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PC.DEL/770/20
25 June 2020

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
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AT THE 2020 ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

25 June 2020

Closing session

Mr. Chairperson,

We have taken note of the efforts by the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretariat to organize this year's Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) at the requisite professional level. The organizers have invested considerable energy in providing the OSCE participating States with an opportunity for a broad exchange of opinions. However, I wish to be quite frank, so I must say that this event has left me with a painful impression. In view of the coronavirus pandemic, one would expect all of us to have realized how fragile our world is and how we are all facing common challenges, and that we would accordingly start looking for points of convergence and unifying premises. The universal threat posed by the spread of the coronavirus – a “moment of truth” of sorts – has given us a unique chance to reconsider the origins of our Organization and what it was conceived for, and to try to come up with fresh solutions to acute problems.

Unfortunately, it has been forgotten by many that we came together here not to take part in an exercise in political demagoguery and to juggle with ideological clichés, but for the purpose of thoughtful, professional work and a conscientious search for compromises, as was in fact envisaged by the relevant decision of the Ministerial Council meeting in Porto in 2002. The ASRC was established as, I quote, “a framework for enhancing security dialogue and for reviewing security work undertaken by the OSCE and its participating States”. Among its objectives the one that appears first is “implementation of an OSCE strategy to address threats to security and stability in the twenty-first century”. I would ask you: surely this platform was not created for slanging matches, the bandying about of hackneyed slogans and the articulation of hidden phobias? Do we actually listen to one another? Do we try to understand our interlocutor's reasoning? What is the point of coming together if the sole aim of the meeting is essentially to declare the infallibility of one's government's position?

Over the past few days, we have witnessed numerous attempts to lay the blame at Russia's door for pretty much all of the calamities in the OSCE area. Dialogue has been supplanted by self-appraisal. No one wants to admit his or her share of responsibility for the fact that our Organization is steadily losing its integrity and sinking into inertia and stagnation. Instead of looking for specific ways of reducing military tension, many have preferred to try their hand at propaganda. Real problems and challenges – such as

terrorism, organized crime and illicit cyberactivity – have been placed on the back burner, much to the delight of our common enemies. What good does this do anyone?

A case in point was the discussion of the situation in Ukraine, which demonstrated how a number of key OSCE participating States are completely unprepared for a realistic analysis of what is going on in that country. Instead of a professional discussion on ways of exiting the crisis, the highly politicized and toxic fabrications of propaganda were assiduously rehashed. The logic behind these actions has evidently nothing to do with a desire to help bring to an end the conflict in eastern Ukraine as quickly as possible. The discussions on other conflicts in the OSCE's sphere of responsibility were also marked by an unacceptably high confrontational temperature. Yet, the point is that the ASRC was conceived for professional dialogue on "implementation of OSCE decisions and activities in the area of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation".

Indeed, we really do see many things differently. I shall briefly explain what our profound divergences essentially come down to. My country wants to live in a world whose foundations are determined not by some "rules-based order" but by international law, together with the concordant implementation of all the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and of subsequent fundamental decisions; in a world where countries strive to reach agreement on the principles of good-neighbourliness and are guided by national interests, rather than by chimeras thrust upon them by politico-military alliances; in a world free of relapses into a "bloc mentality" and of attempts to impose anyone's exclusivity and self-proclaimed leadership; in a world without coups d'état triggered by external interference, without blackmail and arm-twisting for the sake of commercial gain; in a world where there are no attempts by the authorities to assert themselves at the expense of the lives of those whom they have pronounced to be "aliens" just because they happen to speak a different language, worship in a different church or hold other views; in a world where strength consists in the diversity of societies alongside the protection of the fundamental tenets of human rights and freedoms; in a world where it is considered shameful to try to rewrite history.

If you, too, want to live in such a world, then let us build it together. That is after all what the OSCE was created for: to form, through co-operation on an equal footing, "a common and indivisible security space". If you do not, I would advise you not to waste your energies on attempts to foist your "civilizing" notions on Russia. Our paths must then inevitably diverge.

Thank you for your attention.