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STATEMENT
by H.E. Mr. Sergey V. LAVROV,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation,
at the 69th session of the UN General Assembly

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Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

There is a growing evidence of a contradiction between the need for collective and partner efforts in the interest of elaborating adequate responses to challenges common to all and the aspiration of a number of states for domination and revival of archaic bloc thinking based on military drill discipline and erroneous logic of "friend or foe".

The U.S.-led Western alliance that portrays itself as a champion of democracy, rule of law and human rights within individual countries, acts from directly opposite positions in the international arena, rejecting the democratic principle of sovereign equality of states enshrined the UN Charter and trying to decide for everyone what is good or evil.

Washington has openly declared its right to unilateral use of force anywhere to uphold its own interests. Military interference has become a norm – even despite the dismal outcome of all power operations that the U.S. has carried out over the recent years.

The sustainability of the international system has been severely shaken by NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia, intervention in Iraq, attack against Libya and the failure of operation in Afghanistan. Only due to intensive diplomatic efforts the aggression against Syria was prevented in 2013. There is an involuntary impression that the goal of various "color revolutions" and other projects to change unsuitable regimes is to provoke chaos and instability.

Today Ukraine has fallen victim to such an arrogant policy. The situation there has revealed the remaining deep-rooted systemic flaws of the existing architecture in the Euro-Atlantic area. The West has embarked upon the course towards "vertical structuring of humanity" tailored to its own hardly inoffensive standards. After they declared victory in the Cold War and the "end of history", the U.S. and EU have opted for expanding the geopolitical area under their control without taking into account the balance of legitimate interests of all peoples of Europe. The Western partners did not heed to our numerous alerts on inadmissibility of violation of the principles of the UN Charter and Helsinki Final Act, and time and again avoided serious joint work for the establishment of the common space of equal and indivisible security and cooperation from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The Russian proposal to draft the European security treaty was rejected. We were told directly that only the members of the North Atlantic Alliance can have the legally binding guarantees of security, and the NATO enlargement to the East continued in spite of the promises to the contrary given earlier. The instant switch of NATO to hostile rhetoric and to the drawdown of its cooperation with Russia even to the detriment of the West's own interests, and additional build up of military infrastructure at the Russian borders – made obvious

the inability of the alliance to change the genetic code it embedded during the Cold War era.

The U.S. and EU supported the coup d'état in Ukraine and reverted to outright justification of any acts by the self-proclaimed Kiev authorities that opted for suppression by force of the part of the Ukrainian people that had rejected the attempts to impose the anti-constitutional way of life to the entire country and wanted to defend its rights to the native language, culture and history. It is precisely the aggressive assault on these rights that compelled the population of Crimea to take the destiny in its own hands and make a choice in favor of self-determination. This was an absolutely free choice no matter what was invented by those who are responsible in the first place for the internal conflict in Ukraine.

The attempts to distort the truth and to hide the facts behind blanket accusations have been undertaken at all stages of the Ukrainian crisis. Nothing has been done to track down and prosecute those responsible for February bloody events at Maidan and massive loss of human lives in Odessa, Mariupol and other regions of Ukraine. The scale of appalling humanitarian disaster provoked by the acts of the Ukrainian army in the South-Eastern Ukraine has been deliberately underscored. Recently, new horrible facts have been brought to light when mass graves were discovered in the suburbs of Donetsk. Despite UNSG Resolution 2166 a thorough and independent investigation of the circumstances of the loss of Malaysian airliner over the territory of Ukraine has been protracted. The culprits of all these crimes must be identified and brought to justice. Otherwise the national reconciliation in Ukraine can hardly be expected.

Russia is sincerely interested in the restoration of peace in the neighboring country and this should be well understood by all who are even slightly acquainted with the history of the deep-rooted and fraternal ties between the two peoples. The way towards political settlement is well known: last April Kiev has already taken upon itself an obligation in the Geneva Declaration of Russia, Ukraine, U.S. and EU to immediately start a wide all-national dialogue with the participation of all regions

and political forces of Ukraine with a view to carrying out a constitutional reform. The implementation of this obligation would allow all Ukrainians to agree on how to live in accordance with their traditions and culture and restore the Ukraine's organic role as a binding link between the various parts of the European space which naturally implies the preservation and respect by all of its neutral and non-bloc status. We are convinced that in the presence of good will and denial of support to the "party of war" in Kiev which is trying to push the Ukrainian people into the abyss of national catastrophe the way out of crisis is within our reach.

The way to overcoming the crisis has been opened with the achievement of the cease-fire agreement in the South-Eastern Ukraine on the basis of initiatives by Presidents P.A.Poroshenko and V.V.Putin. With the participation of the representatives of Kiev, Donetsk, Lugansk, OSCE and Russia, practical measures are being agreed upon successive implementation of this understanding, including the separation of the parties to the conflict, pull back of heavy weapons of the Ukrainian army and militia forces, setting up monitoring trough the OSCE and preparation for elections in the South-East. Russia is ready to continue to actively promote the political settlement. However, it should be crystal clear that we are doing this for the sake of peace, tranquility and wellbeing of the Ukrainian people rather than for catering to someone's ambitions. The attempts to put on pressure on Russia and to compel it to abandon its values, truth and justice have no prospects whatsoever.

Let me recall a history of not so far ago. As a condition for establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1933 the U.S. government demanded of Moscow the guarantees of non-interference into domestic affairs of the U.S. and obligations not to take any actions with a view to changing political or social order in America. At that time Washington feared a revolutionary virus and the above guarantees were put on record on the basis of reciprocity. Perhaps, it makes sense to return to this topic and reproduce that demand of the U.S. government on a universal scale. Shouldn't the General Assembly adopt a declaration on the inadmissibility of

interference into domestic affairs of sovereign states and non-recognition of coup d'état as a method of the change of power? The time has come to totally exclude from the international interaction the attempts of illegitimate pressure of some states on others. The meaningless and counterproductive nature of unilateral sanctions is obvious if we took an example of the U.S. blockade of Cuba.

The policy of ultimatums and philosophy of supremacy and domination do not meet the requirements of the 21st century and run counter the objective process of development of a polycentric and democratic world order. Russia is promoting a positive and unifying agenda. We always were and will be open to discussion of the most complex issues no matter how unsolvable they would seem in the beginning. We will be prepared to search for compromises and the balance of interests and go as far as exchange concessions provided only that the discussion is respectful and equal.

The Minsk understandings of 5 and 19 September on the ways out of the Ukrainian crisis and the compromise on the timeline of the entry into force of the Association Agreement between Kiev and EU are good examples to follow, the same as the finally declared readiness of Brussels to begin negotiations on establishing the FTA between the European Union and the Customs Union of Russia, Belorussia and Kazakhstan as it had been proposed by V.V.Putin back in January this year.

Russia has been consistently calling for harmonization of integration projects in Europe and Eurasia. The agreement on political benchmarks and timelines of such a "convergence of integrations" would become a real contribution to the work of the OSCE on the topic of "Helsinki+40". Another crucial area of this work would be to launch pragmatic discussion free of ideology on politico-military architecture in the Euro-Atlantic, so that not only NATO and CSTO members but all the countries of the region including Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia enjoy equal and indivisible security and not have to make a false choice of: "either with us or against us".

The new dividing lines in Europe should not be allowed, even more so that under globalization these lines can turn into a watershed between the West and the

rest of the world. It should be stated honestly that no one has the monopoly on truth and no one can anymore tailor the global and regional processes to one's own needs. There is no alternative today to the development of consensus regarding the rules of sustainable global governance in the new historical circumstances – with full respect to cultural and civilizational diversity of the world and the multiplicity of the models of development. It will be a difficult and perhaps tiresome task to achieve such a consensus on every issue. Nevertheless the recognition of the fact that democracy in every state is the "worst form of government, except for all the others" also took time to break a way through, until W.Churchill passed his verdict. The time has come to realize the inevitability of this axiom also in the international affairs where today there is a huge deficit of democracy. Of course someone will have to break up the centuries-old stereotypes and to abandon the claims to eternal uniqueness. But there is no other way to follow. The consolidated efforts can be built only on the principles of mutual respect and taking into account of the interests of each other as is the case for example in the framework of BRICS and SCO, G20 and the UN Security Council. The theory of the advantages of collective work has been supported by practice: this includes the progress in the settlement of situation around Iranian nuclear program and successful conclusion of chemical demilitarization of Syria. Besides, on the issue of chemical weapons we would like to obtain authentic information on the condition of chemical arsenals in Libya. We understand that our NATO colleagues after they bombed out this country in violation of a UNSG Resolution would not like to "stir up" the mayhem they created. However, the problem of uncontrolled Libyan chemical arsenals is too serious to turn a blind eye on it. The UN Secretary General has an obligation to show his responsibility on this issue as well.

What is important today is to see the global priorities and avoid making them hostages of a unilateral agenda. There is an urgent need to refrain from double standards in the approaches to conflict settlement. Everybody largely agrees that it is a key issue to resolutely counter the terrorists who attempt to put under their control

increasingly larger territories in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Sahara-Sahel area. If this is the case then this task should not be sacrificed to ideological schemes or the desire to get square with someone. Terrorists no matter what their slogans are should remain outside the law.

Moreover, it goes without saying that the fight against terrorism should rely on a solid basis of international law. The unanimous adoption of a number of UNSG Resolutions including those on the issue of foreign terrorist operatives became an important stage in this fight. And vice versa the attempts to act against the Charter of our Organization do not contribute to the success of joint efforts. The struggle against terrorists in the territory of Syria should be structured in cooperation with the Syrian government, which clearly stated its readiness to join it.

From the very beginning of the "Arab spring" Russia urged not to leave it to extremists and to establish a united front to counter the growing terrorist threat. We warned against a temptation to make allies with almost anybody who proclaimed himself an enemy of B.Assad: be it Al Qaeda, Jabhat an Nusra and other "fellow travelers" seeking the change of regime, including ISIL, which today is in the focus of our attention. As the saying goes, it is better late than never. It is not for the first time that Russia makes a real contribution to the fight against both ISIL and other terrorist factions in the region. We have sent large supplies of weapons and military equipment to the governments of Iraq, Syria and other MENA countries and will continue to support their efforts to suppress terrorists.

The terrorist threat requires a comprehensive approach if we want to eradicate its root causes rather than be condemned to react to the symptoms. ISIL is just a part of the problem. We propose to launch under the auspices of the UN Security Council an in-depth study on the extremist and terrorist threats in all their aspects across the MENA area. The integrated approach implies also that the long standing conflicts should be examined, primarily between Arabs and Israel. The absence of settlement of the Palestinian issue over several decades remains as it is widely recognized one of

the main factors of instability in the region that helps the extremists to recruit more and more new Jihadists.

Another literally pressing area of our common work is the joining of our efforts to implement the decisions of UNGA and UNSC on the fight against Ebola virus. Our doctors are already working in Africa. There are plans to send additional humanitarian assistance, equipment, medical instruments, medicines and teams of experts to assist the UN programs in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

The United Nations established on the ruins of World War II enters the year of its seventieth anniversary. It is an obligation for all of us to celebrate in appropriate manner the jubilee of the Great Victory and pay tribute to the memory of all who died for freedom and the right of each people to determine its own destiny.

The lessons of that terrible war and all the course of events in today's world demand of us to join our efforts and forget about unilateral interests and national electoral cycles when it comes to countering the global threats to all humanity. It should not be allowed that the national egotism prevail over collective responsibility.