

Conference on Disarmament

18 September 2020
English
Original: English/Russian

Note Verbale dated 16 September from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation addressed to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament and transmitting the Statement of the Russian Federation concerning a commentary by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Ukraine dated 12 August 2020

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament H.E. Ms. Tatiana Valovaya and has the honour to transmit herewith the Statement of the Russian Federation concerning a commentary by the MFA of Ukraine dated 12 August 2020 and circulated as an official document CD/2190.

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation would highly appreciate if this Statement could be issued as an official document of the CD and circulated to all Member States and observer States of the Conference.

The Permanent Mission avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the CD and the Secretariat the assurances of its highest consideration.



Statement of the Russian Federation at the Conference on Disarmament in connection with the comment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine of 12 August 2020

(Geneva, 16 September 2020)

The conduct of combat training exercises by the fleet of the Russian Federation is a matter for the Russian Federation alone.

The Republic of Crimea and the federal city of Sevastopol are integral parts of the Russian Federation. This is not open to discussion. They became part of the country in keeping with the will of their population, peoples of many nations, and in accordance with international law. This decision is fully consistent with Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, in which “respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples” is proclaimed. Any attempt to question the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation is absolutely unacceptable. The choice of the people of Crimea and Sevastopol, who decided to join Russia, is fully legitimate.

We call on our partners to cease their attempts to demonize Russian military activity in the Black Sea. The nature of the Russian military presence in the region has not changed since Crimea was part of Ukraine. Of course, we are modernizing our forces and capabilities as facilities under the control of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are built in increasing proximity to the country’s borders. But our efforts are entirely in keeping with real defence and security needs. In addition, Russia attaches particular importance to confidence-building measures in the region, and by inviting members of foreign militaries to observe the exercises it is demonstrating the greatest possible degree of transparency. Whether or not to accept this invitation is a decision for our partners to make.

The politically motivated allegations of what the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on 12 August, called “deliberate steps to escalate tensions” in the Black Sea are being made against the backdrop of increasing military activity by Ukraine in the region. For example, Ukraine, together with NATO forces, is staging exercises involving simulated attacks, as well as actively upgrading its military facilities, building its military capabilities and testing new weapons systems. The Government of Ukraine, for the rest, is not denying that these systems are to be used in a fight with Russia.

This Ukrainian military activity, carried out with foreign support, clearly destabilizes the situation and shows disregard for obligations contracted under the military and political documents of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. At forums provided by the Organization, we have stated that there is abundant evidence of violations by Ukraine of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and of the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures.

Russia is in favour of maintaining peace and stability in the Black Sea region. We believe that the countries of the region, relying on existing cooperation mechanisms, are well equipped to address issues of common security on their own. We call on all Black Sea States to return to full-fledged cooperation within the framework of the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group, Operation Black Sea Harmony and the document on confidence- and security-building measures in the Black Sea.

Instead of engaging in political intrigue, Ukraine should focus on fulfilling its obligations under the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, put an immediate end to the punitive operation against civilians in the Donbass region, move weapons to designated storage sites, disarm all illegal groups and remove foreign military equipment and mercenaries from the country. There is an urgent need to lift the inhumane social, economic and transport blockade of the region, grant it special status and grant amnesty to its residents, in accordance with the Minsk Agreements. If political issues are not resolved, a comprehensive resolution of the crisis in Ukraine will be impossible. We underscore the direct responsibility of Ukraine for the practical implementation of all aspects of the Minsk Package of Measures and the decisions made at the Normandy format talks in Paris on 9 December 2019.