

CSTO summit

The Kremlin hosted a meeting of the heads of state of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation.

May 16, 2022 18:00 The Kremlin, Moscow

Taking part in the meeting, timed to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the Collective Security Treaty and the 20th anniversary of the organisation, were the heads of Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

The main focus of the summit was on key issues of cooperation within the CSTO, topical international and regional problems, and measures to further improve the collective security system.

During the meeting, the leaders signed a Statement of the CSTO Collective Security Council (CSC) in connection with the 30th anniversary of the Collective Security Treaty and the 20th anniversary of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. They also signed a resolution of the CSTO CSC to award the participants in the CSTO peacekeeping mission in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

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President of Russia Vladimir Putin: Colleagues, good afternoon!

I am glad to welcome you all in Moscow.

At the suggestion of our chairman, and today Armenia chairs the organisation, we gathered in Moscow, because this is where 30 years ago the Collective Security Treaty was signed, and 20 years ago, on the basis of this Treaty, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation was created.

This means we have two anniversaries almost on the same day: on May 14 and 15 in 1992 and 2002, respectively. I congratulate you on this.

I hope that the organisation, which has become a full international structure over the years, will continue to develop, even through difficult times. I would like to note in this context that both 1992 and 2002 were difficult times; they never end.

The organisation plays a very important role in the post-Soviet space – a stabilising role. I hope that in this sense its capabilities and influence on the situation in our area of responsibility will only grow.

Here I would like to finish my welcoming remarks and give the floor to the Chairman [of the CSTO Collective Security Council], the Prime Minister of Armenia.

Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan: Thank you, Mr Putin.

Colleagues, I would like to welcome all of you!

I would also like to add my congratulations on the two anniversaries the President of Russia noted. The Treaty on Collective Security was signed on May 15, 1992, and the decision on establishing a Collective Security Treaty Organisation was made on May 14, 2002. We meet today partly in commemoration of both anniversaries.

I suggest we express our views on these anniversaries and on the current situation as always – in alphabetic order. Please hold your comments to 3 to 5 minutes – this is the open section.

Afterwards, we will sign the documents that are ready for signing, and will then continue our discussion behind closed doors.

I give the floor to the President of the Republic of Belarus. Go ahead, please.

President of the Republic of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko: Mr Pashinyan, dear friends!

I will talk a bit longer than usual since I am the first to speak, and the current situation deserves attention.

Today's meeting is taking place in a difficult time, as the President of Russia has just said – a time of repartitioning the world; the unipolar international system is irretrievably receding into the past, but the collective West is fiercely fighting to keep its position.

Anything goes, including actions in the zone of responsibility of our organisation: from NATO's sabre rattling at our western borders to a full-scale hybrid war unleashed against us, primarily against Russia and Belarus.

NATO is aggressively building its muscles, drawing Finland and Sweden into its net, countries that only yesterday were neutral. This is based on the attitude, "those who are not with us are against us," and, hypocritically, NATO continues to declare its defensive nature. The truly defensive and peace-loving position of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation is in contrast to this background.

The United States is building up its military presence on the western flank of the CSTO, its military infrastructure is being upgraded at an accelerated pace and many NATO exercises are taking place. The large-scale exercise, Defender Europe 2022, the likes of which we have not seen before, are now being held on the territory of 19 European countries, in part, near our borders in Poland. You can guess for yourselves whom they are defending themselves against.

Until now, there is a force of about 15,000 military personnel stationed at the Belarusian-Polish border, which were deployed there last year under the pretext of a migration crisis, in addition to the troops that are stationed there permanently. Last year, 15,000 troops, mostly Americans, were redeployed. The migrants left that area a long time ago, but the troops are still there. The question is why?

Clearly, no country is posing any threat to NATO today. Moreover, an additional force of over 10,000 military troops was brought there to reinforce the alliance's eastern flank with 15,000 troops already deployed in Poland and the Baltic countries as part of the US armed forces' Atlantic Resolve and NATO-allied Enhanced Forward Presence. For perspective, seven or so years ago, there were 3,500 troops in this location (addressing the CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas) on your watch, now there are about 40,000 troops right on the territory of Poland and the Baltic states. And I am not talking about Ukraine yet.

Our military interaction within the framework of the Union State of Belarus and Russia, and Belarus' membership in the CSTO, are the very stabilisers that have a certain sobering effect on the hotheads on the other side of the border. This shows that if it were not for this, I am afraid that a hot war would already be underway in Belarus. By the way, they tried to do this in 2020.

Today, there is no more pressing or important issue than the Ukraine conflict. Since 2014, all of us have been assisting in every way possible in resolving it. In principle, all of us sitting at this table are ready to do this even now and in any format.

Clearly, Ukraine was fomented, incited and fed nationalism and Nazism. We saw that in Odessa, when people were burned alive. Ukraine was fed Nazism, Russophobia and weapons. They used every approach to poison it.

After the election in Belarus in August 2020, regarding interaction with us, Belarus, Ukraine completely succumbed to the West. We have constantly experienced unfriendly actions from our southern neighbour for over two years now.

Ukraine proactively imposed sanctions on us even before the West, including the Americans. Ukraine was the first to do so. Remember? Their airspace was closed, then railway service, and then they began to train militants and send them to Belarus and ship weapons across the border. Everyone knows that. Provocative actions were carried out with Ukrainian drones conducting reconnaissance missions in Belarus' airspace.

The facts indicating a threat to our national security are indisputable. This is exactly why we were absolutely right to activate the support mechanism in the framework of our alliance with Russia.

Belarus paid attention to the unjustified growth of the Western military presence in Ukraine and the region as a whole even before the start of the Russian special military operation. We talked about this more than once and warned that a conflict was looming. We expected the West, primarily the US, to accept Russia's proposal to enter into talks on security guarantees. This process will start eventually in the foreseeable future but what will remain of Ukraine and our region by this time is a big question.

Right now, we are seeing that the West, including Washington, is only interested

in prolonging the conflict as much as possible. This is why Ukraine is being flooded with weapons. The goals are clear: to weaken Russia as much as possible by miring it in this war. The flames may reach beyond it – we are seeing this, too. If this is the idea, likely nobody will be able to sit it out.

Currently the most dangerous trend in Ukraine are the attempts to partition the country. Thousand-strong units have already been formed to enter Ukraine in the guise of peacekeepers to “protect” it.

Unity and solidarity among like-minded people are particularly important at a time when norms and principles of international law are being completely ignored. The CSTO member states displayed such solidarity and support in January of this year in a time of trial: you remember the events in Kazakhstan. By acting rapidly when needed, we graphically demonstrated to the entire world our close allied relations and the capacity of our organisation to ensure the security of its members. Nobody in the West even dared think about interfering in this situation because we are stronger together.

But is it possible to claim today that the members of this organisation are really united and bound by ties of solidarity and support as before? Recent events suggest probably not. This is from our perspective, and I may be wrong. But it is enough to recall the ban imposed by some of our CSTO partners on the flights to their countries by national airlines of other CSTO members.

The concepts of unity and solidarity are not always enough, given the brutal, rabid sanctions pressure by the consolidated West. Unfortunately, this is clear from the voting in international organisations.

With the tacit agreement of our partners, Belarus and Russia are being vilified and expelled from international organisations against all laws of international life, just on a Western whim. Yes, you, CSTO members are subjected to pressure – tough and unprincipled pressure – but this is where collective, mutual support is so helpful. We may not exist tomorrow if we do not unite as soon as possible, if we do not strengthen our political, economic and military ties.

Our enemies and detractors are systematically degrading our strongholds and allied ties, and we ourselves are partially helping the West in this regard. I am sure that if we had acted as a united front right off the bat, the hellish, as they say, sanctions would be

out of question.

Look how united the European Union is when it votes or acts, and how strong its intra-bloc discipline is. It applies automatically even to those who disagree with its decisions. This begs the question: What is keeping us from using this bloc resource? We need to follow their example. If divided, we will simply be crushed and torn apart.

Back in January, I said that the main goal of certain external forces is to undermine stability and to disrupt the evolutionary path of development throughout the post-Soviet space. They started with Belarus, then the infection spread to Kazakhstan, and now it is Russia's turn, as we see, and problems are being created in Armenia as well. Make no mistake, no one will be spared.

It is absolutely clear that, without united pushback from the CSTO allies and other integration associations in the post-Soviet space, the collective West will ratchet up its pressure.

What do we need to do to reinforce the CSTO in this unprecedented situation at hand? Off the top of my head, I can visualise the following top-priority steps, which are many, and the President of Tajikistan covered them at length when he talked about the challenge facing that region.

The first is to strengthen political interaction and coordination of the CSTO member states. It is important to improve the efficiency of the foreign policy and security consultation mechanism. We need to speak more often on behalf of the CSTO on international platforms so that its voice and position can be seen and heard, and this voice and position must be united as they are in the West.

Let our foreign ministers consider how best to go about this, and where. Let them think about our political response to a new wave of NATO expansion in light of the intentions declared by well-known states.

We must work out in advance the CSTO position on this matter and make our interests known to the international community. We must act as one in this. Russia should not be alone in voicing its concern and fighting the attempted NATO enlargement.

The second point is to increase the effectiveness of efforts to counter challenges

and threats in the information space, including the fight against fake news and disinformation. It is clear that we are facing a hybrid war, the main part of which is an information war.

In order to counter this, we should make the most of the 2017 CSTO Agreement on Information Security Cooperation and actively promote the CSTO on social media, which our Western opponents intensively use, in order to effectively respond to fake news and planted information. Moreover, we need to think seriously and, perhaps, follow China's policy in the information confrontation, especially on the internet.

Relevant tasks should be assigned to all foreign ministries, special services and the CSTO Secretariat.

Third, there is a clear need to strengthen the forecasting and analytical component in the CSTO Secretariat's work. I am sure that there are similar departments in the UN, the European Union and NATO. It might be worth considering creating a unit responsible for analysis and strategic planning at the CSTO Secretariat. I think the Secretary-General needs to study this issue.

Fourth, it is worth thinking about combining the potential of the analytical centres of the CSTO member states and forming a network of these centres to assist in the development of conceptual documents on current issues on the international agenda.

Dear friends,

I am offering such seemingly simple proposals at these extremely difficult times because we may not immediately agree on more complex ones. Therefore, these may be the first steps, but we need to go further and deeper, as we used to say in the past

Colleagues,

Everyone understands that the historical era that existed before is ending, and there will be no return to the previous international order. We cannot allow the creation of a new international architecture without us, while the West is already planting false stories and holding talks about it.

I believe that the CSTO should firmly strengthen its status in the international system of checks and balances. The organisation has a powerful collective potential for further progressive development, but it depends only on us today, it is up to us, how effectively the CSTO will use this potential and whether it will continue to exist in the next 10, 20 or 30 years.

After Armenia, the CSTO chairmanship will rotate to Belarus. In addition to the promising areas of work outlined above, we are already seriously considering new proposals aimed at the further development of our organisation, and you will learn about them in the near future. We hope for maximum support and constructive work from all of you, our colleagues. We have no other choice.

Sorry for such a long speech.

Thank you for your attention.

Nikol Pashinyan: Thank you, Mr Lukashenko.

I will give the floor to President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev: Mr Pashinyan, colleagues!

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to President of Russia Vladimir Putin for organising this anniversary summit of the Collective Security Council. It is true that our summit today is distinct in marking two CSTO anniversaries.

Over the years our organisation has proven to be an effective mechanism of multilateral cooperation with serious potential for further development.

Once the CSTO was established, a reliable system for collective security was built in the vast expanse of Eurasia. The main goals are to strengthen peace and stability as well as international and regional security, and protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of its member states.

The CSTO's permanent working bodies operate successfully; there are various formats for close cooperation and interaction. The CSTO's authority, law enforcement and peacekeeping potential are being strengthened.

We focus on countering international terrorism and extremism, illegal drug and weapons trafficking, and illegal migration. In this context we attach great importance to the developments in Afghanistan. The unstable situation there as well as the unrelenting activity of armed groups on the territory of Afghanistan continue to threaten the security and stability of our states. I believe the CSTO must consider every potential threat while paying even more attention to ensuring the security of the southern borders of Central Asia.

In the mid-term, developing the organisation's peacekeeping potential is an unconditional priority. Active work is underway in this area. CSTO peacekeeping forces have been created and are being improved every year; a plan is being developed to equip them with modern weapons, equipment and special tools.

As you know, the institute of Special Representative of the CSTO Secretary-General for peacekeeping has been established, at Kazakhstan's initiative. This means that all the necessary tools have been created, and we suggest that it is time to set the goal of getting the CSTO involved with the United Nations' peacekeeping activities.

This step would promote the legal status of the CSTO and ensure the organisation's participation in international peacekeeping operations.

Colleagues,

Our assessments of the CSTO's development and common view of the current aspects of international and regional security underlie the anniversary statement of the Collective Security Council. I would like to thank Armenia for its productive chairmanship and Russia for its timely initiative to hold this forum.

Thank you for your attention.

Nikol Pashinyan: Thank you, Mr Tokayev.

Next to speak is President of the Kyrgyz Republic. Mr Sadyr Japarov, please, take the floor.

President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Japarov: Good afternoon.

Mr Putin, Mr Chairman of the CSTO Collective Security Council Nikol Pashinyan, Messrs heads of state,

I am happy to meet with you in hospitable Moscow.

I would like to begin with congratulations. First, I want to extend my congratulations to our fraternal peoples on the 77th anniversary of the Great Victory. On May 9, many thousands of people across Kyrgyzstan took part in the Immortal Regiment march carrying the slogans “Eternal Glory to the Heroes” and “Nobody Is Forgotten, Nothing Is Forgotten.” The republic holds this holiday sacred, as it epitomises the defeat of Nazism and Fascism by the Soviet people and invariably pays a sincere tribute to the memory of the heroic deed of our fathers and grandfathers.

Second, I want to extend my congratulations to all of us on the 30th anniversary of signing the Collective Security Treaty and the 20th anniversary of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. We fully support the political statement to be adopted today in connection with these two historic dates.

The international events taking place in recent years show that the strategic decisions taken to ensure shared and collective security from Brest to Vladivostok were right.

At the same time, I am pleased to note that throughout its existence the Collective Security Treaty Organisation has fulfilled the responsible mission assigned to it and developed as an institution, with its potential becoming ever stronger. In this connection, I would like to express my gratitude to CSTO Secretary-General Stanislav Zas, all his predecessors in the post and the CSTO Secretariat staff for their loyal service in the interests of the security of the Organisation’s member states.

Colleagues,

The current international situation does not offer cause for optimism, in terms of both global security and the world economy. Threats to security and military and political tensions have come too close to the borders of the CSTO zone of responsibility. Attempts are being made to interfere from the outside in the internal affairs of the CSTO member states.

For example, earlier this year we had to help a CSTO member state get out of a security

crisis it had unexpectedly found itself in. Our response was quick and effective. I fully support the decision to award participants in this peacekeeping mission.

The situation at the southern borders of the CSTO remains alarming, primarily due to the unhindered activities of radical religious terrorist groups in some Afghan provinces. The external sponsors of these groups have far-reaching plans for Central Asia. I think we should keep focusing our attention and analysis on the Afghan issue. It is necessary to carry out an entire package of political-diplomatic and military-technical measures to ensure security in this area. At the same time, it is important to provide humanitarian aid for the Afghan people. Our fellow countrymen are among them.

Colleagues,

We are seriously alarmed by the sanctions war. The Kyrgyz economy has not yet recovered from the coronavirus pandemic, and now the sanctions are already creating a threat to food and energy security, macroeconomic sustainability and social stability.

Under the circumstances, we must discuss and draft a common approach to alleviate the consequences of sanctions and prevent the deterioration of the socioeconomic situation in our countries. We will soon have an opportunity to do so at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council and the First Eurasian Economic Forum in the city of Bishkek.

Colleagues, I hope for your personal participation as heads of your delegations, in which I am asking you to include heads of sectoral ministries and business structures.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate you again on the Day of the Great Victory and the two anniversaries of the Collective Security Treaty.

I sincerely wish you and the friendly nations of the CSTO peace, stability, wellbeing and prosperity.

Thank you for your attention.

Nikol Pashinyan: Thank you, Mr Japarov.

I am giving the floor to President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin.

Mr President, go ahead, please.

Vladimir Putin: Friends and colleagues,

I will agree with the previous speakers – indeed, in the past few decades, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation has become considerably stronger and won a well-deserved reputation as an effective regional defence structure that ensures security and stability in the Eurasian space and reliably protects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its member countries.

Importantly, cooperation in the CSTO has always been built in the spirit of true allied relations, on the principles of friendship and neighbourliness, respect and consideration of each other's interests, mutual assistance and support. The same principles guide our cooperation in the current difficult situation.

The CSTO's successful peacekeeping operation, held in Kazakhstan in January 2022 at the request of its leaders, showed the maturity of our Organisation and its real ability to adequately withstand acute challenges and threats.

The contingent of the collective CSTO forces, sent into Kazakhstan for a limited period of time, prevented extremists, including those directed from abroad, from seizing power and helped to quickly stabilise the internal political situation in the republic.

The use of peacekeeping forces at the request of the Kazakhstan leadership was the first operation of this kind in the CSTO's history. The operation revealed the strong points of practical cooperation between our military structures and security services, and, at the same time, showed what we should work on to improve it.

Today, we will sign a joint statement reaffirming, taking into account the experience gained, among other things, during the afore-mentioned operation, the resolve of our states to continue acting as partners in different areas of military and defence development, and building up our coordinated actions in the world arena.

At the same time, it is quite logical that our current high-priority task is to further improve and streamline the work of the CSTO and its governing bodies. We will also

provide the collective CSTO forces with modern weapons and equipment, we will enhance the interoperability of their troop contingents, and more effectively coordinate the joint actions of our military agencies and secret services.

We streamline the relevant operations all the time during CSTO exercises, and we are set to expand such exercises. This autumn, there are plans to hold an entire series of joint CSTO exercises in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. I am confident that these measures will boost the combat readiness of our states' military agencies and improve their coordination, as well as increase the entire peacekeeping potential of the CSTO.

We also believe that the CSTO should continue its efforts to counter terrorism, drug trafficking and organised crime. Law enforcement agencies of our countries interact rather effectively in this field, so as to prevent the recruitment of people and to neutralise the resource potential of international terrorist organisations.

Efforts to maintain biological security also require the most serious attention. For a long time, we sounded the alarm about US military biological activity in the post-Soviet space.

It is common knowledge that the Pentagon has established dozens of specialised biological laboratories and centres in our common region, and that they are by no means merely providing practical medical assistance to the population of the countries where they are operating. Their main task is to collect biological materials and to analyse the spread of viruses and dangerous diseases for their own purposes.

Now, during the special operation in Ukraine, documentary evidence was obtained that components of biological weapons were developed in close proximity to our borders, which violates the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, and possible methods and mechanisms were worked out to destabilise the epidemiological situation in the post-Soviet space.

In this regard, we count on our colleagues supporting the earliest possible implementation of Russia's initiative to operationalise the designated CSTO council. Once again, I would like to note the importance of close coordination between CSTO members in matters of foreign policy, coordinated actions at the UN and other multilateral platforms, and promotion of common approaches to the multiplying

international security issues.

In this context, it is important to build up cooperation with our “natural” partners in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Commonwealth of Independent States. By the way, we think it would be appropriate and correct – we will discuss this – to grant the CIS observer status in the CSTO.

I would like to highlight our priority task of jointly defending the memory of Victory in the Great Patriotic War, the feat of our peoples who saved the world from Nazism at the cost of enormous and irreparable sacrifices, and to counteract any attempts to whitewash the Nazis, their accomplices and modern followers.

This is extremely important particularly now, when monuments to the heroes liberators are being barbarously demolished in a number of European countries, laying flowers at memorials is forbidden, and cynical attempts are being made to rewrite history, while praising murderers and traitors and insulting their victims, thus crossing out the feats of those who selflessly fought for Victory and won the war.

Unfortunately, in our neighbouring country, Ukraine, neo-Nazism has been on the rise for a long time now, to which some of our partners from the “collective West” turn a blind eye, and thus actually encourage their activities. All this goes hand-in-hand with an unprecedented surge in frenzied Russophobia in the so-called civilised and politically correct Western countries.

Indeed, we hear, and I hear people say that extremists can be found anywhere, which is true. Extremists are everywhere and one way or another they are leaving their underground hideouts and make themselves known. Nowhere, though – I want to underscore this – nowhere are Nazis being glorified at the state level and not a single civilised country’s authorities are encouraging thousands of neo-Nazi torchlight processions with Nazi symbols. This is something that is not practiced anywhere. But unfortunately, this is happening in Ukraine.

The expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance is a problem that, in my view, is being created in an absolutely artificial manner because it is being done in the foreign policy interests of the United States. Generally, NATO is being used, in effect, as the foreign policy tool of a single country, and it is being done persistently, adroitly, and very aggressively. All of this is aggravating the already complex international security

situation.

As for the expansion, including the accession of two prospective new members, Finland and Sweden, I would like to inform you, colleagues, that Russia has no problems with these states. No problems at all! In this sense, therefore, there is no direct threat to Russia in connection with NATO's expansion to these countries. But the expansion of its military infrastructure to these territories will certainly evoke a response on our part. We will see what it will be like based on the threats that are created for us. But generally speaking, problems are being created from nothing. So, we will respond to it in a fitting manner.

Apart from everything else, apart from this interminable policy of expansion, the North Atlantic Alliance is emerging beyond its geographical destination, beyond the Euro-Atlantic area. It is increasingly active in trying to manage international issues and control the international security situation. It wants to wield influence in other regions of the world, but its actual performance leaves much to be desired. This certainly demands additional attention on our part.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that Russia will continue to contribute to deepening relations of strategic alliance with all CSTO member states. We will do our best to improve and develop effective partner cooperation within the CSTO and, of course, we will support the Armenian chairmanship's ongoing work in this area.

As for Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, we will certainly discuss this, and I will inform you in detail about its causes and the current combat effort. But, of course, we will do this behind closed doors.

Thank you for your attention.

Nikol Pashinyan: Thank you, Mr Putin.

President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon is our next speaker. Please go ahead.

President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon: Colleagues,

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on the occasion of the 30th anniversary

of the signing of the Collective Security Treaty and the 20th anniversary of the creation of the CSTO.

I would like to thank the President of Russia for convening today's meeting dedicated to these milestone events that are important for all of us. Anniversaries are a good opportunity to reflect on the path traveled and the development of the CSTO and to identify prospects for multilateral cooperation seeking to strengthen the common collective security system in light of new realities.

Over the period under review, the CSTO has established itself as an important factor in strengthening peace and ensuring regional security and stability. The organisation's successful peacekeeping mission earlier this year clearly showed it.

We have created an extensive legal framework, the necessary working and coordinating bodies, as well as mechanisms aimed at fulfilling the organisation's goals.

In practice, due attention is paid to strengthening and consolidating mutual trust within the CSTO. The CSTO's international ties are expanding. Last year, we completed the ratification procedure and launched the institutions of observers under the CSTO and the CSTO partners as part of the Tajik chairmanship.

Field and command-staff exercises are conducted on a permanent basis, and measures are being taken to supply modern weapons and military equipment to the collective security system's forces and means. All this helps maintain a high degree of combat readiness, mobility, training and skills of command and service personnel for bringing joint solutions to common tasks.

Today, the CSTO is an important platform for equal dialogue and cooperation between member states in all three basic dimensions: political interaction, military cooperation and joint efforts to counter modern challenges and threats.

The CSTO Collective Security Strategy to 2025, which reflects the principles of our interaction in the mid-term, is an important document that is guiding our organisation along its own path of development. Our common assessment of the state and development prospects of the organisation is reflected in a joint statement that we will adopt following the summit.

Notably, today we are facing no less important tasks to strengthen our common security. Given the manifold growth of challenges and threats to security, we will have to step up joint efforts to strengthen the Organisation's potential and capabilities.

For example, we can see that negative factors have been accumulating in Afghanistan over the past 40 years, and they have worsened the military-political and socioeconomic situation in that country. In this regard, the CSTO needs to be prepared for various scenarios on the southern borders.

Tajikistan plans to continue to actively contribute to ensuring common security in the organisation's regions of responsibility.

Thank you.

Nikol Pashinyan: Thank you very much.

Colleagues, I will now speak in my national capacity, if I may.

First of all, I would like to thank the President of Russia for hosting the anniversary CSTO summit in Moscow and the warm welcome. Of course, our organisation's anniversary is also an excellent occasion to sum up the intermediate results and to discuss prospects for the further development of our organisation.

The President of Belarus raised important questions about interaction between the CSTO member countries and touched on, frankly, rather problematic issues. In general, there are a lot of positive developments in the history of the CSTO, because in reality it was, is and will be the most important factor in ensuring security and stability in the region.

But, as we see, we are discussing not only anniversary-related issues at this anniversary summit, because the situation is fairly tense in the CSTO area of responsibility. I want to touch on some of the issues that the President of Belarus mentioned.

Regarding voting by the CSTO member countries, this issue does exist, indeed. Often, our voting is not synchronised, but this is not something new. This has been typical of our organisation for a long time now. Armenia has repeatedly raised this issue,

and we have repeatedly discussed it in the regular course of business. Clearly, this issue needs to be further discussed as well.

With regard to interaction as well as response and rapid response mechanisms, this is also a critical issue for Armenia, because, as you are aware, last year on these days, Azerbaijani troops invaded the sovereign territory of Armenia. Armenia turned to the CSTO for it to activate the mechanisms that are provided for in the Regulations governing the CSTO response to crisis situations of December 10, 2010 which is a document approved by the Collective Security Council. Unfortunately, we cannot say that the organisation responded as the Republic of Armenia expected.

For a long time now, we have been raising the issue of sales of weapons by CSTO member countries to a country that is unfriendly to Armenia, which used these weapons against Armenia and the Armenian people. This is also a problem.

Frankly, the CSTO member countries' response during the 44-day war of 2020 and the post-war period did not make the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian people very happy, but I want to emphasise the special role played by the Russian Federation and President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin personally in halting the war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

I would like to reaffirm that Armenia remains committed to the trilateral statements of November 9, 2020. I am referring to the trilateral statements by the President of the Russian Federation, the President of Azerbaijan and the Prime Minister of Armenia, as well as the trilateral statements of January 11, 2021 and November 26, 2021.

I think it is critically important to sum up the results, but Armenia, as a founding member of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, is committed to the organisation's further development and considers it a key contributor to stability and security in the Eurasian region, as well as the security of the Republic of Armenia, and is positive about providing its full support for the organisation's further development.

Now I give the floor to CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas so that he tells us about the documents that we are going to sign.

CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas: Mr Chairman, members of the Collective Security Council,

First, I would like to thank you for today's meeting devoted to the CSTO's anniversary. Twenty years is not such a long period for an international organisation. However, it has traversed a very long road during these years – from the formation of the idea of collective defence to the well-established, multi-faceted international organisation that it is today.

Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, heads of state, on the anniversary and to thank you for your hard work on establishing, developing and strengthening our organisation. I am saying this because, of course, all this would have been impossible without your constant attention and support.

You have an analytical review of the CSTO activities over 20 years of its existence in your folders on the table. This review was prepared at the instruction of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Incidentally, our work on this review was very interesting and useful. On the eve of such great anniversaries, we tried to look back at the path travelled and to assess the CSTO's status. We developed a good feeling that stayed with us: We have reasons to be proud.

The mechanism of foreign policy coordination is functioning well in the CSTO format. Using this mechanism, we form the consolidated position of our states on urgent regional and global issues. That said, I agree with the President of Belarus that this is clearly not enough these days. We should not avoid answers, consolidated answers to the most pressing issues.

We have developed cooperation with international regional organisations and their relevant structures. We have preserved and, importantly, are cultivating the principle of prioritising political and diplomatic means to achieve CSTO goals. This is, probably, one of the main pillars of our organisation.

Over these years, we have considerably built up the CSTO's

military capacity. We are upgrading the structure, equipment and training of the bodies in charge of managing and forming a collective security system.

We consider the formation of a uniform system for training personnel, management bodies and troops an important achievement of the CSTO. Of course, the highest form of this system is embodied in the planned joint miscellaneous exercises that we hold every year.

We created and are developing an effective mechanism to counter modern challenges and threats, such as drug trafficking, illegal migration, international terrorism, and crime using information technology. To this end, joint emergency and preventive measures are taken and special operations are carried out regularly. The results prove their relevance and effectiveness.

The formation of a collective biological security toolkit is nearing completion. This topic was raised today, and I think we will return to it.

An important place is occupied by the CSTO crisis response system. Considering the first practical experience gained in Kazakhstan in testing this system, it probably makes sense that today we will also consider issues of improving the crisis response system.

The further development of our organisation will be carried out taking into account your decisions and instructions – I am grateful for today's initiatives and instructions – and based on the plan for implementing the CSTO Collective Security Strategy until 2025.

By the way, next year we need to start preparing the initial data to develop a new CSTO Collective Security Strategy for the next period, 2026–2030. It is high time, and the situation now is significantly different than it was five years ago. This also means a lot of work to be done, and it probably requires that our countries join analytical forces.

Mr Chair and members of the Collective Security Council,

The following two documents have been submitted for your consideration and signing: a draft statement of the CSTO Collective Security Council on the 30th anniversary of the Collective Security Treaty and the 20th anniversary of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation; and a draft decision of the Collective Security Council “On awarding participants in the CSTO peacekeeping mission in the Republic

of Kazakhstan.”

The draft decision recognises the most distinguished participants in the peacekeeping operation. Six members of our militaries, including commander of our peacekeeping mission in Kazakhstan, Colonel General Andrei Serdyukov, are recommended for the CSTO honorary badge, I and II Class, for their skillful leadership, preparation and conduct of this operation, and a number of military personnel are recommended for the medal For Strengthening Collective Security for active participation and selflessness in this operation.

The documents have passed the necessary approval procedure, have been adopted by the statutory bodies and are ready for signing.

I would ask you to consider and support these two documents.

Thank you.

Nikol Pashinyan: Colleagues, I propose to move on to the signing of the documents.

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