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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 1031st PLENARY MEETING OF THE
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

14 December 2022

Agenda item: Closing meeting of the Belgian Chairmanship

Mr. Chairperson,

As the latest round of negotiations wraps up, the Russian delegation would like to share some impressions of the work of our autonomous OSCE decision-making body.

The main observation boils down to how this Organization has ceased to interest the Western participating States as a platform for the professional discussion of security issues in Europe and is increasingly in demand as a tool for criticism or – let us be frank – for supporting information warfare against the Russian Federation. As a consequence, the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) is losing its potential for effective work.

This year, the Forum’s “Western conglomerate” showed itself unwilling to attend to what the participating States have been entrusted with by a whole array of OSCE politico-military documents as well as by scores of OSCE Ministerial Council decisions. The canonical tasks of the FSC as enshrined in the Helsinki Document of 1992 have been forgotten altogether, namely, to conduct negotiations on conventional arms control, disarmament, confidence- and security-building measures, and ways of ensuring military stability in Europe.

Instead, the Western participating States have unleashed at the FSC an unprecedented anti-Russian campaign, which in its mendacity and insolence has far overstepped the bounds of the diplomatic ethos intrinsic to international multilateral platforms. All the politico-military events in the OSCE’s annual cycle without exception have fallen victim to the politicized approaches of the NATO member countries and their clientele. They say to us: “Now is not the time for trust and security.” Our reply is as clear as can be: “There is no sense in sitting there twiddling one’s thumbs and waiting for the bell to ring.”

A case in point is the lack of consensus on holding the third Biennial Meeting to Assess the Implementation of the OSCE Documents on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition. Over the past year alone, we have seen how the United States of America could

at first go around the world promoting the idea of minimizing exports of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and registering each MANPADS unit transferred abroad, only to then discard these noble goals and begin indiscriminately pumping these dangerous weapon systems into a corrupt Eastern European country, Ukraine, from where they later on end up directly on black markets. It is evident that our colleagues do not wish to consider this highly pressing problem for international security: after all, there is no longer any way here in which they can make it seem as though Russia were to blame for all the world's woes.

Grossly violating FSC Decision No. 6/21, the Belgian Chairmanship failed to ensure that before the end of the current round of negotiations the participating States were able to agree upon the dates and organizational modalities of the 33rd Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting on the Vienna Document 2011. The Russian delegation has yet to receive a meaningful response to the question we asked as to the reason why the Chairmanship has dragged out this problem, leaving it unresolved. We would hate to think that Belgium is playing into the hands of the Western delegations that are pursuing the dismantling of yet another politico-military pillar of co-operation at the OSCE.

Against this backdrop, yet another year has gone by in which we have observed attempts to haul issues on to this negotiation platform that are not directly related to its mandate or agenda. The Russian delegation is categorically opposed to such an approach. We will block any attempts at weaving environmental issues into the "fabric" of the Forum. The reason for this is simple, namely, that the doctrinal and strategic documents of the United States and NATO make it clear that they regard the climate crisis as grounds for intervening in international and regional conflicts, and also that they are purposefully enhancing the capacity of their armed forces to address combat tasks under extreme weather conditions in areas belonging to the US interest zone.

We emphasize that it is absolutely unacceptable to replace the mandate of the Forum, which comprises 57 participating States with equal rights, with the narrow political agenda of a group of countries and military blocs. In this regard, we call upon future FSC Chairmanships to demonstrate a responsible and professional approach in fulfilling their duties.

Mr. Chairperson,

The very nature of the OSCE notwithstanding, our Western colleagues display a chronic reluctance to show understanding for the positions of States that are pursuing an independent foreign policy. Those maligning Russia pass over in silence the fact that they themselves are parties to an armed conflict by virtue of their rendering of multidimensional military assistance to Ukraine, their encouragement for the launching of strikes against targets deep inside Russian territory and their orchestration of an information war against our country, in which intelligence services, private companies and cybercrime groups are all involved.

If anyone in this room still had any doubts that the Minsk agreements were yet another "stage production" by the collective West and its minions, those doubts will have been dispelled by former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who on 8 December of this year said: "The Minsk agreements of 2014 were an attempt to win time for Ukraine. Indeed, Ukraine made use of that time to become stronger ..." These remarks serve to fill in crucial details in the overall picture of the conduct of the special military operation, the justified nature of which can no longer be called into question by any right-minded person. The operation is based on impeccable legal grounds and will be continued right until all the objectives set by Russia's senior political and military leadership have been accomplished.

We often hear at the FSC that, at the start of 2022, Russia turned down the Polish OSCE Chairmanship's proposal to initiate a dialogue on European security issues. The OSCE's

“Western conglomerate” evidently has a faulty notion of what dialogue entails, given that it kicked off with accusations, threats and attempts to exert pressure on our country.

By way of comparison, we invite you to take a look at how the United States and its allies and clients have over all these years responded to proposals by the Russian Federation for de-escalating the politico-military situation in Europe.

We called upon them to enhance the mechanisms for preventing dangerous military incidents – their response was to increase strategic bomber flights in Europe almost seventeenfold.

We proposed that military exercise areas be moved deep into the interior of countries – in response the United States, as part of the “DEFENDER-Europe 2022” exercise, transferred an entire division to Europe.

Instead of heeding our appeal for the de-escalation of politico-military tensions, NATO increased the number of troops near Russia’s borders tenfold. That process continues.

We can see that our Western colleagues are in all respects following the precept of the French historian Pierre Gaxotte to the effect that history should be written with a pencil, as it can then be erased more easily. There is otherwise no way of explaining the logic behind the actions of the collective West, whereby at first the Soviet leadership was promised that NATO would not expand eastwards, only for this to be followed by decades of unbridled expansion by the bloc, accompanied by protestations as to its purportedly defensive nature. The assurances that elements of the US anti-missile defence system in Europe would not be aimed at Russia proved to be just as false. Indeed, reports are now coming in of how the United States plans to hand over MIM-104 Patriot surface-to-air missile systems to the Ukrainian Government, which will then be deployed near our national territory. Despite the West’s claims that it is not interested in a nuclear escalation, the Zelenskyy regime, steered by its handlers on the other side of the Atlantic, continues to shell the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant using weapons supplied by NATO countries.

Manipulation of the facts and distortion of the origins of the European security crisis are becoming the hallmarks of Western diplomacy. Nevertheless, the real facts speak for themselves, and over time an objective assessment of these is gaining ground.

The refusal to co-operate with the Russian Federation will ultimately backfire on the initiators of that step. The US-imposed policy of harsh sanctions has already led to crisis-like phenomena in Europe. Pushed through by the US Government, the ban on hydrocarbon supplies from Russia is already contributing to industrial decline in European countries. By forcing the Europeans to empty their armament depots for the benefit of Ukraine, the United States is freeing up the market for its military hardware. The transatlantic strategists are prodding their European satellites into co-operating closely with the Ukrainian Government and aggravating their relations with Russia by compelling them to use their territory as a transit zone for arms shipments. This is posing threats to the security of Russia and drastically increasing the risk that the armed conflict in Ukraine could spill over into a full-scale war in Europe.

Our European colleagues will have to choose what matters most to them.

Mr. Chairperson,

For us it is obvious that only the West’s representatives are responsible for the lamentable state of affairs in the field of European security, and likewise for eroding the foundations of the FSC, which has led

to the Forum's work in 2022 having achieved the most unimpressive results. The entrenchment of the United States, NATO and the European Union in positions of antagonism towards our country is at odds with the OSCE's vision of establishing a pan-European security area.

That being said, the Russian delegation is convinced of the need for predictability to be increased and further spiralling of escalation to be prevented. Any actions aimed at knocking out altogether the still functioning elements of the arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture must be eschewed. It is important to refrain from dangerous steps in the development of military capabilities that could be interpreted as a violation of the principle of equal and indivisible security.

Of course, after the collective West's assertions about the need to inflict a "strategic defeat" on Russia "on the battlefield", we have come to the conclusion that there can be no going back to "business as usual". Nor will there be any unilateral concessions from the Russian Federation. Moving forward, it will be a question of a fundamentally new basis for co-operation. Will this materialize in the foreseeable future? That is up to the collective West, which over all these long decades has been destroying the politico-military foundations of co-operation within the OSCE.

In closing, we should like to express our appreciation to the delegations of Azerbaijan, Belarus and Belgium for chairing the FSC and for their efforts to maintain dialogue in challenging times. We trust that Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Canada will be able to make a constructive contribution to strengthening the Forum in 2023.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.