

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

FSC.DEL/7/24  
18 January 2024

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

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 1066th PLENARY MEETING OF THE  
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

17 January 2024

**Agenda item: Opening session of the Cypriot Chairmanship**

Mr. Chairperson,

Accept our congratulations on assuming the Chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). We welcome His Excellency Mr. Constantinos Kombos, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, and thank him for having outlined the Chairmanship's priorities for the first trimester of 2024.

This latest round of negotiations at the FSC opens against the backdrop of continued deterioration of the international politico-military environment. The situation in Europe is by no means becoming more stable; what is more, the continent's key problems stem from the doctrinal positions of the United States of America and NATO with regard to military "containment" of Russia. Demonstrative training events on using the Alliance's strategic bombers to carry out missile strikes against Russian targets, the rehearsal of NATO offensive operations on the borders of the Union State, the collective West's exploitation of the territories of several post-Soviet countries, along with calls by officials from the bloc's member States to prepare for war against Russia – all these are provoking a battle of nerves and further accelerating the cycle of escalation. Evidently, the goal of inflicting a "strategic defeat" on our country has irreversibly clouded the judgement of Western political figures, who have come to believe in the pre-eminence of neocolonial methods of governance.

Yet another tragic manifestation of these policies is the overt sponsoring of combat operations conducted against our country by the Kyiv regime, which is in its death throes. In late December 2023 and early January, Belgorod, Donetsk, Gorlovka and other Russian cities and towns were subjected to barbaric strikes by the Ukrainian armed forces using weapons and ammunition manufactured by NATO States. In the course of a few days before the New Year in Belgorod and the Belgorod region alone, 29 people were killed and 129 were injured, while around 150 private houses and some 100 apartment buildings were damaged. However, no one from the Western OSCE participating States found it within themselves to condemn the Kyiv regime's murderous barbarity. All this demonstrates the true intentions of the Ukrainian Government

and its handlers, who continue to be guided by long-term plans for civilizational confrontation with Russia and the thwarting of Russia's legitimate interests in the realm of international peace and security.

In view of this, it seems especially cynical that the Kyiv regime should be advancing, with the support of the West, a so-called peace formula and that yet another "Copenhagen format" meeting should have been convened in Davos on 14 January. I wish to emphasize that this pseudo-peacemaking initiative, which is essentially about issuing an ultimatum to Russia, has nothing to do with resolving the situation in Ukraine. Not surprisingly, it has not resulted in the shaping of a vision for the way forward. Instead, the forces of common sense have once again been able to see for themselves the pointlessness of any talks about a settlement without the participation of Russia.

We continue to stand by our fundamental readiness to eliminate the threats arising from the Zelenskyy regime that are being created by NATO countries, be it within the framework of the special military operation or through the use of political and diplomatic tools. However, it is important to understand that as long as a legal prohibition on talks with the Russian leadership is in force in Kyiv, the discussion of any peace initiatives has no practical significance whatsoever.

To date, the Russian force groupings have liberated an area five times greater than that occupied by the People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk before the start of the special operation. We continue to hold the strategic initiative along the entire line of engagement. As the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, stated during a meeting on 16 January with the heads of municipalities from constituent entities of the Federation, "their [Ukraine's] counteroffensive has failed ... If it continues like this, Ukrainian statehood may sustain an irreparable, very serious blow." Moreover, it is clear to any unbiased person that defeating Russia is impossible. We continue to equip our army and fleet with cutting-edge weapons, including weapons based on artificial intelligence technologies and new physical principles. Thus, in 2023, despite the sanctions, we manufactured a larger quantity of high-tech weapons than all the NATO countries. Going forward, we will be paying particular attention to the implementation of a range of command and combat training activities taking account of the threats associated with the Alliance's further suicidal expansion eastwards.

Mr. Chairperson,

The past few decades have exposed the flawed nature of Europe's existing security architecture. NATO usurped the principle of the indivisibility of security, building instead security against artificially created "adversaries". This is leading to fragmentation of the pan-European space and is causing tremendous harm to the standing of the OSCE, which has become a hostage to, and a conduit for, the narrow agenda of the collective West.

It is not surprising that, in these circumstances, the FSC is increasingly faced with problems in its work. Most of the plenary meetings have begun to be convened by the rotating Chairmanships as a box-ticking exercise, that is, so as to give certain delegations the opportunity to hypocritically work through their weekly "plan for Ukraine" and to keep on reciting the same propagandistic anti-Russian arguments. The Forum's traditional work formats are frozen: a year has passed since Working Group A was last convened; the politico-military events in the OSCE's annual cycle have not been held for almost two years now.

In that regard, we expect to see the Cypriot Chairmanship take specific steps to restore full operability at the OSCE's politico-military platform, which is in a state of profound crisis.

It is important to bear in mind that the quality of pan-European security depends on the ability of States to pull together in combating common threats across formal dividing lines. We take the position that the FSC's work needs to be conducted in accordance with its politico-military mandate as approved at the CSCE Summit in Helsinki in 1992 and as enhanced in Istanbul in 1999. At the heart of this mandate are arms control, disarmament, confidence- and security-building measures, and issues related to small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition. Accordingly, we count on our Cypriot colleagues to initiate in due course a discussion, within the format of Working Group A, on holding the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting on the Vienna Document 2011.

We regard as destructive any deviations conducive to diluting the Forum's politico-military mandate through the discussion of human rights issues, "gender" issues or climate matters, all of which fall within the scope of other OSCE dimensions. We will resist such deviations.

What is called for today, as never before, is a pooling of mental and practical efforts with a view to developing effective responses to the numerous threats of our times. That is why the Russian delegation is again submitting for the Chairmanship's consideration a proposal to convene a plenary FSC meeting in the format of a Security Dialogue devoted to the politico-military challenges of European security, with the participation of representatives of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), NATO and the European Union. We consider the examination of ways to achieve de-escalation and prevent military incidents to be a key objective. We will continue to strive for such an event to be held, for it would make it possible to unlock the Forum's potential at a time of crisis.

I cannot fail to touch on the vexed issue of inviting keynote speakers to FSC meetings. Utterly indefensible are the persistent attempts by certain colleagues to censor the participation of speakers in events who, in their opinion, do not meet certain Western criteria and are not prepared to dance to their tune. Last year, we already saw how representatives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the CSTO Secretariat were denied access to the FSC. Such actions are unacceptable – they are overtly discriminatory and hostile, and they also contradict the very nature of the OSCE. We trust that the Cypriot Chairmanship will take a balanced approach and respond to our proposal to include a Russian representative in the list of panellists due to speak on 7 February on issues related to international humanitarian law.

Mr. Chairperson,

In closing, allow me to emphasize that diplomatic work is about looking for solutions based on the balancing of interests and on mutual recognition of, and respect for, those interests. The Russian Federation's foreign policy is aimed at developing friendly and stable relations with all independent actors in the international arena. This year, Russia is chairing the BRICS group, doing so under the motto "Strengthening Multilateralism for Equitable Global Development and Security". As part of our chairmanship of the Commonwealth of Independent States, we are giving priority attention to the enhancement of mechanisms for jointly tackling traditional and new challenges. Eurasian integration processes are evolving dynamically. In other words, beyond the OSCE area, life does not stand still.

We for our part are willing to also make efforts to establish dialogue on politico-military security issues in the OSCE area by maintaining contact with members of the FSC Troika who are interested. But will the Western delegations be able to muster the diplomatic courage required to revive the Forum as a platform for addressing security issues on the basis of the principle of equality among all the participating States? For now, there are more questions here than answers.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.