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PC.DEL/240/23
27 February 2023

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1412th (REINFORCED) MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

24 February 2023

The Russian special military operation: One year on

Mr. Chairperson,

Today it is exactly one year since the start of the Russian special military operation. The decision to launch it was taken by the President of Russia in accordance with Chapter VII, Article 51, of the Charter of the United Nations. The objectives of the special operation, which include protecting the population of Donbas and the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine, remain unchanged and will be accomplished fully.

Russia's actions were forced upon us in response to the many years of armed violence against the civilian population of Donbas carried out by the puppet regime in Kyiv with the support of its foreign sponsors; in response to the Ukrainian Government's brazen and overt sabotaging of the implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015 endorsed by the United Nations Security Council through resolution 2202; and in response to the NATO member countries' creation, on Ukrainian territory, of direct threats to the security of our country.

The Minsk agreements were in effect wrecked by the Kyiv regime long before Russia recognized the Donbas people's republics as its constituent entities and long before the start of the decisive action to defend them. Russia always – up to the very last moment – emphasized that the Package of Measures could and should have been fully implemented on the basis of direct dialogue between those who had obligations pursuant to that document. From the text of the Package of Measures it follows that all these obligations fell within the exclusive purview of the authorities in Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk. Hopes for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 2202 did not fade right until the start of the Russian special operation – this is confirmed by the active signals from Russia at the OSCE and other international platforms, as well as in bilateral and multilateral formats. Our country constantly exhorted the representatives of the Kyiv regime to engage in meaningful intra-Ukrainian civic dialogue and diplomacy, to show common sense, to roll back the military preparations, and to desist from belligerent rhetoric and attempts to initiate reconsideration of Ukraine's non-nuclear status. Documents discovered in the course of the special operation and the testimony of witnesses in the areas liberated from the Kyiv regime serve as additional confirmation that all Russia's concerns were well founded.

Insinuations that it was Russia that fought shy of implementing the Minsk agreements and nullified these by conducting the special operation are lies invented by those who are attempting to justify their Kyiv protégés' nefarious sabotaging of the Minsk Package of Measures.

The special operation was preceded by a drastic exacerbation of the situation in the territory of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, where the Kyiv regime's units went on the offensive along the entire line of contact from 17 February 2022. The Russian Government could not stand idly by during this latest round of inhuman extermination of the residents of Donbas, an absolute majority of whom had long ago signalled their desire to preserve their historical unity with Russia forever. Over just five days before the start of the special operation, our country took in tens of thousands of refugees, mainly women, children and elderly people.

According to the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations and the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, a total of around 5 million forcibly displaced persons, including more than 700,000 children, have arrived in Russia since the Kyiv regime's punitive operation against the civilian population began in 2014. That is more than in any other country and it eloquently demonstrates that the Ukrainians themselves certainly do not consider Russia to be some sort of "aggressor": they are taking refuge in our country from the crimes of the Kyiv regime. A considerable proportion of the people who have come to Russia have managed, with the support of the authorities and civil society organizations, to obtain housing and employment. As for the rest, 880 temporary accommodation facilities for these persons continue to operate in 61 constituent entities of the Russian Federation; more than 40,000 people, including over 12,500 children, are housed in these.

We would emphasize that the watershed moments in Ukraine occurred not on 24 February 2022 but, rather, more than nine years ago, when, as the result of an armed coup d'état orchestrated, funded and organized from abroad, radical nationalist and inherently anti-democratic elements came to power in Kyiv. The processes launched by them – namely, brutal suppression of political dissent, discrimination against a huge proportion of the population, and fuelling of hatred towards Russia and all things Russian – had devastating consequences for the country. It was already obvious then that they were banking not on dialogue but on violence.

Following the 2014 coup d'état, Ukraine was placed under external control – something that no one even tried to hide. Thus, the current President of the United States of America, Joe Biden, has publicly described how during his tenure as Vice President he would send instructions from Washington, D.C., to Kyiv concerning appointments to the highest offices of state. A case in point is his admission about the "firing" of Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin in 2016, accomplished "in six hours". It would appear that Mr. Biden also managed to issue staffing and other administrative decisions that are no less revealing during his lightning visit to Kyiv on 20 February this year.

The nominal leaders of the Kyiv regime – irrespective of their political promises to strive for peace – time and again opted for war. Both Petro Poroshenko, who promised to achieve peace in Donbas "in one week", and Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who gave himself one year in which to bring about a settlement on the basis of the Minsk agreements, have toed the line set by external controllers. They lied to their own population and to the greater part of the world community, that is, to the part which had not been officially notified of the collective West's true intentions with regard to Ukraine. It is publicly acknowledged nowadays that over in Kyiv they never actually intended to set about implementing the Minsk Package of Measures in good faith, but merely exploited that document as a smokescreen to conceal further militarization and military preparations.

In the course of the Russian special operation over the past year, the world has learned the truth about that – many masks have been dropped. It is now evident that, in Ukraine, the Western alliance is not concerned with building a State governed by the rule of law, but with using that country as a battering ram against Russian statehood – and the Ukrainians themselves as expendable material in that struggle. Put simply, this is about a carefully planned confrontation with Russia, about attempts to obliterate the prospects for the favourable development of our country. We shall not now dwell in detail on the unsuccessful efforts to bring about our international isolation, to organize a blitzkrieg of anti-Russian sanctions, to undermine socio-economic stability in Russian society, or on the attempts to “cancel” Russian culture.

In their striving to inflict pain and damage on our country, the instigators and executors of these ideas have no qualms about employing the dirtiest methods – such as the creation and dissemination of fake stories about Bucha, Kramatorsk and Mariupol, cobbled together in the same spirit as the Nazi propaganda about the civilians in the village of Nemmersdorf “raped and massacred” by Red Army soldiers on 21 October 1944. Or the act of sabotage carried out in September 2022 on the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines, two crucial energy supply routes for Europe. Let us not forget either the terrorist attack on the Crimean Bridge, which claimed civilian lives in October 2022.

We would point out that the revelations by former leaders of Western countries are more instructive than the statements by diplomats from those countries at international forums. For example, the fact that NATO had been preparing for a conflict with Russia since 2014 by deliberately bringing its military infrastructure closer to the Russian borders is something that NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg recently spoke about. And the fact that NATO military supplies in Europe were being built up during all these past years to be used specifically against Russia was disclosed a few days ago by British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at the Munich Security Conference. The United Kingdom’s representatives at the OSCE will obviously not start saying any time soon that the Normandy format, which enabled the development of the Minsk agreements for the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk, was, as it turns out, launched by the West as a “diplomatic imitation”, as former Prime Minister Boris Johnson has publicly admitted.

French and German diplomats will hardly dare to repeat the revelations made by the former leaders of their countries, François Hollande and Angela Merkel, “co-mediators” under the Normandy format, to the effect that the Minsk agreements gave the Kyiv regime time “to become stronger” militarily, to prepare for combat operations. The representative of Ukraine will remain silent about how Mr. Poroshenko and Mr. Zelenskyy admitted that the Ukrainian Government, a few years before the start of the Russian special operation, confirmed to its French and German partners that it simply had no intention of implementing the Minsk Package of Measures.

On the contrary, during all these years, diplomats from the aforementioned countries have been telling downright lies in this room, claiming that NATO’s actions did not have an anti-Russian thrust and that the Kyiv regime actually wanted, with help from the West, to implement all the provisions of the Minsk agreements.

Mr. Chairperson,

Since the very beginning of the conflict in Donbas in 2014, the Kyiv regime’s armed formations have been carrying out targeted attacks on civilian objects, including critical infrastructure. In the course of nine years, thousands of civilians were killed and more than 50,000 essential infrastructure facilities damaged in the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics, which are now controlled by the legitimate authorities. Only a small fraction of these sad statistics found its way into the reports of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, which operated for eight years, until the end of March 2022. In the course

of 2022, more than 13,000 residential buildings, at least 557 educational facilities, over 140 medical facilities, and more than 700 power, water, heat and gas supply facilities were destroyed or damaged in Donbas as a result of the actions of Mr. Zelenskyy's formations.

We regret that the efforts of the OSCE, whose leadership should have striven for full implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures, ultimately turned out to be ineffective: it did not prove possible to prevent escalation and facilitate a sustainable settlement. The robust toolbox created under the OSCE's aegis, including opportunities for negotiation within the framework of the Minsk-based Trilateral Contact Group, was unable to achieve much given the obstructionist policy of the Kyiv regime and its Western sponsors. The Russian special military operation is meant to put an end to the protracted conflict in Ukraine – assisting with the political settlement of that conflict was a task that proved to be beyond the OSCE.

The Organization and its specialized institutions turned a blind eye to blatant instances of the Kyiv regime's violation of Ukraine's obligations under international law, of the rights of Russian-speaking inhabitants (the principal one being the right to life), religious communities, civil society organizations, political and other associations; they seemingly did not notice the monstrous manifestations of neo-Nazism, the destruction of the memory of those who fought against Nazism, and so on. Neither before the special operation, nor after it had started, were the lives of the people of Donbas, the victims of the Ukrainian shelling, deemed worthy of attention or even mention in statements by OSCE officials.

In its waning days, the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine – the OSCE's "flagship field operation" – completely strayed from the principles of impartiality and began openly carrying out the political orders of a small group of participating States. It breached its mandate and avoided contacts with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk, demanding from them political loyalty to the Kyiv regime as a condition of communicating with them. It ignored outright the presence of NATO military personnel and equipment in Ukraine in violation of paragraph 10 of the Package of Measures – the presence of US and other countries' private military companies, instructors, and so on. In its reports it airbrushed facts and evidence that were awkward for the Ukrainian Government's Western sponsors; it glossed over the Ukrainian neo-Nazis' crimes.

The OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine stopped hiding the fact that his activities over many years were aimed not so much at ensuring that the Ukrainian Government implemented its OSCE commitments in good faith, as at ensuring that the course intended to drag Ukraine into Euro-Atlantic structures was maintained. The group of NATO countries today seeks to continue that course under the OSCE banner as part of the so-called Support Programme for Ukraine, which has not been approved by all the participating States. Yet, no one has bothered to ask the Ukrainian people for its opinion – as already noted, there has not been a single nationwide referendum during which the inhabitants of Ukraine could express their attitude towards the idea of joining or not joining the European Union and NATO.

We are currently witnessing an intensification of attempts by certain participating States to turn the OSCE into an appendage of NATO and the European Union, into a means of advancing the foreign policy priorities of those organizations, which, by their own account, intend to inflict some kind of "strategic defeat" on our country. It is increasingly sought to use the OSCE as a platform for promoting a US-centric "rules-based order", which its creators are pitting against a world order based on international law. Instead of actions to uphold OSCE principles we see attempts to push through the foreign policy priorities of the United States and its satellites, accompanied by a highly selective, politically biased and ad hoc invocation of those very principles. We stress that using the situation in Ukraine as a pretext to try to usurp the collectively agreed functions of the OSCE Secretariat and the specialized OSCE institutions is utterly unacceptable.

The Western countries, which have come themselves to believe in the illusion of their fictitious superiority over other members of the international community, forget a fundamental point: there is either security for everyone or there is none for anyone. It is important to remember that an arrangement in which there would be security only for the adherents of an “order based on US rules” – and, what is more, at the expense of the interests of Russia and its allies – is absolutely unsustainable.

Contrary to the US and UK Governments’ assurances about their commitment to peace, the tensions that they are stoking go far beyond the scope of the Ukrainian crisis: they are trying to harm our country on all levels, in all fields and in every region of the world. In such a situation, it no longer seems possible to do business as usual with the United States and, in general, with the West – whether on matters of principle, or in the field of arms control, which is inseparable from political and military-strategic realities.

The attempts to reduce the causes of the current crisis in the pan-European space to the “choice made by one man”, Russian President Vladimir Putin, to launch a special military operation do not strike us as naive: they constitute direct malicious manipulation of public opinion. It is quite obvious that such an argument is meant to deflect attention from the destruction of the European security architecture resulting from the North Atlantic Alliance breaking its own guarantees about non-expansion and from its expansionist and militaristic policy in Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet space. The special military operation is the response by the whole of Russian society to the collective West’s attempt to realize a new “Drang nach Osten” (thrust towards the East), to eliminate one of the geopolitical centres of the multipolar world that is taking shape, to destroy and dismember our fatherland. This is essentially about our resistance to historical revanchism on the part of the ideological successors of those who once found themselves biting off more than they could chew as they sought to annihilate Russia and the “Russian world”.

In that regard, it is telling that for many years the United States and its satellites have been avoiding discussions with Russia on a whole range of specific initiatives proposed by our country for de-escalation and confidence-building in the Euro-Atlantic area on the basis of the principle of equal and indivisible security agreed upon at the OSCE. Instead of substantive dialogue we have seen attempts to replace honest consideration of concerns with empty blathering – for example, in the format of the so-called Renewed European Security Dialogue at the OSCE – and, what is more, without leading to legally binding agreements on security guarantees. We emphasize that, in responding to the Russian Government’s suggestions, the powers that be in Washington, D.C., and the European capitals rejected all the substantive proposals from Russia, essentially issuing us with an ultimatum demanding that we capitulate.

Well, Russia never said that it would not protect its people, its national interests, unity and sovereignty, its freedom and independence, its language and culture, the prospects for good-neighbourly relations, and the tranquillity of its borders. Or that it would not react to externally created threats to its national security. It never said that it would look on silently and meekly while certain States unilaterally burned their bridges vis-à-vis Russia, proclaiming our country to be an opponent, even an enemy, and desiring to defeat it “on the battlefield”.

To Russian society it is quite obvious who is opposing us in Ukraine. It is by no means the Ukrainian people, with whom we remain historically and culturally united – a unity that we will most assuredly preserve. No, it is the puppet regime in Kyiv, which, by its own admission, is “carrying out a NATO mission” in its struggle with Russia (as the Kyiv regime’s Defence Minister, Oleksii Reznikov, has repeatedly stressed).

With regard to the tactics being employed as part of the special military operation: Russia is not waging war against the civilian population. Claims to that effect are lies spun by the West. The Russian armed forces, mobilized citizens, assault units and volunteer units are carrying out strikes on those supply

and infrastructure facilities that are being used for military purposes or that are themselves direct military targets. According to the Russian Ministry of Defence, a total of 387 airplanes, 210 helicopters, more than 3,000 unmanned aerial vehicles, around 8,000 tanks and other armoured combat vehicles, over 4,000 field artillery pieces and mortars, more than 1,000 mobile multiple-launch rocket systems, 405 anti-aircraft missile systems and over 8,500 special operations tactical vehicles have been destroyed in the course of the Russian special operation.

Sustainable peace in and around Ukraine could be achieved quite quickly. The United States and its NATO satellites must desist from rendering military support to a neo-Nazi regime that has openly set itself the goal of “destroying Russia as a country” (to quote the Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, Oleksii Danilov). They need to stop encouraging attacks against Russian territory, providing intelligence data and helping with the selection of targets – these are all signs of the direct implication of the United States and NATO in the conflict in Ukraine, no matter what lies they spread on international platforms about their “non-involvement”. They have to wind down the secret military programmes being implemented on Ukrainian territory, including the Pentagon’s military biological activities. It is important to renounce the logic of a bloc mentality and to embrace, instead, honest dialogue for the sake of indivisible security on our shared European continent.

It is essential that the Kyiv regime stop its armed provocations and attempts to destabilize the situation in neighbouring States. It is important that all the legislative constraints on a peaceful settlement, which were introduced by a decision of the Kyiv regime’s leadership on 30 September 2022, be lifted so as to open a path for diplomacy on the basis of realistic approaches. At the end of the day, if the current representatives of the Kyiv regime are incapable of doing this, it will be done for them by those who eventually take responsibility for acting in the interests of the inhabitants of Ukraine, rather than the interests of puppet masters on the other side of the Atlantic.

Russia will welcome specific initiatives aimed at facilitating a political and diplomatic solution to the crisis in and around Ukraine. This conflict arose as a result of the Western countries’ neocolonial striving to control the territory of Ukraine and exploit it for a proxy war against Russia – what is more, a war to be waged literally down to the last Ukrainian. For that reason, those in the West must realize the flawed and dangerous nature of such a course, which could well lead Europe and the whole world to uncontrollable escalation. There is no way that fantasies about our country yielding to the collective pressure from a group of Western countries so that it starts acting against its own interests will come true.

We do not seek confrontation, but we are prepared for all scenarios. Russia will defend its legitimate national interests for as long as it takes; it will protect its people by all available means. Step by step, carefully and consistently we will deal with the tasks at hand – Russian society has the will, resolve and sense of responsibility required for that.

Thank you for your attention.