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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**RIGHT OF REPLY BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1462nd (REINFORCED) MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 February 2024

On Ukraine

Madam Chairperson,

Today once again, as was the case one year ago, false accusations have been levelled against Russia by the representatives of a number of participating States in connection with the anniversary of the start of the Russian special military operation.

We regret that the Maltese Chairmanship is taking part in this, having completely forgotten about its real duties and powers, which were jointly agreed on by all 57 participating States. It is all the more regrettable after the recent rulings of the International Court of Justice, which rejected the baseless claims by the Kyiv regime and its Western handlers to the effect that our country has since 2014 been engaged in some sort of “unprovoked aggression”, that it has been supporting “terrorist structures” in Donbas and that, since 2022, it has been waging a “genocidal war”.

We harbour no illusions as to a swift resolution of the Ukrainian conflict and of our differences with the West as a whole. We can see the non-constructive approach taken by the Western participants in the NATO bloc and their Kyiv protégés – all of them are pounding the war drum, rejecting the very thought of taking Russia’s legitimate interests into account.

Our country has never closed itself off from mutually respectful dialogue, in which genuine consideration of the legitimate interests of the parties would allow existing disputes to be resolved. But we will never agree to be spoken to in the language of ultimatums, of unrealistic and impracticable “formulas”.

We note the growing involvement of NATO countries, in word and in deed, in the armed confrontation with Russia – both on our constitutional territory and using the territory of Ukraine. Well, so be it. Russia is striving for peace, but not at any price. The price of peace cannot consist in renouncing the sovereign path, true freedom, independence and territorial integrity of our country.

Let us be objective: both in Russia and in the West people realize that the Kyiv regime’s armed formations are taking a beating. It is only a matter of time before they are completely routed. Just as it is only a matter of time until the West abandons the compulsive and inherently crazy ideas about inflicting a

“strategic defeat” on Russia on the battlefield, and also about consolidating the domination of the “Anglo-Saxons” in continental Europe to the detriment of European countries’ national interests.

Today, all responsibility for the level of escalation rests with the leadership of those countries that continue to invest in the military “beefing up” of the Kyiv regime and are persuading it that the time for diplomacy has not yet come. It is they who are responsible for the continued casualties, including casualties among the civilian population. Responsible for each further house destroyed, each life lost, each individual destiny crushed, each additional infrastructure facility hit. By whitewashing all of the Kyiv regime’s actions and providing it with ever new weapons, they are expressing solidarity with every new terrorist attack planned by that regime. I stress that what we are talking about is not simply encouragement of the Kyiv regime, but, rather, unequivocal complicity by Western countries in these crimes and in the organization of combat operations against Russian military personnel and directly against Russian Federation territory.

In view of this, it is puzzling to hear the contrived lamentations by representatives of Western countries about civilian casualties – for they consider any victims in the Russian regions not to be human beings at all and do not even notice them, while the population in areas controlled by the Kyiv regime is of interest to them merely as cannon fodder in a hybrid war against Russian statehood.

It must not be forgotten that representatives of the United States of America and the United Kingdom bear direct responsibility for the derailing of the political and diplomatic settlement process that had begun to take shape following the consultations between representatives of Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul on 29 March 2022. As is known, the United States and the United Kingdom insisted on the continuation of the hostilities, making Ukraine promises that were inflated and unrealistic. Having bought into those promises, in October 2022 the authorities in Kyiv prohibited by law any contacts with the leadership of Russia on the question of a settlement. To this day, that prohibition has not been revoked.

The insinuations that it was Russia which shied away from diplomatic efforts to bring about a settlement are a downright lie. Today, neither the Kyiv regime nor its Western sponsors are demonstrating the political will for a settlement of the conflict. This leaves Russia with no other choice but to continue the special operation by military means.

At the end of last week, Russian military personnel completed the liberation of the city of Avdeyevka (Donetsk People’s Republic), where for ten years the Ukrainian armed forces had been constructing a formidable stronghold. The liberation of Avdeyevka heralds a qualitatively new stage in the special military operation, which will be followed by other, no less impressive victories of Russian arms.

Today’s special meeting of the Permanent Council is laden with symbolism: it has been convened on the eve of the anniversary of the start of the Russian special operation. However, today a further symbolism comes into play: Defender of the Fatherland Day is traditionally observed in Russia on 23 February.

It was around this time of year a decade ago that an armed coup d’état was carried out in Kyiv, whereupon war on all things Russian was declared in Ukraine. The residents of Donbas began to be exterminated, while Ukraine itself began to be actively militarized and prepared for a high-intensity conflict with Russia. All this, to be sure, not only changed the scheme of things in Europe but also once again acutely raised the issue of defending our fatherland, our history, the right of all peoples in our country freely to determine their own destiny and to uphold our common values and interests.

To stress our main point, the Russian special operation is a forced measure – it 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.

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 military operation will be continued until the tasks set have been fully accomplished.

Thank you for your attention.