

Statement by the Representative of the Delegation of the Russian Federation in Exercise of the Right of Reply

Mr. President,

The delegation of the Russian Federation would like to exercise its right of reply to address some of the allegations against Russia.

In particular, with regard to the statements made about Russia's alleged violations of the provisions of the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances related to Ukraine's accession to the NPT, we would like to emphasize that Russia has strictly fulfilled its obligations. These include a commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. It is being fully implemented with respect to Ukraine, including in recent months. The interpretation of the statements made by the leadership of the Russian Federation as a threat to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine is unscrupulous and does not stand up to any criticism if we refer to the original sources.

At the same time, the statements by representatives of Kiev that not only call into question the viability of the Budapest Memorandum but can also be interpreted as an explicit bid to reconsider the non-nuclear status of Ukraine, cannot but cause concern. Such a destabilizing move would run counter to Kiev's NPT commitments, grossly undermine the integrity of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and would pose unacceptable risks to international security.

Kiev itself has not complied with its obligations under the Budapest arrangements for many years. In particular, those that were meant to counter the rise of aggressive nationalism and chauvinism in Ukraine.

Loss of its territorial integrity is the result of internal centrifugal processes triggered by external destabilizing influence of western countries in an attempt to

tear Ukraine away from Russia. Neither the Russian Federation nor its obligations under the Budapest Memorandum have the slightest connection to this happenings. Neither in 1994 nor afterward did Russia commit itself to recognizing coups d'état and forcing regions of Ukraine to remain part of it against the will of the local population.

We would also like to strongly reject the utterly unfounded, detached from reality and unacceptable speculations that Russia allegedly threatens to use nuclear weapons, particularly in Ukraine. We do not rule out the possibility that this is done on purpose in order to fuel anti-Russian hysteria.

Russia's relevant doctrinal provisions are explicitly clear. Just hypothetically we assume a nuclear reaction solely as a response to aggression involving weapons of mass destruction or as a response to aggression involving conventional weapons, when the very existence of the state is threatened. None of these two hypothetical scenarios is relevant to the situation in Ukraine.

We recall that only one country in the world actually used nuclear weapons – it was the United States, which dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, even though this has not reasons from the point of view of military expediency and was in fact a testing of weapons of mass destruction on Japanese cities and their inhabitants.

In the current circumstances, Russia is deeply concerned about the trend toward growing international turbulence and the associated increase in nuclear risks. One of the most important tasks in this context is, in our view, to maintain the commitment to the tenet of preventing nuclear war by all P5 countries, which they reaffirmed in January's joint statement at the top level. Russia is fully committed to it.

With the exacerbation of the Ukrainian crisis caused by the Kiev regime and its Western patrons, the message of the statement by the P5 not only has not lost its relevance but has also taken on added significance. According to logic

confirmed by provisions of the aforementioned P5 statement, any military confrontation between nuclear rivals must be prevented, since it is fraught with the risk of escalation to the nuclear level.

This is the essence of Russia's warnings about the potential consequences of direct aggression by NATO countries against our country in the context of the Ukrainian crisis that in fact moved to the fierce hybrid confrontation and dangerously balance on the edge of open military clash. Such a move would be able to trigger one of the two emergency scenarios described in our doctrine. We obviously stand for preventing this, but if Western countries try to test our resolve, Russia will not back down. And this is not the language of threats at all, but a statement of what is possible – such is the logic of deterrence.

In this context, we note unscrupulous interpretations of the decision of the Russian President to temporarily put our deterrence forces on a special mode of duty. This is just about the transition of shifts of strategic command posts to the duty with reinforced personnel. In essence, this means that vigilance has been heightened against acts of intimidation and coercion with nuclear weapons against our country. The grounds for the decision were confrontational actions and provocative statements by representatives of Western nuclear powers about the possibility of NATO interference in military actions in Ukraine against Russia.

Thank you, Mr. President.