

The UN Must Again Become a Center for Harmonizing the Actions of Nations

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*The UN's high-level week, held as usual in the last week of September, this time within the framework of the 79th UN General Assembly, included the so-called Summit of the Future. The Russian Federation was represented by Foreign Minister **Sergei Lavrov**. The article below features his views on the Summit and its outcome, as well as the challenges the ongoing global geopolitical transformation poses to the UN's authority.*

DOES THE 'PACT FOR THE FUTURE' HAVE A FUTURE?

Russia welcomed the idea of convening a Summit of the Future, proposed by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, understanding that the UN is sinking deeper into a crisis and something has to be done about it. Russian diplomats joined the efforts to prepare this meeting and acted in a sincere and honest way, even though we did not have any illusions in this regard. In the past, quite a few major UN

events had not gone beyond bombastic declarations that were forgotten as soon as they were adopted.

Suffice to recall the Millennium Summit in 2000, which proclaimed the goal to “free the peoples from the scourge of war.” Just about two years later, the United States and a coalition of the willing, acting under a ridiculous pretext and without the mandate of the UN Security Council, invaded Iraq—a country which has yet to overcome the devastating consequences of this reckless undertaking.

The 2005 World Summit proclaimed its commitment to establish a just peace in accordance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. But it did not prevent Washington and its allies from emboldening Georgia’s then-leader Mikheil Saakashvili to launch an armed aggression against the people of South Ossetia and Russian peacekeepers in 2008. Three years later, NATO orchestrated a military intervention in Libya that destroyed its statehood and undermined the stability of neighboring countries and the Middle East in general.

In 2015, the UN Summit on Sustainable Development adopted grand plans to fight poverty and inequality. These proved to be empty promises as the Western countries are unwilling to give up their neo-colonial practices of siphoning off the riches of the world for their own benefit. One look at the statistics is enough to see how many promises to fund the Global South’s development and transfer environmentally friendly technologies have been honored.

Just like Kofi Annan and Ban Ki-moon before him, Antonio Guterres came out with his initiative under the slogan of resetting global cooperation. This is a wonderful idea. Who would disagree? But what global cooperation is there to talk about when the West has trampled all of the unshakeable values of globalization that we have been hearing about from everywhere for so many years? These perorations were designed to convince us that they would give everyone equal access to the goods of modern civilization. Where is the inviolability of property, the presumption of innocence, freedom of expression, access to information, fair market competition under fair and constant rules?

Can we discuss global cooperation when the Western countries have unleashed a real war of sanctions against more than half, if not the

majority, of the countries in the world, and the U.S. dollar, promoted as an asset and good for all humanity, has been crudely turned into a weapon?

The trade blockade of Cuba has been in place for over 60 years, even though the overwhelming majority of countries have been working to lift it. In pursuit of the ephemeral goal of preserving its domination, Washington has blocked the WTO's efforts to resolve disputes and reform the Bretton Woods institutions, although its structure no longer conforms to the real balance of power in the global economy and finance. The West's actions in this sphere show that the U.S. and its client states simply fear honest competition.

Worse yet, the West wants to turn the UN into an instrument for attaining its selfish goals. The Summit of the Future has shown that more and more attempts are being taken to erode the intergovernmental foundations of the UN. They hinder the badly needed change in the system of forming the UN Secretariat, where the key posts have been seized and are "inherited" by representatives of the Western minority. Since even the UN Secretary-General calls for resetting global cooperation, the UN Secretariat should advocate unifying ideas and compromises rather than invent justifications for inculcating pro-Western narratives in the UN's agenda.

It is not too late to give the UN a new lease on life. But this should not be done through delusional summits and declarations but through the restoration of trust based on the Charter principle of the sovereign equality of all states. Unfortunately, this is not happening. Trust is being undermined, in particular, by the West's efforts to create restricted and controllable bodies, in circumvention of the UN, for addressing serious and even fateful issues. They include internet governance and a legal framework for AI-assisted technology. These issues can have a profound impact on humankind's future and should therefore be addressed on a common basis without any discrimination or striving for unilateral advantages.

This means that matters should be dealt with fairly by all UN member states, and not the way the Pact for the Future was prepared—without a single plenary session attended by all countries and under strict control of the Western masterminds. As a result, the newly-baked pact has joined

the necropolis of beautifully worded English-language declarations. Regrettably, this is the fate of all “products” of such global summits.

PEACE AND SECURITY

The situation is no better when it comes to implementing UN Security Council resolutions, which, according to the UN Charter, is obligatory for the member states. We have all seen the Kosovo settlement decisions and the Dayton Accords on Bosnia and Herzegovina sabotaged. The most egregious example is the consensual resolutions on the establishment of an independent Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace and security, which have been brushed aside for almost 80 years.

There is no justification for the act of terrorism committed against Israel on 7 October 2023, which killed many civilians. However, everyone who still has a sense of compassion is predictably outraged that this tragedy is being exploited for mass collective punishment of the Palestinian people, which has spiraled into an unprecedented humanitarian disaster. The killing of civilians with American weapons must be stopped immediately. Humanitarian supplies must be delivered to Gaza unimpeded, and local infrastructure must be restored. Most importantly, Palestinians must be guaranteed their legitimate right to self-determination and allowed—not in words, but in deeds, on the ground—to build a territorially contiguous and viable state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Another outrageous example of terrorist methods used to achieve political goals is the inhumane attack on Lebanon, where civilian equipment was turned into a deadly weapon. This crime must be investigated immediately. But even now, we cannot overlook the numerous media stories, including in the European and U.S. media, which indicate Washington’s involvement or at least its awareness of that premeditated terrorist attack.

We know that the Americans always deny involvement and will do everything they can to hush up this evidence, too. In fact, this is what they did in response to irrefutable evidence of their complicity in the terrorist attacks on the Nord Stream gas pipelines. Incidentally, those

pipelines were a perfect symbol of the “global cooperation” that the UN Secretary-General dreams of. The loss of that infrastructure has undermined the EU’s global competitiveness for years, to the benefit of the United States. The West is also responsible for concealing the truth about the masterminds behind many other heinous crimes, including the brutal provocation in the Kiev suburb of Bucha in April 2022 and a series of poisonings of Russian citizens in Britain and Germany.

The UN Secretariat cannot remain aloof from efforts to establish the truth in situations that directly affect global security and must strictly abide by Article 100 of the UN Charter, acting impartially and avoiding the temptation to play into the hands of certain states, especially those who are not calling for international cooperation but openly dividing the world into a “garden” and a “jungle,” or comparing it to a “democratic table set for dinner” and “those on the menu.”

We must recall the “track record” of those who demand that the rest of the world play by their rules. The invasion of Afghanistan and the inglorious twenty-year presence of a well-known coalition there was accompanied by the emergence of al-Qaeda. The creation of ISIS directly resulted from the aggression against Iraq. The start of the war in Syria gave birth to Jabhat al-Nusra (now called Hayat Tahrir al-Sham). The Western coalition’s strikes against Syrian territory de facto served as a source of inspiration for the Kiev regime to carry out similar terrorist attacks against Russian regions by targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. Incidentally, the West has openly backed these efforts. Even in Syria, the Zelensky regime has been working with the United States to train Hayat Tahrir al-Sham terrorists to master the latest UAV manufacturing technology in order to fight the Russian armed forces in Syria.

The West has destroyed Libya, opening the floodgates for terrorism in the Sahara-Sahel region and sending millions of illegal immigrants to Europe. We urge all those who care about the future of their countries and people to be extremely cautious about the new reckless undertakings by the inventors of these very rules.

Political assassinations, like the ones that took place on July 31 in Tehran and on September 27 in Beirut, are a matter of grave concern for us. When Israel launched its ground invasion of Lebanon in the

early hours of October 1, the U.S. administration did not condemn in any way this act of aggression against a sovereign state. Washington de facto encouraged its Middle Eastern ally to expand the combat zone.

The tragic and unacceptable developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict, in Lebanon, in Yemen, in the waters of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, in Sudan and in other hotspots in Africa reflect an undeniable fact: security can either be equal and indivisible for all, or there will be no security for anyone.

For years, Russia has been trying to make Washington, London and Brussels, overwhelmed by their complexes of exceptionalism and impunity, understand this seemingly simple truth in the context of European security. Although the Western countries initially promised not to expand NATO, and in 1999 and 2010 they signed the official documents of OSCE summits setting forth their commitment not to ensure their own security at the expense of others, in fact NATO has been carrying out its geopolitical and military expansion in Europe for three decades, trying to establish its positions in Transcaucasia and Central Asia, creating direct threats to the security of our country. Today, the same situation is unfolding in the Asia-Pacific region, where NATO's infrastructure is creeping in and where narrow military and political blocs are being created, undermining the inclusive security architecture under the auspices of ASEAN, in order to contain the People's Republic of China and Russia.

At the same time, the West not only fails to seek global cooperation called for by the UN Secretary-General, but in its doctrinal documents openly and harshly accuses Russia, China, Belarus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Iran of creating threats to its dominance. The goal of inflicting a strategic defeat on Russia has been declared: similarly to what London and Washington planned in May 1945, when (before the end of the Second World War) they developed Operation Unthinkable to destroy the Soviet Union.

PRIMARY CAUSES OF THE UKRAINE CRISIS

In the mid-20th century, Anglo-Saxon strategists kept their aggressive plans under wraps. Today, they no longer hide their intentions. So

far, their strategy has been to defeat Russia by using the illegitimate and essentially neo-Nazi Kiev regime as a proxy. Evidence abounds. Kiev has aggressively promoted and continues to propagate the neo-Nazi ethos, rewrites the World War II history, and fosters nationalist sentiments among broad segments of Ukrainian society, as it strives to perpetuate the memory of Nazis and their minions. There are clear instances of the direct borrowing of Nazi symbols. It is also important to keep in mind the crimes committed for many years by irregular volunteer battalions formed from among the Ukrainian nationalists. Even international bodies that connive with Kiev, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, could not keep silent about their atrocities.

Ukraine has become a terrorist state, which has been terrorizing its own citizens and people beyond its borders for the past ten years. Despite this, the West lets the Kiev junta do as it pleases and pours vast resources into it. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's claims that Ukraine defends values cherished by the EU catch the eye. European Council President Charles Michel has also drawn parallels between Ukraine and European values. Confessions like that can hardly be interpreted as something other than a manifestation of the deep-seated Nazi core of Europe's political class, which is on the verge of plunging itself into a reckless and suicidal anti-Russia gambit. Is there any point in discussing the absurdity and danger of attempting to "wage a war to victory" against a nuclear power like Russia?

Equally absurd are Kiev's Western masters' mantras about there being no alternative to talks based on the infamous Zelensky formula. In support of this doomed ultimatum, the West makes appeals to the UN Charter, demanding that Ukraine's territorial integrity be ensured.

As a reminder, the very first article of the Charter proclaims an obligation to respect the principles of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples which served as the legal foundation for the decolonization process (which still needs to be completed despite resistance from the French, British, and other former colonial powers). In 1970, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Principles of International Law..., which states that territorial

integrity is respected for the states whose governments respect the right of peoples to self-determination and thus represent the entire population residing within the borders of a particular territory. This was a unanimous decision of the General Assembly after many years of difficult discussions. There is no need to prove that the Ukrainian neo-Nazis, who seized power in Kiev following the bloody coup in February 2014 backed by the U.S. and its allies, did not and do not represent the Russian population of Crimea, Donbass, and Novorossiia.

Western leaders, who obsessively use every opportunity they can get to invoke the subject of human rights, are conspicuously silent about these rights when it comes to racist moves by their Kiev clients. In light of such forgetfulness, let us recall another demand contained in that very first article of the UN Charter which is to respect the rights and fundamental freedoms of every person, regardless of race, sex, language, or religion. The rights of Russians and other ethnicities associated with Russian culture have been incrementally destroyed following the coup in Kiev. The Russian language was made illegal in all spheres of life in Ukraine, including education, the media, art, culture, and even daily life. A recently adopted law bans the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The Kiev regime is waging war on everything connected with the Russian World. Russian-speaking citizens have been the most discriminated group in Ukraine for many years now. Considering this, Zelensky's calls to abide by the UN Charter are a farce.

The above egregious violations of the rights of Russians enshrined in the UN Charter, along with threats to Russia's security—and to all of Europe for that matter—that come from the Kiev regime and those who are trying to pull it into NATO, are the primary causes of the ongoing Ukraine crisis. Russia's Special Military Operation is aimed at eliminating these threats in order to protect its security and the present and future of the people on their ancestral land.

We appreciate our partners' sincere mediation initiatives, made with the best of intentions. We respect their constructive focus on achieving a result as opposed to Zelensky's dead-end formula. However, we urge our friends to fully consider the above facts revealing the real causes

of the current crisis. A just peace relying on the UN Charter cannot be achieved without first moving these causes out of the way. A realistic settlement plan was laid out by President Putin on 14 June 2024. He made a compelling case for Russia's goodwill to achieve negotiated solutions, the prospects for which were ruined by Kiev and its patrons as a result of the 2014 coup followed by the ditching of the 2015 Minsk Agreements and the 2022 Istanbul Agreements.

TOWARDS A MORE JUST INTERNATIONAL ORDER

The unprecedentedly arrogant and aggressive Western policy towards Russia has not only stymied the idea of global cooperation advocated by the UN Secretary-General but is also blocking the operation of the system of global governance, including the UN Security Council. That was not our choice, and we cannot be called to account for the consequences of that dangerous course. However, all countries will be affected by these severe consequences, unless the West stops now.

It is clear to the World Majority that confrontation and hegemonism cannot resolve a single global problem. They are only holding back the inevitable emergence of a multipolar world based on equal rights of all nations, big and small, respect for the value of a human being, the equality of men and women, and the right of nations to choose their future themselves. These principles are set out in the UN Charter, just like the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states, which the United States and its allies refused to reaffirm when voting for the pact at the Summit for the Future, much to the shame of the UN member states.

In his address at the Fourth Eurasian Women's Forum on 18 September 2024, in St. Petersburg, President Putin emphasized the importance of unity for attaining sustainable development and universal and indivisible security. The extremely complicated issues that humanity is facing can only be resolved together and based on respect for each other's interests. The West must accept this truth and abandon its neo-colonial practices.

The Global South and East are raising their voice to declare their right for a comprehensive engagement in decision-making on the

entire range of items on the international agenda. This is becoming more and more important today amid the West's persistent efforts to destroy the globalization model it itself has created.

The role of interstate associations is growing stronger in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. They include the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, the African Union, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Arab League, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and other organizations.

Regional integration structures are developing ties between themselves and with the global BRICS group, which offers opportunities for harmonizing the mechanisms of mutually beneficial cooperation and development that are not subject to any negative external influence or dictate. All these objective processes should be taken into account in the G20 activities, where the G7 can no longer call the tune.

THE EURASIAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Today's world needs better ways of ensuring security in various regions, it should learn a lesson from the unfortunate attempts to adopt a Euro-Atlantic security model that the West has put at the service of its expansionist designs.

Russia has initiated the idea of building an inclusive architecture of equal and indivisible security in Eurasia. It is open to all states and organizations on our continent that are willing to work out mutually acceptable solutions together, taking advantage of the interconnectedness and natural competitive advantages of our common Eurasian space.

Establishing a space of equal and indivisible security in Eurasia is crucial amid the all-encompassing processes unfolding in the macro-region. It is not only that the deterioration of the military-political situation caused by the collective West's policy to undermine the sovereign development of the continent's leading powers is unacceptable to responsible Eurasian states. The growing risk of local tensions evolving into a bigger regional conflict jeopardizes the further progressive development of the entire Eurasia, which is a major driver of global economic growth. Resolving security issues is

an indispensable condition for the further dynamic development of the continent's countries and unlocking the potential of multilateral projects they are part of.

Our initiative is based on the understanding of the need for states and multilateral organizations in Eurasia to assume responsibility for ensuring their own security under the formula "Eurasian solutions to Eurasian problems." Therefore, the strategic goals of the architecture that we propose are: settling the existing disagreements jointly by the Eurasian countries themselves; preventing conflicts in the future; and terminating the destabilizing military presence of extra-regional players in Eurasia. We are confident that all states interested in achieving long-term military and political stability will eagerly join the effort to address security issues on the basis of coordinated approaches. In our view, achieving economic growth, social progress, integration and mutually beneficial cooperation, and addressing common problems are crucial for ensuring Eurasian security.

At the same time, we are not fencing off or excluding European states from this dialogue provided that they are genuinely interested and are not involved in any destructive actions against other countries of Eurasia—a continent that stretches from Lisbon to Vladivostok and from Moscow to Riyadh, New Delhi, Beijing, and Jakarta.

REFORMING THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Last July, at Russia's suggestion, the Security Council held open debates on building a fairer and more stable world order. This discussion must continue, both at the UN and at other forums. Meanwhile, it is obvious to us that a more equitable world order unconditionally presupposes increased representation of the Global South and East in the UN Security Council, i.e., African, Asian, and Latin American countries. We reaffirmed our position in support of Brazil and India, provided a positive decision is reached in the framework of the well-known initiatives put forth by the African Union. At the same time, of course, there can be no talk of additional seats for Western countries and their allies, which are already over-represented in the Security Council. This would not make any sense and be even absurd.

However, there are those whose vision of fairness diverges from what we believe in. Many have weighed in with their suggestions on reforming the UN Security Council. But Antonio Guterres surprised us the most by saying that Europe has an excessive presence in this body, since France, the UK, and Russia are among its permanent members. This vision not only fails to reflect the present-day geopolitical reality but actually distorts it, especially after the UK withdrew from the EU, while Russia refused to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic and pan-European projects.

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May 2025 will mark the 80th anniversary of the Victory in World War II, during which tens of millions of people, including 27 million people of various ethnic backgrounds from across the Soviet Union, fell victim to the genocidal policy of the Third Reich. Such crimes have no statute of limitations, as there is no moral justification for those who try to whitewash Nazi torturers, collaborators and their current successors in Ukraine, the Baltic States, Canada, and other countries.

Today, the international community once again is facing massive challenges, just like during World War II, which require united efforts rather than confrontation and desire for global dominance. Russia will always advocate collective efforts, truth and the rule of law, peace and cooperation in the interests of reviving the ideals set forth by the UN's founding fathers. This is the aim of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, established on the initiative of Venezuela. Its objectives and principles remain fully relevant. It is important that everyone, without exception, respect these principles, not selectively (choosing from the "menu"), but considering their holistic and interconnected nature, including the principle of the sovereign equality of states. Then, while working for the fair balance of the legitimate national interests of all countries, we can bring to life the purpose of the United Nations as stated in its Charter: "To be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends."