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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY  
MS. IULIA ZHDANOVA, MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY  
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1046th PLENARY MEETING OF  
THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

24 May 2023

**Agenda item: General statements**

**Subject: On the denunciation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe**

Madam Chairperson,

The current deplorable state of the international arms control system is the result of the destructive influence of the countries of the North Atlantic Alliance, which is obsessed with redistributing the balance of power at the expense of the security of others and ensuring military and strategic superiority for itself as it strives for global domination.

We cannot stand idly by as some countries infringe on the core interests of others, engage in “hybrid” subversive activities against them and try to exert pressure by using force, deliberately creating risks and fuelling escalation with a view to turning that escalation to their own advantage.

Under these circumstances, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, has taken the decision to withdraw from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty). On 16 May this year, the State Duma unanimously endorsed the Federal Act on Denunciation of the CFE Treaty.

This was long overdue. The Treaty, which was signed in 1990 and entered into force in 1992, has become hopelessly outdated. With the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and then of the USSR and the withdrawal of Soviet/Russian troops from Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Treaty mechanisms, designed as they were to maintain the balance of forces between two politico-military alliances, lost their significance. Furthermore, as a result of its enlargement, the NATO bloc has exceeded the levels established for it by the Treaty.

The Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty, drafted at Russia’s insistence and signed in 1999, has never entered into force owing to the destructive position of the United States of America and other countries of the Alliance.

After the OSCE Summit in Istanbul, Russia fulfilled its so-called Istanbul commitments regarding conventional armed forces, but the United States kept moving the goalposts further. At some point we

realized that the US Government simply had no need for the adapted CFE Treaty. It would, for example, have forced the United States to show us its troop movements across Europe into the Persian Gulf zone in preparation for the US aggression against Iraq. Squeezing Russia out of the near abroad was and remains the principal objective for the United States. Realizing that it would not be able to achieve these goals, it to all intents and purposes “overturned” the adapted Treaty.

In recent years, the challenges and threats posed by NATO’s activities began to reach a critical mass. The Alliance has continued to increase its military presence near Russia’s borders and has dramatically stepped up the activity of its air and naval forces in the immediate vicinity of our territory. The intensity of aerial reconnaissance operations conducted over the waters of the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea has increased.

With the start of the Russian Federation’s special military operation, the collective West has, in effect, openly launched into confrontation with our country. By supplying the Kyiv regime with huge volumes of weapons, passing on intelligence information and participating in the planning of strikes on Russian territory, it is violating virtually all international obligations in the field of conventional arms control in Europe.

The applications for NATO membership by the Finnish and Swedish Governments and Finland’s accession to the Alliance have been the last straw for us.

It is clear that reaching agreements on conventional arms control is now unrealistic. That is part of a much broader relationship among States in the field of security. It will only be possible to talk about a relaunching of this relationship once the current stormy period of European history is over and the West has abandoned its hostile anti-Russian policy. If and when the time comes to sit down at the negotiating table, the world will be a very different place and fundamentally new approaches will be required, not least with regard to agreements in the sphere of conventional arms control. In doing so, we will be guided first and foremost by our national interests.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.