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**Briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, Moscow,
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**Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's upcoming visit to the Republic of
Serbia**

On June 6-7, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will make a working visit to the Republic of Serbia. He will meet with President of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic, and hold talks with Foreign Minister Nikola Selakovic, Speaker of the National Assembly Ivica Dacic and Patriarch Porfirje.

There are plans to conduct in-depth discussion of issues regarding bilateral political and economic interaction, to exchange opinions on the situation in the Balkan region and on topical international issues.

**Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's working visit to the Republic of
Turkey**

On June 8, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will make a working visit to Ankara, where he will meet with Foreign Minister of Turkey Mevlut Cavusoglu.

It is planned to discuss the status and the prospects for deepening bilateral interaction on a wide range of trade and economic cooperation issues in conditions of illegitimate anti-Russia sanctions that have been imposed by the West.

The ministers will also exchange opinions on topical issues of the regional and international agenda, primarily the current situation in Ukraine, the peace settlement in Syria, Libya and Nagorno Karabakh, the situation in the Balkan region, Afghanistan and Central Asia.

**Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's upcoming participation in a meeting
of the Council of CSTO Foreign Ministers**

On June 10, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will take part in a regular meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation in Yerevan. This year, the Republic of Armenia presides in the CSTO.

The participants will sum up the results of multilateral intra-CSTO cooperation and to discuss prospects for future interaction. During the meeting, there are plans to conduct an in-depth exchange of opinions concerning the international and regional situation and its influence on the security of the CSTO member states, as well as ways to improve the CSTO's crisis response mechanism.

The parties will sign a plan of consultations between representatives of CSTO member states on foreign policy, defence and security issues in 2022-2024 based on the results of the meeting.

Sergey Lavrov will hold a number of bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the event.

25th St Petersburg International Economic Forum

The 25th St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) will be held on June 15-18.

This year's 25th anniversary edition, with the theme "New Opportunities in a New World," will feature a rich and diverse agenda. The Forum will offer sessions on topical issues of global politics and economics, including challenges and prospects for cooperation in leading industry sectors. In addition, there will be a series of sessions on the development of bilateral contacts, including those with Egypt, China, African and Latin American countries, as well as cooperation within ASEAN, BRICS, the EAEU and the SCO.

As in previous years, the Forum will attract a large number of foreign guests. To date, we have received participation confirmation from foreign officials, businesspersons, experts and media representatives from over 120 countries, as well as from about 20 international organisations (these are just preliminary figures).

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will take part in the Forum events. A number of bilateral meetings with foreign partners will be held on the sidelines of the Forum.

There will also be an off-site briefing. We will put out an announcement. Media representatives are welcome. Later on, we will announce the sections and panel discussions in which the Ministry will participate.

Ukraine update

On June 1, the world marked International Children's Day. The Armed Forces of Ukraine celebrated the day in a peculiar way, by yet again carrying out massive artillery strikes against populated areas in the Donetsk People's Republic. As a result, a nine-year-old boy and his mother were injured by a Grad MLRS missile in Gorlovka. On May 31, a woman and a five-year-old girl were killed in Makeyevka. On May 30, the Ukrainian forces fired 14 shells and two cluster bombs from a Smerch MLRS at the centre of Donetsk and the Voroshilovsky and Budyonnovsky districts of the city, damaging three schools.

By June 1, the Kiev regime approached fully armed, in the direct meaning of the word. Five civilians were killed, including a teenager born in 2008, while 18 civilians, including two children, were wounded. Did the Western media report this? Were protest flash mobs held around the world? Did NGOs take notice of this? Are furious EU residents picketing at the Ukrainian embassies in their countries? Or is it all right to kill Donetsk and Lugansk residents and everyone else who has not taken the oath of allegiance to the Nazi and neo-Nazi regime? It looks like it.

There are grounds to assume that the Ukrainian forces used large-calibre long-distance guns. Shell fragments with US markings were found at the site. The West recently started to supply such weapons to Kiev, saying cynically that the Ukrainian Armed Forces need them for defence. I hope the Pentagon and the US Department of State will be able to comment on this today. We won't accept the explanation that they didn't know the weapons they were supplying would be used against civilians and children. We expect to hear the truth. The Ukrainian neo-Nazis, prodded on by Washington, are using the weapons supplied by the United States against civilians, regardless of casualties among civilians and, worst of all, children and teenagers. Moreover, they are deliberately targeting the Donetsk districts that have not been attacked since 2014. This is not fake news like what we saw from Bucha and Kramatorsk but facts, which Washington must take into account because this is happening with its information and military support.

In this context, we would like to comment on the decision taken by President Joe Biden to provide Ukraine with missile systems with a range of about 50 miles (80 km). This will increase the number of civilian casualties. The United States, which claims to be concerned about civilians, must answer for its actions. Responsibility for the death of innocent people will lie with Washington, which is providing such weapons.

The Ukrainian nationalists have at their disposal all kinds of foreign artillery guns, including long-range ones, such as the French Ceasar howitzers, Polish Krabs and US M109s.

Germany has promised to provide the PzH-2000 and Slovakia, Zuzana howitzers. The Western war concerns are getting rich off the death of peaceful civilians in that long-suffering country. But we have long known that they don't care about Ukraine. US President George W. Bush recently said Ukraine's mission is "to destroy as many Russian troops as you can." He forgot to add that its mission is also to destroy as many Ukrainians as possible. Maybe he will say that next time. I would like to make special mention of the achievements of German companies. By promising to supply newer weapons to the Central and East European countries which are sending weapons to Ukraine, Berlin is making them dependent on the German military industry.

But the largest number of weapons are coming from the United States. US military assistance supplied to Ukraine since late February has reached more than \$3.8 billion. Washington has approved the allocation of nearly \$40 billion to Kiev, including over \$23 billion for military needs.

I would like to remind you that these Western actions, which have turned Ukraine into a military bridgehead against Russia, are one of the reasons for the special military operation launched by the Russian Armed Forces. As we said on numerous occasions, it will continue until all its goals, namely the demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine, are achieved. We have done a great deal towards this end. The fighters of the Azov nationalist battalion have surrendered in Mariupol, and the liberation of Donbass is proceeding according to plan, as the Defence Ministry of Russia regularly says in its reports.

Trying to divert global public attention from its own war crimes, the Kiev regime is waging a disinformation campaign and spreading fake news about Russia, with generous support from NATO's media structure. This is taking place in the best traditions of information wars, this time in the context of a global Western war declared against Russia. The Ukrainian propagandists have accused our military of infringements on the life and health of children, which they themselves are killing. A real monster of this information war is the Verkhovna Rada's former human rights commissioner, Lyudmila Denisova, who produced non-stop fake news about paedophilia and claimed that teenagers and children were brutally raped by Russian troops. Is this one of her sick fantasies, or did she have Ukrainian troops in mind? Even the Kiev authorities could no longer tolerate her blatant lies. On May 31, the Verkhovna Rada dismissed ombudswoman Denisova, citing her focus on the numerous details of "unnatural sexual offences" which were unsupported by evidence.

It is a historical achievement for modern Ukraine (read: Western protectorate) to admit that a senior official, the human rights commissioner, was guilty of disinforming the public amid the hostilities. This could no longer be tolerated. But the trouble is that the same is also going on with regard to food security and other issues.

Another example of Ukrainian and Western disinformation is the groundless claim that Russia is preventing grain exports from Ukraine by sea, which could cause global hunger. Everyone knows that the mines laid by the Ukrainian Armed Forces are impeding grain exports. The absurdity of the situation is beyond ludicrous. They will say next that grain doesn't want to be exported from Ukraine. This is unreasonable and inexplicable. Mines are being laid everywhere, in the fields, sea ports and water areas. Russian troops are working to clear these mines and have cleared 1,900 hectares. The ports of Mariupol and Berdyansk have resumed operation after the Russian and Donetsk militaries cleared the port territories and waters from mines and other dangerous items. On May 31, the first dry cargo ship left Mariupol and headed to Rostov-on-Don. This is the real picture. It cannot be disproved because it is backed by facts, including photographs.

Russia is ready to create conditions for grain exports from Odessa and other ports on the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. As we have pointed out on numerous occasions and at all levels, Russian troops open humanitarian corridors for the free movement of sea vessels every day. As we said, if the seaport waters are cleared of mines, we will ensure the safe export of grain and accompany grain vessels to the international waters of the Black Sea.

Russia is also ready to export its own grain to the countries that need it, but it cannot do so because the West has adopted restrictions, for political and commercial reasons, on foreign vessels calling at Russian ports and on Russian vessels calling at foreign ports for taking on supplies, as well as created insurmountable obstacles in insurance and bank transactions. If the United States and EU countries really want to prevent a global famine, they should lift these restrictions, and every country that needs grain will be able to get it.

Termination of Russia-US memorandum on cultural and humanitarian cooperation

In relation to the Russian Government's directive to terminate the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the United States of America on the Principles of Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Humanitarian and Social Sciences, Education, and the Mass Media, signed on September 2, 1998, in Moscow, I would like to say the following.

The US authorities have launched a large-scale campaign to discredit Russian culture. I am not even sure this phrase can exist, but that is what they are trying to do. The US intelligence and law enforcement agencies' aggressive moves against the leaders and activists of the Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots Living Abroad, which has been traditionally engaged in promoting the Russian language, history and traditions, have undermined the activity of this organisation.

Overall, what the US and its satellites are doing now to persecute the Russian cultural and historical heritage across the globe is aimed at cancelling everything that is related to Russia. It is an absurd phrasing and absurd logic. That is the era we live in now. They probably don't fully comprehend what they are doing. Western countries don't make a secret of the fact that the relevant decisions are taken on political and momentary grounds. The legacy of Russian writers, poets, composers, artists, engineers and even toponyms are on the line. The problem is that this blow is not aimed at us, but at the global civilisation.

It is obvious to all reasonable, educated people with an intellect that this campaign is absurd and doomed to fail. Due to the Americans' actions, the memorandum has lost all meaning. We sent a relevant note to the US Embassy in Moscow on June 1.

We again reiterate that we will respond to any unfriendly steps Washington takes. The situation when the US Administration, while persecuting the Russian culture and its bearers, continues to promote their “values” in Russia under the auspices of the said memorandum can no longer be tolerated.

Suspending the work of the Russia-Norway Joint Commission on Nuclear and Radiation Safety

In view of the Kingdom of Norway’s unfriendly position towards the Russian Federation since the beginning of the special military operation in Ukraine, Oslo’s joining European Union’s anti-Russian sanctions, and its attempts to put economic and political pressure on our country, we decided to suspend cooperation with Norway in nuclear and radiation safety.

During a meeting of the commission on May 31, 2022, Norway was informed about the suspension of further work and joint projects within bilateral agreements.

Statement by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell and representatives of the European Commission on World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

The Russian Foreign Ministry’s Diplomatic Academy has developed a diplomatic dictionary. I think it needs to include a separate entry explaining the “EU diplomacy of the Josep Borrell era.” It could be expanded to include the prerequisites that led to this phenomenon. One way or another, his name should be included in historical dictionaries in appropriate contexts.

We have noted the recent Joint Statement by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell and other representatives of the European Commission on World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. One would think this day’s purpose is to contribute to the rapprochement of peoples of different cultures. However, the EU has been using it as just another occasion to incite conflictual rhetoric against Russia.

We fully agree that cultural diversity is a fragile concept. Apparently, that is why the European Union has failed to preserve its true meaning. Its commitment to global cultural dialogue has been replaced by overt calls from a number of EU capitals to ignore certain languages, national cultures, art, and literary and musical masterpieces. Russian literature, works by Russian composers and Russian art masterpieces are being outlawed, as are our exhibitions, our films, television channels, news resources and even restaurants with Russian cuisine. A centralised campaign has been unleashed to falsify history, including with regard to our people's role in World War II; and the number of cases of vandalism and destruction of Soviet monuments has grown significantly. We talk about this tirelessly and take actions and steps to protect them. Moreover, Brussels has been totally ignoring the wide-scale "cleansing" of everything Russian from Ukraine and the Baltic countries, which started long before Russia began its special military operation. They are now using it to justify their unsightly actions. We have repeatedly mentioned this during the negotiations. We provided a lot of material substantiating reports of the kind of treatment the Russian-speaking population had been suffering there for decades. Brussels and the European Commission should have been taking this into consideration, but they never did. We tried to help and handed over large amounts of information. They "took note" and at some point even "expressed concern." But they never took any action. Was there nothing they could do? Unlikely. We see now that sanctions can be imposed, public and private property can be stolen under political pretexts, media outlets can be shut down, accounts can be blocked, and sanctions lists can be drawn up. None of this has ever been done to discourage those who have been harassing ethnic minorities in their countries for decades. It looks like this is only being done to destroy everything related to our common culture.

It is obvious that the European Commissioners' commitment to support and protect the variety of cultures as expressed in their joint statement is far from the EU's actual intentions. I would put it differently. Maybe they want to protect and develop the cancel culture – but that's a different story.

Furthermore, we are completely perplexed by the accusations of purposefully destroying Ukraine's culture, its institutions and heritage. Do people who make such statements even know anything about the history of our common space, in today's realities? The endless number of monuments, many geographical and cultural landmarks are associated with our shared history or with Ukraine as a republic that was part of the Soviet Union. Who and when has anyone ever tried to "purposely" destroy the Ukrainian culture? Unlike our neighbours, we never stoop to this kind of behaviour – we are not conducting a campaign to demolish monuments commemorating Ukrainian figures or to rename streets named after them. We never did. But how is the Kiev regime being pumped with weapons – which are later used for destructive actions, including in residential areas – consistent with the EU's declared goal of protecting and restoring Ukrainian culture? This question remains to be answered.

In general, this is just another manifestation of Brussels' destructive logic, where the EU is ready to sacrifice the basic principles of international humanitarian cooperation, politicise culture, sports, scientific and technical cooperation, and youth policy in order to achieve its goals (or the goals others have formulated for it). They have always done this, but kept it within some civilised framework. That's life. A lot of things have been politically influenced. Now, it is no longer about double standards; it is about the violation of everything that humanity has been moving towards for centuries. As always, the EU is trying to hide its true intentions behind beautiful slogans. But it is increasingly failing. Obviously, the consequences of trying to isolate the EU from Russian culture are already making themselves felt.

US restrictions on the Russian media and our response

US authorities continue their targeted repression against the Russian media and journalists, tirelessly cleansing their information space of any news source that is not to Washington's liking. This has been going on for many years. It has now reached a terminal stage for Washington itself. It has completely shattered all illusions of the true attitude to basic concepts of democracy – freedom of speech, independent journalism, pluralism, etc.

An entire arsenal of crackdowns on dissent is being used. In addition to direct bans, they are blocking the bank accounts of our correspondents and the Russian media representative offices as well as the bank accounts of the reporters and videographers who co-operate with them. They have also cut off the possibility of salary transfers and of paying office leases. Visas and accreditation for our correspondents are not being renewed, and new ones are being denied. When we retaliate, they become hysterical. They forget that the measures are retaliatory and spread stories about some US or Anglo-Saxon journalist being “hurt” by the “Russian power machine.”

For many years, we only retaliated months after we had used every opportunity to convince our Western “partners” of the harmfulness of such destructive logic and actions against our journalists. We tried to use diplomacy, co-operation and engagement to prevent such a development. Washington continued to deliberately destroy any Russian media presence in the United States. Apparently, the plan was long-term. Everything is being done to make any Russian media production or economic activity in the US impossible, to ban it, to restrict it, etc.

We have received some factual information from journalists and media outlets, a long list of what is being used against them. To give one example, by June 7, all legal entities and individuals in the United States are ordered to cease all relations with the three major Russian TV channels (Channel One, Russia 1 and NTV) on the sole grounds that they are “associated with or acting in favour of the Russian government.” They do not hesitate to threaten companies outside their national jurisdiction with secondary sanctions for cooperating with Russian media operators. In case of rebroadcasting a signal through a satellite operating in another part of the world, not affiliated with the United States or a US company, it will also be subject to Washington’s measures. Which ones? We know perfectly well. This is more than George Orwell’s 1984, it is something “heavier.” The United States is actively engaging major IT companies like Google, Apple, Facebook, Instagram, Meta, Twitter and others in its Russophobic line to block all digital resources connected to our media. A global sweep is underway. Dissent, alternative viewpoints, other data feeds, other material provided on current issues should not be leaked from any source.

The United States' open censorship of the Russian media will not go without a response. This is not just censorship of the media, but of an entire media space. They can make no specific claims against the activities of Russian journalists or news offices. They would like to find something to complain about, but no. They have not found any flaws either in the information they transmit as it is based on facts, or in terms of their stay on US territory. If the work of the Russian media is not brought back to normal in the United States, the harshest retaliatory measures will inevitably follow.

On Monday June 6, the heads of all US news offices in Moscow will be invited to the Russian Foreign Ministry Press Centre and will be informed about the consequences of their government's hostile policy towards the Russian media.

The UK's propaganda traditions

What we are seeing is a British reality show on London's "concern for media freedom." In actual reality, concern for developing the media serves as a smokescreen for interfering in the domestic affairs of Russia and other countries. This is an inexhaustible subject. Earlier, we said that these neo-colonial traditions have deep roots in the bloody history of the British Empire. In fact, revanchist sentiment still runs high in the United Kingdom. At a certain point, the European Union became an obstacle to fulfilling this agenda. This was also one of the reasons behind Brexit.

We are now approaching a stage where isolated pieces of evidence, including those uncovered by hackers, found in the public domain or by investigative journalists, come together like a puzzle to form a single image. There emerges a horrible picture. Importantly, reports on the Foreign Office's subversive activities around the world have been cross-validated by a wide range of sources. Of course, the UK Foreign Office would have never been able to pull this off by itself. It relied on its diplomatic network, as well as British Councils, the media and trusted contractors. When needed, the British state created organisations to blend its diplomatic, intelligence, military and propaganda assets. Their American curators were also involved. Could it be otherwise? After all, one Anglo-Saxon power won't peck at the eyes of another Anglo-Saxon power, as the saying goes, and even if it did, it wouldn't peck them out.

I would like to make a side note here to emphasise the continuity in London's worst interagency practices. The Daily News Egypt recently published a review of a book called 'How to Stage a Coup' by Rory Cormac, a specialist in the history of subversion and intelligence. Let me share a quote with you: "During the Cold War, the UK executed media protocols targeting the Middle East, Africa, and parts of Asia with the intention of fostering instability, manipulating sentiment, inciting crime, and aggravating ethnic strains with news by promoting and backing anti-communist ideas from the mid-1950s to the late 1970s through a Foreign Office Unit located in London."

This refers to the Information Research Department (IRD). Created by the Labour government after World War II, it was designed to oppose Soviet propaganda in Britain. In the mid-1960s, it employed 360 agents, and it mainly served as a highly secret Special Editorial Unit that released news items. It should be clear what kind of news this was. It was misinformation, the culture of fake news, which the UK had been brewing for decades.

The British agenda consisted of fabricating statements by official Soviet organisations and representatives. Between 1965 and 1972, the department fabricated at least 11 false reports from Novosti Press Agency, a Soviet state-run news agency. You can imagine the scope. This may not seem like much at first sight, but all of these reports were released at crucial moments in the history of certain regions and sought to influence the course of events.

British agents used a variety of tricks to counter Soviet influence. In 1963, they forged a statement from the International Federation of Democratic Youth — a fake Soviet organisation — which denounced Africans as "uncivilised, primitive, and morally weak." The forgery received press coverage across the continent, with many newspapers reacting intemperately.

Doesn't this remind you of anything? They keep playing by the same rulebook, using lies and fraud, as their covert operations alone are not enough to undermine Russia's influence.

In the new historical period, the so-called Russia Unit set up in 2017 has taken the baton from the IRD. It was created to implement the UK strategy for Russia, primarily coordinating information and propaganda efforts on the Russian track. This is evidenced by the data from the government information disclosure portal. It says that until 2021, the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) of the British Foreign Office was implementing an ambitious Counter Disinformation and Media Development Programme, including in Russian.

According to the programme summary, the UK interacts with a range of partners to enhance the quality of public service and independent media so that it is able to “support social cohesion, uphold universal values and provide communities in countries across Eastern Europe with access to reliable information.” For all that is good, against all that is bad, for the benefit of the United Kingdom. The information on a British programme to weaken Russian influence, obtained in the information space in 2021, has thus been confirmed by open-source data.

So it was all true – the amount of funding, the methods used in the Baltic States, Ukraine, and Russia (instruction by the BBC and Thomson Reuters, advice on broadcast schedules, the financing of joint projects and support for media projects in Russian).

Interestingly, for the first time, the Russia Unit officially stood tall in 2019, when British investigative journalist Till Bruckner requested data from the British Foreign Office on the activities of the Integrity Initiative (a project to spread anti-Russian fraudulent information and wage a propaganda war against Moscow). He asked the Foreign Office, but the answer came from the Russia Unit. It said the project had cost almost 2.3 million pounds in 2017-2019. As we know, their appetites – and budgets – have grown many times over since then. Elizabeth Truss openly speaks about its goals as she fumes with aggression and declares her will to destroy our country in any possible way.

One cannot disagree with experts, historians and journalists that the reckless ventures undertaken by the London elite around the world are not even part of some strategy (each new government churns out a new one) – but part of their way of life, of their survival. The stakes increase every time the situation escalates somewhere, including through Britain’s efforts. Their peacetime projects (recruiting supporters, arranging them as an influence network) are being used for new goals. Their propaganda is being elevated to the next level – war propaganda. This is the current trend in the Western coverage of what is happening in the Donbass region and Ukraine. A false agenda is being created with media discourse strictly regulated at all levels, and military censorship introduced in the leading media even though the UK is not officially a warring party.

This time, the global neo-imperial ambitions of the British elites are paid for by the Ukrainians with their blood.

The anti-Russian sanctions impact the Japanese economy

The Prime Minister Fumio Kishida-led government, having imposed 10 packages of sanctions on Russia, continues with persistence worthy of a better cause to deploy full-scale efforts to dismantle the entire complex of relations with our country. This creates the strong impression that this area of “activities” has swept aside obviously significant goals of any political leadership, such as economic growth or the promotion of the social sphere. Moreover, thoughtlessly severing supply and production chains with sector-specific restrictions and disrupting international transport links, the ruling class of Japan, with surprising ease, is creating new problems for their country’s individuals and corporations, which have not yet recovered from COVID-related complications.

As reported by the Japanese media, three of Japan’s leading banks – Mitsubishi UFJ, Sumitomo Mitsui, and Mizuho – which have enjoyed great success in our country, have already lost over \$2.7 billion due to their Russian clients lacking technical capabilities to repay their loans in the wake of the restrictions that were imposed on Russia’s financial sector. Due to the direct and indirect impact of anti-Russian sanctions, seven major trading and investment corporations, including such powerhouses as Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Itochu, Sumitomo, and Marubeni have lost over \$2 billion as of late March. And that’s March alone. April and May are history, and it’s already June now.

Losses and lost opportunities for Japanese firms as a result of their leaving the Russian market have yet to be assessed. We are aware that many of them were subjected to unprecedented political and psychological pressure by official Tokyo, which, in turn, was subjected to pressure coming from the United States. Otherwise, it is difficult to account for the actions of the Fast Retailing Co management, which owns the Uniqlo chain in Russia, which first said it would stay in Russia and then suddenly changed its mind. If a business operator has a strategy, its interest is unlikely to go through peaks and troughs. This means that they are under a formidable – not even influence or pressure – but blackmail.

The sanctions campaign unleashed by Tokyo in cahoots with the West adversely impacts Japan’s macroeconomic benchmarks. The Japanese Finance Ministry reported that as of late March public debt has increased again to a whopping \$9.5 trillion, almost 200 percent of the country's GDP, which is the poorest result among the OECD countries. Several decades ago we perceived Japan as a thriving economy. What kind of economists are they if they cannot even secure their own debt? Everyone is living on credit. The grandeur turns out to be a bubble.

Fumio Kishida and his ministers' statements about raising duties and refusing to buy Russian energy and other goods do nothing but speed up the rise in prices for commodities, metals, and food. It's their country, so let them do as they please. However, they themselves never stop talking about food security and rising energy prices, and then drive up prices for the resources in question. According to the Bank of Japan, in April the wholesale price index was up by 10 percent, which is the highest increase recorded in the past 40 years. Who are they trying to punish? Us or themselves? Most likely, consumers and small businesses may need to brace for even higher prices. Disruptions in supplies from Russia have led to higher prices even for traditional Japanese dishes such as sushi, noodles, etc., which is to be expected. Tokyo is imposing restrictions on our country, and their country is hit by higher prices. Go ahead and let your people know why you are doing this. In the United States, the concept that has been written on every wall claiming that higher gas prices were caused by Russia has failed miserably. Even people without deep knowledge in economics understand that Washington's imposition of sanctions and its blocking of normal economic activities has broken down existing economic models and driven up prices. It is impossible to zombify people to such a degree that the West and Tokyo, under the West's pressure, have.

Most importantly, the Kishida government's self-serving political actions are clearly evidenced by their cynical behavioural logic whereby it is much easier for it to blame its socioeconomic troubles on a situation in faraway Europe than to honestly acknowledge to Japanese voters the ineffectiveness of its own policies.

Foreign Ministry's regular report on the violation of the rights of Russian citizens and compatriots in foreign countries

The Foreign Ministry published a regular report on the violations of the rights of Russian citizens and compatriots in foreign countries on its official website.

This topic, which has always been the focus of the Ministry's close attention, acquired special urgency in 2022. After the Russian Federation was forced to launch a special military operation in Ukraine, the systemic problems that had been accumulating for decades were joined by blatant Russophobia, which is no longer concealed. It was hidden, smouldering and corroding, but now everything has been revealed. We can see what is really going on there.

As a result, Russians and our compatriots living abroad are facing a wide range of violations and harassment. Since late-February, there have been many different incidents that go beyond the legal framework in Western countries, from coercion to public repentance and condemnation of the Russian authorities' actions (by force, blackmail and threats) to everyday discrimination, which took the form of real bullying and persecution (dismissal from work, refusal to provide banking services and medical care, eviction from homes contrary to rental agreements, and refusal to serve Russians in shops, cafes and restaurants, etc.) In a number of countries, physical aggression against Russian speakers became commonplace. Indiscriminate and encouraged by official propaganda, it affected not only ethnic Russians, but also representatives of other ethnic backgrounds, including Ukrainians. The most defenceless part of our compatriots – children – were also subjected to persecution and bullying. These people faced dehumanisation and public insults. Children were subjected to “flogging” in schools not by their classmates, but by teachers and the leadership of “educational institutions.”

We are closely monitoring the situation around these unprecedented manifestations of Western “civilisation.” The Russophobic campaign is striking in its scale. Russian missions abroad launched special channels of communication with our compatriots in order to promptly respond to their problems in connection with numerous discriminatory incidents. A number of our diplomatic missions systematise and post on their official websites information about specific cases of violation of the rights of Russian speakers received through the hotline. Hotlines operate in various applications and messengers, including those created by Rossotrudnichestvo, as well as by the Association of Lawyers of Russia.

The most aggressive representatives of “civilised Europe” did not shun physical attacks on diplomats, as was the case in Vilnius in March 2022. Two months later, in Warsaw, during a flower-laying ceremony at a memorial cemetery of Soviet soldiers, Russian Ambassador Sergey Andreyev was doused with red liquid. On the same day, attempts to disrupt a commemorative event were made as Consul General of Russia in Gdansk Sergey Semyonov was laying a wreath on the Soviet memorial. There are scores of acts of vandalism against Russian foreign missions and hundreds of threats against their employees.

The Russophobic campaign gave a strong boost to Poland, Ukraine, and the Baltic states' efforts to combat monuments and memorials of the Soviet soldiers who died liberating Europe from Nazism. The mask fell off. Everyone saw the terrible mug of Western "civilisation." In 2022, the things the authorities of these countries were doing with regard to Soviet memorials started looking like flat-out mayhem of violence. The efforts to rewrite history and erase Russian communities' national memory residing in these countries intensified, including at the legislative level. Local authorities started pumping out legislative and administrative measures that created prerequisites for establishing artificial restrictions for Russian-speaking residents in various spheres of public life, including their criminal prosecution for their efforts to preserve their culture and to support Russia. It didn't start today, it just got stronger. Our journalists have already been arrested in the Baltic countries on manufactured non-existent criminal charges. They were detained and placed under house arrest. Their bank accounts were blocked and their professional work was rendered impossible as they were subjected to outlandish bullying.

The Latvian government's actions are particularly cynical. It is speeding up the demolition of the monument to the Liberators of Riga in violation of the Russian-Latvian agreement on the preservation, care of, and tending to memorial grounds, which bring together tens of thousands of people annually on May 9 to commemorate Victory Day. On May 9 and 10 this year, the Latvian authorities used special equipment to destroy vast numbers of flowers that the residents of Riga brought to this monument thus showing what they really think about Russian-speaking residents and their country. The people were terrified by what their own government did.

Major efforts are being made to hide the Nazi nature of the Kiev regime from the international community. They have gone as far as openly whitewashing the supporters of neo-Nazism represented by the radical nationalist battalion Azov and other similar extremist formations in Ukraine. Any mention of the numerous brutal crimes committed by them in Donbass is carefully removed from the media. They are hiding this information because it will be commented upon and they won't be able to get away with what they did. There is evidence, photographs, footage, as well as names of the people who testified and tried to make public as many things as possible. Their goal is not to let this information go to the public space.

Meanwhile, the problems that existed before the special military operation in Ukraine started still remain relevant. In 2021, politically-driven persecution and detention of Russians in foreign countries continued unabated. Our concern about our citizens' conditions of detention is related to these motives. The return home of Konstantin Yaroshenko, who was convicted on a fabricated charge and spent over 10 years in American prison for nothing – just because they wished to do so, is a landmark event for our country. They intimidated our citizens and let them know what they could do to them. They showed disregard for their own laws in order to assert themselves as some kind of a global policeman who can do as he pleases.

The obstruction of the Russian journalists or representatives of the Russian media's professional activities was put on record multiple times. In a number of countries promoting an "alternative" history, Russian compatriots, representatives of the Russian and Russian-speaking communities were persecuted and bullied because of their desire to maintain ties with their historical Motherland, to preserve the truth about important historical events of the 20th century, especially World War II and the Great Patriotic War, and to celebrate the dates and national holidays that are important and memorable for their history and families, primarily, Victory Day. Civil society activists, human rights activists and journalists who promote viewpoints that are different from official views on domestic and foreign policy, as well as the history of these countries, came under pressure.

We will continue to monitor the developments related to Russians and Russian-speaking people and record acts of discrimination in order to let the leaders of these foreign countries know about these offences and to demand that they fulfill their international legal obligations with regard to our compatriots. However, we have no illusions about the true intentions of a number of countries from the collective West with regard to individuals who have even minimal connections to Russia. Despite this, we plan to make every effort to protect their rights anywhere in the world.

We also believe that manifestations of intolerance in the Euro-Atlantic space need to be studied seriously and impartially. Countries that have declared themselves models of democracy are holding collective gatherings and drawing lines between "superdemocracies", just democracies, and "underdemocracies" while formally declaring their commitment to the rule of law. In fact, they are going downhill in this regard. However, the aggressive persecution of Russians convincingly shows that, in reality, Western societies not only failed to get rid of this discriminatory and racist sentiment, but also continue to encourage it.

Ceasefire in Yemen

We welcome the decision by the internationally-recognised Government of the Republic of Yemen and the Ansar Allah Houthi movement taken on June 2, 2022 to extend the ceasefire in the country for another two months until August 2 on the same terms. We note that both parties to the conflict managed to demonstrate the necessary political will and flexibility while considering existing disagreements.

We note with satisfaction that during the period of the ceasefire the humanitarian situation has significantly improved. Oil tankers were allowed port calls at the ports of the Al Hudaydah Province. For the first time since 2016, the airport in Sanaa has resumed its operations.

In this connection, we would like to note efforts by UN Secretary-General Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg, as well as those by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Oman, which played a decisive role in reaching these agreements.

We believe that the extended ceasefire will help the parties consolidate the positive shifts in the intra-Yemen conflict and move towards launching a UN-led full-scale and comprehensive peace settlement process in Yemen.

Opening an exhibition to mark the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Russia and El Salvador

Today, the Russian Federation and the Republic of El Salvador mark the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

Over these years, a solid foundation was laid through joint efforts for Russian-Salvadorian friendship, mutual understanding, and fruitful cooperation.

To mark the event, the Russian Foreign Ministry used its website to post an exhibition of unique documents and photographs that captured the most remarkable pages in the history of our bilateral relations. This exhibition is based on materials from the Russian Foreign Policy Archive. Materials are available in Russian and Spanish.

We invite everyone to visit the exhibition.

The 20th anniversary of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter

At their summit in St Petersburg on June 7, 2002, the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan approved the Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. This fundamental document sets forth the goals, objectives, and key areas for activities of an international organisation of a new type, which was established on the principles of mutual respect, equality, consensus-based decision-making, non-intimidation in respect of other countries and international organisations, and which seeks to promote positive development of diversified cooperation that will help maintain and strengthen peace, security and stability in the region.

The strict fulfillment of obligations under the Charter serves as a basis for effective and diversified cooperation between the member countries in political affairs, security, the economy, education, and culture. As a result, the SCO today is a dynamically developing intergovernmental association, as well as an influential and predictable participant in international relations.

All this has helped the organisation look increasingly more attractive in the eyes of the world community. India and Pakistan joined the SCO in 2017. There is good progress on the accession process for Iran as an SCO full-fledged member. As soon as Egypt, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia are granted dialogue partner status, the SCO will acquire a Middle East dimension. The SCO portfolio has a large package of applications allowing different forms of cooperation with it.

The legal basis for a relationship between the SCO and the UN and its agencies continues to expand, as well as with multilateral institutions promoting similar principles of creative development.

To be continued...



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