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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. De Rivière	(France)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Ms. Dautllari
	Brazil	Mr. De Almedia Filho
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Gabon	Mr. Biang
	Ghana	Ms. Oppong-Ntiri
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland	Mr. Gallagher
	Kenya	Mrs. Toroitich
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mr. Mills

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 4.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Mr. Sergey Kupriyanov, official spokesperson for Gazprom; and Mr. Marc-Antoine Eyl-Mazzega, Director of the Centre for Energy and Climate of the French Institute of International Relations.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Hanif.

Mr. Hanif: I have been requested to brief the Security Council on the issue of recent leaks in the Nord Stream pipelines. I should emphasize that all of the information and data cited in this briefing are from publicly available sources. The United Nations is not in a position to verify or confirm any of the reported details related to the incident.

Between 26 and 29 September, four leaks were detected in the Nord Stream submarine pipelines in the Baltic Sea. The first was reported in the Nord Stream 1 pipeline on the morning of 26 September in Europe when seismologists detected a spike in activity. The second and third were reported in the Nord Stream 1 pipeline on the evening of 26 September. A fourth leak was reported in the Nord Stream 2 pipeline on the morning of 29 September. Neither pipeline was in operation, as supplies to Nord Stream 1 were halted this month and Nord Stream 2 has never come into operation. However, both pipelines contain natural gas and were reported to have held several hundreds of millions of cubic metres of natural gas at the time of the incident. At this stage, a site inspection has not yet been done and details on what exactly happened remain unknown. While the causes of the incident are being investigated, it is equally urgent to address the consequences of those leaks. I would like to point out three possible potential effects.

First, the damage to the Nord Stream pipelines raises concerns regarding the uncertainty in the global energy markets. According to the report *Global impact of war in Ukraine: Energy crisis — Brief No.3*, published by the United Nations Global Crisis Response Group in August, the high price volatility witnessed since the pandemic, particularly in 2022, suggests that prices remain at high levels and could rise again, causing socioeconomic stress across the world. The incident could exacerbate the high price volatility on the energy markets in Europe and around the world.

Secondly, the potential environmental impact of the leaks is a matter of deep concern. A discharge of hundreds of millions of cubic metres of gas into the atmosphere can result in hundreds of thousands of tons of methane emissions. Over a 20-year time frame methane has more than 80 times the planet-warming potency of carbon dioxide, and roughly 30 times its potency over a 100-year time frame. It is not yet possible to assess how much methane has actually been released into the atmosphere, given the many uncertainties.

Thirdly, the incident also makes the vulnerability of critical energy infrastructure manifestly clear. It underscores the importance of accelerating the energy transition in order to create a clean, resilient and sustainable energy system while ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy for all. As the Secretary-General emphasized at the launch of the Global Crisis Response Group's third brief, every country is part of this energy crisis.

Any attack on critical civilian infrastructure, including energy infrastructure, is unacceptable. This incident must not be allowed to further increase tensions or deepen divisions in an already tense regional context.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Hanif for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kupriyanov.

Mr. Kupriyanov (*spoke in Russian*): On 26 September, in the space of one day, breaks occurred in three branches of the Nord Stream pipeline system in the Baltic Sea, specifically in both branches of Nord Stream 1 and one of the two branches of Nord Stream 2. The Nord Stream pipelines are offshore gas pipelines, each approximately 1,200 kilometres long, built to deliver a reliable supply of Russian gas directly to Europe. The pipelines have a total projected annual capacity of 110 billion cubic metres of gas per

year, which is a quarter of the gas consumption in the European Union and the power supply for 52 million European households. Nord Stream 1 has provided nearly half a trillion cubic metres of gas to European consumers since 2011.

I will now provide more details about what happened on 26 September. At about 6 a.m. Central European Time, the gas pipeline onshore dispatcher recorded a pressure drop in Line A of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. Earlier, at about 2 a.m. Central European Time, the pressure drop started to be recorded by the Gascade system. The pressure dropped rapidly from 103 bar to 7 bar in the German section.

The site of the rupture is in the Danish economic zone, 25 kilometres south-east of the island of Bornholm. The distance along the pipeline is 153 kilometres to the German coast and 1,081 kilometres to the Russian coast.

Later that day, two more ruptures occurred, this time on the Nord Stream 1 pipeline. At 7.12 p.m. Central European Time, Nord Stream 1's control centre dispatchers recorded a simultaneous pressure drop in both lines of the gas pipeline. While the pressure before the incident had been 165 bar, it subsequently dropped to 8 bar.

The site of one of the ruptures in Nord Stream 1 is in the Danish exclusive economic zone, 54 kilometres north-east of the island of Bornholm. From there, the distance along the pipeline is 218 kilometres to the German coast and 1,005 kilometres to the Russian coast. The site of the other rupture is in the Swedish exclusive economic zone, 59 kilometres north-east of Bornholm, 224 kilometres from the German coast and 999 kilometres from the Russian coast along the pipeline. The two ruptures are therefore several kilometres apart.

It is estimated that about 800 million cubic metres of gas were in the three lines of the pipeline at the time of the ruptures. By comparison, that represents Danish consumption over three months.

The data on the sudden drop in pressure and gas leaks allow us to say with confidence that the depressurization of the pipelines was caused by physical damage.

Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 are modern, high-tech and ultra-reliable offshore gas pipelines. Years of safe operation have proved the flawlessness

of the technical solutions used. In constructing the pipelines, several centimetres of ultra-strong steel pipes in a special reinforced-concrete casing were used. At the time of the incident, gas was not being transported through the pipelines for various reasons, but they were in a fully operational state.

We have now started to search for possible solutions to make the Nord Stream system operational once again. At the moment, it is not possible to estimate the time frame for the work to restore the system. We can say with certainty that it will be a very complex task technically. The first step is to physically inspect the rupture sites.

In general, a situation with simultaneous ruptures in three lines of offshore pipelines on the same day is truly unprecedented. Europe has essentially been indefinitely deprived of a key route for the delivery of a crucial energy resource.

Russia and Gazprom invested a great deal of effort and money to construct and launch those pipelines because that is the shortest and the safest — as we thought — route for Russian gas to reach European consumers. The pipelines are currently ruptured.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Kupriyanov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Eyl-Mazzega.

Mr. Eyl-Mazzega (*spoke in French*): I am a researcher at the French Institute for Foreign Relations. For several years, I have been working on Russian-Ukrainian gas issues.

(*spoke in English*)

I cannot but concur with Mr. Kupriyanov's assessment that the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 corridors were designed and laid on the bottom of the sea through extraordinary state-of-the-art technology with a view to reducing the risk of any significant damage eventuating from storms, non-exploded Second World War bombs, vessel anchors, fishing trawls or sinking ships. They are great pipelines. To my best knowledge, an accident can therefore be ruled out. However, I am not in a position to say what exactly happened. Instead, in my remarks, I will try to contextualize those unprecedented events, as Mr. Kupriyanov put it.

In a nutshell, the explosions are another episode in the long-lasting geopolitical confrontation between the United States and Russia, on the one hand, and

Europe and Russia, on the other hand, where energy and pipeline infrastructure have taken centre stage and have been weaponized.

Allow me to go back a year. In June 2021, when the first unprecedented intervention by Gazprom on the European gas market took place. Gazprom unusually started to reduce its gas exports to European markets — however, respecting contractual obligations. That pushed gas prices up and led to a slow increase in imports of liquefied natural gas to compensate. Nord Stream was indeed fully operational by then. That happened last year at the climax of tensions between the United States and Russia around Nord Stream 2, whose construction was being finalized but was slowed down due to United States sanctions. Finally, the pipeline construction was completed following a meeting in Geneva between President Biden and President Putin, and, by the autumn of 2021, the opening of the pipeline was pending the completion of a certification procedure to make sure that it complied with European Union (EU) law.

The last point, which is an important one, is that the reduction in Gazprom supplies last year happened as the EU published its accelerated decarbonization plan for 2020 and as the Russian military build-up started around Ukraine. Russia's aggression against Ukraine in February this year therefore aggravated the tensions over the gas supply. At the end of February, Germany indefinitely stopped the certification procedure for Nord Stream 2. Shortly after that, Gazprom reduced gas supplies to Europe via Poland and Ukraine, and, in the following months, using various pretexts and reasons, it progressively started to entirely cut off most of its customers, but this time in disregard for long-term contracts. This summer, in an unprecedented move, Gazprom further reduced export volumes via Nord Stream, blaming Western sanctions on equipment.

As we speak, that extraordinary pipeline infrastructure had actually been shut down for many days and weeks. Europe and many important countries around the world have been severely impacted by Gazprom's market behaviour. On the one hand, in Europe we have soaring prices, which cause incredible burden and pain on consumers, utilities and public finances, while Gazprom has made huge profits. And in the rest of the world, many large importers are deprived of access to LNG cargoes because simply they cannot afford to pay for them. The consequences are clear: many countries and companies turn to

such dirty fuels as heavy oil or coal as LNG became unaffordable, which has caused, of course, huge and lasting environmental damage.

So where did we stand just before the pipeline explosions? Gazprom ended contractual relations, much to my regret, in an incredible, unprecedented move, with most of its European customers in full tatters, so that flows through the pipeline had already been stopped for several weeks. Against this backdrop, the relevance and value of the Nord Stream corridors to Russia have obviously declined. Financially, this huge investment is a de facto sunk-cost investment. Gazprom had, as I said, stopped transporting gas for Nord Stream, and whatever the relevance of its explanations, Gazprom has and had the ability to reroute gas going through Nord Stream via either Belarus or Ukraine, but this did not happen.

It is a widely shared view among experts that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline would probably never be put into operation following Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The EU has therefore been working over the past months to phase out Russian gas as soon as possible, meaning when contract obligations allow, and in turn Russia has pledged to rapidly divert its gas infrastructure to Asia, in particular to China and India.

What then is the new situation we are in now following the pipeline explosions? I cannot but refer to the incredible massive methane leak, which an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report called dangerous. As a footnote, I would add that it is regrettable that Russia has not signed on to the Global Methane Pledge, and satellite pictures of Russia suggest Gazprom has been ramping up gas-flaring operations in recent months. Spot gas prices are up again, and Gazprom can still export a lot more gas via Belarus and Ukraine, if it really wanted to. I see little impact on United States energy exports to Europe in the short to long term. United States supplies to Europe will remain steady unless the weather interferes. And, overall, there is a clear upward limit to additional energy supplies from the United States to Europe in future, which is why Europe is looking for other options to help replace some of the Russian gas.

In conclusion, these explosions set an extraordinary precedent where energy infrastructure is targeted by obvious sabotage operations of a sophisticated nature. We had seen this before in Ukraine. This should be, in my view, not only a concern for Europeans, but actually

for the rest of the world, because anything happening in Europe has global implications.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Eyl-Mazzega for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the representatives of the United Nations Secretariat and Gazprom for their briefings. We also thank Mr. Eyl-Mazzega. I will not comment on his interesting but at times not always objective briefing on what is happening on the gas market. We have a representative of Gazprom in the Chamber with us, and I think he could brief us himself if he so chooses.

Russia requested today's meeting in connection with the acts of sabotage on three lines of the Nord Stream offshore-gas pipeline system on 27 September 2022 in the exclusive economic zone of Denmark and Sweden near the Danish island of Bornholm. The Office of the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation has already initiated criminal proceedings under the article on acts of international terrorism. A preliminary investigation has been opened.

Right now, let us simply take a look at the facts, side by side. Fact number one is that a few weeks before the start of the special military operation, United States President Joe Biden said,

“If Russia invades, that means tanks or troops crossing the border of Ukraine again, then there will be no longer a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it.”

In response to a journalist's question about how this could be possible if Nord Stream 2 is controlled by Germany and not by the United States, President Biden replied, “I promise you, we will be able to do that.” This message was then parroted by many United States officials.

Fact number two is that, in June 2022, the Danish island of Bornholm, where three months later the Nord Stream incident was to take place, was the site of large-scale NATO exercises in the Baltic Sea. As the United States publication *Seapower* wrote, one of the main objectives for the alliance during these exercises was to test unmanned underwater vehicles for which the waters off the island were best suited. Following the conclusion of the exercises, the American landing

ship *USS Kearsarge* did not leave the Baltic Sea and remained near the Danish island until 20 September. But the most interesting part is that, ever since the end of August, the ship's helicopter unit began to systematically patrol the area of Bornholm island, and the flight path of the helicopters curiously coincides with the route of the gas pipelines.

I want to stress that this is open data on the geolocation of maritime and air transport, which is collected on the basis of data from transponders. In other words, the United States did not hide its presence in the area and carried out its manoeuvres in a demonstrative and deliberate manner.

Fact number three is that, immediately after the incidents, the former Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs of Poland Radek Sikorski, posted a photo of the leaked site on Twitter and openly thanked the United States for this sabotage. He wrote, “Thank you, USA.” I am now showing the Council a photo of that tweet.

Under it, the Member of the European Parliament commented on his own tweet, saying,

“... there's no shortage of pipeline capacity for taking gas from Russia to Western Europe, including Germany. Nord Stream's only logic was for Putin to be able to blackmail or wage war on Eastern Europe with impunity ...”.

Yesterday, apparently realizing that he had said too much, he deleted his tweet. We also cannot fail to note that Mr. Sikorski's wife, Anne Applebaum, is a person who enjoys access to the circle of power in Washington, D.C., and a wide variety of information.

Fact number four is that, at almost at the same time as the sabotage of Nord Stream took place, the Polish city of Goleniów marked the official opening of the Baltic gas pipeline from Norway. Poland has long positioned this pipeline as a salvation from the Nord Stream, even though, incidentally, the capacity of the Baltic pipe is far inferior to that of Nord Stream.

Fact number five is the NATO statement made in connection with the incident warning of the danger of strikes against NATO infrastructure. It is as though NATO is afraid that someone will retaliate for something and take revenge on it. As the saying goes, an uneasy conscience betrays itself.

As in any investigation, first and foremost, it is important to establish who benefits from the current

situation or, as investigators say, who had the motive and the opportunity to commit the crime. Let us analyse this further. Does the destruction of the Nord Stream benefit European States? That can hardly be the case. They in this case become dependent on a more expensive and extremely unreliable supplier; I am referring to the host country of the United Nations Headquarters. If we set aside the Polish, Czech and Baltic country politicians who have gone completely mad with Russophobia, then despite the off-the-charts anti-Russian hysteria in the EU, experts cannot fail to recognize the danger of such a scenario and its consequences for the European economy. There has been serious environmental damage done to the waters of the Baltic Sea and its maritime communications are threatened. Our Danish and Swedish colleagues have confirmed all of that in their letters to the Security Council.

The objective significance of Nord Stream 1 and 2 and their contribution to Europe's energy security has been repeatedly stressed by top officials of the European Union and its member States. From the beginning, Nord Stream had the status of a Project of Common Interest for the European Commission and enjoyed full political support. The gas pipeline system made a significant contribution to the diversification of natural gas supply routes, just like the Yamal-Europe and TurkStream pipelines. Their commissioning enabled Europe to gradually become less dependent on the monopoly of its gas supply transit by the Kyiv Government, which has been distinguished by its unscrupulous business practices — or theft, to put it simply.

Germany's leaders have said for years that Germany and Europe's need for gas will only increase. In 2021, the Austrian authorities said that Nord Stream contributes to Europe's energy security and welcomed the steps to improve the reliability of the continent's energy supply. The disruptive consequences of the energy crisis have proved those who understood the importance of Nord Stream in ensuring stable and predictable energy supplies right. The disruptions in gas supplies caused by European and American sanctions in 2022 are already having a negative effect on European industry, profitability and competitiveness and are driving the emigration of skilled labour and the transfer of production capacities out of Europe and into the United States in particular. Energy poverty is not just back, it has rocketed to the top of the agenda of the developed as well as the developing world. A resumption of

supplies, especially through long-term contracts, which Russia will continue to offer, would make it possible to stabilize the situation in manufacturing industries and avoid an energy collapse.

The next question is whether the destruction of Nord Stream benefits Russia. Considered from a common-sense point of view rather than one of sick fantasies about Russia's willingness to do anything merely to frighten Europe, of course not. It makes no sense for us to destroy with our own hands a project in which we have made such a huge investment and that could bring us significant economic returns. After all, the West itself has constantly asserted that we profit from energy exports and rising energy prices.

Finally, the big question is whether what happened to Nord Stream benefits the United States. Unquestionably. American suppliers of liquefied natural gas (LNG) must be celebrating the massive increase in LNG supplies to Europe, while from a political standpoint, the last thread securing the energy independence of the European Union has snapped. Thanks to the energy crisis, European production is being rapidly transferred to the United States, which is receiving top personnel, advanced technology and production resources, everything that a united Europe has been accumulating and developing for decades. The citizens of Europe have been left to face their problems alone. Across the ocean, no one cares that Europe is in for a very long, dark and cold winter. In connection to those simple and logical questions, I would like to ask the representative of the United States if he can confirm right now, here in this Chamber, that his country had nothing to do with that sabotage.

Of course, it is not our job to find and name those responsible today. The Security Council is not a judicial body and should not take on such tasks. Russia therefore endorses a comprehensive investigation to shed light on the true circumstances of the incident. We would be interested to hear the opinions and official views of our Western colleagues today. We hope that they will refrain from the meaningless Russophobic verbal gymnastics that they have been using about Ukraine's strikes on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Should we expect assertions that in the wake of the masochistic shelling of a power plant where we ourselves are positioned, we have begun to blow up our own pipelines?

It is quite obvious to us that sabotage of that complexity and scale is beyond the abilities of ordinary terrorists. We consider the damage to the pipelines to be deliberate sabotage of a crucial facility of the Russian Federation's energy infrastructure and an attack that could hardly have happened without the involvement of a State or State-controlled entities. We will definitely establish the identity of everyone involved in the sabotage. Those who were behind it cannot claim to be a non-party to the armed conflict or to have neutral status, which in any case Western countries violated long ago. I also want to stress that any international investigation of the incident can claim to be objective only if Russia is included in it. We also believe it is essential not only for the countries in whose territorial waters the incident occurred to participate but also representatives of Germany, which has been the main recipient of Nord Stream gas.

If the theory that one or another State is involved in these acts of terror is confirmed, that would make it a deliberate escalation of the conflict. I hope that everyone in this Chamber is aware of the dangerous point to which the perpetrators of this act of sabotage are leading us.

Ms. Juul (Norway): We thank the briefers for their updates.

The damage to the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines in international waters within the economic zones of Sweden and Denmark is deeply worrying and has created a very serious situation in terms of climate and environmental consequences and risks to shipping. We remain in close contact with our Nordic neighbours, and we thank Denmark and Sweden for the joint letters sent to the Security Council.

All the information currently available indicates that the damage to Nord Stream 1 and 2 is the result of a deliberate and irresponsible act of sabotage. We need to get to the bottom of what has happened and why, even if it takes some time. Norway fully supports the investigations launched by the Danish, Swedish and German authorities aimed at getting full clarity about the incident. This has occurred against a backdrop of war and an energy crisis in Europe and beyond. Those responsible clearly wanted to create fear and insecurity on the European continent. As a major supplier of gas, Norway is aware of the special responsibility we have to safeguard security on the Norwegian continental

shelf. We will maintain close dialogue with our allies and partners on the issue.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Hanif and Mr. Eyl-Mazzega for their briefings and the information they shared with us.

Mexico has followed with concern the recent incidents in the Baltic Sea that caused leaks in the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines, and we regret the impact they will have on the environment and international shipping. Unfortunately, they are also an additional destabilizing factor for energy markets, which had already been badly affected by the war in Ukraine. What complicates it further is that given the information available, it seems more likely to have been an act of sabotage than an accident. That is particularly worrisome in the context in which it occurred, as it will not be easy to repair, and the damage inflicted could have serious social and economic consequences. It is therefore necessary for a rigorous and impartial investigation to be carried out promptly in order to determine the circumstances that damaged this civilian infrastructure and to identify those responsible.

In conclusion, I reiterate that this regrettable incident forces us to truly rethink how we will focus the efforts of the Council in order to reduce tensions and begin, more decisively, to seek a solution through dialogue and diplomacy so that the conflict does not continue to escalate, as it has week after week under the Council's passive watch.

Mr. Gallagher (Ireland): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Hanif for his briefing and our other briefers for theirs.

Ireland is deeply concerned by the sudden and extensive gas leaks detected in the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines earlier this week. The immediate priority must be to ensure maritime safety and avert the risk of a climate and ecological disaster. The potential for a massive and highly damaging emission event is a serious concern.

All the analysis to date indicates that the leaks are the result of deliberate acts of sabotage. We understand that at least two detonations occurred underwater, damaging the pipelines and causing major leaks of natural gas into the Baltic Sea. The magnitude of the explosions was measured at 2.3 and 2.1 on the Richter scale, corresponding to an explosive load in the region of several hundred kilograms.

The irresponsibility of such acts cannot be overstated and must deeply concern us all. That such acts could occur now, in the midst of a global energy crisis and with winter fast approaching, makes it all the more appalling.

Sweden, Denmark and Germany have our full support in managing the consequences of this indefensible act, and we stand ready to provide any assistance necessary. We also strongly support the ongoing investigations in the most affected Member States in order to determine the full facts behind the leaks.

Let us be clear — any deliberate disruption of European energy infrastructure is utterly unacceptable. Ireland, along with our European Union partners, will ensure that it is met with a robust and united response.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Hanif for his briefing. We listened carefully to the briefings delivered by Mr. Kupriyanov and Mr. Eyl-Mazzega.

The information we were provided just now on major leaks in the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines are alarming and raise concerns about the possibility of a disaster in the Baltic Sea. The magnitude of the risk and the scope of economic and environmental stakes call for an urgent and well-defined response in order to assess the level of the threat and to guard against possible negative consequences of the release of methane into the atmosphere.

We note with apprehension the measures taken, particularly regarding the ban on overflights and the navigational bottleneck in the area concerned. We hope that those precautionary measures are taking into account safety and the indispensable energy supply in question, given that the winter season is approaching. Above all, we hope that the damage to the gas pipelines is not the result of hostilities between the warring parties.

We are opposed to war, but also note that war is not a state of lawlessness. It has strict rules that protect civilian populations and infrastructure. We reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of hostilities between the warring parties and stress the urgency of action to repair the damaged gas pipelines leaks and mitigate the damage. We also call for an independent investigation to shed light on the leaks and to identify those responsible.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I would like to thank our briefers for setting out what we know so far about this case, which is clearly still very limited.

But this afternoon in the Chamber, we once again heard some absurd Russian claims and conspiracy theories. Russia's request for this meeting was a cynical attempt to distract from Putin's illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory today.

The damage to the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines in the Baltic Sea is of deep concern. Those leaks are not only causing risks to shipping but also substantial environmental damage in the Baltic Sea. They are releasing enormous amounts of methane into the Earth's atmosphere.

We agree with the assessment that all currently available information indicates that this damage is the result of sabotage. We strongly support the investigations by the authorities of Denmark, Sweden and Germany. Intentional damage to civilian infrastructure is reckless and irresponsible, wherever it takes place. We must establish clear international norms that such damage is utterly unacceptable.

For NATO's part, as set out in yesterday's statement of the North Atlantic Council, allies remain committed to prepare for, deter and defend against any hybrid tactics by State and non-State actors, including coercive approaches to energy. We are clear that any deliberate attack against allies' critical infrastructure would be met with a united and determined response.

The United Kingdom will continue to work alongside our partners to protect Europe's energy security.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Hanif and our other briefers today.

I will be a little longer than I intended given that, once again, our Russian colleagues have decided to instrumentalize a Security Council meeting to spread conspiracy theories and disinformation and, to quote my colleague, "morbid fantasies".

But let me begin by saying clearly and unequivocally that we are deeply concerned by the apparent sabotage that took place on the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines.

As we heard just now from the representative of the United Kingdom, deliberate actions to damage critical infrastructure cannot be tolerated. Efforts to investigate are under way, and the United States strongly

supports European efforts to conduct that important investigation. It could take time, but the search for the truth will not be rushed. It is important that we first establish the facts.

I know our Russian colleagues have had a bad day. They had to sit and watch that strangely odd fascist Nuremberg-style rally combined with Las Vegas 1970s show that happened in Moscow this morning to celebrate the illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory. And then in the afternoon they got hit by the Council's vote, sending a clear message about Russia's annexation of Ukrainian territory. But I do not think that justifies the Russian delegation once again raising conspiracy theories and spreading mass disinformation in the Council.

My Russian colleague continues to use inflammatory rhetoric accusing the United States of being involved in this act of sabotage. Let me answer his question. Let me be clear — the United States categorically denies any involvement in this incident, and we reject any assertions to the contrary.

Let me also talk about energy supplies, since that was raised, and the relationship between the United States and our European friends and partners in the energy sector. It has been clear for years that Russia is not a reliable energy supplier. The United States has therefore been working with our European partners and our allies in order to increase their energy resilience and provide alternative supplies. We are working on a short- and long-term basis to address energy security and the stability of global energy markets, not only for Europe but the world.

I will end there, because while we get to the bottom of what happened to Nord Stream, we will not let Russia's disinformation apparatus distract us from addressing the main issue at hand, which is the continuing aggression against Ukraine and the destruction of civilian infrastructure on Ukrainian sovereign territory. It is important that we use this meeting not to foster conspiracy theories, but to focus our attention on Russia's blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and on its crimes in Ukraine.

In only half a year, Ukraine has become the scene of some of the worst mass-scale violence that Europe has witnessed in decades, including the destruction of infrastructure. Of deep concern to us all is the conclusion last week by the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry that Russia

has committed war crimes in Ukraine, including the deliberate destruction of infrastructure. The sabotage of critical infrastructure should be of concern to us all. In the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, we have seen numerous Russian attacks damaging civilian infrastructure. We have witnessed Russia recklessly seize control of Europe's largest nuclear power plant, risking a nuclear disaster in Europe. We have seen countless attacks destroying civilian electricity infrastructure.

Russia attacked energy and water infrastructure in Kharkiv, Zmyiv and Pavlograd on 11 and 12 September, causing mass blackouts and water cut-offs. On 14 September, there were reports that Russia had struck a dam at the Karachunov reservoir, causing fears of floods. In this very Chamber we have also heard United Nations experts recount numerous verified instances of harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure resulting from Russia's war against Ukraine. They include credible reports of the bombing of educational institutions, medical clinics and hospitals and the killing of aid workers, medical staff and patients. Evidence of the scale of atrocities continues to mount as Russia ignores international calls for an immediate end to the war.

Despite the efforts we heard today to distract us from the truth and disseminate more disinformation and slightly wacky theories, the facts on the ground in Ukraine speak for themselves. Russian attacks in Ukraine have hit civilians and reduced cities to rubble, resulting in thousands dead and injured. As we did with this afternoon's vote (see S/PV.9143), we must continue to speak out against Russia's atrocities, the war and the wanton disregard for international law that we are seeing on the ground. We must not allow Russia to continue to use the platform of the Security Council to spread lies and disinformation, which it has done since the very beginning of the war in Ukraine. I am sure that all of us recall how during the days before the war began, the Russian delegation was tweeting out that there was no intention to invade Ukraine.

We must continue to investigate and bear witness to Russia's atrocities, and we must demand accountability. The United States will not be distracted from seeking justice and accountability. We will not be distracted from defending the Charter against such blatant violations and transgressions.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the three briefers for their presentations.

We are deeply concerned about the recent multiple leaks and powerful underwater explosions in the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines, which are the main artery for transporting energy to Europe, providing a vital gas supply to 23 European countries. The physical disruption of the pipelines caused by the leaks has exacerbated energy supply shortages in Europe. Consumers around the world, particularly in developing countries, are likely to suffer from the resulting volatility in energy markets and soaring energy prices. The leaks are still going on, and their impact on the shipping routes and the Baltic Sea ecosystem continues to play out. At a time when Europe and the world are facing growing and seemingly insurmountable challenges, this incident is indeed a terrible disaster that we would have preferred not to see.

We note that some of the information we are currently receiving indicates that the leaks were no accident, but very likely the result of a deliberate act of sabotage. If that is true, it would constitute an attack on transnational civilian facilities and submarine pipelines, in violation of international law. We also note that all the stakeholders agree that an objective, impartial and professional investigation of the leaks is imperative. As the briefers stressed, the leaks highlight the vulnerability of transnational infrastructure. We stand ready to work with all parties to maintain the security of cross-border infrastructure.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): I would like to begin by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Navid Hanif for his briefing. We have also listened closely to the other briefers today and taken note of the information they provided.

We too are deeply concerned about the severe damage to the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines. While the exact cause remains unknown, it appears that the damage is the result of a deliberate act of sabotage. At a time of heightened geopolitical tensions and global turmoil, potential missteps and further escalation must be avoided. Now is the time to maintain calm and establish the facts concerning the cause of the damage through a transparent and comprehensive investigation.

As the world continues to suffer from the consequences of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, maintaining maritime and energy security around the world is fundamental to ensuring stability and prosperity

for all of us. Further volatility in energy markets will be an increasing strain on communities around the world, particularly in developing countries. Furthermore, the incident has resulted in a grave environmental disaster with long-term repercussions not only for the Baltic Sea region but the world. While the full environmental cost is only now being assessed, it is likely to represent one of the worst greenhouse-gas leaks ever recorded.

The world is facing severe environmental, economic, and energy challenges while on an already difficult path to recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic. The damage to such energy infrastructure and the resulting environmental and economic harm will further exacerbate those challenges. We underline the critical importance of avoiding any steps that aggravate the fragile regional and global situation. Every effort must be made to ensure that the facts are properly established and that no further incidents take place.

Ms. Dautllari (Albania): We are also deeply concerned about the reports of the large-scale leaks that were detected on 27 September in both the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines in the exclusive economic zones of Denmark and Sweden in the Baltic Sea. The plumes of gas rising to the surface are causing environmental damage, and the impact on maritime life in the Baltic is likely to be very substantial. The information available so far indicates that the leaks are the result of a deliberate act of sabotage. Such acts are unacceptable and pose a serious threat to international security. We support the investigations under way to find the origin of the damage and its likely perpetrators. It will be very important to have full clarity in that regard. We share the commitment of the international community to deterring and defending against the misuse of energy and other hybrid tactics by State or non-State actors. Any deliberate attack on critical infrastructure should be met with a united response.

While we wait for the results of the investigation, we must not lose sight of the larger context. While Russia's military aggression continues and has further escalated, reckless and irresponsible acts of sabotage on critical energy infrastructure could be seen as aimed at intimidating the countries directly affected in the Baltic region and the European Union. Since 24 February we have witnessed repeated attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, including through the serious endangerment of nuclear plants. Energy is being used as a weapon to achieve geopolitical gains. It is therefore

imperative that we unite our efforts to promote energy security and prevent further threats and actions.

Mrs. Toroitich (Kenya): I join others in thanking Mr. Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, and the other two briefers for their statements this evening.

Europe and the world cannot afford any escalation or spread of the war in Ukraine. Many countries that were already struggling to build back after the coronavirus disease pandemic are bearing the brunt of the war's impact, including a surge in food, energy, and farm input prices. That is why Kenya continues to call for an immediate cessation of hostilities to allow space for diplomacy in the search for a political solution that is aligned with the Charter of the United Nations and that safeguards Ukraine's territorial integrity while being sensitive to the security concerns of all parties.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): I thank the Assistant Secretary-General and the other two briefers for their statements.

We are closely following developments with regard to the evolving situation. We continue to urge those involved to exercise restraint and refrain from engaging in any activity that could disrupt peace and stability. Any targeting of civilian infrastructure and facilities must be avoided. The present incidents have the potential to impact stability in Europe and beyond, as well as to negatively affect the environment. Since the beginning of the Ukraine conflict, the global South has been disproportionately affected by its consequences, including those related to the food, fuel and energy crisis. If left unchecked, the current situation has the potential to further exacerbate those circumstances, and we would support calls for an independent and objective investigation in that regard.

India strongly reiterates the need for an immediate cessation of all hostilities and a return to dialogue and diplomacy. We have consistently reiterated that the global order is anchored in international law, the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Hanif, Mr. Kupriyanov and Mr. Eyl-Mazzega for their briefings.

This week's incident is undoubtedly a cause for concern for all in the light of its potential for further disrupting Europe's energy security with ripple effects

on the world economy. We must also be aware of the significant environmental impact that such a disaster implies for local maritime life, along with the threat to our global effort to combat climate change represented by the amounts of greenhouse gases leaked.

It is critical to ensure that reactions are based on sound information. We urge for additional information to be regularly shared with Council members on the status of the Nord Stream pipelines. We also believe that an investigation of the events should precede any conclusions. It is in the interests of all to clarify the incident and seek a prompt solution in order to avoid worsening the energy crisis in Europe. We encourage those involved to cooperate in the investigation efforts and to work together to ensure that the necessary repairs take place as soon as possible.

Ms. Oppong-Ntiri (Ghana): I would like to thank the briefers for sharing their assessments of the situation with the Council.

Ghana notes with great concern the unprecedented damage caused to the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines that has resulted in natural gas leaks in the area. We have also noted that the leakage has necessitated the demarcation of a no-sail zone and caused some disruptions to maritime straits in the affected area. Like the wider international community, we are concerned about the immediate and potentially long-term damage to the marine environment and climate in the region. We believe that urgent and independent investigations are needed to determine the circumstances that led to the leaks in the two pipelines and to guide appropriate remedial action, including ensuring accountability for any persons or States found to have been complicit in the matter.

The safety and security of Europe's energy infrastructure, like all other critical infrastructure situated on land, in maritime areas or in cyberspace, requires the concerted efforts of all Member States and the wider international community in order to prevent foreseeable interruptions to services that are critical to the survival of the people who rely on them. Indeed, in resolution 2341 (2017), the Security Council recognizes the increasing interdependence of countries on critical infrastructure and encourages cooperation at all levels to ensure their safety and protection from all forms of harm. We cordially call on all stakeholders to work closely to resolve any issues affecting the security of the Nord Stream gas pipelines and other such critical

infrastructure. We urge restraint on the part of all parties concerned and caution against unilateral actions.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

France is extremely concerned about the two underwater explosions that hit the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines on 27 September and resulted in four methane leaks off the Danish island of Bornholm. Such events are unprecedented. France expresses its full solidarity with Denmark and Sweden, which are directly affected by the security and environmental consequences of the explosions. The situation is grave, and the threat must be taken seriously. All the available information indicates that the leaks are the result of a deliberate act and likely one of sabotage. Two seismic events were recorded before the leaks occurred, with measurements indicating explosions equivalent to 500 kilogrammes of TNT. It was therefore not a coincidence, and the explosions were human-caused. I would like to thank the Danish and Swedish delegations for the letter they sent to the Council presidency yesterday, which is very helpful to the Council in its work.

France condemns such an irresponsible act, which endangers maritime navigation and the environment. The coercive use of energy is unacceptable. We call for a full investigation of the origin of the explosions and support the conduct of the investigations by the countries concerned. Any deliberate attempt to attack critical infrastructure is unacceptable and should be considered a hostile act. The European Union will therefore be firm and united in its response to attacks on its energy infrastructure, as well as to any attempt to undermine its security of supply.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I am grateful to my United States colleague for his direct response to a direct question, which was whether he could confirm right now, in this Chamber, whether or not his country was involved in this act of sabotage. My American colleague's response was to declare, in this Chamber, that the United States denied any involvement in the incident, and I thank him for his answer.

However, in the light of his remarks, and of the statement by my British colleague, I have another question. I would like to know what they mean by Russian disinformation and conspiracy theories. We have not named anyone as responsible. There has been no investigation yet. All we have done is cite facts. The representative of the United States is not going to deny what his President said publicly, after all. We just cited what he said, which is a fact, just like the other facts I cited.

It is a fact that NATO's BALTOPS exercise took place in June near the island of Bornholm. It is a fact that a former Foreign Minister of Poland, Mr. Radosław Sikorski, published the tweet that I showed Council members in which he thanked the United States for what happened to the pipeline. The opening of the Baltic pipe from Norway is a fact. It is a fact that NATO has made declarations about sabotage and the unacceptability of strikes on its countries' infrastructure. Those are all nothing but facts. Can it be denied that the current energy crisis in Europe is objectively making American energy suppliers more competitive? Is that a conspiracy theory too? It is an economic reality, and the United States benefits from it in objective economic terms.

Lastly, before our American colleague took the floor today, we had frankly not linked the Nord Stream incident to the situation in Ukraine. Now we see that our Western colleagues perceive this act of sabotage, whoever may have committed it, as revenge of some kind for Russia's actions in Ukraine. Well, I think that statement narrows the list of suspects and could be very helpful to us in the investigation.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the United States of America has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): I will take the floor briefly. I again categorically deny any United States involvement in the incident. We have heard, also quite categorically, both from me and from one of our briefers today, that the energy situation in Europe, however one wants to describe it, is more affected by Russia's unreliability as an energy supplier than by anything to do with the United States.

I would also like to point out that as the Russian delegation itself has said, the facts are clear. There is no hiding anything that has been said. However, as I laid out, over the past seven months it has been Russia that has a record of destroying civilian infrastructure

and causing suffering and loss across Ukraine. If there is any country that has a record of doing the kind of thing that we are discussing here today, it is not the United States.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names on the list of speakers.

As this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of September, I would like to take this opportunity to express the sincere appreciation of the French delegation to the members of the Council and the Secretariat for all the support and assistance they have given us. I am also grateful to the technical support team, conference officers, interpreters, translators, verbatim reporters and security staff.

As France ends its presidency, I know I speak on behalf of the Council in wishing the delegation of Gabon good luck in the month of October.

The meeting is adjourned.

I apologize. The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation): Before we thank you, Mr. President, for the French presidency of the Security Council during the month of September, we would like to point out that during the meeting we were informed that one of our briefers, the representative of Gazprom, wanted to make a brief comment at the end of the meeting, and I believe that request was transmitted to the presidency. I ask that you grant him that request, if it is acceptable to the presidency.

The President (*spoke in French*): I do not intend to give the floor to the briefers again. However, if the majority owner of Gazprom wishes to take the floor instead of the briever, it may do so.

Mr. Kupriyanov (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to briefly thank Mr. Eyl-Mazzega for his overview of the gas market, although we categorically disagree with him. Nord Stream 1 and 2 —

The President (*spoke in French*): I have not given the floor to the briefers. Mr. Kupriyanov does not have the floor. The representative of the Russian Federation has the floor.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation): I cannot speak for Gazprom. I just passed on Gazprom's request to speak.

The President (*spoke in French*): I am fine with Gazprom speaking through the delegation of the Russian Federation. Once again, if Gazprom's owner wishes to make a further statement, it may. If not, I will adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation): I value your irony, Mr. President, but just to get things straight, the representative of Gazprom — whose participation in this meeting we facilitated — obviously requested the floor through us because he has a means of communication through us, and not because the Russian State is the major shareholder in Gazprom.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of Gazprom was permitted to take the floor just as the other participants were.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.