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Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's video address to participants in the Moscow Nonproliferation Conference

Colleagues,

I would like to welcome participants to the Moscow Nonproliferation Conference (MNC) organised by the Centre for Energy and Security Studies (CENESS).

You are meeting in a difficult situation of crisis in the system of arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation, which reflects unprecedented degradation in the sphere of international security.

Today, the United States and their NATO client states are still dreaming of inflicting a "strategic defeat" on Russia and are ready to carry on with their policy of deterring our country "to the last Ukrainian." At the same time, the West is balancing on the dangerous edge of a direct military confrontation between nuclear powers, which could have catastrophic consequences. We are especially concerned that the three Western nuclear powers are among the main sponsors of the criminal Kiev regime and the main organisers of various provocations. This could create serious strategic risks and increase the level of nuclear threat.

The US-led "collective West" is cynically complementing the deliberate destruction of balanced and equal agreements that do not suit Washington with the promotion of apparently dishonest schemes that would create advantages for the United States. Their obvious goal is to create a unilateral military advantage for themselves by setting new limits for nuclear arsenals while formalising the aggregate Western superiority in the sphere of non-nuclear capabilities.

Striving to attain decisive military superiority, Washington and its allies are enlarging the network of alliances directed against third countries. They are working energetically to implement a number of highly destabilising military-technical programmes. They include the creation of a global ballistic missile defence system coupled with the stockpiling of precision weapons for delivering preemptive and decapitation "global strikes," the forward basing of US nuclear

arsenals in Europe and their destabilising development within the framework of NATO's "joint nuclear missions," as well as preparations to deploy weapons in space and ground-launched intermediate and shorter-range missions throughout the world.

A matter of profound concern is the emerging partnership between the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, AUKUS, which is increasingly similar to a military bloc, alongside with the growing military spending by the NATO countries and US allies, and Britain's plans to build up its nuclear potential.

There is no basis whatsoever for an arms control and strategic stability dialogue with the United States in the face of a total hybrid war being waged against our country. This agenda cannot be artificially separated from the general international segment and be considered in isolation from other aspects of interstate relations, as Washington is seeking to present. It will be possible to discuss these topics only after the US authorities renounce their openly hostile anti-Russian policy. Any hypothetical effort to reduce the conflict potential should be comprehensive in nature and based on removing what we regard as the central problem, to wit, NATO's aggressive eastward expansion. We see no alternative to these fundamental approaches.

Moves to undermine the existing arms control and non-proliferation system are affecting the stability of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Problems involved in the implementation of the NPT are not only persisting but also tend to mount. The latest two NPT review cycles culminated in their final documents being blocked. In the first case, this was done by the US, Canada, and the UK. In the second, we witnessed a disgusting "spectacle," where the collective West (including the abovementioned countries) took to filling the documents with patently unacceptable formulas having no relation to the NPT, something that led to their inevitable blocking.

The main problem is that the Western countries have used the treaty for years to address political agendas unrelated to nuclear non-proliferation. In other words, they sought to bring pressure to bear on or stage direct interventions against "dissenting" countries and step up their control over nuclear programmes of non-members of the Western bloc. These actions are evoking a response from non-nuclear states, which put forward exorbitant nuclear disarmament requirements. We can also count in the initiatives by certain NATO countries trying to increase their control over the Russian and Chinese nuclear arsenals under the guise of disarmament.

It is impossible to analyse the state of affairs on the nuclear disarmament track in isolation from the current military-political and strategic realities, especially since Article VI and the NPT Preamble clearly put this issue into the context of general and complete disarmament. It is essential to reach these goals in a package, by concerted efforts of nuclear and non-nuclear countries and without artificial removal of certain elements from the relevant NPT commitments.

I would like to specifically address the situation with The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). As early as in 1999, US Congress refused to ratify it under far-fetched pretexts. Since then, Washington has not taken any practical action in this area. We believe its explanation that it cannot get Congress's approval for the treaty's ratification is a flimsy excuse. Hence, we conclude that the US political establishment is not interested in the CTBT.

Russia's withdrawal of the CBTB ratification became a logical response to the destructive moves by the US and other Western countries. That said, we remain a full-fledged party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Not so long ago, we completed the formation of our segment of the International Monitoring System. We are ready to return to the issue of its ratification as soon as the US does this.

The attempts of the Western countries to tailor the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to their vested interests are a source of serious concern. The Western states have already turned this prestigious and strictly technical international agency into an instrument for implementing their geopolitical interests in the Middle East and beyond by privatising the OPCW Secretariat. These destructive activities caused a split in the OPCW. It lost its independent status and authority as a universally recognised expert venue on chemical disarmament and non-proliferation.

Supported by its allies, the US continues its propaganda campaign to discredit Russia's space activities and our initiatives on preventing an arms race in outer space. They want to sidetrack the attention of the international community from the real threats in space and receive additional funds for the buildup of their national military space potentials. Washington's anti-Russia throw-ins have reached the point of absurdity. It is hurling at Russia unsubstantiated accusations of some activities in space that are threatening international security and are linked with "the deployment of nuclear weapons there."

These allegations are completely divorced from reality. Russia is firmly committed to its international legal obligations, including the 1967 Outer Space

Treaty. We are consistently advocating the preservation of space as a venue for exclusively peaceful activities of all states on an equitable basis.

Our priority is to elaborate an international legally binding instrument that would establish reliable guarantees to prevent the deployment of weapons in space and the use or threat of force as regards space facilities. There exists a foundation for this – a relevant draft treaty submitted by Russia and China to the Disarmament Conference.

The US is continuously engaged in military biological activities throughout the world in violation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). In this context, it is essential for the international community to enhance the convention, primarily by supplementing it with a legally binding protocol that would envisage an efficient verification mechanism. Russia has also made a number of initiatives to upgrade the convention regulations. We look forward to real progress in this area based on the activities of the specialised Working Group established by the decision of the Ninth BTWC Review Conference.

NATO countries and their satellites continue supplying the Kiev regime with arms and ammunition on a mass scale, thereby violating their previous international commitments to control the exports of military technology and equipment. We consider important the problem of controlling international exchanges of conventional arms. It is important in this context for all countries to observe strictly at national level the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

We are convinced that to prevent further degradation of the world situation, maintain durable stability and create a realistic disarmament, all countries should pool their efforts to upgrade the international security system relying on the principles of multilateralism, equality and indivisibility. This is the only way of reducing interstate conflicts and ensuring real progress in arms control.



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