in his report. They have agreed on all of this, but the special court has not begun its work and, I believe, will not start now.

Pristina has recently decided to impose a 100 per cent duty on imports from Serbia, a decision which the United States and the EU have officially criticised. However, I do not doubt for a second that this decision was coordinated with those who want to force Belgrade to officially recognise Kosovo's independence. I have no doubt that this is how the game is being played.

By the way, yesterday Prime Minister of Albania Edi Rama said openly in an interview with a Greek newspaper that Kosovo is part of Albania. Well, you wanted it, you got it.

Question: In the morning today, I asked Romanian President Klaus Iohannis as a representative of a Black Sea country about instability in the Black Sea region and Romania's stance as an EU member on this matter. Tension seems to be on the rise in this region after the recent conflict in the Sea of Azov, or rather it's a cinch that it is not receding. Could you briefly outline Russia's position in the Black Sea region and on conflicts of this sort?

Sergey Lavrov: If you mean the incident involving the Ukrainian Navy's ships, this was a stage-managed provocation; we have no doubt about this. Petr Poroshenko needed it for his personal aims in order to launch his presidential election campaign and represent it in a favourable light. This incident occurred after two similar Ukrainian Navy ships sailed through the Kerch Strait to the Sea of Azov without any hindrance in September 2018, because they followed security instructions. It is a narrow passage that requires pilotage support and all ships heading for the Sea of Azov request it. Those ships were obeying the security rules.

In November, the Ukrainian authorities needed a scandal and they got it. By the way – I am speaking for the benefit of those who still harbour illusions about Crimea – the Ukrainian vessels were detained in Russian territorial waters that had this status even before the referendum in Crimea.

Now let us focus on a more comprehensive approach to the security issue in the Black Sea region. Your question was about the EU's perspective on this. Brussels has many regional initiatives, including in the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea, Central Asia, and so on. We have nothing against it. The only thing of which we ask the EU is to pay due respect to the arrangements already existing in various regions, be it in the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, or any other region.

There are two mechanisms created by the littoral states in the Black Sea region: the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and Operation Black Sea Harmony initiated by Turkey and supported by all other countries in the region. It is clear what BSEC means. The case in point is economic cooperation. Black Sea Harmony is a joint operation mounted by the littoral navies to ensure legitimacy of shipping in the Black Sea.

I think that anyone wishing to contribute to stability in the Black Sea should respect the existing order. The EU has been invited and has BSEC observer status. They know only too well what things are like over there.

UK Minister of Defence's Presentation

It's a huge privilege to attend my first Munich Security Conference.

While you have heard this message before many times, we will continue to repeat.

Whilst the United Kingdom is leaving the European Union, I want to start by saying our commitment to European security remains steadfast.

We have delivered European security long before the creation of either the European Union or NATO and we will continue to deliver it when we leave the EU. Britain will remain an outward looking nation. We will look for new opportunities, enhance our bilateral relationships and take Brexit as an opportunity to do more on a global stage. Delivering the leadership that the world turns to Great Britain to actually provide.

For me, one of those key bilateral relationships is with Germany.

GERMANY AND THE UK PARTNERSHIP

We are proud, very proud, of our deep friendship with Germany.

260 years ago we fought side-by-side at the battle of Minden. Since then, it is fair to say, our partnership has greatly evolved. The odd ups and downs. Today, we are both defending the borders of Eastern Europe as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence. We are taking on Daesh in the Middle East. And, we are working together in Afghanistan, Lithuania and Mali.

With the signing of the UK-Germany Joint Vision Statement (JVS) last October it is obvious to both that there is much more to achieve as two nations.

The fact both our nations are increasing their defence budgets reflects the growing threats we are facing. And, we must not forget what can be achieved by working together.

As the world becomes darker and more dangerous, allies must stand together.

RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EU

And, I know this is something Ursula very clearly recognises. She has spoken of her determination to take forward greater EU defence co-operation. This is something we welcome, European countries combining to develop capabilities that are available to the Alliance.

The EU's role in stabilisation and capacity building is also important for the future.

But it is important that an EU which shuts out non-EU NATO allies from capability development will only weaken its own industry base and capabilities it wishes to develop.

AND NATO MUST STEP UP TOO

NATO must remain the bedrock of our security in Europe. Since 1949 it has stood the test of time. It is combat proven. It deters the most serious threats.

So, let's support the world's most successful military Alliance. Let's deal with Russia's breach of the INF Treaty and the threat of new Russian missiles.

Let's be ready to handle their provocations.

Russian adventurism must have a cost.

The US has been stepping up its commitment to NATO. But, as Ursula and I agreed with Pat Shanahan when we met at NATO earlier this week, Europeans should not be spending two per cent of GDP on defence for America. We should be spending it for

ourselves and our security. And, I applaud Ursula's personal efforts to drive investment in German defence.

It is a genuine and real privilege to be able to work side-by-side with a colleague who is not only so personally inspiring but a lady of deep compassion and a real sense of duty, not just to her nation, but to her friends and allies as well.

And, it is that sense of duty which means all European nations must take responsibility for the security of our continent.

THE UK WILL CONTINUE LEADING IN NATO

This is something the UK is continuing to do, as we step-up our efforts in NATO.

In NATO, we are ready to defend what's right. Ready to fight what's wrong. And, ready to lead.

At the recent Defence Ministers meeting, I announced the increased commitment to Alliance readiness in Estonia, adding to our presence with Apache attack and Wildcat reconnaissance helicopters.

In NATO's 70th anniversary year, we are also hosting a NATO Heads of State Meeting at the end of December.

Significantly, in the next few months our UK-led nine-nation Joint Expeditionary Force...will conduct its first deployment in the Baltic Sea...delivering reassurance to our allies and deterrence to those who wish to do us harm.

And, we continue to increase our defence budget, creating a new Transformation Fund to boost our nation's global presence, and the armed forces' mass and lethality.

RUSSIA THREAT

NATO matters more than ever because an old adversary is back in the game. 30 years since the Berlin Wall fell and five years since the illegal annexation of Crimea – Russia remains a threat to our security.

Russia's illegal activity continues unabated on land in the Donbas, and, at sea with the seizure of Ukrainian naval ships and the imprisonment of their sailors.

We've seen Russian recklessness and disregard for life on the streets of Britain. With Russia degrading its reputation with such blatant disregard of international borders and sovereignty.

Meanwhile Russia, despite its denials, has clearly breached the INF treaty. It has made clear it is developing more missiles and nuclear-capable weapons that break this agreement. Trying to goad the West into a new arms race it simply is not interested in and does not want. Making the world a less safe place. They claim they want greater security on the one hand. While undermining trust on the other.

The Kremlin is also taking the fight into the 'grey zone'. Operating without rules using espionage, military, political, cyber, economic and even criminal tools to undermine its competitors. Russian Governmental subversion of Western elections through disinformation, online trolling and persistent cyber-attacks has become its new norm.

Their clandestine use of proxies...mercenary armies... like the infamous and unaccountable Wagner Group...allows the Kremlin to get away with murder while denying the blood on their hands.

But, as a nation who hold dear the values of democracy, tolerance and justice we must not be cowed or intimidated.

That's why our military continues asserting its legitimate freedom of access and action across the globe...deploying our forces in a measured and resolute way.

And, we all continue to work together to lift the veil on this behaviour and always deliver a clear response - for actions must have consequences.

THE UK WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO LEAD OUTSIDE NATO

And, we will not abandon countries Russia seeks to undermine, like Ukraine and those in the Western Balkans. In the Cold War those behind the iron curtain saw us as a beacon of liberty. Now

they have achieved their freedom the UK will continue to help them defend their right to choose their own destiny.

But, let me be clear this is not the relationship with Russia that we want.

We remain open to a different kind of relationship and options of dialogue remains on the table. It is vital that we always work to avoid escalation and avert risks of miscalculation.

And, we encourage Russia to start acting within the rules-based international order. Step back from the path it has been taking and look to a new and different way.

This very conference has long honoured those with the vision and courage to bring an end to the Cold War - inspirational people such as, Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, George Bush, Helmut Kohl and, of course, Mikhail Gorbachev.

These were patriots. Figures who understood strength. Leaders who fought for their country's interests. And, they understood the value of being open to different kinds of relationships. As we are today. We hope Russia chooses a different way. Being inspired, not by those who wish to bring fear and hate, but, be inspired by those who wish to bring hope and peace.

But, as we continue to face threats in an increasingly dangerous world we know that NATO is the best guardian of our security.

CONCLUSION

So, for the sake of our values, allies and friends we will continue to lead in NATO.

We will continue to build our alliances with close friends like Germany.

We will continue to deliver European security.

We will continue to step out into the world protecting our friends, defending our interests and standing-up for our values.

And, let us never forget that the reason that we will invest in our defence is to deliver a more peaceful, a more prosperous, and more just world.

NATO Sec General's Presentation

Thank you so much. It's really a great pleasure to be back here at the Munich Security Conference, especially because the focus this year is on the need for global institutions, for global order.

And we all know that these institutions, this rules-based order is under pressure. And therefore we also know that when these institutions are under pressure, we also see more uncertainty and more unpredictability.

And therefore today, I will actually focus a bit on how we can deal with that unpredictability and the more uncertain security environment that surrounds us.

I will do that of course out of the perspective of NATO. And I will also do that knowing that one way of dealing with uncertainty is to try to predict the future.

At the same time, we know that to predict the future is extremely difficult.

We were not able to predict the fall of the Berlin Wall.

We were not able to predict the 9/11 attacks.

And we were not able to predict the rise of ISIS.

And I can also confess to you that I know it's not only in the realm of international security that it is hard to predict the future.

Because for many years – well, not so many years – but in my first job, as an economist in the Central Bureau of Statistics in Norway, we tried to predict the oil price.

And we were wrong all the time.

So to predict the future is not easy.

What is therefore needed is not only to try to predict the future, but to develop strategies to deal with uncertainty, to be prepared for the unexpected.

And when it comes to security, there are at least three essential things we need to address when we try to develop a strategy to deal with and be able to tackle uncertainty.

One is strong multilateral frameworks;

Second, strong defence;

And third, strong transatlantic cooperation.

All of these help us to reduce risks.

And to cope with surprises when they happen.

And they will happen.

So first, we need strong and effective multilateral frameworks.

After the destruction of World War Two, visionary leaders created institutions that enabled countries to compete and cooperate peacefully.

That covered everything from European security and arms control.

To monetary policy and international trade.

They protected the weak from the strong.

They ensured our peace and prosperity.

And they have benefitted us all, and they have been incredibly effective in meeting the needs of the people they served.

Yet today, these institutions are under pressure.

If we want them to remain effective.

We need to continue to reform and modernize them.

That is why one of my main objectives in NATO has been reform.

To make sure the Alliance remains fit for the future.

One important framework that has served us all very well is the nuclear arms control regime.

Which, over many decades has dramatically reduced the number of nuclear weapons.

In the early 1990's, the United States and the Soviet Union each deployed 12,000 long-range strategic nuclear warheads.

Today there is a limit of 1,550 warheads for each country.

There were also almost three thousand intermediate range nuclear weapons in Europe.

The INF Treaty banned them all,

And brought that number down to zero.

But now, the whole nuclear arms control regime is under assault.

Russia has deployed several battalions of its new SSC-8 missile system, in breach of the Treaty.

These missiles are mobile.

Easy to hide.

And nuclear-capable.

They can reach European cities, like Munich, with little warning.

They lower the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons in a conflict.

It was on this very stage, at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, this was the place that President Putin first publically expressed his desire for Russia to leave the INF Treaty.

A treaty that is only respected by one side will not keep us safe.

Then it is just a piece of paper.

That is why, with the full support of all NATO Allies, the United States has announced its intention to withdraw from the Treaty.

This will take effect in six months.

So Russia still has a window of opportunity to return to compliance.

We call on Russia to take that opportunity.

And to verifiably destroy its intermediate range missiles.

The clock is ticking.

We want Russia to return to compliance.

But we are also preparing for a world without the INF Treaty.

And a world with more Russian missiles in Europe.

NATO has already started this work.

And I will not predict the outcome.

But what I can say is that we will do this as an Alliance.

United and measured.

And that NATO has no intention of deploying new land-based nuclear weapons in Europe.

NATO will always take the necessary steps to provide credible and effective deterrence.

While we remain determined to avoid a new arms race, we cannot afford to be complacent, and we cannot afford to be naïve.

And that brings me to my second point, the second thing we must do to deal with uncertainty.

To continue investing in our defence.

For centuries in Europe, conflict was our constant companion.

The last 70 years of peace have been the exception, and not the rule.

We must never take peace for granted.

After the Cold War, NATO Allies cut their defence budgets.

And that was understandable, as tensions had fallen.

But today, tensions are increasing again.

And so for the first time in many years, we have started to significantly increase our defence budgets.

This is the right thing to do to keep our people secure in today's world.

Since 2016, NATO allies in Europe and Canada have spent an additional 41 billion dollars on defence.

And by the end of next year, that will rise to one hundred billion US dollars.

The money matters.

And what we do with that money matters too.

We have deployed combat-ready troops in the eastern part of the Alliance for the first time.

Increased the readiness of our forces.

Modernised our command structure.

Stepped up in the fight against terrorism.

And we are doing more to address hybrid and cyber threats.

By doing all this, we ensure we can continue to protect all Allies against any threat.

Not to provoke a conflict, but to preserve the peace.

Europe and North America are doing this together, through NATO.

And the unprecedented cooperation between NATO and the European Union also contributes to our security and to transatlantic burden-sharing.

And we just had a Defence Ministerial meeting in Brussels, and High Representative Federica Mogherini was there, as she always is. Showing that we are working more and more closely together, NATO and the European Union.

Therefore, the third essential element to manage uncertainty is strong transatlantic cooperation.

Standing shoulder-to-shoulder, Europe and North America brought the Cold War to an end without a shot being fired on European soil.

We underpinned stability and prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic.

We helped bring peace to the Balkans.

And fought side-by-side against terrorists in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

The bond between our two continents is historical, cultural and personal.

But the real reason this bond endures is even more fundamental.

Standing together is in our shared interest.

It is in the national interest of each and every one of our nations.

The cooperation between North America and Europe is more important than ever.

As the balance of power is shifting.

A key driver for this shift is the rise of China.

There is genuine potential for partnership and political dialogue.

NATO and China have already worked together to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia.

And our militaries are in regular contact.

But China's rise also presents a challenge.

One example is of course the concern many Allies have expressed about China's increasing investment in critical infrastructure, such as 5G.

We have to better understand the size and the scale of China's influence,

What it means for our security.

And we have to address it together.

Europe and North America are stronger together – economically, politically and militarily.

We represent almost one billion people.

Half of the world's economic might.

And half of the world's military might.

A strong NATO is good for global security.

It is good for the security of Europe.

And it is good for the security of North America.

NATO provides the United States with 28 friends and Allies.

And many more partners across the globe.

Nobody else can count on that.

Indeed, as you all know, the only time that we have invoked Article 5, our collective defence clause, was after the 9/11 attacks on the United States.

Since then, hundreds of thousands of troops from European Allies and Canada have served alongside America in Afghanistan.

And more than a thousand have paid the ultimate price.

The strength of a nation depends on the size of its economy.

And the size of its military.

But it also depends on the number of its friends.

So it is vital that we continue to stand together to maintain our security in an uncertain world.

If we maintain robust and relevant international institutions;

If we continue to invest in our defence;

And if we remain united,

We will be ready to face the future.

Whatever the future may bring.

A European Union Perspective

Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the Munich Security Conference

Thank you Nathalie [Tocci, Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali]. First of all, it is a pleasure to share the stage with you. I think it is only the second time - and maybe not even - that we share the stage together.

It is a pleasure for me also to take the floor in the same session as Jens [Stoltenberg, Secretary-General of NATO] and Heiko [Maas, Foreign Minister of Germany]. And let me stress one specific thing that Jens [Stoltenberg] has

mentioned: it was a pleasure for me to be at the [NATO Defence Ministers meeting yesterday](#) in Brussels, because we have increased EU-NATO cooperation and partnership as it was never done before. Let me also say on a personal, but also institutional and political note: I was happy to be there when for the first time the Defence Minister of North Macedonia [Radmila Šekerinska] was sitting next to me. And I would like to congratulate here the leadership and the people of North Macedonia and of Greece for a remarkable achievement that I think inspires us all.

You know, this is also working on security, I believe, because as the Munich Security Report that was presented ahead of this conference and also our [Global Strategy](#) says: “We are living in complex times”. I was surprised to see that the Munich Security Report uses a famous quote by Antonio Gramsci [Italian philosopher] saying that “the old is dying and the new cannot be born.” It could not be more appropriate to describe our times.

The nature of the security threats that we all face is completely different today from even a few years ago: proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, new arms races, terrorist fighters, but also the impact of climate change, or the challenges posed by the use of new technologies, for instance artificial intelligence. These are all security issues, probably the most pressing ones of our times. And yet, they all go beyond the traditional domains of security and defence policy.

The same is true if you look at the conflicts, starting from those in our region, in Libya, in the east of Ukraine, in Syria, in Yemen. Solving them might require a traditional security component, but most of all it requires diplomacy and mediation, the economic capacity to engage in the reconstruction and to transform a war economy and a war society into a peace economy and a peace society, readiness to rebuild institutions – all of them -, train the local security forces, which requires humanitarian aid and private investment, and the list would be long.

None of the security challenges our world faces today can be effectively addressed with a purely military approach. And I know it sounds surreal to say this at the Munich Security Conference, but I will then come to the defence part of my speech. I think it is important to recognise that we feel today - not only as Europeans, but I believe all around the world – the sense of frustration sometimes in front of the security challenges that we are facing. And I believe we feel the need for a sort of ‘creative mix’ of tools that can – and sometimes does and sometimes has to - include the military one, but always requires also much more: economic support, protection and promotion of human rights, empowerment of young people and women, reconciliation, climate action and here again the list continues.

And I believe this is why it is today, contrary to the past, that the European Union has become a real security provider. Because we can be - and sometimes more than others - a security provider ‘at large’. I am using this expression to refer to ambassadors at large that we have around the world who cover non- traditional fields of competence. It is because we are facing

different kinds of threats in the world that we need different kinds of security providers with different kinds of tools than the ones we had in the past. Using different tools, mixing them depending on the time – I would say even depending on the phase of the conflict - the place, the region and the players involved. And last but not least, mobilising resources like, including financial resources, like no one else in the world can do and is willing to do.

Because let us be clear: today the money invested into humanitarian aid, sustainable development, climate action, protection and promotion of human rights and even sometimes the money mobilised by our trade agreements, this is all also an investment in security and peace in the world of today. It is, I believe, sustainable security and peace. Because to face the security threats of today's world, investing in education and job creation might sometimes be more effective than having a tank in a battlefield.

We can say this, today, as Europeans, because we have finally overcome the ideological debate – I would say the dilemma - on whether we come from Venus or Mars. Today, I believe, Europe knows that military means are sometimes necessary and there is no ambiguity about that, we know that, we have lived through that time. We also know that military means are never sufficient alone. And this is why we have, in these last two years, built - at last - the European defence. A dream that our founding fathers and mothers always dreamt of, but never managed to accomplish. Now it is done.

Without losing our trade mark, which is soft power, but finally adding to that a credible hard power component. And doing it as the European Union. And doing it our own way, which is the European way – a cooperative way -, investing in partnerships and in multilateralism. We believe that the security threats we face can only be tackled through cooperation and in the multilateral framework. I think Heiko [Maas] was defining it perfectly well.

I know that many people here are worried about a tendency towards a "great power competition" in global politics, and rightly so. We Europeans have something totally different in mind, also given our history. We are a cooperative power by definition. We actually became a power in the moment when we understood that cooperating was much more convenient than fighting each other. We know that the logic of spheres of influence and zero-sum games does not work and that it only leads to more tensions, more instability and more violence.

The European Union is one of the main global powers of today's world – the largest market in the world, the second largest economy in the world, the first trade partner for most countries in the world. We invest, as the European Union, more in development cooperation and humanitarian aid than the rest of the world combined. And we have – this is a figure that we sometimes tend to forget – united, as European Union, the second largest defence budget in the world. And we are determined to put this strength at the service of international cooperation, multilateralism, peace and security globally.

This is why in these last two years, for the first time ever, we have also started to invest seriously in our collective hard power – the Europe of defence. As our security environment continues to change, we want to help, to accompany our Member States, and also our partners because we know that security in our region is strictly connected with our security. We want to accompany and help our Member States respond to the challenges in the best possible way.

The Munich Security Report talks about European countries as “middle powers”. I think that this is even generous. I would even say that, individually, our countries are small. I often say that our Member States are not small nor big ones; we have Member States that have not yet realised that they are small. But together, joining forces, we are definitely a super-power – economically and also in security terms. Joining forces, as Heiko [Maas, Foreign Minister of Germany] was saying before me, is a strategic interest of all European states - no one excluded.

Our defence industry and our research labs are among the best in the world. But we will not be able to cover the full range of capabilities we need, if we do not synchronize our national defence programmes, and this is exactly what we are helping Member States to do. When a new capability is needed – maybe high-tech or particularly complex – joining forces inside the European Union is the natural starting point, the natural choice and also the most effective one.

This is a big part of our work on the Europe of defence, to incentivise Member States, to plan together their defence spending, to invest together, to research together, but also to train their troops together, and to act together on the ground. This is, in very concrete terms, what our [Permanent Structured Cooperation](#) [PESCO] is all about: concrete projects to have European Union Member States cooperating in all these fields.

We are investing, for the first time ever, resources from the European Union budget for this to happen. It is the first time this happens. The European Defence Industrial Development Programme supports capability development in all fields - from the space, to air, to the sea, the land and the cyber-space. From 2020 the European Defence Fund will bring the EU budget funding to support capability development to €13 billion over seven years.

Overall, [we have proposed](#) €30 billion in common funding for defence-related initiatives during the next seven-year budget cycle. We had zero investment on defence from the EU budget until just a few years ago. This gives you the idea of how far we have gone, without losing the nature of our approach to security, which is one that always knows that hard-power might be needed but it is never sufficient alone, and without giving up our own trade mark, our own approach to security which is always a cooperative one.

I am proud that, as we strengthened the Europe of the defence, we have also strengthened [our cooperation with NATO](#) like never before, as Jens

[Stoltenberg, Secretary-General of NATO] just said a few minutes ago. Cooperation with NATO is for the European Union the natural choice. NATO is the pillar of Europe's collective defence; it is even mentioned in the European Union treaties.

You all know that the large majority of EU Member States are NATO allies, the large majority of NATO allies are EU Member States. This is why building the Europe of defence is also a way to strengthen NATO, to help the Europeans allies have the resources to invest in strengthening NATO. No duplication, no competition and when we refer to strategic autonomy – which we do inside the European Union – it is very clear to us what we mean.

For us Europeans, strategic autonomy and cooperation with our partners are two sides of the same coin. We have chosen the path – if you allow me to use a new expression – of cooperative autonomy. Cooperation with NATO, but not only. I want to mention here our partnership, including in the field of security and peace, with the United Nations but also with our other partners.

I want to particularly stress the work we do with the United Nations from Mali to Somalia and in particular our work with the G5 Sahel. We are showing as Europeans that we are ready to take responsibility for our common security and for peace globally. The Europe of defence is in our own interest, I believe it is also in the interests of our friends, partners and allies, and this is why I believe we should keep investing in it.

In the months ahead, I would like to consolidate the work we have done so far. A collective work that in just a couple of years has built something that was considered simply impossible, and I quote what we have heard from many of our friends so many times: "Simply impossible". But [Nelson] Mandela has taught us that everything seems impossible until it is done – also in the Balkans, by the way.

Thanks – and I would like to pay tribute here – to an excellent work the European institutions – all of them – have managed to do in these last two years. All our Member States, the European Commission, the European Parliament, we have worked to do this as one. I would like to thank all the different institutions in the European Union, all the Member States for the excellent work they have done. Because it is thanks to the determination and the dedication to the European approach to defence that we have managed to do this after sixty years of attempted steps that never managed to reach a goal.

I am determined first of all to use the next seven months, from now to the end of my mandate, to consolidate this achievement. I am confident that the next High Representative and the next Commission will continue on the path of European defence integration, strategic autonomy, and cooperation with our partners.

Because whatever will happen next inside the European Union, I am sure that the Europe of defence is no longer the impossible dream of our founders. It is today already contributing to our common security, and its

contribution will become even more evident in the coming years. The Europe of defence is now a reality with solid foundations and this is our contribution, the contribution of the European Union to the security of our citizens first and foremost, but it is also our commitment to a more cooperative, multilateral new world order.

Thank you very much.

The Chinese Perspective

(Translation)

Working for a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind by Promoting International Cooperation and Multilateralism

*Keynote Speech by H.E. Yang Jiechi
Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and
Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign
Affairs*

At the 55th Munich Security Conference

Munich, 16 February 2019

*Mr. Wolfgang Ischinger, Chairman of the Munich Security
Conference,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*It is my great pleasure to join you at this year's Munich Security
Conference (MSC). As a global forum on security policy, the MSC
provides an important platform for people around the world to
express views and share insights on major issues concerning
world peace and development. This year's focus on promoting
international cooperation and multilateralism is important, timely
and has much practical relevance.*

*Our world today is undergoing fast and profound changes with
growing uncertainties and instability. Unilateralism and
protectionism have been on the rise; the multilateral international
order and global governance system have come under challenge.
Our world stands at a crossroads and faces a consequential
choice between unilateralism and multilateralism, confrontation
and dialogue, isolation and openness. As President Xi Jinping*

pointed out, multilateralism provides an effective way of upholding peace and promoting development, and the world needs multilateralism now more than ever.

It's been China's consistent view that the United Nations is the symbol of multilateralism, and the UN-centered multilateral architecture provides an overarching framework for international cooperation. The consensus of the global community on multilateralism has been enshrined in the UN Charter, which serves

as the cornerstone for the modern international order. As a founding member of the UN and a permanent member of its Security Council, China has all along supported multilateralism, followed the multilateral approach, and advocated peace, development and win-win cooperation, playing its consistent role as a promoter of world peace, contributor to global development and upholder of the international order.

To serve the common and fundamental interests of the people of China and around the world, President Xi Jinping called for the fostering of a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation, and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. He expounded on a vision of an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity. Such thinking and vision encapsulate the propositions and principles that China holds dear as a staunch supporter of multilateralism.

*They include, **first, the principle of sovereign equality, which is the most important norm governing state-to-state relations.** All countries, regardless of size, strength and wealth, are equal. The right of people of all countries to independently choose their development paths should be respected. And the practice of imposing one's will on others or interfering in others' internal affairs should be rejected.*

***Second, dialogue and consultation, which is an important approach to sound global governance in today's world.** Dialogue and consultation should be pursued in the interest of peaceful resolution of differences and disputes. The willful use or threat of force, hegemony and power politics should be rejected.*

***Third, the rule of law, which is central to the pursuit of law-based international relations.** The basic norms governing international relations centering on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter must be safeguarded. International law must apply equally to all, and double standards or selective application of international law should be rejected.*

***Fourth, win-win cooperation, which is essential for achieving common development.** We must work together to pursue the greatest possible common interests among nations and expand*

areas of converging interests on the basis of mutual benefit.

To advocate and practice multilateralism is not just China's choice, but also the preferred option of an overwhelming majority of countries. The UN-centered system of international institutions have engaged in extensive dialogue and cooperation across the political, economic, security and cultural fields and worked to address global issues and challenges. Such efforts have advanced democracy in international relations and vigorously contributed to global peace, stability, development and prosperity. Inspired by the core principles of multilateralism, the G20, APEC, BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Asia-Europe Meeting and other global forums have all carried out meaningful cooperation. The EU, ASEAN, the African Union, the Arab League, Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and other international organizations have contributed to peace and development by advancing regional cooperation. All this has shown that to pursue global cooperation, multilateralism and a community with a shared future for mankind represents a momentous trend of our times and is the right way to go.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

History tells us that we can only realize our peoples' dreams for a better life by upholding multilateralism and enhancing global cooperation. It falls to us to grasp the underlying trend of our times, respond to the call of the people, and make the right choices. China advocates a steadfast commitment to advance international cooperation, uphold and develop multilateralism, and make the international order more just and equitable.

First, we need to forge partnerships through mutual respect. *Choosing dialogue over confrontation, we should work vigorously to develop partnerships that are more inclusive and constructive. This is a foundation and prerequisite for multilateralism and international cooperation.*

China is committed to building a generally stable and balanced framework of major-country relations. We are ready to work with the United States to solidly implement the important common understanding reached between the two Presidents and jointly build a China-US relationship based on coordination, cooperation and stability. Over the past few weeks, the economic teams of the

two sides have engaged in intensive consultations, and important progress has been made. We hope that the two sides will continue to make concerted efforts toward a mutually beneficial and win-win agreement.

Following the strategic guidance from the top leaders, China and Russia will work to elevate their comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination to new heights. China remains a staunch supporter of European integration. We welcome a Europe that is more united, stable and prosperous, and support Europe in playing an important and constructive role in international affairs.

China follows the policy of building friendships and partnerships with neighboring countries based on amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness. China is committed to pursuing the greater good and shared interests and to the principle of sincerity, real results, amity and good faith. We will earnestly implement all the outcomes of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the meeting between leaders of China and Pacific island countries, the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum and the Forum of China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, to advance the building of a community with a shared future with all other developing countries.

Second, we need to uphold universal security through mutual support. *We should work toward a new vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and respect and protect the security of each and every country. Global issues such as climate change, cyber security, terrorism and major natural disasters should be tackled through global responses, and regional and global security must be protected with common efforts. International cooperation must be intensified to safeguard the security and stability in West Asia and North Africa, and a holistic approach is required to tackle the issue of refugees and migrants at its root. A few weeks ago, Egypt, the new rotating Chair of the African Union, hosted the successful 32nd AU summit, where constructive and meaningful dialogue and cooperation were carried out in addressing the issue of refugees, migrants and displaced people in Africa.*

China has been actively involved in the UN peacekeeping missions, and is the largest troop contributor among the P5 and the second largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget.

The Chinese navy has conducted escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and the waters off the Somali coast over the past ten years, serving over 6,600 Chinese and foreign vessels.

China has been an active player in international cooperation against terrorism, supported African countries in resolving African issues in an African way, and supported the AU and other regional and subregional organizations in playing a leading role in meeting the security challenges in their region. China is committed to facilitating the proper resolution of regional hotspots such as the Iranian nuclear issue and the Syrian, Palestinian and Afghanistan issues through dialogue and negotiation.

China supports security dialogue among the Asia-Pacific countries and efforts to explore a regional security vision and architecture that fits the reality of this region. We welcome the upcoming second meeting between the DPRK and US leaders, and will continue to work with other parties concerned toward the full denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the establishment of a permanent peace regime on the Peninsula.

China is resolute in defending its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests. We firmly oppose any activity that undermines China's sovereignty and security interests under the pretext of freedom of navigation and overflight. China is committed to working with ASEAN countries to fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and advance consultations on the Code of Conduct. And we hope that these efforts by the countries in the region will be respected and supported by all non-regional countries.

Third, we need to foster global development and prosperity through win-win cooperation. *Given the complementarity of our strengths, there is much potential to be tapped for promoting inter-connected growth. We need to follow the new approach of win-win and all-win cooperation, and abandon ideological prejudices and the outdated mentality of zero-sum game and winner-takes-all. We need to rise to the challenges and promote common development through closer cooperation. We need to make economic globalization more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial to all, and accommodate the interests of all countries, particularly emerging markets and developing countries.*

The rapid advance of the new round of global technological and industrial revolution brings both opportunities and challenges for humanity. Countries should pursue the path of open, integrated and win-win development, and work together to foster an open, fair and transparent environment for international cooperation. We should reject technological hegemony and narrow the digital divide to deliver the benefits of the Fourth Industrial Revolution to people of all countries.

Following a win-win strategy of opening-up, China has introduced a host of major steps, including broadening market access, to open wider to the world and build an open economy. Last year, we held the first China International Import Expo (CIIE), which produced deals worth nearly US\$60 billion. Going forward, China will host the International Import Expo on an annual basis to open its door further.

China is firm in upholding the multilateral trading system and advancing trade and investment liberalization and facilitation. We have deeply engaged in regional and sub-regional cooperation, and concluded 17 free trade agreements with 25 countries and regions.

China is committed to advancing regional integration with Asia-Pacific countries and building a community with a shared future in the Asia-Pacific. China-ASEAN relations have seen comprehensive and in-depth growth. In 2018, China-ASEAN trade approached US\$600 billion, making China the largest trading partner of ASEAN for the tenth consecutive year. And mutual visits between the two sides reached about 50 million.

China supports ASEAN centrality in East Asian cooperation and encourages greater synergy among free trade arrangements and cooperation frameworks in the Asia-Pacific. We will also work with all relevant countries including India for the early conclusion of negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Fourth, we need to improve global governance through reform and innovation. *Facing a growing number of global challenges, no country can manage them on their own, or stay immune. To strengthen global governance and reform the global governance system represents the call of the times. We need to firmly defend*

the central role of the UN in international affairs and uphold the rules-based multilateral trading system with the WTO at its center.

Guided by a vision of global governance featuring consultation, cooperation and benefit for all, China has actively engaged in the reform of the global governance system and taken a clear stand against unilateralism and protectionism, thus injecting stability and positive energy to a world fraught with uncertainties. We believe that the purpose of the reform is not to overturn the current system or start something new, but to improve the existing framework to reflect new realities and increase the representation and voice of emerging markets and developing countries.

In reforming the WTO, we need to uphold the core values and basic principles such as openness, inclusiveness and non-discrimination, and move forward in a gradual manner based on extensive consultation to safeguard the development interests and policy space of developing countries. By hosting international conferences such as the G20 Hangzhou Summit and initiating the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Development Bank, China has made important contributions to the improvement of global economic governance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the country has embarked on the right path, one that is suited to its national conditions and follows the trend of the times. The nation has stood up, become prosperous and grown in strength. With these historic leaps, the Chinese people are embracing the bright prospect of great national rejuvenation.

The Chinese economy has entered a new phase of transitioning from high-speed growth to high quality development, operating within a proper range and maintaining overall stability and continued progress. For years running, China has contributed nearly 30 percent to the world economic growth, more than any other country in the world. Growing at 6.6 percent in 2018, China's GDP exceeded RMB90 trillion, or US\$13.6 trillion, for the first time, and the resulting increment year-on-year surpassed the average annual increment from double-digit growth over a decade ago.

Facing lackluster new drivers and mounting downward pressure in the global economic context, China has enough resilience and huge potential to keep the economy on a sound track for a long time to come.

The enormous effective demand being generated by the 1.4 billion Chinese people who are moving up the income ladder will provide the world with even more opportunities in terms of market, investment and cooperation. It is estimated that in the coming 15 years, China will import more than US\$30 trillion and US\$10 trillion worth of goods and services respectively, injecting new and strong impetus and dynamism into global growth.

The Belt and Road Initiative is an important international public good that China contributes to global cooperation for common development. It is also an important pathway toward building a community with a shared future for mankind. The Belt and Road cooperation has gained support and popularity from more and more countries across five continents. China and over 150 countries and international organizations have signed Belt and Road cooperation agreements. With over US\$6 trillion of cumulative trade between China and participating countries, over US\$ 80 billion in direct Chinese investment and a large number of major cooperation projects up and running, the Belt and Road cooperation is contributing to greater well-being and development of local communities in many parts of the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The freight train service between China and Europe is a powerful example of how the Belt and Road cooperation can drive common development and prosperity of China and Europe with enhanced connectivity. Facts have shown and will continue to prove that the Belt and Road Initiative put forward by President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China creates opportunities and benefits for all countries and serves the common interests of humanity. Guided by the principle of consultation and cooperation for shared benefit and the vision of green, clean and sustainable development, China will partner with all parties on the basis of universally accepted international rules, standards, laws and regulations to make the Belt and Road cooperation a road for peace, prosperity, openness, innovation and cultural exchange. Building on the successful first Belt and Road Forum for

International Cooperation in 2017, China will host the second forum in Beijing in about two months' time. With active participation and concerted efforts of all parties, the Belt and Road cooperation will achieve even greater progress to the benefit of all peoples.

Fifteen years on since the establishment of the China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership, the two sides have developed an all-dimensional and multi-tiered framework of exchanges and cooperation covering wide-ranging areas. Efforts to build China-EU partnerships for peace, growth, reform and civilization have made substantial progress. People-to-people and cultural exchanges are thriving, making China and Europe a great example of cultural dialogue and engagement. Not long ago, the Berlin Philharmonic captivated the Chinese audience with its world-class performances. Traditional Chinese New Year was celebrated across Europe during the recent week-long holiday season. Chinese tourists coming in big numbers brought business opportunities and vibrancy to European cities like Berlin and Paris.

Strong complementarity and mutual benefit have always been the defining feature of China-EU cooperation. Anyone wise enough in Europe and elsewhere in the world can tell from their own experiences whether cooperation with China serves the EU's interests. The new round of technological and industrial revolution has created new horizons for China's mutually beneficial cooperation with the EU. It is essential that our two sides continue to draw on each other's strengths, focus on shared interests, remove obstacles and work together to seize the opportunities presented by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and meet our people's aspirations for a better life.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a German saying goes, "Those who work alone, add; those who work together, multiply." There is a similar saying in China, "One thread snaps easily; ten thousand threads woven together can pull a boat." Let us all join hands to intensify global cooperation and firmly uphold multilateralism. Together, let us build a better and more prosperous world.

Thank you.

These speeches are to be found on the Munich Security Conference website.

<https://www.securityconference.de/en/activities/munich-security-conference/munich-security-conference/msc-2019/statements-and-speeches/>

Additional Perspectives

The speeches by former VP Bidden was not found on the website and Chancellor Merkel's speech was only in German so they are not included.

This CNN story published on February 16, 2019 provided a look at those remarks:

Former Vice President Joe Biden on Saturday returned to a familiar place on the world stage in his role as a "citizen," assuring political leaders and security experts gathered in Germany that the US should remain committed to its allies despite a perception that the country is "pulling away from the world and our leadership responsibilities."

"The America I see is not in wholesale retreat from the interest and values that have guided us time and again, to be willing to shoulder our responsibility of leadership in the 20th century, and we can do that again. We must do that again," Biden said in remarks at the Munich Security Conference.

"The America I see does not wish to turn our back on the world or allies, our closest allies. Indeed, the American people understand that it's only by working in cooperation with our friends that we are going to be able to harness the forces of a rapidly changing world, to mitigate their downsides and turn them to our collective advantage."

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/16/politics/biden-showcases-foreign-policy-munich/index.html>

And this story published DW provided an overview on Chancellor Merkel's remarks:

The chancellor on Saturday said international structures to maintain security were under increasing pressure to meet the demands of a changing world.

"What we see as an overall architecture underpinning our world as we know it is a bit of a puzzle now; if you like, it has collapsed into many tiny parts," Merkel told her audience at the Munich Security Conference.

"We have to think of integrated structures and interdependencies," said Merkel, who noted a deterioration in relations with Russia.

While the chancellor asserted the importance of NATO as an alliance, she stressed that a holistic approach was needed, embracing economic and political realities as well as military ones.

We need NATO as an anchor of stability on a stormy sea. We need it as a community of shared values.

We should never forget that NATO was not founded only as a military alliance but as an alliance of nations that share values, that share the same values as regards human rights, as regards democracy — guidelines that we all share."

Merkel directed several specifics in her speech at the US, questioning the wisdom of a rapid US withdrawal from Syria and Afghanistan and the notion that German car exports represented a threat to US national security. She stressed that carmaker BMW's largest plant is in the US, not in Bavaria. Merkel received standing ovations, with lots of applause from the audience during her speech — with the notable exception of Ivanka Trump and US Vice President Mike Pence.

<https://www.dw.com/en/angela-merkel-warns-of-global-political-disintegration-at-munich-security-conference/a-47546255>

And we should not forget the presentation by the Iranian Foreign Minister as well which was the icing on the cake for those who wish to criticize the United States.

A DW story provided a good summary as well of the Iranian Foreign Minister's speech and appeal to Europe to split with the United States:

The Munich Security Conference (MSC) ended on Sunday in traditional fashion: a morning session focused on the Middle East. This year, though, the conference had to ride out an awkward imbalance, as the planned appearance of Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir was canceled "for scheduling reasons."

That left the stage clear for his Iranian counterpart, Javad Zarif, to deliver a typically well-honed rebuke to United States Vice President Mike Pence's speech from the day before.

Zarif's rhetorical flourishes were routine, but no less theatrical for that. The US, he said, had had an "unhealthy fixation" with Iran ever since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was the "wolf-cryer-in-chief," and the US military had "travelled 10,000 kilometers to dot all our borders with its bases."

"There is a joke: Why did Iran dare to put its country in the middle of the US bases?" he declared. President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also gave Zarif plenty of ammunition. "In the past two years, the US has taken its animus towards Iran to a new extreme, as epitomized by its unlawful and unilateral abrogation of its commitments under the painstakingly negotiated Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," he said.

Zarif also touched on the favorite theme of this year's MSC: picking up the pieces of the "puzzle" by reviving multilateralism. If Europe was to do that, he said, it had to stand up to US "bullying."

"They also need to walk the walk," he said. "Europe needs to be willing to get wet if it wants to swim against the dangerous tide of US unilateralism."

<https://www.dw.com/en/iran-and-israel-trade-rebuked-at-munich-security-conference/a-47556653>