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THE STATE OF THE RUSSIA-US DIALOGUE AND GLOBAL SECURITY

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Sergey A. Ryabkov, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation

*Institute of Contemporary International Studies, Diplomatic Academy of the Russian
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RYABKOV: The relations between the U.S. and Russia remain quite complicated. Indeed, they have reached the lowest point since the Cold War. The foundation for cooperation between our countries that had been built over the decades, has been severely undermined by targeted destructive actions of the U.S. side within a short period of time.

The dialogue on most issues is overshadowed or even stalled by the anti-Russian hysteria that has plagued the U.S. political circles. There are two incentives behind it. On the one hand, there is a negative attitude bordering on hatred, demonstrated by a large part of the establishment on the other side of the Atlantic towards our country. People in Washington are vying with each other in talking about their growing "concern" over Russia seeking to regain its influence in the international scene, building its military capacity, and pursuing an independent foreign policy that is inconsistent with the "American" vision of the world order.

On the other hand, there is an unprecedented internal political struggle that has escalated in the United States, with the opponents of the incumbent President trying to discredit him playing the "Russia Card". The destructive effect of this factor not only does not weaken, but apparently is going to strengthen in the run-up to the congressional primary elections to be held on November 6, 2018.

Being under severe pressure from the opponents, Donald Trump's team acts inconsistently and goes from one extreme to another. On the one hand, the U.S. President himself has reiterated on several occasions, both publicly and in bilateral contacts, that he intends to bring our relations back on a more stable track. However, judging by the actual steps taken, Washington's policy is in fact dictated by our ill-wishers that openly reject Russia's right to be a powerful State protecting its national interests.

As a result, the attempts to exert pressure on Russia still continue. In practice, Americans

set out to elaborate a system of strategic deterrence of our country. The United States *de facto* goes as far as to recurring to the approaches used during the Cold War, but this time with quite a touch of toxicity. This "new deterrence" includes a wide range of military and political measures, financial, economic and information pressure, willingness to impact on Russia's internal processes, and attempts to limit our influence and capacity to develop relations with other States.

These guidelines are also enshrined in the core doctrine documents of the United States that portray our country as a challenge to the hegemonic aspirations of the U.S. and a threat to its security and well-being. These documents include the updated *National Security Strategy*, *National Defense Strategy*, as well as the *Nuclear Posture Review* (Nuclear Doctrine). The *Ballistic Missile Defense Review* to be released later this year will unlikely be any different.

As can be seen from the guidelines set forth in the abovementioned documents, the United States intends to support its positions with force by building its space and cyber capacity, developing its BMI) system, as well as maintaining and modernizing its nuclear forces. Indeed, they perpetuate the policy that Washington has been pursuing for years, which is to reinforce its military capabilities with a view to ensuring its supremacy over any opponent and exerting its influence without hindrance in various regions of the world.

There are labels for those who disagree with the U.S. aspiration to global hegemony, and these labels are "rivals and revisionists", that is, the States whose interests do not align with the American ones. Washington considers Russia as one of them and defines it in its National Security Strategy as a center of power that poses the greatest threat.

All these factors, without doubt, substantively complicate the U.S.-Russian dialogue and undermine the strategic stability. I would like to elaborate on this particular aspect.

For us, "strategic stability" is not only predictability or parity in the field of nuclear offensive weapons. In the modern context, we define it as a state of international relations characterized by the following factors:

- in the political sphere – strict observance by all States and associations of States of the principles and norms of international law and the provisions of the UN Charter governing the use of force and the adoption of coercive measures, respect for the legitimate interests of all States and peoples in addressing current international and regional issues and inadmissibility of interference in the political life of other States;
- in the military sphere – retention by all States of their military capabilities at the minimum level necessary for national security needs; deliberate restraint from taking steps in the field of military construction, forming and enlarging military-political alliances that could be perceived by other members of the international community as a threat to their national security and would force them to take retaliatory measures aimed at restoring the balance; resolution of differences through a positive and constructive dialogue and strengthening of mutual trust and cooperation.

We assume that ensuring any country's security at the expense of the security of others is

unacceptable. Given the current level of military capabilities, it is extremely dangerous to escalate an inter-State tension and arms race and destabilize the situation at the global and regional levels. We should ensure that any attempt of individual countries to gain overwhelming military superiority over others and use force to promote their national interests be excluded from the international practice.

An important tool for strengthening international security and stability is arms control, and any measures in this field should be governed by the fundamental principles enshrined in the 1978 Final Document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament. These principles remain fully relevant, especially the idea that measures for arms reduction and limitation should be fair, balanced and lead to the greater security for each State.

One of the remaining key problems in the context of maintaining strategic stability is the unilateral and unlimited deployment of the **U.S. global ABM** system, which is increasingly being shaped as a single integrated system surrounding our territory. In 2001, Americans unilaterally announced the withdrawal from the ABM Treaty that was the cornerstone of the international security system, saying that "we are not doing this against you", that is, Russia. However, the important element in strategic planning is not the intention, but the balance between actual capacities.

For 15 years, we have vainly tried to bring Washington to discussing problems related to its withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, but the United States has simply waved our concerns aside. Steps to strengthen Russia's defense potential announced by Vladimir Putin in his address to the Federal Assembly on 1 March 2018 became a response to the development of global antiballistic missile system designed to devalue Russia's nuclear forces. We have repeatedly warned our partners that we would have to take such steps. Besides, our new arms do not violate any existing restrictions.

The key to maintaining parity with the United States in strategic offensive arms is the implementation of **the New START Treaty**. We reaffirm our commitment to this instrument, the obligations under which we have fully met. On 5 February 2018, the Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement indicating our remaining strategic nuclear capacity: 527 deployed ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers (with the set limit of 700), 1,444 warheads on them (the limit is 1,550), 779 deployed and nondeployed ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and heavy bombers (the limit is 800).

We acknowledged the similar US statement. At the same time, we have to note that the United States has reached the set limits not only by actually reducing the arms. Conversions of 56 Trident II SLBM launchers and 41 B-52H heavy bombers were carried out in such a way that the Russian Federation cannot confirm that these strategic arms have been rendered incapable of employing nuclear weapons. Thus, we cannot deem their removal from the count lawful.

Besides, one should remember that the New START Treaty establishes the linkage between strategic offensive arms and strategic defensive arms, as well as the increasing importance of this linkage in the process of reduction of strategic nuclear weapons. The architecture of

the U.S. ABM system in its entirety, including sea- and space-based components, significantly affects the balance of power in the area of offensive arms. We believe there is also a risk that the ABM umbrella can lead to an illusion of invulnerability and impunity and, hence, engender temptation to use unilateral steps in solving global and regional problems, including to lower the threshold for using nuclear arms.

In any case, possible future steps to reduce nuclear weapons should be considered in the context of making disarmament efforts multilateral and taking into account the whole set of factors affecting strategic stability.

It is important to create such international environment in which already conducted reductions and restrictions of nuclear weapons would lead to a harmonious strengthening of international stability, peace and security of all States without exception. We are ready for a dialogue with the United States on establishing such conditions on the basis of equal partnership and consideration of each other's interests.

We reaffirm our commitment to **the INF Treaty**. We are ready to discuss in a constructive way all existing INF-related issues, which should be addressed without unnecessary politicizing. Until today, the United States has not specified its accusations concerning our alleged non-implementation of the INF Treaty. The information the American side has nevertheless provided is obviously insufficient for a substantive dialogue, and we have repeatedly noted that; The discussion could have been more constructive if we were given the information underlying false conclusions that our ground-launched cruise missile was tested to the range being in excess of the maximum distance stipulated by the INF Treaty. The reluctance to give specific facts raises doubts about genuine goals of the American policy in this area. It seems that the main objective is to artificially foment tension, including in the public space.

We are particularly concerned about the fact that the US is already considering "retaliatory measures" with regard to the alleged "violation" by Russia. Notably, they have approved and financed the development of ground-launched missiles with a range capability in excess of the maximum distance provided for by the INF Treaty. This is an evident step towards breaking up the Treaty. Moreover, Washington uses the pretended "Russian violation" to justify its plans to create a modern nuclear-capable sea-launched cruise missile. The same is used as a pretext to step up sanctions on Russia.

Another reason why we consider the discussion of the INF Treaty important is that we have not yet received any satisfactory response to our questions raised with regard to its implementation by the American side. Specifically, a U.S. missile defense site has been operating in Romania since 2015. Vertical launching systems, deployed there as part of the Aegis Ashore system and planned to be deployed in Poland, are similar to ship launchers Mk 41 that are used to launch not only missile interceptors, but also precision strike weapons such as Tomahawk cruise missiles. The U.S. has not provided evidence to prove that such uses of these launchers were not possible if deployed on land. Therefore, we have every reason to treat the U.S. missile defense sites as a direct violation of the Treaty. The Treaty does not prohibit the use of such launchers at sea, but their deployment on land runs counter to its provisions.

Regarding the INF Treaty, we are seriously concerned about the large-scale programme being implemented in the U.S. aimed at developing target missiles for testing ABM facilities having similar characteristics with intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles. Another concern is the U.S. strike drones which clearly fall under the category of intermediate-range ground-launched cruise missiles as defined in the INF Treaty.

We believe it is in the interests of both Russia and the U.S. to maintain the viability of the INF Treaty as an important international instrument.

In the context of strategic stability, it is important to address the problem of **turning outer space into an arena for armed confrontation** including through the use of different types of anti-satellite weapons and the prospective creation of a space-based ABM segment. This tendency also leads to undermining international security. In the situation when the U.S. refuses even to discuss a legally binding ban on the deployment of weapons in space in order to have a free hand in this regard, prevention of arms race in outer space is becoming increasingly relevant.

Nuclear factor keeps actively influencing the situation in the area of universal stability and international security. In this regard, we have many questions as to the updated U.S. nuclear doctrine which suggests an emerging American mindset, according to which waging a war with the use of nuclear weapons is not only admissible, but even advisable.

We would like to draw attention to the fact that the U.S. is carrying out a campaign aimed at modernizing practically all components of its nuclear arsenal. For example, funds have been allocated for the development of low-yield warheads for ballistic missiles to be used in submarine-launched ballistic missiles and the next generation air-launched nuclear cruise missile. The B61 nuclear bombs are being improved in order to create a modification that would be less destructive, but more accurate, which leads to the "temptation" to use nuclear weapons not as a means of retaliation, but rather as a means of first strike.

I would therefore like to remind you that Russia views nuclear weapons as a means of deterring aggression and ensuring military security. We reserve the right to use nuclear weapons in two exceptional cases: in response to the use of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction against us and (or) our allies, and in case of aggression against the Russian Federation with conventional weapons if the very survival of the State is at stake. These provisions of the Military Doctrine have not changed in many years.

Another important requirement that would help to maintain strategic stability is the storage of all nuclear weapons in the territory of the owner country. The European continent still hosts U.S. nuclear weapons, including the above-mentioned B61 bombs, non-nuclear members of the Alliance have been actively involved in training on their operation in breach of international agreements. Our non-strategic nuclear weapons are situated solely in the Russian territory and concentrated on centralized bases. We have repeatedly called upon the U.S. to follow our example – withdraw its weapons from Europe and dismantle the infrastructure used for their deployment there.

We are obviously concerned by the **consistent build-up of Pentagon's activity** in Eastern Europe, the Baltic States, the Middle and Near East, the Asia-Pacific region. In cooperation

with its NATO allies, the U.S. has been bringing military potentials closer to Russian borders, destabilizing the situation by deploying conventional arms in areas sensitive in terms of our security.

For-example, under the false pretext of the threat of potential Russian aggression, the U.S. has constantly increased its military presence on NATO's eastern flank, including aviation and heavy armor, and expanded the supporting infrastructure. This has been carried out under the so-called *European Deterrence Initiative* approved by the U.S. President, in 2018 its funding increased from 3.4 to 4.6 billion USD *The National Defense Authorization Act* allocates 6.3 billion USD for the same aims in fiscal year 2019.

There have been more provocative visits by U.S. Navy ships to the water area adjacent to Russia, the intensity of reconnaissance flights at our borders remains high. A vast array of exercises has been carried out in Central and Eastern Europe, with increasing participation by the U.S. strategic bomber aircraft.

In short, the U.S. has been very active in the area of Eastern Europe neighboring Russia. Pentagon has transferred brigade-level armored tank units to Eastern Europe: 3,300 personnel, about 90 tanks and 150 AIFV, other heavy equipment, plus more than 2,000 aircrew and technical staff of army aviation, as well as about 80 helicopters. The U.S. Armed Forces have over 65,000 personnel in ground force, Air Force, and Navy formations on the European continent.

The U.S.-NATO military preparation in direct proximity of our borders lead to an important question: what is that Washington is getting ready for in Europe, what role, or fate, has Washington prepared for it?

It is natural that we have been and will be taking all these factors into account in our own military planning and development of the Armed Forces. Russia has no plans of using its military capacity for aggression. This is a warranty of the strategic balance of forces, which is still a crucial factor of international stability. We do not need new threats. We must come to the negotiating table and together devise a new system of global security.

Finding mutually acceptable ways out would be a major contribution to strengthening international security and stability. We are certain that it is in the interests of both Russia and the U.S.

QUESTION: Thank you for your presentation. I probably was going to ask a question about strategic stability issues which you addressed so deeply on the issues, but I will do a completely different thing. I would not ask it on the details of your presentation. Hopefully bring some other aspect of US-Russia relations here. When there was World Cup here and for all the summer I was doing my homework on US-Russia relations. I crossed 19 United states, particularly those where Trump got his highest support among the voters, and really so it was not thanks to those rogue Russians, but because of Americans who voted for him there. But I also, of course, had to talk to people in places like Missouri or Oklahoma, Texas, are sitting in the pubs, are in the bars, but the CNN was on, unfortunately. That definitely didn't add to a good climate of talking to people. I must say though, that I found most of ordinary Americans, normal Americans, are and they were quite media-resistant.

They were very much resistant to what they were listening to they said, this is the Washington bubble, why should we, basically, follow that closely?

And this is some contradiction: on the one hand, of course, the media influence of what's going on now that anti-Russian...is enormous. On the other hand, normal America and its all normal problems have nothing to do with Russia. Maybe something to do with China, but definitely not with Russia. And in this situation, when we have this gloomy and deteriorating picture on strategic relations. Don't you think that doing more on traditional, classical people to people contacts, between our two peoples, Russian and American people, particularly among the young people, but not limited to them should be some good investment in the long-term future because I hardly can see...or you see it as the illusion, that it's just not possible under the current atmosphere we described?

RYABKOV: Well. Thank you, Vladimir, for these observations. I think, that it is really hard for me to judge how much of engagement different segments of the American society may have on issues of relevance relevant to our bilateral relationship, or to their bilateral relationship with Russia and for that case for arms control and strategic stability. What I know for sure though is, that the domestic agenda is so predominant and so overwhelming in very broad layers of the American society, that it will kind of guide and, you know, control, if you wish, the behavior of decision makers irrespective of whether they are in the executive power or opposite to that attacking the current executive power in Washington. And, if something from the sphere of foreign policy and international relationship, would be judged, considered, as being conducive for achievement of domestic political goals in the US, it will be immediately used to this end. I am talking not just on relationship with Russia or relation to Russia, but also on all sorts of different situations around. We have seen how dramatically things changed with respect to North Korea. We know how possible some dramatic moves are in terms of the situation in the Middle East. The domestic component in it is in my view a very, very central if not the central one, and we should regard it this way. In terms of what you said on people to people and direct contacts between the youth. Yes, for sure it should happen. Well, we all know the circumstances. And I am not only talking on the lack of funds, on all sorts of restrictions, ramifications, political and non-political, practical and non-practical. Waiting time for three hundred plus rector Bazhanov said five hundred days for US visas. Accompanied with invitations to go to Vilnius, Kiev or elsewhere to get visa immediately. Problems of travel, serious risks for Russian citizens to be arrested in the US for unknown reasons or for things like poor Maria Butina did, being a girl from province just in her illusion to find ways how to settle in the US, just ridiculous how degrading it was for the US services all together, and things like this. You know, it's-- we are no more thrilled with which other. I don't know the youth, but all the enchantment of old rosy days and years of nineties and early two thousand has evaporated. Some people here are trying to constrain their sense of hatred towards the US, other are not doing so. Still others are being paid, you know, for exhibit this sense of hatred or play with this sense of hatred, but that is the reality, the same thing vice versa. I think it will take time before this melt down cools. We will see. At least as an agency, as a ministry we will continuously work very focusedly to facilitate contacts between people including between the youth and we support educational programs and other programs, prepared, organized and performed by different institutions including by some educational centers, universities, not just in Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, but also elsewhere. We will do so continuously.

QUESTION: Two short questions, one of a tricky...I think you haven't mentioned in your opening remarks the Open Skies Treaty. We learned just today that the US blocked the certification of the new airplane from Russia, within this treaty. So, it would be great to hear your thoughts on this step from the US and on the future of this treaty.

And the second short question, just clarifying your remarks on the INF treaty. It may sound a bit naïve but let me ask it nevertheless. What keeps Russia from just showing the Americans the missile in question, the 9M-729, just to ease some of their concerns, so they have them in reality. Thank you.

RYABKOV: Thank you. I hope you will not use anything of it in your very esteemed paper. On open skies, it simply couldn't go otherwise in the current Washington. It would be a huge, huge, huge surprise, to put it mildly, for all of us who are doing arms control on a daily basis if this new plan would be certified by the US. You know, it would be very inconsistent with what is going on in the US on arms control issues. Preceding to this, we had a year with no open skies flights anywhere because some people believed that is was very wrong for Russia to introduce, according to the treaty, some limitations on the flights over Russia close to Abkhazia and South Ossetia – in the 10 kilometers zone. There were some other things – the numbers of airbases, airports that could be used for re-fueling, the maximum range of flights over some other territories and so on so forth. Very technical, but there are many. Then, in the course of this year we have proposed to Georgia, to the US, to Canada, and also to the rotating presidency is the so called open skies consultative commission in Vienna and those presidencies were the Czech presidency and the Swedish presidency to whom we are very grateful for their very faithful effort to find compromise, solutions and kind of figure out whether there might be a way forward. We have proposed to affix, if you wish, that would be so-called “Status neutral 1” without any attempt to kind of resort to open skies treaty for unrelated purposes and that is for continuous dispute whether these territories are independent states or not. Then it didn't work and then later we have completely removed all the limitations over flights on our territory along the borders of these countries – so what the US, Georgians, others claimed to be the main obstacles for normal functioning of the treaty is now there is no more, still with no positive effect. There will be no flights this year, there will be a huge difficulty in agreeing on quarters for the next year and if you read this Defense Appropriation Act for two thousand nineteen in a thorough way you would see that people under heel, legislators and staffers who are very much into the nitty and gritty of it are deliberately working towards the end when it would not be possible for the US to comply with a treaty, to receive open air flights, open skies flights. Similarly, they do not need these flights for their own purposes, whatever given the dire state of the overall situation a sacrifice of such a thing like open skies may well go unnoticed by anyone but those who are doing this on a daily basis. This is the reality, so, once again, it would be highly amazing for me if the US just abruptly would decide to certify the new Russian open skies plan. It would never happen. It would never happen. This plan would stay idle, we have now a lost investment in it. This is how I see this situation. On the missile and why not to show to the US 9 and 729 even of us for showing them this missile. They want us to know that we are in the material breach of this treaty. This is number one. And number two they say what they have already provided to us in terms of underpinning their accusation is more than sufficient for Russia to make her own

conclusions. Well, we don't think it's sufficient. They think it this. And here we are. Here we are. I am not going to disclose what we have proposed them in order to at least initiate some meaningful process and not just to continue these empty, futile exchanges of arguments both in public and in private. But, we, you know, going into it with the very specific set of points that are being shared to the US, and not just to the US, but also to Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus, who are parties to this treaty, upon dissolution of the Soviet Union, they became parties to this treaty. We also conduct bilateral consultations with the US on it now and then. I was tempted to say on a regular basis but then, I thought the regularity of this basis would equal to the number of rotations of Pluto around the sun. Okay.

GEN. BUZHINSKY: Thank you. Only one, one addition, the investment is not lost because when I'm going into the military industry and the company which actually developed the equipment, on board equipment, you see, it can be very easily converted to a normal reconnaissance plane. And some countries were interested and still...

RYABKOV: I'm glad, General, that we are back to normalcy, at least somewhat.

QUESTION: Thank you, mister, for your presentation. So, given the state of the US-Russian relationship that you described and given the fact that the US has recently taken some big decisions about, of consequence, for both Europe and Russia. Is Russia ready to engage constructively with Europe on issues of mutual interest? For instance, on Iran, there were statements on your side saying that Russia was ready to discuss this so-called four pillars strategy, including disarmament, but also going beyond that. But we must admit that so far it has been very difficult to bring Russia around the table to actually discuss it.

Second question, on a different issue, but in the same vein. Where does Russia stand on proposals made recently by President Macron to discuss, with Russia, in a constructive manner revised European Security architecture? Thank you.

RYABKOV: Thank you very much. First of JCPOA, before I comment on it. I will ask your colleagues those of you who follow the Russian media and Russian papers for that case not to take what is being printed or otherwise sent out including internet by «Российская газета», where my interview appears this morning in the aspect of myself saying, that negotiations, on negotiations, that's just a very funny word used by paper. On sunset closes regional polices and missile program of Iran are ongoing. I tried hard to correct this thing, this morning before I came here, I don't know whether they have made so. But, if you still will find it in the internet or elsewhere, please, disregard this. It's unthinkable thing that I would say such unimaginable ideas out. My point was that we are ready to look very constructively into the ideas of the president Macron, including on the four pillars. We do things that are worth exploring, but we are also saying and telling everyone including the Iranians and we told so to your colleges through appropriate channels, that firstly we want to keep JCPOA intact as is, we are prepared to discuss, changes of so-called sunset closes and we know that the European Union... well, not sorry, for misspoke. Not the European Union, E3 plus European Foreign Service plus Italy are conducting, as separate dialogue with Iran on parts of the Iranian regional policy which is Yemen. I don't know anything about the contents of this exchange, nor of the results, nor of the intentions but it still on

going and that on the Iranian missile program this is a big question, we do not understand what it would mean even for the authors of this idea. We have no experience apart from what we have in our bilateral relationship with the US in this area. We don't know how ambitious the authors of these ideas are. My suspicions, I suspect that the idea is to destroy of the Iranian missile program, complete destroyal of the Iranian missile program, for me it would be okay, and we say so to the Iranians, if they do so bilaterally, fine. I don't believe they will go along. But then the authors should at least think what they may give in exchange. Where is the deal-breaker, how big the carrots should be or is it just about, you know, just about sanctioning and sanctioning until Tehran surrenders and says please come to us and you will destroy your everything in this area with your own hands, then you will have sufficient confidence that there is no hidden programs any obscure activities or any necessity for any experts from independent organizations to be in the place. On the new security architecture, I think we are in the process of talking bilaterally on this. I am not following to a sufficient extent our relationship with France, but upon several contacts at the presidential level am subsequently I believe some channels and formats have been established for these discussions, and I believe also in such areas likes cyber, for example, or what we call information security, and I think also that in a given situation formats like the structured dialogue in Vienna, which was originally, introduced by our German colleagues and subsequently also coordinated by the German ambassador in Vienna, now I believe it's Belgian colleague who does so. I think is a good functional mechanism for exchanges on these broader issues. By the way, one of the unusual things that happened in recent time at this format was a communication by the Russian minister of defense, personal communication the Russian minister of defense to the OSCE secretary general Mr. Greminger, where the minister of defense undersigned for continuous exchanges on different things, including on some doctrinal aspects of the current situation and also pointing out that the need would be to start thinking, well they are doing the militaries, they are the structured dialogue doing, what they are doing is so-called mapping. And we are ready at some point to go into de-escalation issues, meaning by these arrangements that would not allow for some incidents, but not just incidents, but very the posturing of forces and capabilities may be considered. What we cannot support though, is again an attempt to use this platform to address some situations of the recent past, that were kind of a more political character. We went through it, when for years, there were discussions on so-called frozen conflicts, at a format of the consultative commission of the CFE we know how we tended, we don't want that this structural dialogue will be turned into this mood. Because then it we will not participate in it. Thank you.

QUESTION: The first thank you very much for your presentation. And I have another question also on arms control. Following the meeting of the chairmen of Russian Security Council, US National Security Adviser Bolton says that US is still saying thinking controversy is going to start. There is an option of defending, there is an option negotiation..., and there is also an option of doing something along the lines of Moscow Treaty of 2002, which Bolton was actually actively participating in negotiating. So, do you feel that US thinking is moving in that direction and if yes, will it be something that Russia will be interested in?

RYABKOV: Thank you. I am not responding right away, because I am thinking how Chatham on it is all together. But maybe I will just say a word, that at the meeting proper,

Mr. Bolton was somewhat more elaborate on this. Very much in line with what he said subsequently at the press event, but he also added something to this and that was not mentioned in the press. I am not going to disclose what was said there. I will say what is our conclusion. Our conclusion is that the US administration is still analyzing the situation all pros and contrasts and all the repercussions of the current situation are under review. By the way, apart from the national security adviser's statements, some of you have probably seen remarks by my colleague and counterpart the secretary Thompson, who said in addition to what was said by the national security adviser, that there is no need to rush into any decisions with respect to start, because an eventual extension would require short time to be arranged and this debate should not last for months and months. I think, I quote almost very closely to what she said actually. That's okay. The only problem with all this is that somehow there is another party to this treaty. Strangely enough. And because of all the circumstances that I tried to explain earlier, and most of all because of this attitude to Russia, like there is no purpose to deal with Russia like it was done earlier for all sorts of different reasons and better not to do anything with respect to Russia, just if Russia would be kind enough not to meddle anywhere, domestically, externally, anywhere in the world. The most, the preferable, you know, proposition would be a non-existent Russia, but it's not achievable at least for now. So, then what's the second-best option? The second-best option is to fix things in a manner, that are easy enough, so that there is no need to invest into elaborate negotiating scheming, arguments, counter-arguments, beating positions, reserve positions, all this is a very outdated, old-fashioned, irrelevant and non-applicable, especially to Russia these days probably to others as well, and the mood of the administration is that of fixing difficult things overnight. So why not to continue doing such things towards Russia including in the area of arms control. This is my personal interpretation of the situation, it's not something the kind of feed into our system, and this is just how I interpret what is going on out there. And let's see, we use some time to remind the US on the need to at least discuss these things, we are hopeful it will happen in an appropriate moment, but maybe closer to the moment when this decision should be actually taken on start.

QUESTION: When I was in Washington in 2013 with Vladimir Orlov, an American official said to me, well if Russia wants to compete with American approaches, so everything is going to become really, really bad. And that's what happened actually. Well, but all this time, we tried to have a clear vision between our contacts and also the issues of strategic stability and arms control, and although we have these sanctions, weekly, daily sanctions, but still, we constantly make some suggestions, a dialogue of discussing the treaties, cybersecurity, chemical security, and so on. So, we try to distinguish between sanctions and national security. Well, I know we are talking about the presidential address, and also the neighbors, but then maybe there are species of arms control, that are not just like viable, they are an everyday necessity, and maybe there is going to be such an approach that all that will be just crammed into one package, on nonproliferation, arms control. Now are talking about global security and I understand why it's important to have this interest on a special path. Could the approach actually win in the society when all that is going to be crammed into the same package? It would be used together. Thank you.

RYABKOV: Well, thank you for this question. It's one of the fundamental ones. I am very confident that this scenario will never turn real, because of several things among those are our conscious approach to arms control as something that serves Russia's nationals

interests. We have never experienced a situation where there is no arms control arrangements apart from, say NPT, although there would be further fights around this treaty in the years to come, but all the rest is already in the risk area, in a grey zone with no guarantee, no confidence, of their continuous existence in the future. So, we have not experienced anything like this any time before, Bbt the early years of the Cold War, so this is my first consideration and we will never be the first to abandon any of the elements of the security architecture, because it makes no purpose. Our security will not be enhanced by this act. Russia will become a target for endless attacks by all sorts of people. Many of whom pursue some goals that have nothing to do with idea of arms control. Number three, it will make no difference in Washington. Probably, it will even make the life for decision makers in Washington much easier, we should not play into the hands of them. Why should we? That would be a very wrong proposition even from a tactical point of view. They feel constraints of all this damned arms control treaties, because they kind of constitute obstacles for some grander ideas of the US dominance all over the world, or more politically correctly for the establishment of all rules-based international system everywhere. Secondly, all this, or much of this, is the legacy of Obama, which is in itself an anathema, so something should be done about it, surely. We should not be of assistance in all these considerations that are quite strange to our mind. Well, to put everything in one boat, to mix everything into strange cocktail, that's not the way, how we operate; we look at things at their own merits. We think the JCPOA should be sustained, because it serves the purpose of states nonproliferation regime and also ensure the sufficient degree of international control of Iranian nuclear program. We have said so to Iran and to others, that Iran should never become a nuclear weapons state. And we still believed the JCPOA is the best way to ensure it. So, this selfish approach towards these things, I think would guide us in the future. Thank you.

GEN. BUZHINSKY I would like, as usual, to comment on one issue which is of interest for a lot of people, maybe for you as well. You know that the exercise, the big exercise "Vostok-2018" is being conducted now in the east of our country. I see that all military attaches are now in Chita: they left yesterday to be briefed and be present at some episodes of the exercises.

The last few days I had a lot of requests from our media and foreign media – especially US and UK media – for comments on these exercises. And the main request was: "What is the message that Russia is sending to the world and to the West?" Well, first of all, I don't think that every exercise should be interpreted as a message. But the Soviet Union and Russian Federation haven't conducted such scale exercises in the last 37 years. The last exercise of such scale was conducted in 1981. It was called "Zapad (The West) – 81" and was held in the territory of Western parts of the Soviet Union, now independent states – Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldova, and the territory of Czechoslovakia, GDR and Poland. So, what is the message? There may be some messages, of course. The first message, as I see it, is that irrespective of sanctions, irrespective of pressure, irrespective of all threats to strangle Russia economically, Russia can afford to conduct such scale exercises. It is not a cheap thing, believe me. Two military districts, two fleets, the whole of air bombs forces, long range of transport aviation, three hundred thousand people, more than one thousand aircrafts, few hundreds of warships and auxiliary ships. So, it is quite an exercise.

The second message is that irrespective of the claims that Russia is isolated, has no partners, has no allies, our military cooperation with the West is finished for the time being, we are developing our corporation with Eastern partners, especially China. It is not the first exercise on the territory of Russia, where Chinese armed forces are taking part. But it is the first time when the Chinese participation is so significant – three thousand five hundred personnel, few hundreds of pieces of armor, hundred aircrafts. The Chinese participation is quite big.

The third message is the following. We hear a lot of reports that US president is thinking of delivering a strike against Russian objects in Syria in Idlib under the pretext of the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government irrespective of the fact that the Russian intelligence is monitoring the situation and informing the world community, the Security Council, on every step of the opposition on the possible use or staged use of chemical weapons – with chlorine and other chemicals. Yesterday the media cruise arrived to that point and started filming the consequences and the results of the chemical attack. Maybe the third message, it is the message that Russian forces are in good shape and are capable of repelling and if necessary of retaliating.