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**STATEMENT BY
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FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY SECURITY
AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1062nd PLENARY MEETING OF THE
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

15 November 2023

Agenda item: Any other business

**Subject: On the reaction of Western States to Russia's withdrawal from the Treaty on
Conventional Armed Forces in Europe**

Madam Chairperson,

In connection with the Russian Federation's now consummated withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), we have taken note of the ensuing actions by the United States of America and its satellites.

On 7 November, the day of Russia's definitive withdrawal from the CFE Treaty, statements were issued by NATO member States and by the North Atlantic Council regarding the suspension of the Treaty's implementation. They were accompanied by hypocritical remarks about the collapse, "through Russia's fault", of the arms control system and the European security architecture established in the aftermath of the Second World War. We should like to respond to them point by point.

First, when Russia in its own day suspended application of the Treaty, it went through all the necessary procedures for withdrawing from that agreement (consideration of the matter by both houses of the Federal Assembly; sending notifications to all the States Parties; a relevant Conference; compliance with the time frame provided for in the Treaty). Nevertheless, the NATO countries tried to accuse us of violating international legal norms back then, too, citing the fact that the Treaty itself contains no reference to the possibility of its suspension.

Yet, what is happening now? Our opponents are themselves suspending application of the CFE Treaty, thereby indirectly acknowledging the rightfulness of the steps taken by Russia in 2007. At the same time, as we understand it, they do not intend to adhere either to the conditions for suspension provided for by international law or to the procedure that our country followed 16 years ago. For some reason, the NATO member States think that it is sufficient for them simply to announce their decision.

One can see even from this fact alone how different the Russian and Western approaches to such sensitive matters are – the collective West is profoundly indifferent to international law. They have their own rules, which they create in an ad hoc manner, and their own world order based on these.

Secondly, let us simply enumerate the facts showing by whom and when the entire system of international treaties guaranteeing strategic security began to be destroyed, starting with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, and so on. By the way, we do not recall the United States of America having been accused by Western countries of undermining the Treaty on Open Skies, whether at the Open Skies Consultative Commission or subsequently here at the Forum for Security Co-operation.

The aforementioned agreements all have one thing in common: they were concluded on the basis of the principles of equality, the indivisibility of security and the relationship between offensive and defensive weapons. All this was wiped out overnight. The United States and its satellites are at present consciously moving to undermine arms control and export control agreements that do not suit them and that restrict their freedom of action. They prefer, instead, to act unilaterally or in interest-group fashion.

Madam Chairperson,

There is one further conclusion that may be drawn from what is taking place in relation to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, namely that the West has a very short historical memory. I shall take the liberty of briefly recalling the reasons for the step taken by Russia, since we have already done so at length more than once: 16 years ago and in June of this year, at Extraordinary Conferences of the States Parties to the CFE Treaty.

The Treaty was concluded in 1990 between the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty and the NATO member countries. It established a balance of forces between the participants in these politico-military alliances at reduced levels, and limited the scope for them to station their conventional armaments along the line of contact. Russia complied with the Treaty provisions in good faith, reducing the largest numbers of conventional armaments and equipment and hosting the greatest number of inspections among all the States Parties.

However, subsequent events – the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the USSR, the emergence of hotbeds of conflict on our territory, and later the North Atlantic bloc's incipient expansion eastwards – necessitated adaptation of the CFE Treaty to the new realities. Russia ratified the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty, but this never entered into force because of the destructive position of the Western States Parties, which, under spurious pretexts and under US pressure, refused to ratify it and continued to circumvent the limitations set forth in the original CFE Treaty by expanding the Alliance.

Under these circumstances, Russia suspended its application of the Treaty in 2007, while at the same time leaving the door open for the viability of the European conventional arms control regime to be restored. However, Finland's accession to NATO, the prospect of conventional armed forces of third States being stationed on Finnish territory and, likewise, the ongoing procedures for Sweden's admission to the Alliance have substantially altered the balance of forces in northern Europe. These developments were the last straw, making the Russian Federation's withdrawal from the Treaty inevitable.

Madam Chairperson,

The message that we previously tried to convey to the Vienna disarmament community has evidently not been heeded. We repeat: the Western countries had more than enough time to show common sense and

respond to our initiatives for guaranteeing military security, but they preferred to go down the path of confrontation with Russia.

In closing, allow me to say a few words about the future of the system for conventional arms control in Europe. We are convinced that, only once the present turbulent period of European history has come to an end and only if the West abandons its hostile anti-Russian policy, will it be possible to talk about this topic. If and when the time comes to sit down at the negotiating table, the world will be different, as will be the approaches to conventional arms control in Europe. There will be no going back to the old CFE Treaty then – for us that is a closed chapter in the book of history. What is more, Russia will be guided exclusively by its national interests and the interests of its allies.

Thank you for your attention.