

**Question:** If the UN Security Council introduces a new resolution against the DPRK, will Russia block it?

**Sergey Lavrov:** As far as I understand, the United States has already prepared such a resolution. To say, without seeing the text, that we will block or support it, is not correct. We need to see it, and this work is now starting at the expert level. We will proceed based on the assessments and approaches outlined by President Putin at his news conference in Xiamen. They are rooted in the fact that the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula has been addressed using pressure for many years, while proclaiming the need for a dialogue, but doing nothing to renew and establish such a dialogue. This will be the touchstone that will determine our position.

As was already mentioned, during the most recent session of the UN Security Council following the end of nuclear tests in North Korea, together with our Chinese colleagues, we drew attention to the joint Russian-Chinese initiative to carry out the road map proposed by Beijing and Moscow in order to pull the situation out of this deep tailspin and steer it back toward negotiations.

To reiterate, let's see what's written in the draft resolution. We will by all means focus on the need to underscore the lack of alternative to talks, the lack of a military solution, and, given that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres publicly expressed grave concern with the current state of affairs, we will also ask him to join the mediation efforts. I think it will be useful.

**Question:** Do you plan any contacts on the sidelines of the EEF with DPRK representatives? According to some sources, they are present here.

**Sergey Lavrov:** As far as I understand, the DPRK delegation at this forum consists of representatives of the economic bloc of the North Korean government. We also have representatives of economic ministries and departments here. I believe contacts between the corresponding departments of the two countries will take place.

**Question:** Will Russia support Ukraine's proposals to deploy UN peacekeepers on the Russian-Ukrainian border?

**Sergey Lavrov:** This question should be framed the other way around. This proposal came from the President of Russia Vladimir Putin, and was underpinned by the fact that for many months the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine has been experiencing issues with security of its monitors. The agreement on the disengagement of forces and weapons along the line of contact is not being observed for many months now. Let me remind you that this agreement was reached by the Normandy Four leaders: the presidents of Russia, France and Ukraine, and Germany's Federal Chancellor. This provision was stipulated in the first sections of the Minsk Agreements that were signed in February 2015 and was later confirmed by all four leaders during their meetings in Paris in 2015 and in Berlin in 2016. Nothing has been done. The creation of the first three pilot zones for implementing the disengagement arrangement has yet to be completed. The last of the three pilot areas, Stanitsa Luganskaya, cannot be accounted for as an area where the disengagement took hold, since our Ukrainian colleagues, representatives of the Ukrainian Government and Armed Forces, demand that the disengagement be preceded by seven days of complete silence. I think that the OSCE monitors have already reported and confirmed eight times a week-long suspension of hostilities. They proposed proceeding immediately with the disengagement in Stanitsa Luganskaya. However, every time the Kiev authorities said that the OSCE statistics were at odds with their own data, and that according to their data someone somewhere did fire a shot. They are boycotting and seeking to undermine the implementation of the roadmap approved by the

Normandy Four. There are constant complaints that OSCE monitors face risks, and are prevented from patrolling specific regions. The statistics are there to show that incidents when OSCE monitors are prevented from accessing certain areas mostly happen on the Ukrainian side. There are in fact twice as many incidents of this kind on the side controlled by the Armed Forces of Ukraine compared to the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics. If the security of monitors is an issue, we are ready, just as the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin said in Xiamen, to support the idea that has been voiced on a number of occasions to create a UN peacekeeping mission that would be called the UN Mission to Protect OSCE SMM Monitors. The disengagement was designated as the main priority in all the agreements reached as part of the Minsk process and the subsequent Normandy Format summits in Paris and Berlin in 2015 and 2016. It was Russia's proposals to have the UN Security Council adopt a decision to send OSCE monitors to areas where the disengagement takes place and to deploy UN forces and means at the same time to these regions in order to protect the monitors.

Of course, the specific parameters of these forces and means of the UN Mission to Protect OSCE SMM Monitors, including the national contingents, and what countries the participants in the Mission will represent should be agreed upon by the parties to the conflict, which means that DPR and LPR should be directly involved. That is all that can be said about it.

When our Ukrainian colleagues say that they are ready for the deployment of a peacekeeping mission to Donbas, but the deployment should start with the border between Russia and Ukraine, not the line of separation, this is not only an outright distortion, but a direct perversion of the Minsk Agreements, which stipulate that Ukraine will be able to assume full control over its border once everything its President Petr Poroshenko subscribed to is implemented, including the resolution of all political issues related to the crisis in Ukraine. This includes permanently stating in the Ukrainian Constitution that these Donbass regions benefit from a special status, as well as an amnesty for all participants in the events that followed the government coup and the so-called counter-terrorist operation announced by Kiev against its own citizens, and holding elections in DPR and LPR territories.

Russia's proposal regarding a UN Mission deals with the key priority that was designated as such in the Minsk Agreements and confirmed on a number of occasions by the Normandy Four leaders: the disengagement of troops and weapons along the actual line of contact in order to enable OSCE monitors to enter the disengagement areas under the protection of UN peacekeepers.

**Question:** Will you please comment on the lifting of the siege of Deir ez-Zor? Many people in the Syrian Army have appealed to Russia to help the Syrians liberate the Idlib Province. Will this affect the plans to establish de-escalation zones in Deir ez-Zor?

**Sergey Lavrov:** I do not think that Russia should be urged to help the Syrians liberate their own country. The lifting of the ISIS siege of Deir ez-Zor, where Syrian Army units and civilians were trapped for several years, is a major victory in the fight against terrorism. Now that the siege has been lifted, it will be possible to achieve another crucial goal: the liberation of Deir ez-Zor from the terrorists. This mission is being fulfilled by the Syrian Army with support from the Russian Aerospace Forces.

The guarantor countries and initiators of the Astana process – Russia, Iran and Turkey – maintain discussions of the developments in Idlib. They have moved forward in coordinating the parameters and security methods for the Idlib de-escalation zone. I hope we will soon hear more detailed news regarding this.

**Question:** Do you plan to meet with Foreign Minister of Japan Taro Kono on the sidelines of the Eastern Economic Forum?

**Sergey Lavrov:** President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will meet tomorrow. Foreign Minister Taro Kono and I will also attend this meeting.

**Question:** The Russian Consulate General in San Francisco and Trade Representation in Washington were shut down on September 2. How should we respond?

**Sergey Lavrov:** The Trade Representation has not been shut down. We were told to vacate the buildings in Washington, which are our sovereign property, just as the two buildings in San Francisco. President Vladimir Putin said what response we could take at the news conference following the BRICS summit in Xiamen. Our firm decision to go to court has provoked a reaction in the United States. It is my understanding that the US Department of State has said that Russia could not take them to court because the United State was fully in its rights to shut down our Consulate General in San Francisco. Indeed, any country has the right, as President Putin said yesterday, to revoke the permission for the operation of any country's diplomatic mission. We are considering a legal procedure because they have taken, seized and expropriated our property. The fact that the Russian Federation owns the buildings that have been seized is in no way connected to the United States' right to issue or withdraw permission to open a diplomatic mission in its territory.