

**Ministerial open debate on Maintenance of International Peace and Security**

**Conflicts in Europe**

**21 February 2017**

**Intervention by H.E. Mr. Péter Szijjártó**

**Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary**

*Check against delivery!*

Thank you, Mr. President.

*(Spoke in Russian)*

Allow me to express my sincere condolences on the decease of the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations. Ambassador Churkin was a leading, brilliant diplomat, who, in his work, gained great respect here in New York and throughout the world.

*(Continued in English)*

Thank you very much, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, and thank you very much for organizing this debate, which is extremely timely, since currently, Europe is experiencing a period when we face the most numerous, simultaneous, serious security challenges and armed conflicts since the conclusion of the Cold War. The EU, which once was the most successful political and economic integration of the globe, has never had to face so many challenges and threats either.

But the conflicts and the challenges are not only European ones: all of these conflicts we have been experiencing in Europe, all, have global components, global factors, sometimes global reasons, and all are parts of global political developments. We, Europeans, speak a lot about these conflicts; we are looking for solutions; but we really do have to admit that it is not only us, Europeans, who can resolve these conflicts; it is not only up to us, Europeans, to depend on whether these conflicts will be resolved or not.

In our understanding, these conflicts will have a realistic chance to be overcome, and a realistic chance to come to a solution if there is a realistic change in the US-Russia relationship towards pragmatism and improvement in the future. We have a very simple historic experience in Central Europe: whenever there is a conflict between East and West, Central Europe usually loses, and whenever we lose, we usually lose big time. So that is why we cross fingers for the new American administration and the administration of Russia to be able to build a better relationship, to get along with each other better, or, quoting the words of the new US President, "to make a deal".

Without such a closer cooperation between the US and Russia, we see no realistic hope to offer sustainable solutions to our threats and to our challenges. And there are some clear proofs in the recent history: I am pretty sure no-one doubts that there would be no nuclear deal with Iran if Russia and the US had not sat on the same side of the negotiating table.

That is why we are happy with all initiatives that bring us closer to a better US-Russia relationship, and we find all initiatives and decisions absolutely harmful which bring us further from this better cooperation.

Actually, we usually hear, in different formats, the expressions “dialogue” and “deterrence”, and we, Hungarians, we, Central Europeans, really do hope that both the US and Russia will put a lot of emphasis on engaging in a dialogue, based on mutual trust, and respect towards international law.

This enhanced cooperation will offer a better chance to destroy ISIS, and finally win over terror, without which it is absolutely impossible to tackle the root causes of the mass illegal migratory flow which hit the European Union extremely seriously in the past. Some bad international political decisions and mismanagement of some crises ended up in destabilized systems, ruined economies, and emerging dictatorships in the European neighborhood, which forced, then, people to leave their homes massively.

Resolving this, thus creating stability in the European neighborhood, which has a direct impact on the security of Europe, is such a robust task that it is simply impossible to complete without active cooperation between the US and Russia.

And since I am coming from Hungary, with a very exciting neighbourhood and with tensions arising from time to time around us, I would like to emphasize two issues very shortly. Number one: we consider the full implementation of the Minsk Agreement as the only way to overcome the conflict in Ukraine. So that is why we hope for a more accelerated, full implementation of the Minsk Agreement. Similarly, we hope for a long-lasting stability and predictability in the Western Balkans region, in order to which we support the European integration path of this historic region, and we do hope that this European path will be accelerated in the future as well.

Dear Pavlo, I am thanking you for convening this meeting; I would like to tell you that it is an honour to be here and speak in front of the Security Council, which we hope will be a forum for dialogue in the future to help overcome these really historic challenges, which Europe and the European Union have been facing recently.

Thank you very much.