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Seventy-eighth year

Provisional

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meeting

Monday, 27 March 2023, 3 p.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Fernandes	(Mozambique)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil	Mr. Costa Filho
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
	France	Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault
	Gabon	Mr. Biang
	Ghana	Ms. Oppong-Ntiri
	Japan	Mrs. Shino
	Malta	Ms. Gatt
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Switzerland	Mrs. Chanda
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Belarus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Nicaragua, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in this meeting.

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2023/212, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Belarus, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today we are to vote on a draft resolution (S/2023/212) to establish, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, an international investigation into the act of sabotage against the Nord Stream gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea in September 2022. The draft resolution is proposed by the Russian Federation and is co-sponsored by the People's Republic of China, along with Belarus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Nicaragua, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

As we said during the Council's meeting on this issue in February (see S/PV.9266), we put forward this initiative because we have serious — and very justified — doubts about the objectivity and transparency of the national investigations being carried out by some European countries. Unfortunately, those investigations demonstrate, in every way possible, a lack of intention to cooperate with the stakeholders — in particular our country, as one of the most affected — in order to comprehensively clarify the circumstances of this crime, which threatens various aspects of international peace and security.

Moreover, those countries are deliberately and consistently trying to mislead the Council by saying that Russia was informed of their efforts. I would like again to draw attention to the letters we circulated dated 13 March 2023 (S/2023/193) and 24 March 2023 (S/2023/223), which include annexed copies of the correspondence from the Russian missions abroad addressed to the competent authorities in Germany, Denmark and Sweden. It is clear from that correspondence that we received nothing but non-answers from the authorities of those States.

Accordingly, without an objective and transparent international investigation into the truth of what happened, we cannot ascertain what occurred. Russia therefore, in an open and constructive manner, proposes to Council colleagues to adopt a draft resolution instructing the Secretary-General to make proposals on the establishment of an independent international commission to conduct a comprehensive, transparent and impartial investigation into the circumstances of what took place. That is especially important against the backdrop of the emergence of new facts and the proliferation of different versions in the media, reflecting varying degrees of credibility or absurdity.

At the final stages of the discussions on our draft resolution, the only argument we heard from colleagues who doubted the expediency of an international investigation boiled down to the fact that we first needed to wait for the end of the national investigations. We would like to respond by saying that such investigations can go on for years in the same inefficient and non-transparent manner. However, valuable time is running out, and more and more suspicions are emerging that the efforts of those investigations are not aimed at clarifying the circumstances of the sabotage that occurred, but at ensuring that evidence remains concealed and cleaning up the crime scene.

We believe that the Council has a responsibility to the international community in term of responding to such acts, especially because our initiative in no way limits national investigations. Rather, the text contains a call to ensure wider-ranging cooperation between Member States and the Commission. We trust that it will help to ensure synergies with relevant efforts.

There is therefore no cause for concern. Furthermore, the recent incident with the discovery, in one of the Nord Stream lines, of an unidentified item, and the authorization by the Danish authorities

for Nord Stream AG to be involved in its inspection confirm the need for an international procedure. We doubt that such an authorization would have even been possible had we not drawn the attention of the international community to the egregious situation regarding national investigations. If, in order to have such a minimal degree of openness, full international attention must be paid to the work of Governments, then there is no doubt as to the need for such global efforts.

During the discussions on the draft resolution, the Russian side acted in a responsible and flexible way, trying to make the draft acceptable to all States. In addition, the concerns expressed by members of the Council were taken into consideration. We therefore urge the Council to support the draft resolution. Its adoption would send a clear signal that such acts of sabotage regarding cross-border infrastructure are unacceptable, and the perpetrators should be brought to justice. We are convinced that is in the interests of all States and the international community as a whole.

The President: The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Brazil, China, Russian Federation

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Albania, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 3 votes in favour, none against and 12 abstentions.

The draft resolution has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

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

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Let me begin by reiterating our deep concern regarding the sabotage that took place on the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines in September 2022. The United States categorically refutes Russia's unfounded allegations levelled against us in relation to that act of

sabotage. The United States was not involved in any way. As we have said previously, the international community cannot tolerate any deliberate actions to damage critical infrastructure.

However, let us be clear on what Russia's draft resolution (S/2023/212) was and what it was not. It was an attempt to discredit the work of ongoing national investigations and prejudice any conclusions they reach that do not comport with Russia's predetermined and political narrative. It was not an attempt to seek the truth. The competent national investigations by Sweden, Denmark and Germany are proceeding in a comprehensive, transparent and impartial manner. As many Council members have said, they must first be allowed to conclude.

That is why we did not support this draft resolution and abstained in the voting today. We must ask why, despite having failed to make its case to the Council, Russia still chose to bring this draft resolution to a vote. It is difficult to accept Russia's posturing that it seeks only an impartial, independent investigation. Let it be clear, for the record, that the first draft of Russia's draft resolution clearly implicated the United States based on mischaracterizations of statements made by United States officials. The first draft criticized the investigations of other Member States.

Over the course of many rounds of consultations, Russia failed to provide any credible new information to justify a United Nations investigation at this time. I repeat that Russia has consistently sought to advance a political agenda based on unfounded accusations and predetermined culpability. Russia's decision to call for a vote on a draft resolution that has such little support should make us all question what its true intent is. United Nations resources for United Nations investigations should be preserved for scenarios in which States fail or are unable to carry out genuine, impartial investigations. That is not the case today.

We cannot allow Russia's continued spurious allegations to distract the Council or unnecessarily divert the Organization's scarce resources from other pressing matters deserving of the Council's attention and resources. If Russia were truly committed to protecting civilian infrastructure, it would demonstrate that through its actions. Russia's claim to be concerned about the sabotage of critical infrastructure belies the fact that Russia is relentlessly attacking its neighbour. It is striking cities and towns across Ukraine,

damaging and destroying residential areas and medical facilities. Russia's attacks against Ukraine's civilian infrastructure have left millions displaced, without power and in need of humanitarian assistance. Russia's calls for accountability today ring hollow.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Beyond trying to shed light on the act of sabotage on the Nord Stream pipelines, today's vote is a particularly sombre moment for international investigations. It is a requiem or, at least, a dark day for the logic of attributing responsibility in an independent, impartial manner in the case of illicit acts with international consequences.

Given the perplexing outcome of the voting, it is clear that it will be extremely difficult to get the world to agree to an international investigation that would be detrimental to its interests. For us Africans, who regularly host all sorts of international investigations, and independent experts and members of Parliament for such investigations, who very often put into question the sovereignty of our States, we do not know whether we should be happy or be sad about this turn of events and this confusion.

We abstained in the voting because we are confused. Of course, we intend to avail ourselves of the arguments put forward here today by all sides whenever these questions are put to our countries. It goes without saying that no one will accept any more moral lectures from anyone on unlawful and reprehensible acts that affect international security. It is clear that the death knell of international responsibility that is now ringing is, inevitably, heralding the advent of uncertainty for the people of the world, who, in their distress and in the face of illicit actions or facts that threaten international security, risk more than ever being at the mercy of the initiative of States, while knowing that States basically only act according to their own interests. It certainly works for the benefit of the sovereignty of each State, and it is certainly to the detriment of impartiality, transparency and independence.

Ms. Oppong-Ntiri (Ghana): Ghana considers the preservation of peace as an overarching objective of the mandate that underpins the important work of the Security Council. That has underlined our overall approach to the discussions on the attacks on the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines. Ghana abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2023/212, submitted by the Russian Federation, not because we are against international investigations, but because we recognize

that at this stage there are three ongoing investigations by competent national authorities that have committed to a fair and impartial process to establish the truth surrounding a deliberate act of sabotage. While we have noted the expression of some dissatisfaction with the conduct of the current investigative processes, our own assessment is that it may be premature to launch, or advocate, parallel international investigations under the auspices of the United Nations, which does not have its own capacity for such investigations.

As a country, we used our statements in the two previous meetings (see S/PV.9266 and S/PV.9144) on this matter to urge all the parties and actors to exercise restraint and cooperate in good faith with the national investigations currently under way. We believe that call for restraint is still relevant today. We call on all the parties to foster trust and build confidence by avoiding any unilateral actions that could potentially undermine the efforts to establish the facts, unravel the truth and pursue the need for accountability. At the same time, we are mindful of the solemn responsibility conferred on the Council by the Charter of the United Nations. In that respect, we want to make three points that we believe are necessary to help bring about a speedy closure of the matter.

First, the ongoing national investigations should be expedited. They should be time-bound, not open-ended, and should endeavour to keep the Russian authorities and operators informed of all their actions in a timely fashion, as well as seeking their cooperation as necessary.

Secondly, given the global level of interest in the matter, it is important to keep the Council regularly updated on developments in the ongoing national investigations. In that regard, we welcome, the joint letters of 21 February and 24 March submitted by Germany, Denmark and Sweden, and encourage additional relevant and positive updates of that kind.

Lastly, we stress the necessity and importance of upholding the provisions of resolution 2341 (2017) on protecting critical infrastructure, especially of a transnational kind. To that end, while we await the completion of the national investigations, we believe that as a Council we should work constructively to find a unified voice with which to strongly condemn the present attacks, in order to send a strong message to would-be perpetrators that attacks on similar

critical infrastructure will not be tolerated by the international community.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I take the floor to explain Ecuador's vote on draft resolution S/2023/212, on the incidents involving the Nord Stream pipelines. My delegation acknowledges and is grateful that the penholder took into account some of the suggestions that we made in the informal consultations on the text and from our point of view, improved it. It nonetheless remains inadequate.

Ecuador's vote does not negate my country's position on acts of sabotage, which we unequivocally condemn. On the contrary, as we stated at the Security Council briefing (see S/PV.9266) on 21 February, nothing justifies attacks on critical civilian infrastructure, including energy facilities. Neither are we opposed in principle to considering the establishment of an international investigation commission. However, in the light of the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo, who called for avoiding speculation and any unfounded accusations that could escalate tensions in the region and hinder the search for truth, we decided to abstain in the voting. Among other things, Ecuador had proposed mentioning the Security Council's satisfaction with the conduct of the ongoing national investigations by Denmark, Sweden and Germany, as we have been informed by the joint letter from their delegations (S/2023/126). We reiterate our confidence in those investigations and encourage continuing them without any disruption that might limit or affect their scope.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): Malta once again reiterates its deep concern about the damage to the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines in September 2022 and condemns any attack on critical infrastructure. Such acts are dangerous and irresponsible, not least in the context of a global energy crisis. We listened to the information presented by the penholder of draft resolution S/2023/212 and others, including during the briefing on the subject last month (see S/PV.9266). Unfortunately, so far, the information presented in support of the draft resolution lacks credible supporting evidence. Furthermore, investigations by Denmark, Germany and Sweden are ongoing, and it is important to enable those national processes to be concluded without interference. We also welcome the updates provided by those States last month. Malta therefore abstained in the voting on the draft resolution on the basis that at this point, any investigative action by the United

Nations would be premature and would undermine the integrity of the ongoing national investigations, which are being comprehensively undertaken by the parties directly affected.

Mrs. Chanda (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2023/212, submitted by the Russian Federation, on the damage to the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines. Switzerland is concerned about those incidents, which according to the information available were the result of sabotage. We reiterate our condemnation of all acts of sabotage against critical infrastructure, including energy infrastructure. Denmark, Germany and Sweden are conducting national investigations to shed light on the facts. We advocate waiting for their results. In view of the several investigations under way, we believe that mandating an additional investigation would be of no further benefit at this stage.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): Our delegation has been continually engaged in the discussions on draft resolution S/2023/212 since the negotiations on it began. Japan is deeply concerned about the incident involving the Nord Stream pipelines and is closely monitoring the progress of the ongoing national investigations. Japan abstained in the voting on the draft resolution because we believe that the Security Council should first allow the national investigations to be completed. After that, based on the results, the Council can discuss ways forward, as necessary.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom condemned the act of sabotage against the Nord Stream pipelines, and we do so again now. We full support the national investigations currently being conducted by Denmark, Germany and Sweden and look forward to their results. We support investigative commissions by the Secretary-General, when mandated. However, in the context of the ongoing national investigations, we do not think that it is appropriate to instigate one in this situation. It was clear during the negotiations that Russia is not serious about an impartial investigation. Last month, the Permanent Representative of Russia claimed that Russia already knew with a high degree of certainty who blew up the pipelines and how. Throughout the process, Russia's goal has been to politicize the issue and target another Council member. That is why the United Kingdom, with the overwhelming majority of the Council, abstained in the voting on the draft resolution.

Finally, Russia's apparent concern for civilian infrastructure is hard to take seriously in the context of its relentless assault on Ukraine's civilian infrastructure over the past year. That cynical aggression must stop.

Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault (France) (*spoke in French*): France has clearly expressed its concern following the two underwater explosions that struck the Nord Stream gas pipelines in September 2022. The information available suggests that they were the result of a deliberate act of human origin. The events are unprecedented and must be thoroughly investigated. France abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2023/212, submitted by Russia, precisely because investigations are being conducted by Germany, Denmark and Sweden, and we have no reason to doubt their resolve or their impartiality. Those investigations must be brought to a close. France regrets that Russia opted to request a vote that it knew in advance that it would lose. We are surprised at the zeal with which Russia requests the United Nations to conduct an investigation when it has already attributed responsibility in the matter. We cannot help but doubt the sincerity of its approach.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): In the Security Council meeting on the issue held in February (see S/PV.9266) and during the follow-up consultations, we clearly expressed our deep concern regarding the act of sabotage on the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines in the exclusive economic zones of Denmark and Sweden in the Baltic Sea. Such acts are unacceptable. We fully support the investigations by the national authorities of Denmark, Germany and Sweden, which were promptly launched and are ongoing. We are grateful for their work to date and look forward to a comprehensive, objective and impartial investigation.

We support United Nations investigative efforts, whenever they are mandated. However, at the moment we see no added value in initiating a parallel international investigation. Any attempts to discredit and/or politicize the ongoing investigation process, including by deliberately accusing other States based on prejudices, assumptions or convenience or reliance on unverified press elements that are artificially put together are wrong and unhelpful. They do not have our support because such efforts impede the path towards the conclusion of the issue.

Protecting civilian infrastructure is a legal obligation for all States, anytime and everywhere. It is not a menu from which to choose. In that

regard, Russia's credibility in the case — while it intentionally, methodically and relentlessly destroys the vital civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, with deadly consequences — is at the very least dubious and at the most cynical. That is why Albania abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2023/212.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): After the Nord Stream pipeline explosion in September last year, many members of the Council, including China, immediately expressed concern about its major negative impact on the global energy supply, the environment and shipping security. That vicious act of sabotage affects the security not only of European infrastructure but also of global transnational infrastructure. It is in the interest of every country concerned to conduct an objective, impartial and professional investigation into the incident, make the results of its investigation public as soon as possible and hold perpetrators accountable.

China supports authorizing the United Nations to set up an international, independent investigation commission to investigate the incident. We thank Russia for submitting draft resolution S/2023/212, after taking more than one month to organize in-depth consultations among Council members and demonstrating a flexible and open attitude by incorporating amendments from China and other members into the draft resolution. China deplores the results of the voting on draft resolution S/2023/212, on the Nord Stream pipeline.

Some members believe there is no need for the Council to authorize an international investigation given that the countries concerned are conducting national investigations. Indeed, international and national investigations do not contradict each other. An international investigation, under the auspices of the United Nations, can play a coordinating role among different investigations, ensure the fullness and integrity of the chain of custody and make the findings of the investigation authoritative and widely acceptable. Some members are of the view that the conclusions of national investigations should be drawn before international investigations are considered. Indeed, it has been more than half a year since the Nord Stream pipeline explosions. If an international investigation is to be conducted, evidence must be collected on site as soon as possible. The process must not drag on, lest it become harder to collect evidence, which would affect the results of the investigation. Some members advised against making groundless speculations or accusations or predetermining investigation results. Authorizing the

United Nations to launch an international investigation is precisely the best way to respond to such speculations and allegations. If the countries concerned were to welcome with open arms the Security Council's mandate for an international investigation into the Nord Stream explosions, they would at least have some semblance of a clear conscience. If, however, the countries concerned block the Council's authorization of an international investigation, it only raises the suspicion that there might be something to hide.

Council members have not yet reached an agreement authorizing an international investigation, but they all support determining the truth and bringing the perpetrators to justice as soon as possible. China hopes that the countries conducting national investigations will embrace and elevate the sense of urgency, report the progress of their investigations to the Council in a timely and regular manner and publish their findings as soon as possible. The Security Council has the responsibility to remain seized of the incident, including by holding regular briefings and taking necessary further actions in an effort to discharge effectively its responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I believe that, after today's vote, suspicion regarding who is behind the act of sabotage at the Nord Stream pipeline only grows. I would like to remind the Council of some basic facts.

In the eyes of the whole world, the United States and its allies have done everything in their power to ensure that there is no international investigation into the explosions at Nord Stream in September 2022. Initially, at the very highest level, Washington publicly threatened to blow up the gas pipeline and has since continued along the same lines. There has also been a great deal of speculation in the media, as well as a lot of, to put it mildly, contradictory and absurd versions of who could have carried out the sabotage. All attempts by Russia, as one of the countries affected by the Nord Stream explosions, to get involved in the national investigations carried out by Denmark, Germany and Sweden, were met with refusals and non-answers, which members of the Council could have seen for themselves. Permit me to make a prediction. The so-called national investigations — not to mention that they do not include Russian participation — could go on for years. I would therefore like to ask the representative of the United States what he found to be predetermined about our draft resolution. We have a saying in Russian similar

to “Liar, liar, pants on fire”. As usual, the United States is tying the draft resolution to Ukraine, despite the fact that there is not a word about Ukraine in the text.

When we raised the issue of an objective international investigation, our American and European colleagues' tactics amounted to denying the United States' involvement, on the one hand, while preventing any kind of transparent and impartial clarification of the circumstances of the sabotage on the other. The more evidence that has emerged of the involvement of Washington and its NATO allies, the more firmly the Western camp has insisted on the pointlessness of an international investigation. What does that tell us? One does not have to be a detective or an analyst to see that the United States and its allies are trying to cover their tracks, including by throwing around various fabrications and delusional versions and by refusing to respond to revelations about facts that Washington does not like. Because if the United States really wanted to establish the facts and punish those responsible, it would behave completely differently.

Our vote today served as a litmus test of sorts by which we all had to decide the kind of world we are headed for — a world where international law is respected and where those who attack international pipelines and other infrastructure have to be punished, or a world where some States do as they please while formulating laws for everyone else that they call a rules-based order and taking no responsibility for even the most reckless and dangerous of acts. And today's vote has clearly confirmed that our former Western partners believe that they can do whatever they like and get away with it. The ugliest example is the West's ongoing collective support group in the Council, which leaves the Council unable to carry out its functions. We will of course draw the necessary conclusions for ourselves. We are sure that more detailed facts will emerge and that all concerned in the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipeline will be exposed and the details of their crime revealed. That is inescapable.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): The United Arab Emirates unequivocally condemns the September 2022 sabotage of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines. Those criminal acts caused severe environmental harm and endangered global energy security. The sabotage of transboundary energy infrastructure is of serious concern to the international community. The principles of sovereignty and international cooperation are vital to addressing

threats to global energy security. We recognize the importance of the ongoing national investigations by Denmark, Germany and Sweden and stress the need for national authorities to conduct thorough inquiries. We also urge transparency in sharing their findings with the relevant actors. Global energy security demands sovereign States' collaboration. The United Arab Emirates knows first-hand the necessity of cooperation and information-sharing during investigations. For that reason, we are encouraged by Denmark's invitation to the pipeline operator to retrieve an object possibly related to the sabotage. We hope that it is a signal that greater cooperation between investigating countries and stakeholders will be forthcoming in the near future.

We abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2023/2212 because the national investigations are continuing. We encourage the expansion of last week's cooperative efforts, as well as a clear deadline for the investigations' conclusions. Committed to addressing the issue, we emphasize that global energy security is vital to every country and reiterate the paramount importance of protecting energy infrastructure.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): Any proposal by a Council member must be considered in a respectful and objective manner. Brazil engaged constructively in the negotiations from the start and proposed several amendments with the aim of bridging different positions and perceptions and trying to build consensus. Brazil voted in favour of draft resolution S/2023/212, on the explosions on the Nord Stream. As many members of the Council rightly noted at our meeting on 30 September (see S/PV.9144), this issue is about a threat to international peace and security. Preliminary information provided by the authorities of European countries indicates that it was an act of sabotage with the possible involvement of a State actor. Six months after the explosions occurred, we still do not know what caused them.

The caution with which the issue has been handled by the authorities of Denmark, Germany and Sweden is understandable. Brazil's vote should not be interpreted as a criticism of the conduct of the investigations or a sign of mistrust, but as recognition of the importance of additional and more comprehensive efforts on the part of the United Nations. I would like to reiterate our understanding that every proposal in the Security Council should be analysed on its own merits. Since we considered the explosions in the Baltic Sea to be a threat to international peace and security, a commission

established by the Secretary-General would be well suited to assisting the Council in its decisions.

In view of the rejection of the draft resolution, Brazil encourages those responsible for the ongoing investigations to share their conclusions with the Council as soon as possible. The seriousness of the issue requires a quick and transparent response to the concerns of Member States.

The President: The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): My apologies for taking the floor, but I need to respond to points that were made by the representative of the Russian Federation.

As has been mentioned, ever since the attacks took place Russia has claimed that the United States was responsible for carrying them out. With those comments, it was very clear that Russia was not interested in an impartial investigation. It had already decided who the culprit was. Russia was simply playing politics.

The three countries that have launched investigations are concerned about what is happening to infrastructure around the world. We need to let those investigations play out. I think it is a positive sign that Russia is showing concern about a threat to critical infrastructure, particularly that piece of critical infrastructure. My hope is that it will show the same concern for Ukraine's infrastructure and what is currently being rained upon it.

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have a question for my colleague from the United States. I would like to say that before the recent revelations by Mr. Seymour Hersh, I do not recall Russian officials specifically naming the United States as the perpetrator of that tragedy. The discussions of the matter emerged only after the publication of Mr. Hersh's article.

I would therefore ask my American colleague what he would say about his President Biden's words about wanting to destroy the gas pipeline, long before the pipeline was actually destroyed.

The President: The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Typical of the Russian playbook is to always pose a question without really having any intent. First and foremost, I do not read Seymour Hersh's articles. And frankly, the United States does not base its policies, or responds, simply to charges by an individual journalist.

Let me just say that the charges that have been made by Russian officials about supposed United States culpability for carrying out these attacks are just flat-out wrong, plain and simple. I would just submit to my Russian colleague that, instead of playing politics with such an important issue as this, Russia should deal with the question of critical infrastructure and responsibility. Again, I point to the fact that Russia has no credibility when it comes to the issue of protecting critical infrastructure. Just look at what it is doing in Ukraine.

I would just say to my Russian colleague that, instead of asking questions about the United States and its views towards critical infrastructure, it needs to ask itself about what it is doing in Ukraine and whether that shows responsible behaviour with regard to critical infrastructure.

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I did not ask the representative of the United States about the article by Mr. Hersh, which he did not even read. I do really recommend that he read it. But I did ask him a direct question: how does he understand the words of his own President, who himself openly said: "we will destroy Nord Stream"? I did not receive a response to that specific question.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.