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**STATEMENT BY
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THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1424th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

25 May 2023

On the ongoing crimes by the Kyiv regime and the dangerous policies of the Western alliance countries to escalate tensions

Mr. Chairperson,

On 20 May, as a result of offensive operations by Wagner Group assault units with artillery and aviation support from the southern grouping of the Russian armed forces, Bakhmut was captured – or, to be more precise, the city of Artemovsk in the Donetsk People’s Republic of the Russian Federation was fully liberated. Measures are currently being taken there to clear residential areas of explosive devices, and also to evacuate the remaining civilians, whom Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s formations had been using as human shields.

The liberation of Artemovsk was completed on a symbolic date, for a year ago in Mariupol, on 20 May 2022, the remnants of Ukrainian neo-Nazi units that had ensconced themselves on the premises of the Azovstal plant surrendered to the law enforcement authorities. Mariupol has since returned to a peaceful life; more than 280,000 people are living there today. The same prospect awaits Artemovsk – as in Mariupol on the shores of the Sea of Azov, residential buildings and neighbourhoods there will be restored and new ones built.

Artemovsk was endowed with a mythical status in the West as some sort of symbol of the Kyiv regime’s resilience. Mr. Zelenskyy threw huge numbers of troops and equipment into an attempt to hold on to the city. In February of this year, he publicly asserted: “No one is going to give up Bakhmut. ... We regard Bakhmut as our fortress.” In March, he explained that holding on to the city was of symbolic value both for his domestic audience and for his Western sponsors, namely to justify the need for further military provisioning of Ukrainian formations by the NATO countries. Only a week ago, a representative of the Kyiv regime claimed here, in this very room, that, thanks to Western military aid, the Russian military would never be able to capture that city. Today the rhetoric both in Kyiv and among the regime’s Western sponsors has changed – it turns out that Bakhmut had “no strategic importance”. One thing is obvious: NATO countries’ military aid did not help the neo-Nazis to attain their desired goals.

Artemovsk has indeed become a symbol – a symbol of the devaluation of human life for the sake of the Kyiv regime’s willingness to serve the geopolitical interests of its foreign sponsors. The devastation

caused by the fighting in Artemovsk is a sad reminder of the fact that further militarization of the Zelenskyy regime can mean only further casualties, destruction and human suffering. With one and the same result: the Kyiv regime will lose ground and forfeit control over more territories.

To divert attention from the loss of Artemovsk, NATO's puppets in Kyiv took a desperate and reckless step. On 22 and 23 May, a sabotage and reconnaissance group travelling in US-made armoured vehicles tried to capture several peaceful settlements in the Belgorod region of the Russian Federation. I stress: peaceful, very small settlements in which there were no military facilities or clusters of weapons or ammunition. According to the local authorities, one person was killed as a result of that foray and at least eight civilians were injured; data on further casualties is being verified.

The criminal group's actions were cut short by strikes from Russian aircraft, artillery fire and the active intervention of units protecting the State border around the Western Military District. The Kyiv regime's formations were hemmed in and routed, with the remnants of the sabotage group forced to retreat into the Sumy region, where they continued to come under fire. More than 70 terrorists were eliminated, along with four armoured combat vehicles and five pickups.

Representatives of Mr. Zelenskyy's Presidential Office (such as Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to the Head of the Office) undertook pitiful attempts to deceive the public with statements about the Ukrainian Government having nothing to do with what was happening, and to ascribe everything to the actions of "Russian partisans". Nevertheless, Andrii Yusov, a spokesperson for the military intelligence services of the Kyiv regime's Ministry of Defence, gave away the real implications of that border incursion by saboteurs. In an interview with the Ukrainian media outlet Suspilne Novyny he admitted that mercenaries from outfits belonging to Mr. Zelenskyy's formations had taken part in the raid. Moreover, a few days before, namely on 17 May, their commanders had posted a group photograph taken in front of the Main Intelligence Directorate's headquarters. Video footage shows that the fighters who took part in that raid were wearing the combat gear of the Ukrainian formations, including the corresponding insignia, and carrying NATO weapons. They were travelling – I repeat – in US-made armoured vehicles.

We must emphasize the following point: a number of NATO countries are continuing to provide military, political, financial and other support to the Kyiv regime, whose officials not only organize terrorist forays but also publicly admit to their desire to "destroy Russia as a country" (Oleksii Danilov, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council) and "kill Russians anywhere on the face of this world" (Kyrylo Budanov, chief of military intelligence). In addition, they give briefings on the struggle with Russia being part of a "NATO mission" for which the Alliance had been "preparing for decades" (Oleksii Reznikov, Defence Minister of the Kyiv regime).

The representatives of countries sponsoring the Kyiv regime are lying brazenly, not least in this room, when they claim that their main goal is to support the independent statehood of Ukraine and the development of democratic institutions in that country. They turn a blind eye to any atrocities and crimes committed by their puppets in Kyiv against the civilian population. They have no wish to distance themselves in public from the aforementioned attitudes and methods of the regime or to condemn these. Consequently, their continued assistance to Mr. Zelenskyy's team implies solidarity with it.

The North Atlantic Alliance countries are, in effect, carrying out a hybrid aggression against Russia, using the inhabitants of Ukraine to wage a proxy war against everything Russian that is historically intrinsic to Ukraine, and also against our statehood as such. It is clear that the Kyiv regime will immediately cease to exist as soon as the foreign *de facto* protectorate over Ukraine comes to an end, in one way or another. However, Ukraine itself – a land that is close and dear to us – is most assuredly there to stay.

The grouping of troops deployed as part of the Russian special military operation, which is implementing tasks related to the elimination of the threats emanating from Ukrainian territory that have been created by NATO countries, is faced with considerable military capacities on the opposite side. Those in the upper echelons of NATO make no secret about the fact that they are drawing up military plans against Russia – long before the start of the special military operation, our country had been designated an “adversary”. They are supplying the Kyiv regime’s fighters with equipment, weapons, ammunition and intelligence data, taking part in the assignment of targets, sending mercenaries and making NATO territory available for their recruitment, providing combat training and instruction for Mr. Zelenskyy’s formations, and so on. They publicly admit to seeking to achieve their geopolitical goals by means of all this. It is a veritable proxy war, no matter what anyone claims.

Finally, in an interview with Reuters a few days ago, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said that he intended to invite industry leaders from both sides of the Atlantic to a meeting of NATO defence ministers with a view to discussing the ramping up of military production. As he pointed out, that was necessary to continue provisioning Mr. Zelenskyy’s formations and to replenish NATO countries’ own supplies, which had been used up on Ukraine. In addition, realizing the imminence of the Kyiv regime’s death throes, those in the West have broached the question of supplying combat aircraft.

Despite their unprecedented and blatant involvement in the Ukrainian conflict, the NATO countries carry on lying to the international community about how they do not regard themselves as participants in that conflict, the goal of which, as far as they are concerned – and this is obvious – extends far beyond the events in Ukraine. We can see all this reflected in, *inter alia*, the statement by the countries of the so-called Group of Seven that was adopted on 19 May this year in the Japanese city of Hiroshima, raised from the ashes following the atomic bombing by the United States of America.

Mr. Chairperson,

Representatives of countries supporting the criminal regime in Kyiv who have taken the floor today have spoken about Crimea. We often hear in this room their hypocritical lamentations over individual figures who are being justifiably held in custody by the Russian law enforcement authorities as they are suspected of extremist activities or of having committed crimes against State security and public safety, in some cases acting on instructions from the Kyiv regime’s intelligence services. These people do not comprise even a fraction of 1 per cent of the peninsula’s overall population, though our opponents seek to make their detention out to be indicative of some kind of trend and, what is more, a massive and nationwide one.

Significantly, the aforementioned speakers deliberately gloss over and hush up the Kyiv regime’s truly criminal plans with regard to the peninsula’s inhabitants. For example, the Chief of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Kyiv regime’s Ministry of Defence, Kyrylo Budanov, whom I have already mentioned, described the regime’s intentions in all their “splendour” when reflecting on the 3 million Crimeans a few days ago. I am obliged to cite an excerpt from his interview: “Those in Crimea are not simply disloyal people. They are people with an altered psyche – not an ideology but a psyche. They need to be held duly accountable. As we see it, in the case of certain persons, due accountability for their actions can only imply their physical destruction. That is why there will still be plenty of work to do.”

We do not intend now to enter into a discussion of how the sick fantasies about establishing foreign control over Russian Crimea will never come to fruition.

We wish to note, most importantly, that Kyiv regime officials are admitting to drawing up plans for the physical extermination of a huge number of people because of their views. As we can see, those who

hold forth in this room on the situation in Crimea are not in the least bothered by these plans. We must emphasize that it was in view of precisely such threats that, in 2014, the Crimeans made their choice in favour of historical unity with Russia. And our country will continue to take robust measures to protect its people throughout its entire territory.

Mr. Chairperson,

Four years ago, on 20 May 2019, Mr. Zelenskyy assumed the office of President of Ukraine. Like his predecessor, Petro Poroshenko, he came with slogans about striving for peace, yet he deceived the Ukrainians, throwing himself into accelerated militarization and armed violence. It is now clear that the votes of Ukrainian citizens and changes in the nominal leaders of the Kyiv regime are irrelevant to its Western handlers, who are using their “Ukraine project” for ends that have nothing to do with the well-being of Ukrainians themselves.

No attempts against the security of Russia will lead to the results hankered for by Western countries. Our country’s capabilities are such that all the objectives of the special military operation will be accomplished fully. Russia will continue to consistently defend its legitimate national interests for as long as it takes, and to protect its people by all available means. The demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine will be ensured, as will the elimination of the threats emanating from its territory that have been created by Western countries.

Thank you for your attention.