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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1350th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

13 January 2022

European security challenges and Russian proposals for long-term legally binding guarantees by Russia on its western borders

Mr. Chairperson-in-Office,

We have carefully studied your vision of the OSCE's work this year.

The first Permanent Council meeting of the year is a good opportunity to discuss the present absolutely intolerable situation in the field of European security. This is, in fact, the main task of our Organization, stemming from its existing mandate and original purpose.

Unfortunately, quite a few systemic problems have accumulated in the OSCE that require meaningful action. These concern serious geographical imbalances in activities, including in work on the three "baskets", the need to streamline the functioning of executive structures and field operations, and the implementation of previously adopted decisions to strengthen the effectiveness of the Organization as a whole and to improve the political consultation process. The task of formalizing the international legal status of the OSCE through the negotiation of a charter or constituent document is also overdue. We need to revive the culture of dialogue and co-operation and bring back the "spirit of Helsinki", rather than engage in confrontational rhetoric. This is the only way to increase the OSCE's relevance and restore its role as a leading unifying organization in European affairs.

The current depressing state of affairs in the OSCE area is evident. All signs point to the systemic degradation of the Organization. There are many reasons for this. One of the main reasons is the policy of the United States of America and NATO aimed at the "containment" of Russia. The fight against the "threat from the East" has once again taken centre stage. Along our country's borders, large-scale exercises are being conducted on a permanent basis, military infrastructure is being set up and strike weapons are being deployed, which pose the gravest threat to Russia's security. In addition to this, the United States and NATO are continuing their military absorption of post-Soviet States with the aim of using their potential against our country and exacerbating tension on our borders.

The material foundations of European security have been almost completely destroyed. Thanks to the actions of the United States, with the tacit consent of its allies, the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic

Missile Systems collapsed, the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe was never ratified, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty ceased to exist and the Treaty on Open Skies was irrevocably undermined.

We note the efforts to involve non-member countries of the Alliance in NATO's anti-Russian military activities. In the course of these activities, scenarios, including those of an offensive nature, are being practised. This is an incomplete list of growing problems.

The destabilization of the politico-military situation has reached a limit beyond which a crisis could arise on the continent with unpredictable consequences for European security.

All this represents an unacceptable increase in the risk to Russia's security and we have therefore been forced to respond. That is why we have demanded immediate legally binding guarantees from the United States and NATO ruling out any expansion of the Alliance and the deployment of strike weapons systems near Russia's borders.

I assume that all those present have already had an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the key provisions of the draft international legal documents prepared and made public by the Russian side – the agreement on measures to ensure the security of the Russian Federation and member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on security guarantees. They reflect our vision of a framework for both resolving current issues and discussing practical security measures, including addressing real concerns and minimizing potential threats.

We have deliberately made them public to avoid ambiguity, misinterpretation and even misinformation.

Our initiatives are not a menu from which you can pick and choose. They are a package deal. They are based on the principle of the indivisibility of security endorsed by all the leaders of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian States, which should finally be affirmed in a legally binding form. The time is ripe to address this issue as our partners are systematically failing to honour their political commitments, let alone their verbal assurances and promises, which has nullified all earlier attempts by the Russian side to halt the negative trends in the development of the military-strategic situation in the OSCE's area of responsibility.

In essence, the Russian initiatives are another serious attempt to reach an agreement on what lines should not be crossed and what approaches, which we have jointly formulated and enshrined in many documents, should not be ignored. This is not an ultimatum, as some in this room might want to say, but an invitation to professional, substantive discussions on issues of war and peace. Today's discussion is a direct consequence of the total imbalance in the mechanisms for maintaining a minimum degree of stability and predictability in the Euro-Atlantic area.

We call for the parties to recommit to the international legal obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, the 1999 Charter for European Security and the 1997 Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation. The key elements are commitments to building co-operation on the principles of indivisible and equal security and the inadmissibility of actions and activities conducted at the expense of each other's security, either individually or within international organizations, military alliances or coalitions.

We invite our partners to move away from flawed and dangerous logic in which Russia is regarded as an adversary and to use consultation mechanisms to resolve problematic situations.

This demand of ours is fully in keeping with the principle, confirmed more than once in OSCE documents, that no one will strengthen their security at the expense of the security of other States and that, when determining how to ensure their own security, countries will take into account the legitimate concerns of others.

We should like to warn you openly and honestly that any attempts to stall a meaningful negotiation process on security guarantees as part of the dialogue between Russia and the United States and NATO or to dilute it to the point that it becomes a pointless and repetitive exchange of positions risk inevitable deterioration of the security situation of all States without exception. If we do not hear a constructive response to the proposals made within a reasonable time and the aggressive line of behaviour towards Russia continues, we will be forced to draw the appropriate conclusions and take all necessary measures to ensure a strategic balance and eliminate unacceptable threats to our national security.

Esteemed colleagues,

The great Chinese thinker Sun Tzu once said: “There are roads which must not be followed, armies which must not be attacked, towns which must not be besieged.”

Russia is a peace-loving country. That said, we do not need peace at any price. The requirement for these legally enforceable security guarantees is unconditional for us. The choice of the appropriate instruments today depends largely on all of us, because the guarantees we are talking about are needed to the same extent by all of us.

Thank you for your attention.