



*Unofficial translation*

**STATEMENT**  
**by H.E. Mr. Sergey V. LAVROV,**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation,**  
**at the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN General Assembly**

**September 28, 2018**

Distinguished Ms. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The statements at the general debate prove that international relations are going through quite a complicated and controversial historic period.

Today we all are witnessing a collision of two opposite trends. On the one hand, we see the strengthening of polycentric principles of the world order, the steady development of new centers of economic growth, the aspiration of peoples to preserve sovereignty and choose development models that are consistent with their national, cultural, and religious identities. On the other hand, we see the desire of several Western states to retain their self-proclaimed status of "world leaders" and to slow down the irreversible objective process of establishing multipolarity. To that end, these powers do not hesitate to use any methods, including political blackmail, economic pressure, and brute force.

These illicit acts devalue the international law which underpins the post-war world order. We hear loud statements that not only call into question the

legal validity of international treaties, but also declare the priority of self-serving unilateral approaches over the decisions taken in the framework of the United Nations.

We observe the offensive of belligerent revisionism against the modern system of international law. The attacks have been launched against the basic principles of the Middle East settlement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear program, the commitments within the World Trade Organization framework, the multilateral climate agreement? and many more.

Besides, our Western colleagues are persistently trying to substitute some type of a "rules based order" for the supremacy of law in the world affairs. These rules themselves are invented depending on political expediency and are an illustration of double standards. Baseless accusations of interference into internal affairs of certain countries are being made simultaneously with overt endeavors to undermine and topple democratically elected governments. Attempts are being made to draw certain countries into self-customized military alliances against the will of the peoples, while other states are threatened with punishment for their free choice of partners and allies.

It is indicative that aggressive attacks on international institutions are accompanied by attempts to "privatize" secretariat structures and grant them the rights of intergovernmental bodies in the hope to manipulate them later.

The shrinking space for constructive international cooperation, escalating confrontation, growing overall unpredictability, a substantially increased risk of spontaneous conflicts – all this affects the work of the World Organization.

The international community has to pay a high price for the parochial, self-serving ambitions of a small group of countries. The collective mechanisms of response to common security challenges have stalled. Diplomacy and the culture of negotiations and compromise have been increasingly replaced by dictate and unilateral extraterritorial restrictions put in effect without the consent of the UN Security Council. Such measures, applied already to dozens of countries, are not only illicit, but also ineffective – as exemplified, in particular, by more than half a

century long US blockade of Cuba, which is condemned by the entire international community.

Yet, history does not teach any lessons. The number of those wishing to pass verdicts without charge or trial is not getting any smaller. Today assumptions in the spirit of the notorious "highly likely" are sufficient for some of our Western colleagues to press charges against anyone. We have already been through this. We remember well so many times when spurious pretexts were used to justify interventions and unleash wars – as was the case in Yugoslavia 1999, Iraq 2003, and Libya 2011.

The same methods are being applied today to Syria, against whose territory the missile strikes were launched under a totally trumped-up pretext on April 14, 2018, – few hours before the international inspectors were expected to arrive at the site of the staged incident. We warn that new provocations by terrorists and their patrons with the use of chemical weapons are unacceptable.

The conflict in Syria is already seven years old. The failed attempt of a regime change orchestrated from the outside and relying on the extremists has almost resulted in disintegration of the country and emergence of a terrorist caliphate instead. The energetic actions by Russia in response to the request of the government of the Syrian Arab Republic supported by the diplomatic steps in the framework of the Astana process helped to prevent this fatal scenario. The Syrian National Dialogue Congress, initiated by Russia, Iran, and Turkey this January, created conditions for political settlement on the basis of UN SC Resolution 2254. This is precisely the basis for the Inter-Syrian Constitutional Committee that is currently being established in Geneva. Its agenda includes restoration of destroyed infrastructure to facilitate the return of millions of refugees to their homes. The assistance in addressing these tasks in the interests of all Syrians without any double standards must become the priority of the international efforts and the activities of the UN organizations.

With all the complexity of the situation in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya, we must not turn a blind eye to the longstanding Palestinian problem. Its just and

equitable solution is crucial for improving the situation across the entire Middle East. I would like to warn against unilateral approaches and attempts to monopolize this settlement process. Today as never before, the international community should consolidate its efforts and resume the talks on the basis of the UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. Russia will continue to do its utmost to facilitate this process, including within the Quartet on the Middle East and in cooperation with the League of Arab States and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. Mutually acceptable arrangements must ensure peaceful and secure coexistence of the two states – Israel and Palestine.

Here, at the United Nations, created on the basis of the lessons learned from World War II, we all must think about the future, in which repetition of the mistakes of the past should have no place. This year marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the notorious Munich Agreement that crowned the criminal appeasement policy towards the Third Reich, which is a sad example of the catastrophic consequences that can be entailed by national egoism, disregard for international law, and attempts to solve problems at the expense of others.

Regrettably, today in a number of countries we witness that not just the vaccine against the Nazi plague has weakened, but also a campaign of rewriting history and whitewashing war criminals and their associates is on the rise. We regard as an outrage the campaigns waged in a number of countries to demolish monuments to the liberators of Europe. We call upon you to support the UN draft resolution on the inadmissibility of glorification of the Nazis.

The growth of radical nationalism and neo-fascism in Ukraine – where criminals who fought under the SS banners have been declared heroes – is one of the main factors in the protracted intra-Ukrainian conflict. The only way to settle this conflict is to ensure a comprehensive and consistent implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures approved unanimously by the UN SC. We support the activities of the OSCE Mission in Ukraine and are ready to provide its observers with the UN protection. Yet, instead of implementing the Minsk agreements and instead of a dialogue with Donetsk and Lugansk, Kiev keeps cherishing the

delusions that it might be able to bring occupying forces to Donbass with the support of the West and comes up with increasing threats to resort to military options. Those who patronize the present Kiev authorities must bring their charges to senses and make them lift the blockade of Donbass and stop the discrimination of ethnic minorities across Ukraine.

We are concerned about the desire to open yet another line of confrontation in Europe – this time in the Balkans. The states of the region are being insistently drawn into NATO. Repeating the mantras about the inadmissibility of any interference in their domestic affairs, the European and US leaders in person are campaigning for the accession of the Balkan countries to the North Atlantic Alliance.

In Kosovo, the international military presence authorized by the UN Security Council is being transformed into a US military base. The Kosovo armed forces are being created. The agreements between Belgrade and Pristine brokered by the EU are not implemented. Russia calls on the parties to engage in dialogue in accordance with the principles of SC Resolution 1244 and will support a decision that would be acceptable for Serbia.

On the whole, we urge that the Balkans be not transformed into the arena for confrontation once again or declared someone's domain, the peoples of the Balkan countries be not compelled to face a false choice, and the emergence of new dividing lines be prevented.

Shaping of the architecture of equal and indivisible security is also required in other parts of the world, including the Asia-Pacific region. We welcome positive developments around the Korean peninsula that follow the logic of the Russian-Chinese roadmap. It is important to encourage this process on the basis of further steps of the parties towards each other and by promoting practical implementation of important arrangements between Pyongyang and Seoul through the UN SC. We will continue to work towards the soonest launch of the multilateral process aimed at establishing a robust mechanism for peace and security in Northeast Asia.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is part of the tasks facing the international community in the key area of international security – the non-proliferation of WMDs. Regrettably, serious impediments continue to accumulate on this track. The US unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA in violation of UN SC Resolution 2231 – this is despite the fact that Iran is fully complying with its obligations – has come on top of the lack of progress in the ratification of CTBT and the establishment of a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East. We will do everything possible to preserve the deal that was approved by the UN SC.

Negative trends are accumulating in the OPCW activities where the West is trying to transform the Technical Secretariat into an instrument for punishing undesirable governments with a risk to compromise the independent professional status of this institution, CWC universality, and exclusive prerogatives of the Security Council.

These and other problems in the sphere of non-proliferation were discussed in detail at the UN SC meeting on September 26 that was quite timely convened by the US presidency.

We strongly believe that any problems or concerns that arise in international relations must be addressed through a substantial dialogue. If there are any claims to anyone, we should come to the table and have a talk, present facts, heed counter-arguments of the partner, and seek a balance of interests.

Over the last couple of years the debate on cyberspace abuses has exacerbated. I would like to draw the attention to the fact that it has been already twenty years since Russia initiated the discussion of the issues of international information security at the UN. Against the background of the recent developments, it is becoming even more relevant to elaborate under the UN auspices a set of global norms of responsible behavior of states in the information space, including the principles of non-use of force, non-interference in internal affairs, and respect for state sovereignty. We intend to introduce a draft of the respective resolution in the UN GA First Committee.



We also believe that it is important to start the elaboration of the Convention on Cybercrime and envisage relevant discussions in the Third Committee.

The search for generally acceptable understandings and mutual consideration of interests are required as never before in the world trade and economic ties that today are subject to unprecedented politicization. The values of free trade have become hostages to trade wars and other forms of unfair competition.

Russia is consistently promoting the philosophy of indivisible economic development that has been enshrined in the initiative of the Greater Eurasian Partnership put forward by President Vladimir Putin. This large-scale project is open to all Asian and European states, regardless of their membership in various integration associations. The project being consistently implemented, it could contribute to the development of the space for extensive economic cooperation in Eurasia. And in the long run, it could become the foundation for a renewed architecture of continental security, corresponding to the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Russia continues to do its utmost to build a world on the basis of law, truth, and justice. We are not alone in this aspiration. Our allies and partners in the CSTO, EAEC, CIS, BRICS, SCO, and the overwhelming majority of other countries together with us advocate democratization of international life in all its manifestations and in the interests of all states without exception. The West also has to heed their increasingly resonant voice, which is becoming increasingly apparent in the activities of the G20.

Under the current turbulent circumstances, the relevance of the United Nations – the only existing forum to overcome differences and coordinate activities of the international community – is objectively increasing. The priority of collective work in the interest of coordinating generally acceptable solutions was initially embodied in the foundations of the UN. We should not fail to meet at the

current stage the high goals and principles of the UN Charter and the obligations of the Founding Fathers to the next generations.

We should recall the art of negotiation in order to be worthy of their legacy. Numerous problems of the modern time can be resolved only on the basis of equality and mutual respect. Dictate and coercion, so typical of the colonial era, are to be once and for all sent "to the archive" and even better left "on the ash heap" of history.

Great statesmen of the past gave us quite a few words of guidance that have become aphoristic. Let me quote just one – and it belongs to President Harry Truman: "Great nations lead by the force of example rather than domination".

I hope that the culture of mutually respectful dialogue will finally prevail. Russia will do its utmost to promote this goal.

Thank you.