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**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1463rd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 February 2024

**On the increasing military involvement of certain NATO member countries in
further confrontation in and around Ukraine**

Madam Chairperson,

We note the growing involvement of NATO countries in the armed confrontation in and around Ukraine. From certain capitals we continue to hear irresponsible statements about the discussion of plans to send regular military units to take part in combat operations against the Russian military, which continues to perform missions related to the liberation of the Russian Federation's constitutional territory in Donbas and the Dnieper Lowland from Ukrainian neo-Nazi formations.

Such rhetoric in the West is becoming shriller as Volodymyr Zelenskyy's armed formations are increasingly suffering military setbacks. We may observe the serious concern that has been awakened among many European leaders by the ideas aired in France on 26 February about sending military personnel from NATO member countries to assist the Ukrainian neo-Nazi formations.

According to verified available information, members of individual armed units (including special operations units) from NATO countries are already now present on Ukrainian territory under the guise of instructors and foreign mercenaries. Some of them are directly controlling complicated technical systems, including, for example, air defence systems supplied by Western countries. Others are doing a stint as members of assault units, such as, for example, the Canadians forming part of the grouping of Ukrainian neo-Nazis in the environs of the recently liberated city of Avdeyevka (Donetsk People's Republic, Russia).

We stress that any thoughts of sending NATO military personnel to Ukraine are not only irresponsible by their very nature but also a conscious step towards a heightening of the level of military escalation, both in the Ukrainian conflict and on our shared European continent as a whole. The full weight of responsibility for the erosion of security in Europe, and for the situation having been brought to the dangerous brink of direct military confrontation between Russia and NATO, rests with those who continue to overflow with geopolitical ambitions to control an area of the post-Soviet space where they had previously never exercised any such control. They continue to seek to realize their neocolonial ambitions, including by trying to foist on the international community a so-called "rules-based world order", which

they are setting up in opposition to a world order founded on the Charter of the United Nations, on the principles and norms of international law.

We note how the NATO countries are systematically ramping up the level of escalation as regards the conflict in and around Ukraine. At first, in violation of existing arms export control regimes, they sent the Kyiv regime man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and anti-tank missile systems. These were followed in the next phase by armoured vehicles, long-range artillery, unmanned aerial vehicles and army aviation. At the same time, support was provided in the form of intelligence data and target designation. Subsequently, multiple-launch rocket systems were sent. And after that came cluster munitions and depleted uranium shells. Now the shipping of long-range missile systems and combat aircraft (F-16 fighter jets) is being discussed.

As we can see, those who have learned very little from the sad historical experiences of Napoleon and Hitler have now floated the idea of amplifying the proxy war being waged courtesy of the Ukrainians by arranging for the direct participation of NATO troops in combat operations on Russian soil.

We emphasize that no Russian soldier, no Russian diplomat, nor any other citizen of Russia will ever tolerate the presence on our plains of US and German tanks and other NATO armoured vehicles with neo-Nazi symbols painted on their sides. Such hardware will be destroyed insofar as it is used against Russia and the Russian people.

Incidentally, this week, the first recorded combat use of an M1 Abrams tank proved to be a complete fiasco. The tank did not have time to engage the enemy properly as it was destroyed near Avdeyevka with the help of a Russian drone of the Piranha type. It is difficult not to agree with Russian experts, and also with the journalists from the US magazine *The National Interest*, that the destruction of that tank has demonstrated not only how vulnerable the M1 Abrams is, but also that the fighting potential of this expensive vehicle has been greatly overrated. The same can be said of the German Leopard tanks, the launching stations for US-made Patriot surface-to-air missiles and the many other samples of NATO military equipment that have already been destroyed on numerous occasions in the course of the Russian special military operation. In short, none of this has resulted in the emergence of a “Wunderwaffe” (miracle weapon) for the Ukrainian neo-Nazi formations – something that evidently cannot but upset the Kyiv regime. None of this has given the regime any military advantages, serving instead merely to prolong its death throes at the expense of the lives of thousands of Ukrainians.

The Western countries’ gambling on domestic political destabilization in our country has not worked out either. On the contrary: at a time that is critical for the fate of our fatherland, Russian society, as was so often the case in our country’s history, has merely pulled together even more strongly.

The Russian force grouping deployed for the special military operation continues systematically to reduce the military capability of the Kyiv regime. According to data from the Russian Ministry of Defence, Mr. Zelenskyy’s formations have on average been suffering more than 800 casualties and losing upwards of 120 weapons of various kinds per day since the start of the year. In total, the Ukrainian armed forces have lost over 444,000 troops killed or wounded in action during the special military operation.

Over the past week, a number of tactically important settlements in the Donetsk People’s Republic were liberated – control over these significantly increases the operational potential of the Russian force grouping. Our military personnel continue to build on their gains.

Against this backdrop, some sound thoughts are after all finding their way into the heads of those Western officials who only recently were calling for the so-called “Russian question” to be settled on the

battlefield. A few days ago, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, acknowledged that the era of the West's global dominance had definitively ended with the start of the Russian special military operation and the new round of conflict in the Gaza Strip. We should point out at once that such revelations by Mr. Borrell imply the admission that the West's efforts to isolate Russia in the international arena have failed, as have its attempts to manipulate the policies of "Global South" countries to serve its geopolitical interests.

Some people do not even hide their disappointment over the fact that our country has a sovereign course. The most senior deputy to the US Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, said the following live on CNN (I quote): "It's not the Russia that, frankly, we wanted. We wanted a partner that was going to be westernizing, that was going to be European." Ms. Nuland, who by the looks of it has a rather sketchy knowledge of history, did not stop to consider that it was the United States of America and other NATO countries that spurned the hand of co-operation extended by Russia, specifically when our country in the 1990s and 2000s proposed building together a harmonious new architecture for European and global security. Nowadays, in contrast, there can scarcely be anyone in Russia who cares about her opinion on the kind of country that the United States wants Russia to be. In reality, what matters to us is what our country's inhabitants want Russia to be like. And here there is no room for doubt – they want to live in a strong, united, sovereign and independent Russia.

One last thing. We express our gratitude to the members of the diplomatic corps, academia and the public who showed an interest in the round table organized on 26 February by the Russian Permanent Mission to the OSCE, which was dedicated to the tenth anniversary of the tragic events on the Maidan in Kyiv and the armed conflict that they triggered in and around Ukraine. During the round table, which was open to everyone in the OSCE, eyewitnesses to those events from Donbas and Novorossiia shared facts relating to the crimes of the post-Maidan regime in Kyiv and the current situation in the region. We note in this regard the hysterical reaction of a number of Western OSCE participating States, which issued a joint appeal not to attend that event organized by the Russian Permanent Mission. It is evident that they are attempting to make use of our common Organization to impose their informational dictatorship. They are, moreover, afraid of an honest discussion and so they regularly organize their own "get-togethers" within the OSCE, to which only a select few are invited. However, there cannot be a monopoly on information at the OSCE, which means that the truth will come out in any case.

To stress our main point: the Russian special military operation is a forced measure that is being implemented in view of the years-long militarization of Ukraine by NATO countries and their use of Ukrainian territory to project threats to neighbouring sovereign States, and also in view of the Western elites' encouragement and whitewashing of the Kyiv regime's numerous crimes against the civilian population. Articles now appearing in the Western press confirm what Russian representatives have been saying for years: the "exploitation" of Ukraine by Western intelligence services and military departments and its transformation into an instrument for combating Russia began long before February 2022. The special military operation was launched and is being conducted in full compliance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, which provides for the right of members of the international community to act in collective and individual self-defence.

It must be understood that a durable and just peace in Europe and the world without taking Russia's security interests into account is fundamentally impossible – no matter how much our opponents strive for the opposite. We must emphasize once again that they bear full responsibility for the heightened level of escalation in the Ukrainian conflict and the rising military tensions in Europe as a whole.

Russia has repeatedly stated the need for the development of a just multipolar world order. It has also announced its readiness to use political and diplomatic means to achieve the goals of demilitarization and

denazification of Ukraine, as well as the elimination of threats to the security of our country posed by NATO countries from Ukrainian territory. And if that readiness is not reciprocated, the special operation will be continued by military means until the tasks set have been fully accomplished.

Thank you for your attention.