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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF REPLY BY
MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1560th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 April 2026

In response to the statement by the representative of the United Kingdom

Mr. Chairperson,

I wish to exercise my right of reply and make a brief comment on the issue raised.

With its unsubstantiated accusations against Russia's navy and merchant fleet, the United Kingdom is continuing to exacerbate an already difficult situation concerning the safety of navigation and international trade.

We regard the recent statements by the British Secretary of State for Defence, John Healey, about how the United Kingdom had spent a month repelling the "aggression" of an alleged Russian submarine in the neutral waters of the North Atlantic, as part of a hostile campaign against our country. As has been the British tradition ever since the "Skripal affair", with its allegations in the spirit of "highly likely" – it is, of course, impossible to either verify or believe the statement made by the head of the British Ministry of Defence. That, it seems, is precisely the point.

We should like to emphasize that Russia has never threatened, nor does it threaten, the underwater infrastructure that is indeed of critical importance to the United Kingdom, and it does not employ aggressive rhetoric in this regard.

It is clear that this story is part of the hybrid war that the West has unleashed against Russia, in which one of the main objectives is to restrict our country's access to strategic shipping routes for the delivery of Russian energy resources and to increase the costs associated with their transport.

It is in this context that we interpret the intention, previously announced by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, to seize civilian vessels linked to our country in British territorial waters. What is this, if not an attempt to cloak acts of piracy in some semblance of legality? Such acts are based on unilateral sanctions that contravene international law, not to mention that these actions constitute a flagrant violation of both the letter and the spirit of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Russian side is currently drawing up appropriate countermeasures, and these will certainly follow.

One further point. Let us not forget, meanwhile, that it is the Western countries that are the “experts” in subversive underwater activities. It is they who bear responsibility, among other things, for the very real attack on the Nord Stream gas pipeline, which resulted in its being taken out of service.

Thank you for your attention.