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Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's video address to the participants in the Moscow Non-Proliferation Conference, Moscow, December 5, 2022

Colleagues,

I am happy to welcome the participants in the Moscow Non-Proliferation Conference, organised by the Centre for Energy and Security Studies.

In the past few years, your forum has become a prestigious platform for the expert exchange of opinion on vital issues of global security like the non-proliferation of WMD and arms control.

Today, your work is particularly important. The world situation is very tense. There is an obvious systematic crisis in international security. The main reason is clear – the US-led Western minority is stubbornly trying to ensure global domination and compel the international community to live according to a US-centric "rules-based order." With this aim in mind, the West uses a broad arsenal of unseemly means – from forced dictate, blackmail and unilateral sanctions to demonisation of rivals in the global media space.

The arrogant rejection by the NATO states of President Vladimir Putin's initiative on granting Russia security guarantees in the western direction was one of the catalysts of the current escalation of international tensions. Our country was also particularly concerned at hearing Kiev's open statements on a possible revision of its nuclear-free status. In effect, that would mean an attempt by the Ukrainian national-radicals to acquire nuclear weapons, which is absolutely unacceptable, in part, considering Kiev's commitments under the NPT Treaty.

As the West tries to contain Russia, the policy of the US and NATO in general, which is actually aimed at military confrontation with us, poses a serious threat to us. Obviously, this is fraught with the risk of a direct clash between nuclear powers with disastrous consequences. We must regularly send our warnings to this effect. However, instead of taking them seriously, the West maliciously distorts them and accuses us of a "rhetoric of threats."

Using this opportunity, I would like to confirm that Russia is firmly committed to the logic of understanding as fixed in the joint documents of the Nuclear Five. In line with their statement on the unacceptability of nuclear war,

it is necessary to prevent any armed conflict between nuclear powers. Russia proceeds from this imperative.

Colleagues,

Regrettably, the strategic dialogue between Russia and the United States, the two countries that possess the world's largest nuclear arsenals and have a special responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, has been frozen by Washington. An agreement to renew the START Treaty for five years was the most recent tangible outcome of our joint efforts in this regard. Clearly, in the absence of talks to maintain strategic stability, problems will pile up which is fraught with an avalanche-like increase in risks.

Efforts seeking to undermine the existing arms control and non-proliferation system were clearly demonstrated by the Western countries at the 10th NPT Review Conference, a key event in the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, which was held in New York in August 2022.

The mounting crisis developments on the non-proliferation track have a negative impact at the regional level as well. Washington is staying with its policy of "maximum pressure" with regard to the nuclear deal with Iran. We urge the American side to immediately and irreversibly lift all illegal anti-Iranian sanctions and ensure strict implementation of UNSC Resolution 2231. This step would open the way to Tehran "unfreezing" its voluntary obligations under the JCPOA in a counter move.

In addition, as a result of the United States' unwillingness to take practical constructive steps towards Pyongyang, no progress has been made in settling the situation around the Korean Peninsula.

We are disappointed by the lack of progress in the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The key responsibility for this state of affairs lies with the Americans.

The US-led Euro-Atlantic allies' attempts to reformat the OPCW are a matter of great concern to us. This once highly authoritative and purely technical international agency has been transformed by the Western countries into a tool for promoting their geopolitical interests in the Middle East and elsewhere. Primarily, this concerns the fictitious Syrian "chemical dossier" fabricated by the West and the illegitimate "attribution" imposed on everyone in violation of the CWC to identify the parties responsible for the use of toxic chemicals and chemical warfare agents.

Colleagues,

The Ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of

Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction is taking place in Geneva concurrently with your event. The participating states will analyse the progress of implementing the document and outline areas of focus for the next review cycle. The conference provides an opportunity to unite the efforts of the international community around a pragmatic, non-discriminatory and future-oriented agenda. We hope that the Western states will not sacrifice this to serve their egotistical interests as was the case with the NPT Review Conference. We expect them to show the political will to take decisions designed to strengthen the BTWC.

In addition to WMD non-proliferation, we focus a lot on monitoring state-to-state transfers of conventional weapons, primarily in the context of implementing at the national level of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and in accordance with the UN Register of Conventional Arms. We call on the participants in these universal mechanisms to stay away from supplying weapons to regions with high destabilising potential, including Ukraine. In this regard, we invariably point out to the EU states and the ATT member states that it is imperative to comply with their own commitments which include a ban on arms exports to regions where it can lead to violations of international humanitarian law and exacerbate internal armed conflicts.

We are convinced that a systematic approach to non-proliferation and arms control is the way forward to maintain and strengthen international security through an equal and meaningful dialogue with an eye toward reaching specific agreements. Russia is open to cooperation in these areas with anyone who is willing to do the same.

In closing, I would like to wish you every success in your work.



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