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**STATEMENT BY
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1037th PLENARY MEETING
OF THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

22 February 2023

**Agenda item: General statements
Subject: Special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

A year ago, for the sake of protecting people in our historical territories, to safeguard Russia's national security and eliminate the threats emanating from the neo-Nazi regime in Kyiv, the decision was taken to launch a special military operation. That decision was inevitable after the West's preparations, which had been going on for eight years, for a hybrid war against our country. As the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, stated in his address to the Federal Assembly on 21 February 2023, "step by step, carefully and consistently we will deal with the tasks we have at hand." No one – I stress, no one – should remain in doubt about this.

The so-called civilized world, whose self-proclaimed representatives are the United States of America and its satellites, demonstratively ignored all the horrors, all the acts of genocide to which around 4 million residents of Donbas had been subjected since 2014. They did not consider worthy of protection people against whom the neo-Nazi junta in Kyiv had been deploying combat aircraft, artillery systems and heavy howitzers over a period of almost three thousand days.

Today, the Western-sponsored punitive policy of the Ukrainian Government against the civilian population is being firmly resisted. The utmost is being done to ensure that peace comes to the new constituent entities of the Russian Federation as soon as possible. Our country's regions are providing direct support to the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson provinces. Mariupol, which had been virtually razed to the ground by the Ukrainian nationalists, is coming to life again literally as we speak. Modern medical centres are being erected in Donbas. The ports of the Sea of Azov will be revived. Following the act of terrorism organized by the Ukrainian intelligence services, the Crimean Bridge has been restored in a very short time frame using unique technologies. As we like to say, we look after our people.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russians have a long memory. We remember how most of the wars waged on our land have come from the West. Russia has not started wars – rather, it has finished them, sometimes liberating, in so doing, a significant part of Europe from enslavement, at the cost of great sacrifice. It has always been our premise that in this long-suffering region there are, in general, no irreconcilable differences. However, the real state of affairs – as reflected in the trend towards the build-up of a NATO military presence on our western borders and in the readying of Ukraine for a proxy confrontation with Russia – suggests that over in Washington, D.C., they have been following a different approach.

The Anglo-Saxons and the collective West, which has unquestioningly submitted to their sway, are overtly attempting to disrupt the development of our country, invoking such slogans as “decolonization” and “preparing for the disintegration of Russia”; they spout crude messages about the need to hurt the Russian people, which is the bearer of national sovereignty. As French President Emmanuel Macron has admitted, the West has repeatedly meddled in Russian internal affairs, trying to bring about a change of power. Our European neighbours’ designs are obvious to us, namely, to channel aggression eastwards and, by hook or by crook, get rid of geopolitical rivals. That is how they see it.

The preparations for carrying out that task began long ago. First of all, seeking to gain a free hand, the US Government set about knocking out cornerstones of the international arms control and non-proliferation architecture. Cue its unilateral withdrawal from the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (in 2002), from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (in 2019) and from the Treaty on Open Skies (in 2020). Cue its refusal to ratify the adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and its use of the Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures as a tool for information warfare. All this was aimed at eliminating any constraints on the development of the US military-industrial complex.

The next step was to generate military threats on Russia’s western borders. For eight years now, the return of a “heavy” US military presence to Eastern Europe has been proceeding apace. There are 16 combat-ready battalion-sized task forces on the territory of Poland and the Baltic countries, of which no fewer than 12 are purely US units. The air grouping of the United States and the NATO countries in Europe comprises more than 2,200 combat aircraft. In addition, during the NATO summit in Madrid it was decided to increase the strength of the rapid reaction force to 300,000 troops; these are ready for large-scale redeployment and operational deployment at very short notice. What, pray, are you preparing for?

The United States, NATO and the European Union selected Ukraine as a further tool for the geopolitical “containment” of our country. It would not be amiss to recall here that, in 2014, the US Embassy was providing material support to the tune of 1 million dollars a day to the so-called protest camp on Independence Square in Kyiv. Under the pretext of exercises, military contingents from the Alliance’s member countries were regularly to be found on the territory of that country; there was an integration of Ukrainian and NATO command and control systems. In March 2021, Ukraine adopted a new Military Security Strategy, which is devoted pretty much in its entirety to confrontation with Russia – that being meant to involve “military support [for Ukraine] from the world community in the geopolitical confrontation with the Russian Federation” and, “with the assistance of the international community”, to end “on favourable terms for Ukraine”. Everything had been planned in advance. Not only did the Ukrainian Government proclaim NATO accession to be a strategic objective – it was led on by the authorities in Brussels themselves. There is only one thing to be said here: the means chosen to ensure security must not pose threats to other States, yet the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO was a direct threat to the security of Russia.

Mr. Chairperson,

The whole world is currently witnessing a new chapter in the anti-Russian policy of the collective West, which seeks to shift the conflict in Ukraine into a phase of global confrontation. On 16 February this year, there was a distinct signal to that effect from NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who made it clear that the West is willing to push the world to the brink of catastrophe for the sake of inflicting damage on Russia, and urged everyone to be prepared for a long stand-off. At the same time, US Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, who is possessed by hatred of Russia, exhorted the neo-Nazi regime in Kyiv to launch strikes against Russian military infrastructure in Crimea. Finally, the outcomes of the recent Munich Security Conference show that the NATO member countries have in effect opted to commit a new “Munich betrayal” by seeking, as was the case 85 years ago, to appease a warmonger’s military appetites, thereby provoking the risks of an escalation of tensions and driving a nail into the coffin of collective security in Europe.

Colleagues, the points we have just set out prompt us to ask: what next? What conclusions must the international community draw from the fact that the United States and NATO are giving the green light for the destruction of arms control regimes, are facilitating attempts by the Ukrainian armed forces to launch strikes against Russian strategic bomber air bases, are taking part in the planning of combat operations against our people and, lastly, are forbidding the conduct of negotiations on a diplomatic settlement? It is obvious to everyone that it is not Russia that is moving its military infrastructure closer to the borders of NATO member countries, and least of all those of the United States. Russia is not placing its military bases all over the world, nor is it waging a proxy war against the members of the North Atlantic Alliance. Now, the depths of political villainy were truly plumbed when, despite the Russian Government having provided security guarantees for the US President during his visit to Kyiv (otherwise his meeting with the top brass there would not have happened), and also in spite of the American leader’s “peace-loving” messages to the Russian people, the Ukrainian armed forces continued their barbaric shelling of the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Belgorod region using US-made M142 HIMARS multiple-launch rocket systems. We recall that it is the US armed forces who give the go-ahead for these strikes.

This line of conduct by the United States and its satellites on the other side of the Atlantic, which have by now firmly established themselves as participants in the conflict in Ukraine, has reached the point of no return. They are putting a question mark over the very existence of the Russian State. In these circumstances a concept such as that of red lines can no longer have any meaning for us. Defeating Russia on the battlefield is impossible. As long as the threat created by the West remains, all the necessary steps to eliminate it will be taken. For as long as is required.

The longer the range of the NATO weapons systems arriving in Ukraine, the farther we will be forced to push that threat back from Russia’s borders. Since December 2021, the NATO member countries have handed over to Ukraine 1,170 air defence systems, 440 tanks, 1,510 armoured infantry fighting vehicles, 655 artillery systems, 99,800 missiles for multiple-launch rocket systems, 609,000 rounds of anti-tank ammunition and more than 1.2 million shells. The greater part of the military equipment supplied has been destroyed by Russian troops. Weapons delivered to the Kyiv regime are a legitimate military target, as are the personnel from the United States and other NATO member countries who are servicing those weapons. This was clearly indicated to the US Ambassador, Lynne Tracy, on 21 February this year at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to which she had been summoned.

Continuing with further arms supplies to the Kyiv regime will not bring peace closer, but it will most assuredly cause Ukraine to bleed to death – the citizens of that country are being dragged off to the front; they are forced to shed their blood to advance the interests of the West in its geopolitical confrontation with the Russian Federation. I stress once again that the West has no intention of preserving anyone’s life to the

detriment of its geo-economic ambitions. Meanwhile, the Americans, the British and other Europeans often give the illusion that they are somehow defending “civilization” against barbarity and supporting Ukraine in its “centuries-long struggle for freedom”. This is being said by those who have imposed a political and economic protectorate on Ukraine, by those who have reduced it to the level of a colony with a puppet regime.

We would point out to our US colleagues separately that sugar-coating will not do – that is, trampling on the principle of indivisible security and steering combat operations against Russia while, at the same time, advocating “business as usual” on matters related to ensuring strategic stability. In connection with this, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, has announced the suspension of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START Treaty). However, no one should be under any illusion that global strategic parity can be destroyed. In that regard, should the United States test new types of nuclear weapons, we reserve the right to act in identical fashion.

We are also waiting for an explanation from the United States with regard to the explosions on the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines, which have dealt a blow to European energy security. The findings of the investigation by US journalist Seymour Hersh published on 8 February point to US military personnel and their Norwegian accomplices having carried out an attack on three branches of the aforementioned gas pipelines. The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation has adopted an appeal to the United Nations proposing an urgent international inquiry into the crime committed in the Baltic Sea on 26 September 2022. We urge that no obstacles be put in the way of an objective investigation to establish who the perpetrators were.

It is highly telling that people in the United States and Europe are standing up in protest against the militaristic policies of their governments. Last week, thousands took to the streets of Washington, D.C., and Munich in demonstrations condemning the sponsoring of hostilities in Ukraine. Ordinary Americans and Germans realize that the effects of this anti-Russian policy are not only proving to be a heavy burden for them to shoulder but may well also have catastrophic consequences for global security.

That is yet another sign of the beginning of the end for the liberal and globalist selfish world order based on US rules, crude diktat, ultimatums and imposition of one’s demands in an attempt to bend independent States to one’s will. Three quarters of the countries around the globe have not joined in the anti-Russian sanctions. They have all adopted a balanced position with regard to the situation in Ukraine, which they rightly consider in the context of a European security crisis that had been long in the making on account of NATO’s aggressive approach.

We warn the United States and its satellites about the counterproductive nature of the current aggressive course aimed at intensifying confrontation with Russia. We call upon the US Government to take steps to withdraw US-NATO military personnel and equipment from the territory of Ukraine, and likewise to desist from any hostile activities against our country. For our part, we are ready to respond to any security challenges, drawing on the strength and support of the Russian people. The historical truth is on our side.

Thank you for your attention.