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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY  
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1136th PLENARY MEETING OF  
THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

13 May 2026

**Agenda item: Any other business  
Subject: Western countries' provocative military activities**

Mr. Chairperson,

We consider the statement by the Belarusian delegation to be opportune and justified.

NATO's military build-up remains geared towards "deterrence" of our countries and confrontation with them across all geographical directions and in all operational environments. The Alliance is steadily preparing for a real, high-intensity conflict on the "eastern flank" within the next three to five years. The combined annual defence budget of NATO countries in 2025 was in excess of 1.63 trillion US dollars, accounting for around 62 per cent of global military expenditure.

Against this backdrop, the Alliance's multinational combat battlegroups on the "eastern flank" are being reinforced as part of the forward presence of NATO's land forces. The integration of Finland's and Sweden's military capabilities into NATO planning and NATO military command structures continues. In January 2025, NATO launched "Baltic Sentry", an operation ostensibly aimed at safeguarding the security of critical infrastructure in the Baltic Sea. In practice, this initiative is being used to monitor "Russian threats" and to hinder Russian maritime traffic. Work is gathering pace on the creation of "military mobility" corridors leading to our country's borders, designed to enable the swift deployment of significant numbers of forces and assets, including heavy equipment, to the "eastern flank".

Aircraft belonging to NATO and its member countries continue to be at a heightened level of activity near the borders of the Union State. During aerial patrols, the Alliance gathers intelligence data, which is passed on, in particular to the Kyiv regime for the launching of strikes against Russian territory. In 2025, such activities increased substantially – allegedly in response to "violations" of NATO countries' airspace by Russian aircraft and drones.

NATO's high level of activity is of a provocative nature and increases the risk of an escalation of the politico-military situation in Europe. It is reaching a culmination in the military exercises being conducted

by Western countries next to the western regions of Russia and Belarus, and in the scenarios being rehearsed during these exercises.

For instance, France and Poland are already discussing the conduct of combined military exercises, including elements of so-called nuclear deterrence. This co-operation model also encompasses Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Sweden.

As for the cornerstone of NATO's spring cycle of command and combat training activities, that continues to be the US-led "Sword 26" series of exercises (formerly known as the "DEFENDER" series). These exercises are taking place from late April through May in eight countries, involve 15,500 military personnel and around 1,100 pieces of equipment, and comprise three interlinked principal phases: "Swift Response 26", "Saber Strike 26" and "Immediate Response 26". In addition, dovetailing with this series are the national or multinational exercises "Northern Star" in Finland and "Aurora" in Sweden. This is no longer a set of separate exercises, but a single cycle for testing NATO's regional plans on the "northern and eastern flanks".

Now, if we assemble into a single picture the exercises that have been confirmed, we end up with three interconnected zones for April and May. In Central Europe, multi-domain command and control, troop marching and air mobility are being practised through "Arcane Thunder", "Hussar Saber", "HETHEX" and "Orange Road". In the north and north-east, training for combat operations is under way in a region covering Finland, Sweden and the Baltic, what with "Mighty Arrow", "Aurora", "Rock Sisu", "Northern Star", "Karelian Sword", "Mallet Strike" and "Kevadtorm" ("Spring Storm"). Lastly, "Immediate Response" is being launched in the south-east, capping the overall edifice of "Sword 26".

The bloc's focus on confrontation with Russia and Belarus – a focus that is very much taking a military shape – and the accelerated build-up of military capabilities are increasing the risk of dangerous military incidents occurring. Here in Vienna, however, our interlocutors hypocritically claim that providing information on the NATO countries' combat training exercises is a means of "de-escalating" the politico-military situation. We would appreciate clarification as to how information on military preparations against Russia serves the purpose of military risk reduction.

If the current situation in our Organization's area of responsibility is troubling all the participating States, then the logical thing would be to focus on work aimed at reducing military confrontation and curbing provocative military activity, on the enhancement of mechanisms for preventing incidents and dangerous military activities, and on the re-establishment of military-to-military contacts. This is exactly what we suggested doing at our Vienna-based Forum from 2017 to 2021, but the members of NATO countries' delegations did not deem it necessary to respond to those proposals.

The true meaning of transparency – the meaning with which our predecessors invested that principle – consists in demonstrating the political will to reduce politico-military tensions. However, we are seeing diametrically opposed trends from NATO that are dealing a blow to the pan-European regime of confidence- and security-building measures, and also demeaning the significance of the Forum for Security Co-operation, where Western countries are using specious pretexts to try to legitimize the militarization of Europe.

Having said that, the Russian Federation, just like our Belarusian friends, adheres most responsibly and steadfastly to the course of preventing a direct military clash. What we need is lasting peace based on mutual consideration of interests and on the OSCE's core principle of the indivisibility of security.

Thank you for your attention.