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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. SERGEY LAVROV, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE THIRTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE  
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Valletta, 5 December 2024

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Ironically, exactly 35 years ago, Malta hosted a famous summit, which, as historians have assessed, put an end to the Cold War and ushered in an era of lasting peace and co-operation between East and West.

There are other anniversaries to be marked soon. The 50th anniversary of the signing of the Final Act is just a few days away. The purpose of that document was to eliminate forever the threat of war in Europe – home to one of the greatest civilizations but also the scene of the most devastating conflicts in human history.

In 1975 in Helsinki, the principle of the indivisibility of security was placed at the centre of the efforts to overcome confrontation: the security of each nation means the security of all, no one shall strengthen their security at the expense of the security of others, and no country or organization shall aspire to dominance in Europe. The comprehensive nature of security, encompassing the politico-military, economic and human dimensions, was proclaimed. Of course, everyone solemnly swore an oath to consensus – the basic principle of the OSCE.

There is an enormous gap – a chasm – between the Conference on Security in 1975 and the present day. Progress towards implementing the inviolable principles this forum was established to promote and which we all pledged to rigorously implement (what is more, irrespective of our membership of other international structures) was first halted and then reversed for the sake of imposing a “rules-based order” with ideological, political, military, economic and value-based rules.

Life has shown that for NATO and the European Union the Helsinki principles are a meaningless scrap of paper. They consider it a burden to have to respect and apply these principles, but they force others to engage in selective implementation – only to the extent that it serves Western interests. Declaring Russia a threat and pursuing Russophobic policies is seen as absolution from responsibility for the most egregious violations of international law.

The West’s resolve to push through its neocolonial hegemony at any cost was embodied in the NATO aggression against Yugoslavia in 1999, with the dismemberment of a State in the centre of Europe,

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1 Includes a correction to the translation.

and now in the Ukrainian conflict that has been ignited to suppress Russia and inflict a “strategic defeat” on our country on the battlefield.

The spirit of Helsinki was once a kind of barometer of détente. Arms control instruments, on which work began in the late 1980s, were intended to provide a solid foundation. The aim was to achieve greater security with fewer resources by dismantling the material legacy of the Cold War and building mutual trust, to stop wasting tremendous resources in risky, senseless and self-destructive military confrontation and to join forces in countering cross-border challenges and threats.

This course of action was codified in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Treaty on Open Skies, in the establishment of the Forum for Security Co-operation, in the Programme for Immediate Action and in other fundamental OSCE documents governing diverse aspects of the development of military capabilities and conduct in the military sphere.

However, the United States of America and its allies consigned all this to the scrapheap, along with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. The question is – why? The answer is clear to us: they were driven by a desire to return NATO to the political spotlight. After the Afghan disgrace, there was a need for a new common enemy. The result is the reincarnation of the Cold War, only this time with a far greater risk of its transition to a hot phase. Borders with coils of barbed wire, anti-tank ditches and queuing up for the right to host foreign troops, preferably US ones, on their territory are seen as the epitome of security for those who have declared themselves front-line States in the fight against the Russian threat.

The same unenviable fate befell the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE, which was supposed to be a mechanism for harmonizing the interests of all participating States. However, the West trampled upon the OSCE principles and embarked on a path of suppressing its competitors by means of economic and social coercion and illegitimate sanctions against Russia, Belarus and indeed any other country that dares to defend its legitimate national interests.

Things are even worse in the third “basket”, which is overflowing with pseudo-liberal “values” – without any consensus whatsoever, of course. Indeed, the subject of “values” has also been turned into a tool of diktat. The fundamental tasks of promoting tolerance and intercultural dialogue, ensuring access to information, combating manifestations of neo-Nazism, Islamophobia and Christianophobia and protecting the rights of national minorities and believers have all been scrubbed from the Organization’s agenda.

Western countries, the Chairmanship, the Secretary General and all the OSCE institutions, which express concern about human rights at any opportunity, have maintained a deathly silence when it comes to the actions of the Nazi regime in Kyiv, which since 2017 has adopted a series of laws eradicating the Russian language in all areas – education, the media, culture and the arts – and recently banned the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. This is despite the fact that Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations calls for respect for the linguistic and religious rights of every individual. But the EU leaders simply claim that Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s regime is defending “European values”. This is an acknowledgement of guilt, an admission that racism is today a “European value”.

It would seem that, given the current profound changes in the balance of global forces, the OSCE could become a focal point for co-ordinating the interests of all members of the European space. But it would not occur to anyone in this room to use the OSCE for that purpose. Members of NATO and the European Union would never think of doing that, because through their actions they have sidelined the OSCE from political processes. For us, and everyone else, because such an OSCE is meaningless. There is no room left for co-operation or security in real politics within the OSCE.

There is not a single area in which the OSCE could play even a marginally useful role in finding answers to direct questions within its sphere of competence. Does the investigation of the terrorist attack on the Nord Stream gas pipelines not fall within the remit of the first and second “baskets”? Does the abolition of the rights of national minorities and the banning of all Russian-language media in Ukraine not worry the institutions of our once respected Organization? Perhaps the OSCE leadership could ask the Kyiv regime to publish the names of those whose bodies were neatly laid out in the streets of Bucha in April 2022 and presented to the world by BBC correspondents who so conveniently happened to be there? We have made this request many times both to journalists accredited with the United Nations and to Secretary-General António Guterres. They shamefully avert their eyes. Maybe the OSCE could help us to find out the truth? After all, it has had special, albeit not entirely legitimate ties with the Kyiv regime since the time of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, when that mission covered up the regime’s crimes.

Through various tricks the West has privatized the OSCE Secretariat (admittedly, it is the same with the executive structures of the United Nations and many other multilateral organizations). The West has never respected the consensus principle, having started destroying it decades ago. First, as an exception in the case of the work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, under the banner of the Office’s “autonomy” that has never been agreed upon by anyone. Then, by abusing the atavisms of the Vienna and Moscow Mechanisms, which were created in an entirely different era of “smiles and embraces” that were completely false, as is now clear to everyone.

One of the recent examples is the outrageous mockery by the Danish Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation of the universally agreed rules of procedure. In a similar vein is the violation of the functions of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, when the visa allowing the official representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maria Zakharova, to attend today’s meeting was cancelled at the last minute.

Another trick they use to break consensus is refusing to reach agreement on rules for the funding of extrabudgetary projects. Western countries, without any consultation with other States, simply allocate funds for confrontational events that are favourable to them, and the pliant Secretariat puts an OSCE nameplate on them.

I want to warn you in all seriousness: the OSCE exists only as long as there is consensus, as long as each State has guarantees that its interests will be taken into account. Now, there is neither consensus nor guarantees left.

The OSCE is a victim of the policy of subordinating Europe to the United States through Euro-Atlantic security concepts. NATO and Europe alone are not enough for the authorities in Washington. They have now completely brought both the European Union and the OSCE Secretariat to heel. That is not all, though. The Biden administration is moving NATO infrastructure into the Asia-Pacific region, and military blocs are being created there, moreover with a nuclear component. Military exercises with NATO participation are being stepped up in the South China Sea, in the Taiwan Strait and around the Korean peninsula. It is an obvious attempt to destabilize the entire Eurasian continent.

We cannot allow a repeat in the Asia-Pacific region of the tragedy of many countries in the most diverse regions from Afghanistan to Haiti, when Uncle Sam came, wreaked havoc, then watched what happened and forced others to clean up after it. We are convinced that the principle of “regional solutions to regional problems” is a viable alternative for Eurasia. The countries of the continent must determine their own future. The objective and inexorable course of history obliges responsible politicians to think about the future of their peoples. In addition to ideological considerations that neoliberals are so enamoured with, the

everyday interests of voters should be taken into account as well. For example, the fact that energy costs in Europe are three to four times higher than they are in the United States. The Euro-Atlantic area is losing its status as the engine of global development. The United States has used Europe and has now turned its focus to the Asia-Pacific region in an effort to extract as much neocolonial rent from there as possible.

The principles of sovereign equality of States and mutually respectful dialogue, which have been killed off at the OSCE, are now embodied in projects for mutually beneficial co-operation within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Union State of Russia and Belarus, and other Eurasian associations that have nothing to do with the OSCE. There are no “students” and “teachers” there, no neocolonial practices, no ideology-driven attitudes along the lines of “you are either with us or against us”. Instead, there is mutual respect and a readiness to seek an honest balance of interests.

The growing interest in such equitable alliances was clearly seen during the BRICS Summit in Kazan and the second International Conference on Eurasian Security held recently in Minsk. In the wake of that conference, Russia and Belarus put forward an initiative to develop a Eurasian charter of diversity and multipolarity in the twenty-first century. We would welcome the involvement in this work of all the countries located in Eurasia that value the goals of the indivisibility of security, which have proved unattainable in the failed Euro-Atlantic configurations.

I am confident that the future lies in a pan-Eurasian architecture that is open to all countries of the continent and embodies a new, polycentric state of the world. It is sad that the OSCE leadership and those who manipulate it are deliberately leaving this Organization outside the framework of creative endeavours and the objective course of history. However, every country in Eurasia has its own sovereign national choice to make.