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**STATEMENT BY
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THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1521st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 May 2025

**On the increasing military involvement of certain NATO and EU member States in
further confrontation in and around Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

On 16 May, at the initiative of Russian President Vladimir Putin and with the support of the US administration and of President Donald Trump himself, direct contacts took place in Istanbul between authorized representatives of Russia and Ukraine with a view to finding ways of achieving a sustainable settlement of the Ukrainian conflict.

The Russian delegation featured high-ranking officials who represented our country at similar consultations in Belarus and Türkiye with negotiators from the Kyiv regime in 2022. We would remind you that those consultations were broken off by the Ukrainian side in mid-April 2022 under pressure from the authorities in London. The fact that the Kyiv regime's participation in the negotiation process was suspended at the behest of, above all, then British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was publicly confirmed by the head of the Ukrainian delegation, Davyd Arakhamia, faction leader of the ruling political party in the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament).

We note that, this time round too, a number of NATO countries actively undertook efforts to prevent the Kyiv regime's envoys from taking part in contacts with the Russian side. New conditions, ultimatums and political constructs of various kinds kept being put forward in order to hinder direct dialogue. The Ukrainian representatives were already in Türkiye on 15 May, but right up until noon on 16 May they did not embark on substantive contacts with the Russian side. Instead, they were busy co-ordinating their positions with the national security advisers of the leaders of the United Kingdom (Jonathan Powell), the United States of America (Keith Kellogg), France (Emmanuel Bonne) and Germany (Günter Sautter). This fact in itself speaks volumes about the degree of Ukraine's autonomy in foreign policy matters. A point on which Russia, by the way, has never had and does not have any illusions.

We note with satisfaction that the resumption of direct contacts between the Russian and Ukrainian delegations in Istanbul on 16 May did nevertheless proceed in the manner that President Putin had called for, namely without preconditions. We once again express our gratitude to the Turkish leadership for its efforts in making a venue available and facilitating this dialogue.

We do not now intend to get into a detailed analysis of the histrionic and emotional pronouncements by Volodymyr Zelenskyy that preceded all this – pronouncements calculated to be politically “sensational” and coming from someone whose role as the “President of Ukraine” has been raising legitimate questions ever since 21 May 2024, when his mandate officially expired. The issue of who specifically is able to sign final and conclusive documents regarding a settlement is a fundamental one, but it does not have the highest priority in the negotiation process.

Let us emphasize the essentials. In Russia we are satisfied with the direct contacts that have taken place and with their initial results. It proved possible to reach an important agreement on a large-scale reciprocal exchange of prisoners on a “1,000 for 1,000” basis. This is a significant political and humanitarian gesture that will contribute to building trust between the participants in the negotiation process. It was also agreed that each side would present its vision for a possible future ceasefire. The relevant parameters would be outlined in detail in writing and submitted by each side to the other. Once such a vision had been presented, it would be appropriate to continue the negotiations with a view to establishing long-term peace and eliminating the root causes of the conflict.

Amid the headway that has been made, the nervous reactions observed in certain EU and NATO countries are striking. And it is once again the United Kingdom that is at the forefront of those grumbling the most about peace in our and the Ukrainians’ shared land. In particular, the current Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, stated that Russia’s position as set out during the consultations with Ukraine was, I quote, “clearly unacceptable, and not for the first time”. Arguments were made by him and several other European politicians about preparing some sort of “response” to Russia’s negotiating position. We are dealing here with the latest attempts – and this time utterly blatant ones – not merely to interfere in the negotiation process but to derail it altogether.

On 19 May, a candid, constructive and substantive conversation took place between Presidents Putin and Trump that touched upon issues pertaining to the Ukrainian settlement process. Understanding was reached on the need for further engagement with the Ukrainian side to outline a number of aspects, in particular the principles for a possible ceasefire and the parameters for resolving the conflict as a whole. Work is under way on the drafting of a relevant memorandum; it is important to identify the most effective ways towards achieving peace. Russia has advocated and continues to advocate a political and diplomatic solution to the current crisis and this is understood today by the US leadership – in contrast to the European leaders who obstinately seek to prolong the bloodshed.

We are witnessing attempts by the conventional “party of war” made up of European NATO countries, which has staked pretty much its entire political capital on the Ukrainian conflict, to exercise a destructive influence on high-ranking members of the current US administration. They are seeking to cajole these into adopting anti-Russian positions, to get them to come out in unequivocal support for the warmongering Kyiv regime. We consider such an approach to be extremely dangerous – it is not bringing peace closer, but causing the armed conflict to be dragged out and leading to unnecessary casualties and the risk of further escalation.

Many in the West are making no bones about the fact that they are interested in an enduring ceasefire in Ukraine merely so as to get the Kyiv regime ready for yet another round of hostilities. It is no coincidence that politicians from NATO countries – including, for example, Elina Valtonen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the country that is chairing the OSCE – are talking about their intention to carry on with the military “beefing up” of Ukraine even after a potential ceasefire agreement has been concluded.

Incidentally, the Finnish Chairmanship could not bring itself to welcome the direct Russian-Ukrainian contacts that took place in Istanbul on 16 May. Or the glimpses of progress made during these or the commitment to continuing with the consultations that was expressed by the two sides. On the contrary, a few days ago it was stated in Finland that there was a desire to appropriate 90 million euros' worth of proceeds from Russian financial assets illegitimately frozen in EU jurisdictions and use these for providing the Kyiv regime with weapons and ammunition. What makes this particularly cynical is also the fact that the allocation of *de facto* stolen funds for military spending is to be done through the so-called European Peace Facility, which in reality is a facility for financing armed conflict and does not bring peace any closer.

Does all this bespeak a striving by the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship to look for diplomatic pathways for resolving the Ukrainian conflict? Or to find some role for the OSCE in facilitating the peace process? Unfortunately, it does not – such actions attest, rather, to a desire to fuel the conflict as part of a zero-sum game that is being foisted on our country.

Turning Ukraine into a “steel porcupine” at the beck and call of the European Union and NATO is something that President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, too, has publicly dreamed about – she who a couple of years ago wanted everyone to believe that the Russian military was “taking [micro]chips from dishwashers” and could not accomplish anything on the battlefield.

However, it is not the first time that EU officials have been mistaken in their assessments of the situation and in their predictions – whether knowingly or otherwise. Their political messaging would appear to have one goal, namely to misinform the public in their countries about the true state of affairs and how the various capabilities line up on the battlefield, and also to justify the militarization of their economies to be achieved by taking financial resources away from social spending and redirecting them to military purposes.

In closing, we would stress an important aspect. What is required now is an utmost commitment to peace, to finding mutually acceptable compromises. Russia's position remains unchanged and consistent: it is essential to ensure that the root causes of the current conflict, which are well known, are eliminated.

We would also reiterate that our country has all the necessary resources and capabilities for safeguarding its security and achieving the objectives of the special operation by military or non-military means. It goes without saying that our preferred scenario is for the sovereign players concerned to engage in serious political and diplomatic dialogue, where Russia's interests must be taken into account. This will make it possible to avoid unnecessary casualties and destruction. Our country will not accept any ultimatums directed at us.

Today it is obvious to many people that the anti-Russian strategy of the countries that make up the majority in the European Union and NATO has failed. Their elites underestimated the Russian State's store of resilience, the determination of the peoples of our country to defend the unity and sovereignty of their fatherland. The sanctions blitzkrieg with its attempts to crash Russia's economy and drive our society into poverty has proved a fiasco. As have the efforts to try out NATO's military toolkit against Russian people on Russian soil and the attempts to force our kinsfolk to hate everything Russian and take part in a fratricidal war.

Today even the most biased Western institutions recognize that further prolongation of the conflict would mean a new, far more extensive round of armed escalation – one that would very likely involve an increase in intensity, geographical scope and number of parties compared to the current conflict. The logic of European militarization under the pretext of developments in Ukraine implies severe tribulations for present and future generations. This must not be allowed to happen. It is time for a sober appreciation of

reality and genuine diplomacy in the interests of achieving and consolidating peace, no matter how difficult this may seem to some.

Thank you for your attention.