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**STATEMENT BY
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FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY SECURITY
AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1071st PLENARY MEETING OF THE
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

28 February 2024

**Agenda item: General statements
Subject: Special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

Two years ago, the Russian Federation took the considered decision to launch a special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine in compliance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, which lays down the right of members of the international community to act in collective and individual self-defence. As the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, stated on 24 February 2022, the circumstances called for “decisive and immediate action” from us when, amid an avalanche-like increase in shelling attacks by the Ukrainian armed forces, the Donbas republics turned to our country with a legitimate request for assistance.

That decision was preceded by a long period during which Ukraine was transformed by the collective West into an “anti-Russia” project – a process going back to at least 2004, when the United States of America and the European Union orchestrated the first coup d’état in that country so as to bring their stooge to power. It was assumed that the use of Ukraine as a battering ram against Russia would allow them to achieve the overall geopolitical goal of their hybrid aggression, that is, to weaken a major geopolitical competitor and consolidate a unipolar world order. If anyone still had doubts on that score, they were dispelled by US Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, who promised, live on CNN, to “continue to tighten the noose” of restrictive measures against Russia, since our country was “not the Russia” that the United States wanted. According to leaked information, a network of spy bases, including 12 secret facilities, was set up in Ukraine over the past eight years with the CIA’s support in order to work against our country.

Not surprisingly, those in the West forgot about their promises not to bring NATO closer to our country’s borders. On the contrary, the course was set for the bloc’s global expansion. The international community has to this day not received any explanations regarding the legal basis for the aggressive wars unleashed by the United States and its satellites against Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria or for the completely unjustified armed aggression against Yemen that is being carried out right now. The NATO countries’ “track record” boasts tens of thousands of casualties, along with destroyed States and

economies. The same thing happened to Ukraine, too. Despite having been bequeathed a most abundant industrial capacity by the USSR and the Russian Empire, under the harness of the United States and its satellites it turned into the poorest country in Europe and not a shred was left of its independence.

In response to the West's unfriendly actions, the Russian Federation is determined to defend, by all available means, its right to free development. The majority of humankind are interested in constructive relations with our country. Suffice it to say that the past two years have seen a confirmation of the trend towards development of a truly multipolar world order, while the number of States we regard as like-minded – new centres of political and economic power – keeps on growing. In terms of domestic politics, Russian society has, since the start of the special military operation, been turning away from attitudes that the West had been seeking to impose for more than three decades, and it is becoming increasingly patriotic. In other words, the attempts to weaken and isolate Russia undertaken by the United States and its satellites – which are being corroded by internal socio-economic and political problems – have failed.

Meanwhile, public opinion polls conducted among European taxpayers confirm that people in the OSCE area are tired of the inordinate geopolitical ambitions of the United States, NATO and the European Union in Ukraine. According to European Parliament data, only 10 per cent of the European population believe that Ukraine can win on the battlefield.

In particular, the pessimism of Europeans was fuelled by the Ukrainian armed forces' failed offensive in the summer of 2023, the planning of which was carried out under the supervision and with the direct involvement of generals from NATO countries. The core of the Ukrainian armed forces' attack force grouping was made up of the so-called strategic reserves, among whom at least 75 per cent of the military personnel had undergone training to NATO standards. In other words, our troops were facing what can effectively be described as NATO personnel given the nature of their training. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian armed forces' losses in the course of the entire offensive turned out to be huge, substantially overstressing the initial structure of the attack force grouping. That meant not simply a "strategic defeat" for the Kyiv regime but the debacle of the West's hybrid blitzkrieg as the tremendous economic losses incurred in connection with the sanctions and arms shipments proved to have been fruitless.

At present, the Ukrainian armed forces are continuing to come under pressure along the entire front line. According to Russian Ministry of Defence data, some 327 square kilometres of territory belonging to the new regions of the Russian Federation have been liberated from the neo-Nazis since the start of the year. We are carrying on with the targeted destruction of NATO military equipment – last week, a US Abrams tank that had only just turned up in the area of combat operations was knocked out, as were some of the much-lauded Swedish-made Archer howitzers and British L119 howitzers. As for the German Leopard tanks, our troops are cracking them open pretty much like nuts – over 20 such tanks have been destroyed or abandoned, a third of them in Rabotino.

At the end of last week, Russian military personnel completed, with only minimal losses, the liberation of the city of Avdeyevka in the Donetsk People's Republic, where the Ukrainian armed forces had for nine years been constructing a mighty bastion. In addition, our forces are in control of the settlements of Severnoye, Lastochkino and Pobeda, which opens up the road for us to Ugledar, yet another line of defence of the Ukrainian armed forces.

On a separate note, we should like to mention that for the Kyiv regime it has become a custom to try to achieve major gains of some sort on the eve of "get-togethers" that are emblematic for the Western world – either just before meetings of the Ramstein-format defence contact group or just before the adoption of the budget in the United States. However, the result always turns out to be lamentable. The Ukrainian armed forces lost 13,200 soldiers in the course of their operation in the Kherson area, and, overall, they have lost

more than 444,000 in the course of the special military operation. As we have already said on several occasions, the Kyiv regime pays no regard to personnel losses on the battlefield. As the head of the military administration of the Kharkiv region, Oleh Syniehubov, put it, “there is no point in investing millions in the training of a serviceman, whose lifespan on the battlefield will be exactly two minutes as he will be eliminated by a drone costing 200 dollars.”

In that regard, it is telling that the order by the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Oleksandr Syrskyi, to withdraw from Avdeyevka was not issued until 24 hours after the Ukrainian troops began fleeing in a disorderly fashion. They did not even collect the bodies of the slain; they abandoned the wounded and left behind a large quantity of weapons and pieces of evidence confirming the direct involvement of mercenaries from the United States, Canada and EU countries as part of the nationalist units of the Ukrainian armed forces. The trophies captured by the Russian armed forces include Polish-made mines, US-made hand grenades, terminals for the Starlink global satellite system, depots with US- and Czech-manufactured ammunition for 120 mm mortars, US-made M113 armoured personnel carriers, and much more besides.

It is understandable that, in political terms, the current situation on the front must be most awkward for the Kyiv regime and its handlers. In connection with this, we have information indicating that they are prepared to take reckless provocative steps that potentially pose a threat to international peace and security.

Firstly, reports are coming in of how the West is asking the Kyiv regime for a list of targets on Russian territory together with a justification of the expediency of carrying out strikes on them. Do we understand it correctly that in this way the stage is being set for the delivery of F-16 aircraft and ATACMS and Taurus long-range missiles? On top of that, provocative statements have already issued forth from Paris at the very highest level regarding the possibility of sending regular troops from NATO countries to Ukraine, since in the West they “cannot allow Russia to win”. Moreover, the French Foreign Ministry has confirmed that “certain actions in support” of the Kyiv regime “might require a [military] presence on Ukrainian territory without crossing the threshold of military engagement” in the conflict.

We have repeatedly warned the countries of the North Atlantic Alliance about the dangers inherent in supplying increasingly longer-range weapons to the Kyiv regime, and also in the direct participation of their regular troops in combat operations against the armed forces of the Russian Federation. The consequences of a growing risk of the conflict spilling over into a direct clash between NATO and Russia could be most unpredictable.

At the same time, we do not rule out that a new batch of NATO soldiers could again turn up in Ukraine under the guise of mercenaries. Incidentally, these are already in charge of air defence stations, operational and tactical missile systems and multiple-launch rocket systems; and they also form part of assault detachments. According to Russian Ministry of Defence data, more than 13,600 mercenaries came to Ukraine in 2023 (including 8,500 from Europe, 2,700 from North and South American countries, 1,700 from Asia and around 200 from Africa). By the start of 2024 their overall number had decreased almost sevenfold, to approximately 1,900. Half of these legionnaires were eliminated at the line of engagement or through precision strikes against assembly points (5,900 persons), while the rest (5,600) simply ran away as they had no wish to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the Ukrainian regime. By the way, according to some sources, the pay packets for these mercenaries reach Ukraine directly as part of the Western countries’ financial support. We reiterate our warning that foreign mercenaries are regarded by the armed forces of the Russian Federation as combatants, with all the implications that this entails. Joining the ranks of the Ukrainian armed forces’ “foreign legion” is a one-way ticket. Indeed, getting captured and being sentenced to a term of imprisonment in Russia is the best “stroke of luck” that such a soldier of fortune can hope for.

Secondly, according to the Russian Ministry of Defence, the Ukrainian armed forces are drawing up a plan for stopping the advance of our troops by means of chemical weapons. It has to do with a new tactic for the conduct of combat operations using a “special chemical belt”. The idea is that the Ukrainian neo-Nazis will place containers filled with hydrocyanic acid and ammonia along roads and blow them up as the Russian army advances. The existence of such a plan is confirmed by a request submitted to the European Union Military Staff by the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the European Union, asking for antidote kits and gas masks to be supplied. There are signs that the plan has already begun to be implemented. The Russian Federal Security Service thwarted an attempt by Ukraine to carry out a terrorist attack in the Zaporozhye region yesterday that involved the use of an analogue of the chemical warfare agent with the NATO code “BZ”.

This is a direct violation of the OSCE Principles Governing Non-Proliferation (1994) as well as of Article I of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which expressly forbids not only their development and use but also any military preparations to use chemical weapons, along with assistance for and encouragement of any activity prohibited by the Convention. We demand that the OSCE participating States and also the Organization’s leadership bring their influence to bear on the Kyiv regime and its handlers with a view to preventing expansion of the practice of using prohibited means and methods of combat.

This also applies to the Kyiv regime’s large-scale violations of international humanitarian law, in particular to the continued shelling of the civilian inhabitants of Russian regions with the use of NATO weapons. Suffering setback after setback on the battlefield, as vividly confirmed by the recent liberation of Avdeyevka, the Ukrainian armed forces are venting their frustration on completely innocent people.

Over the past week, the neo-Nazis’ shelling attacks resulted in at least 44 civilian casualties. More than 1,400 munitions were fired on civilian targets in Russian areas, among which were artillery shells of 152 mm and 155 mm calibre, including cluster shells. US-made M142 HIMARS multiple rocket launchers, Slovak-made shrapnel-filled JROF HEF missiles and Czech-made RM-70 Vampire multiple rocket launchers were all actively used.

Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicles equipped with munitions are regularly used to carry out raids on front-line and border areas. These drones hunt down civilians and attack public transport vehicles and infrastructure facilities. On 27 February, a car with construction workers inside was fired at from the air on the outskirts of the village of Pochayevo in the Belgorod region, leaving three dead and four injured. Incidentally, on 15 February the UK Ministry of Defence announced that the United Kingdom and Latvia would lead a “drone coalition” to supply Ukraine with “thousands of drones”. Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Estonia and the Netherlands have also joined this coalition. The international community now knows the names of the countries that are providing State support for Ukrainian terrorism involving the use of drones.

In these circumstances, the necessary steps are being taken to ensure that those responsible for the aforementioned crimes meet with their just punishment. The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation has completed its investigation of over 240 criminal cases against more than 400 military personnel from the Ukrainian armed forces. A guilty verdict was pronounced on 173 individuals in total as a result of 136 of these proceedings. Among the closed cases, four have to do with causing injury and death to minors, while in ten of them, Ukrainian military personnel received sentences ranging from 17 years to life imprisonment for the killing of civilians and serious mistreatment of prisoners. This process will be continued.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Russian Federation is doing its utmost to ensure that peace is restored in the new regions of our country as soon as possible. The stories by the Kyiv regime's representatives about how the inhabitants of Ukraine are afraid of the Russian armed forces, and how these will be faced with a veritable guerrilla war, are shattered by irrefutable facts testifying to the contrary. The people in the liberated cities and towns greet our troops as liberators, thankful that Russia has not abandoned them. Only recently we saw civilians rejoicing at the sight of our soldiers in liberated Avdeyevka. The city is now officially being sponsored by the Chelyabinsk region, which will help with the rebuilding of Avdeyevka. Many of its inhabitants have already received Russian passports.

Projects are under way in Novorossiya and Donbas to revitalize these regions; their integration into the single legal and socio-economic space of our country is moving forward. Industry, agriculture and infrastructure are being restored. The goal has been set to bring these regions up to the All-Russian level by 2030 in key areas that have an impact on people's quality of life. Most importantly, our new citizens, who see their future as bound up with Russia, are enthusiastically taking part in all these processes.

Our country remains open to a sustainable and just settlement of the Ukrainian crisis – something that is directly linked to the need to eliminate its root causes. The West must stop pumping weapons into Ukraine, and the Kyiv regime must cease hostilities. Ukraine must revert to a neutral, non-aligned and non-nuclear status and respect the rights and freedoms of citizens. It is essential to take account of the new territorial realities, of the situation on the ground. However, if our readiness is not reciprocated, then we will continue to fully implement the tasks of the special military operation and to defend our vital interests by all necessary means.

Thank you for your attention.