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RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1461st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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**Derailing of the Minsk agreements by the Kyiv regime and the Western alliance:
ramifications and lessons for the OSCE**

Madam Chairperson,

It is not the first time that we encounter attempts by our Western opponents to adopt a highly fragmentary approach towards historical events, to begin their reckoning from a calendar date that seems more convenient to them politically. With regard to Ukraine, they take as their basis the argument about the allegedly unprovoked actions by Russia that commenced on 24 February 2022 and that were the starting point for a series of historical watershed moments.

However, the true historical turning point came much earlier. What is going on in and around Ukraine is the consequence of an aggravation of the profound crisis caused by the brazen interference of Western countries in domestic political events during 2013–2014, including the protests on the Maidan in Kyiv. This interference led to an anti-constitutional armed coup d'état that not only did not elicit condemnation from Western governments but was actively supported by them.

The guarantees on facilitating a political settlement between the legitimate authorities and the armed opposition that were provided at a high level by France, Germany and Poland proved to be worth no more than the paper to which the representatives of these European countries put their signatures. The coup undermined Ukrainian sovereignty and gave the United States of America and its satellites the opportunity to establish external control over Ukraine's territory through their puppets.

This raises a legitimate question: did the OSCE Secretariat's Conflict Prevention Centre live up to its name and function during all that time? Where were the early warning mechanisms? Why did the OSCE not take, at the very earliest stages, decisive political and diplomatic measures to prevent the coup d'état and the ensuing armed violence?

The post-Maidan authorities pursued the goal of subjugating the whole of Ukraine to the interests of radical nationalists. They actively exploited the slogans of European integration, though in fact they professed ideas that are incompatible with European civilization. The regime that established itself after the coup, not least with the help of armed nationalists, attempted to impose its will on the inhabitants of

Ukraine. As was to be expected, this met with resistance from a substantial segment of society, which duly stood up for the constitutional order and legitimacy. Military force was used against these people, yet three “waves” of offensive operations by the Kyiv regime against Donbas in 2014–2015 did not yield the successes it had wished for.

Exactly nine years ago, at midnight on 15 February 2015, the first paragraph of the Minsk Package of Measures came into effect. It provided for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire, together with the initiation of a process of political settlement of the internal Ukrainian conflict.

The entire set of Minsk agreements envisaged the OSCE assisting in their implementation. The document was endorsed and supported by the United Nations Security Council in resolution 2202 of 17 February 2015, thereby becoming part of international law and binding. The participants in the Normandy format, which included the leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine, developed a so-called monitoring mechanism to watch over the settlement process.

However, a real ceasefire was never established. That is no surprise, though – especially in the light of admissions by the German and French leaders Angela Merkel and François Hollande, who assumed the role of guarantors for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Once they had left office, they went on record to say that they had considered the Minsk agreements to be merely a means of helping the Kyiv regime to buy time so that it could strengthen its military potential. Their remarks were publicly corroborated by someone else who had been directly involved in the events in question, namely the former leader of the Kyiv regime, Petro Poroshenko.

The Minsk Package of Measures was the last hope for a peaceful, political and diplomatic settlement of the conflict – for that very “sustainable and fair peace” which people in this room so like to discourse on. The efforts of the OSCE, whose leadership should have striven to bring about full implementation of the Minsk Package, ultimately turned out to be ineffective: it did not prove possible to avert the course taken by the Kyiv regime towards the socio-economic strangulation of Donbas and armed escalation, or to prevent that regime from irreversibly sliding towards neo-Nazi practices.

The robust toolbox on Ukraine created under the OSCE’s aegis has been a complete failure.

During the work of the Minsk-based Trilateral Contact Group and its working groups, the Kyiv regime’s representatives systematically shied away from direct dialogue with the representatives of Donetsk and Lugansk, which was one of the key stipulations in the Package of Measures.

Among those ineffective tools was also the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), which in the twilight of its existence strayed altogether from the principles of impartiality and began unabashedly advancing the political agenda of the Kyiv regime’s sponsors. The Mission was in breach of its mandate, avoiding as it did contacts with the representatives of Donetsk and Lugansk. As a condition of entering into communication with them, it demanded that they publicly declare political loyalty to the Kyiv regime.

The SMM ostensibly “did not notice” how, in violation of paragraph 10 of the Package of Measures, there was a constant presence of NATO soldiers, weapons and military equipment in the territories controlled by the Kyiv regime, along with foreign mercenaries, fighters from US private military companies and from other countries’ companies of that kind, instructors, and so on. They were there under the fictitious guise of “military exercises” that kept repeating themselves, with one “exercise” following another in regular succession. In its reports the Mission toned down facts and evidence that were awkward for the Kyiv

regime's Western sponsors, and airbrushed the Ukrainian neo-Nazis' crimes. Essentially, all this was merely conducive to armed escalation, rather than a ceasefire.

The OSCE's project activities in Ukraine have completely discredited themselves. Not one of the projects that were announced ultimately helped to ensure that the Ukrainian Government implemented its OSCE commitments in good faith. Discriminatory legislative acts continued to be adopted in Ukraine that were aimed at forcibly altering the identity of most Russian-speaking Ukrainians and curtailing their rights on the basis of ethnic, linguistic, religious and other affiliation. Under the very nose of the OSCE, media censorship was introduced, political assassinations were carried out and the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church was actively combated.

The OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine stopped dissimulating and in 2019 publicly confirmed that his activities over many years had been aimed by no means at rectifying the dismal situation, but at dragging Ukraine into Euro-Atlantic structures. The group of NATO countries today seeks to continue that course under the OSCE flag as part of the so-called Support Programme for Ukraine, which has not been approved by all 57 participating States of our Organization.

As a result of all these failed actions, not a single one of the paragraphs in the Minsk Package of Measures was ever fully implemented. Against this backdrop the NATO countries continued to actively invest in the militarization of the Kyiv regime while at the same time continuing the Alliance's military development of Ukrainian territory and posing unacceptable threats to the security of neighbouring sovereign States.

The context for the events in Ukraine is the expansion of NATO that has been going on for 30 years now – the expansion of a military alliance that has repeatedly demonstrated its aggressiveness through the illegitimate use of military force in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, Syria and, as we speak today, in a whole group of countries in the Middle East. NATO's actions in Europe and, in particular, in Ukraine were in no way compatible with the objective of building an equal and indivisible security community that was laid down at the OSCE Summit in Astana in 2010.

Russia has never shied away from efforts to reduce regional tensions. In December 2021, the Russian Government put forward a proposal for draft treaties with the United States and NATO on security guarantees. These were in effect rejected: instead of reaching a substantive agreement, the West proposed that everything be watered down in endless discussions (including at the OSCE) on individual aspects, leaving aside all the most important matters and points of principle.

In view of the armed escalation undertaken in Donbas by the Kyiv regime in early 2022, Russia was compelled to take decisive military measures to protect the civilian population from military attacks. On 24 February 2022, the special military operation began, its aim being to put an end to the militarization of Ukraine by NATO countries.

However, our country did not close itself to dialogue on a political and diplomatic settlement. Already on 26 and 27 February 2022, consultations on de-escalation took place in Homiel (Republic of Belarus) between representatives of Russia and Ukraine. After several rounds of meetings, the draft of a bilateral agreement was prepared and this was initialled in Istanbul on 29 March 2022 by the head of the Ukrainian delegation, Davyd Arakhania. In order to create the conditions for that agreement to be signed and put into practice, Russian troops began to be withdrawn from the Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Chernihiv and Sumy regions in late March 2022.

After this there followed a spate of staged provocations with the involvement of the Kyiv regime's "Anglo-Saxon" handlers. Large-scale disinformation campaigns about the "atrocities" by Russian soldiers that had allegedly occurred in Bucha, Mariupol and other cities were meant to create the emotional backstory required to derail the reaching of agreement on a settlement. Consequently, that very same Mr. Arakhamia has spoken on the record about how the "Anglo-Saxon" handlers (for example, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson) arrived in Kyiv in person in early April 2022 to give instructions "not to sign anything and just fight".

On 4 October 2022, the ringleader of the Kyiv regime, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, ratified by decree a decision adopted on 30 September 2022 by the National Security and Defence Council (NSDC) of Ukraine prohibiting contacts with the Russian leadership regarding de-escalation and a settlement process.

Those who today hold forth about Russia balking at steps to reach a settlement are intentionally concealing the aforementioned facts and misinforming the international community.

Through its actions and attitudes the Kyiv regime continues to corroborate the validity of conducting the Russian special military operation. On 20 November 2023, the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament), Ruslan Stefanchuk, said that in Ukraine "there are no and cannot be any Russian ethnic minorities". Somewhat earlier, on 1 December 2022, NSDC Secretary Oleksii Danilov had stated that the Kyiv regime's task was to "destroy Russia as a country". From Mr. Danilov's lips, and also in statements by heads of the Kyiv regime's Defence Ministry (such as Oleksii Reznikov), we have been hearing words confirming that in this task the puppets in Kyiv are "carrying out a NATO mission". It goes without saying that Russia cannot but take these realities into account, not least in view of the recent intensification of targeted armed attacks by the Ukrainian armed forces on the civilian population and civilian infrastructure in Russian towns and cities.

And now to our last point. In early 2024, the International Court of Justice rejected the unprecedentedly false accusations by Western countries and their Kyiv protégés claiming that Russia had since 2014 been engaged in "aggression" and a "campaign to erase Ukrainian cultural identity", and that in the context of the special military operation it was waging some sort of "genocidal war". Nevertheless, even after that verdict by the International Court of Justice, the representatives of Western countries and their Kyiv protégés have no qualms about continuing with their propaganda – they are not bothered by the lack of any foundational basis for that propaganda, whether in law or in fact.

Also important is the fact that, in its final judgment on the substance of the claims levelled by the Kyiv regime against Russia, the International Court of Justice dismissed the regime's allegations that the People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk were "terrorist organizations" and had been such ever since they were proclaimed. This in turn means that the military operation initiated against them in April 2014, which the Kyiv regime termed an "anti-terrorist operation", had no basis in law either.

We emphasize that the Ukrainian conflict has been and is being used by the West to achieve quite specific geopolitical goals, which encompass attempts to weaken Russia and to foist on the world a US-centric "rules-based global order" that is being openly set up in opposition to a world order based on international law.

Daily confirmation of this – plain for the whole world to see – is to be found in the actions of NATO countries. As far as they are concerned, the Charter of the United Nations does not exist when it comes to armed interference in the affairs of sovereign Arab States. They disregard the thousands upon thousands of civilian casualties arising as a result of military operations by regimes that they support. They have long

since discredited themselves and lost their nimbus as champions of international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Their last effective source of leverage – namely tools for exerting influence on global economic processes – is increasingly losing its power with the emergence of new economically attractive models and hubs for the development of a multipolar world. However, our former partners stubbornly refuse to face up to the fact that the processes taking place today are objectively discernible trends in global development.

Russia does not seek confrontation, but it is prepared for all scenarios. Our country will defend its legitimate interests for as long as it takes, protect its people by all available means, and carefully and consistently deal with the tasks at hand. Russian society has the will, determination and resources required for that.

Thank you for your attention.