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**STATEMENT BY
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1074th PLENARY MEETING OF
THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

17 April 2024

Agenda item: Opening session under the Croatian Chairmanship

Mr. Chairperson,

We have listened carefully to the information given on Croatia's priorities for its chairing of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), all the more so since the Chairmanship did not consider it necessary to hold preliminary consultations with the Russian delegation about the thematic content of this autonomous decision-making body's programme of work. This invites a discouraging conclusion as far as the FSC is concerned, namely that, under the influence of the delegations of NATO and EU countries, our Croatian colleagues intend to use this platform for political brawls with Russia, thereby plunging the Forum even further into crisis. So be it – that is the choice you have made and it may well force us to take specific countervailing actions.

This latest round of Forum negotiations comes at a historically challenging time, when the foundations of the pan-European security architecture laid down by our predecessors are being deliberately knocked out under the onslaught of the hegemonic ambitions of the United States of America and its satellites. To the detriment of the principle of equal and indivisible security that was agreed on at the highest level at the OSCE, they are erecting “iron curtains” everywhere, from international formats to entire regions. However, these flawed attempts to exert collective pressure on sovereign States under the guise of promotion of a so-called “rules-based world order” are leading merely to an exacerbation of international tensions.

The most striking example in this regard is to be found in the “activities” of the North Atlantic Alliance, which after the conclusion of the Cold War, the break-up of the USSR and the self-dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization took a long time to pick a *raison d'être* for itself and eventually found it in causing the ruin and downfall of States, in the bringing of misery, humanitarian crises and massive human casualties to territories outside State control. Apart from the bloc's twenty-odd military operations, it is worth recalling the recent missile and bomb strikes on Yemen carried out by the US-led Western coalition and the attempts to turn the Middle Eastern region into a “playground” of the United States, which has led to the current escalation fraught with nuclear risks. Moreover, in the light of the recent horrendous terrorist attack at the Crocus City Hall concert venue in the Moscow region, which was executed at the instigation of

the Ukrainian authorities, special significance attaches to the information obtained by the Russian investigating authorities about the involvement of the US oil and gas company Burisma Holdings in the provision of resources for Ukrainian terrorist activities in Russia and beyond. Those are essentially the “achievements” that the North Atlantic Alliance had under its belt when it came to celebrate its 75th anniversary.

The backdrop to and the leitmotif running through the forthcoming discussions at the Forum will be provided by the armed confrontation carefully planned, financed and stoked by Western countries around Ukraine, which they are using as a military training area to operate against the Russian Federation. I would remind you that at the turn of 2021–2022 they rejected our proposals for de-escalating the situation in Europe and began egging the Kyiv regime on to resolve the Donbas problem by force and to aggravate its relations with Russia. Consequently, in order to protect its national security interests, the Russian Federation was compelled, in full accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, to launch a special military operation. The United States and NATO have currently set their sights on preserving Ukraine or at least a part of that country as an anti-Russian territory wholly under their control and geared towards serving the bloc’s interests. However, as a result of adventurist acts by even just one or two member countries of the Alliance, the Ukrainian crisis might well transcend its geographical boundaries and take on a completely different dimension. In these circumstances, the goals of demilitarizing and de-NATO-fying Ukraine remain relevant for us.

We must point out, though, that Russia has never closed itself off to real and meaningful dialogue on settling the crisis concerning Ukraine by political and diplomatic means, which would be based not on some unrealistic “formulas” taking the shape of Western ultimatums but, rather, on the objectives of eliminating the root causes of the tragic situation that arose in 2014 following the coup d’état in Kyiv. These objectives are reflected in, *inter alia*, the draft Istanbul agreement from 2022. As for the attempts by third countries to conduct “peace forums” of some sort without Russia’s participation, they are pointless and irrational. And all the more unacceptable is the organization of such pseudo-events by those who are applying anti-Russian sanctions and are bent on excluding Russia from the European security system. We are convinced that international security should be regarded as a common and indivisible good that all States without exception must be able to enjoy in equal measure. That is the very approach being implemented by Russia, and, what is more, our country has a huge number of like-minded partners, the ranks of which continue to expand.

Mr. Chairperson,

Despite the growing disappointment among our country’s authorities at the results of the FSC’s activities over the past two years, we continue to believe that the Forum can nevertheless still demonstrate its utility at a time of crisis. For that to happen, it is imperative that this platform be rid of neo-Nazi slogans and aggressive bloc-based attitudes. We would emphasize, in particular, that stemming the trends towards a crisis at the FSC is something that very much depends on Croatia’s efforts as the holder of the Chairmanship. The airing of threats directed at participating States and attempts at blackmail are unacceptable – they run counter to the OSCE’s rules and traditions, are not in keeping with the elevated status of the FSC Chairmanship and must be stopped.

At present the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is continuing to thoroughly analyse the agenda put forward by the Chairmanship. For the time being it would be premature to draw final conclusions on which of the topics proposed for discussion are in line with the FSC’s politico-military mandate and which are at odds with it. All the more so given that the Croatian representatives have not justified their selection of topics for the Security Dialogues. In particular, the relevant Russian experts in our capital do not quite understand what is going to be considered at the meeting on “intelligence-collection activities on the basis of open sources of information”, and how such a topic fits in with issues related to military security, arms

control and confidence- and security-building measures. We would ask the Chairmanship to explain in some form or another what the underlying idea consists in. But if what is again being planned is some sort of “pro-Ukrainian performance”, the Forum would do well to prepare itself to conduct an unofficial event on that topic.

On a positive note, we may single out the decision to discuss, during the current round of negotiations, issues related to demining and the role of military academies in the changing security landscape – it is to be hoped that such discussions will also introduce innovative elements into our work. In our view, it was a sensible decision on the part of the Croatian Chairmanship to listen to us and exclude the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security from consideration at the Forum, and to move that topic instead to the format of a joint meeting of the FSC and the OSCE Permanent Council. It has long been clear that biased “conclaves” on the subject which last several hours and have nothing to do with the goals of resolution 1325 cannot be squared either with the resolution itself or with the Forum’s tasks. There is no longer any place for this topic in our platform.

On a separate note, we must stress that we intend to invite prominent Russian experts in the field of security to speak in a national capacity at the FSC via videoconference during the forthcoming round of negotiations. We trust that the Chairmanship will accord representatives of the Russian Government the opportunity to set out our position on behalf of the Russian delegation. Any attempts to censor our representatives will be interpreted by us as deliberate encroachments on the interests of an OSCE participating State.

Despite the intensification of trends towards a crisis in the FSC’s work, we remain convinced that the Forum constitutes a unique politico-military platform for dialogue among the States of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions, the central purpose of which in the current circumstances is to prevent confrontation from escalating out of control. This makes the responsibility of those at the helm of the Forum all the greater. A balanced agenda, the absence of any skew favouring specific groups of participating States, strict compliance with the Rules of Procedure, transparency in the Chairmanship’s activities, the holding of consultations with all the participating States and the restoration of balanced dialogue – these are the ingredients of the sole recipe that would make it possible, while it is not too late, to preserve the Forum and prevent the existing divisions between participating States from becoming an unbridgeable chasm. If you, Mr. Chairperson, and the members of the Troika are genuinely interested in such work, then we stand ready for co-operation based on the principle of reciprocity.

Thank you for your attention.