**In search of the truth**

[Jean-Marie Choffray](https://www.amazon.com/kindle-dbs/entity/author/B00DNUGN64?_encoding=UTF8&node=283155&offset=0&pageSize=12&searchAlias=stripbooks&sort=author-sidecar-rank&page=1&langFilter=default#formatSelectorHeader)\*

Liège, September 28, 2022.

**Abstract**

We are living in exceptional times. Our world seems to be approaching a point of discontinuity. The evolution of its history shows signs of inflection. There is a risk that it becomes non-parametric. Passions igniting, *irrationality* seeks to take over. It is then that one must have the *courage* and the *intelligence* to analyze reality in its radicality and to seek to reduce the differences in perception. In the world of international relations, the role of *The United Nations* is becoming crucial. This is why I have reproduced in the following pages the recent intervention of President Joe Biden before the 77th session of its *General Assembly*, and that which followed by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. In the fog of war, when propaganda seeks to prevail, there is no choice but to return to the sources.

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*It has been said that the United Nations was not created*

*in order to bring us to heaven, but*

*in order to save us from hell*

[The UN Library](https://ask.un.org/faq/14623)

This statement is found at the end of press release SG/382, "Address by Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld at University of California Convocation, Berkeley, California, Thursday, May 13, 1954, at 10:00 a.m. (Pacific Coast Time)".

The original quote is sometimes attributed to Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. In his memoir, *The Storm Has Many Eyes*, Lodge says, "Churchill... said that the UN was not designed to take us to heaven, but to prevent us from going to hell" (p. 185). [The UN Library](https://ask.un.org/faq/14623) has not found a source for the Churchill quote.

[**Remarks by President Biden Before the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/09/21/remarks-by-president-biden-before-the-77th-session-of-the-united-nations-general-assembly/)

September 21, 2022. United Nations Headquarters.New York

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, my fellow leaders, in the last year, our world has experienced great upheaval: a growing crisis in food insecurity; record heat, floods, and droughts; COVID-19; inflation; and a brutal, needless war – a war chosen by one man, to be very blunt.

Let us speak plainly. A permanent member of the United Nations Security Council invaded its neighbor, attempted to erase a sovereign state from the map.

Russia has shamelessly violated the core tenets of the United Nations Charter – no more important than the clear prohibition against countries taking the territory of their neighbor by force.

Again, just today, President Putin has made overt nuclear threats against Europe and a reckless disregard for the responsibilities of the non-proliferation regime.

Now Russia is calling – calling up more soldiers to join the fight. And the Kremlin is organizing a sham referenda to try to annex parts of Ukraine, an extremely significant violation of the U.N. Charter.

This world should see these outrageous acts for what they are. Putin claims he had to act because Russia was threatened. But no one threatened Russia, and no one other than Russia sought conflict.

In fact, we warned it was coming. And with many of you, we worked to try to avert it.

Putin’s own words make his true purpose unmistakable. Just before he invaded, Putin asserted – and I quote – Ukraine was “created by Russia” and never had, quote, “real statehood.”

And now we see attacks on schools, railway stations, hospitals, wa- – on centers of Ukrainian history and culture.

In the past, even more horrifying evidence of Russia’s atrocity and war crimes: mass graves uncovered in Izyum; bodies, according to those that excavated those bodies, showing signs of torture.

This war is about extinguishing Ukraine’s right to exist as a state, plain and simple, and Ukraine’s right to exist as a people. Whoever you are, wherever you live, whatever you believe, that should not – that should make your blood run cold.

That’s why 141 nations in the General Assembly came together to unequivocally condemn Russia’s war against Ukraine. The United States has marshaled massive levels of security assistance and humanitarian aid and direct economic support for Ukraine – more than $25 billion to date.

Our allies and partners around the world have stepped up as well. And today, more than 40 countries represented in here have contributed billions of their own money and equipment to help Ukraine defend itself.

The United States is also working closely with our allies and partners to impose costs on Russia, to deter attacks against NATO territory, to hold Russia accountable for the atrocities and war crimes.

Because if nations can pursue their imperial ambitions without consequences, then we put at risk everything this very institution stands for. Everything.

Every victory won on the battlefield belongs to the courageous Ukrainian soldiers. But this past year, the world was tested as well, and we did not hesitate.

We chose liberty. We chose sovereignty. We chose principles to which every party to the United Nations Charter is beholding. We stood with Ukraine.

Like you, the United States wants this war to end on just terms, on terms we all signed up for: that you cannot seize a nation’s territory by force. The only country standing in the way of that is Russia.

So, we – each of us in this body who is determined to uphold the principles and beliefs we pledge to defend as members of the United Nations – must be clear, firm, and unwavering in our resolve.

Ukraine has the same rights that belong to every sovereign nation. We will stand in solidarity with Ukraine. We will stand in solidarity against Russia’s aggression. Period.

Now, it’s no secret that in the contest between democracy and autocracy, the United States – and I, as President – champion a vision for our world that is grounded in the values of democracy.

The United States is determined to defend and strengthen democracy at home and around the world. Because I believe democracy remains humanity’s greatest instrument to address the challenges of our time.

We’re working with the G7 and likeminded countries to prove democracies can deliver for their citizens but also deliver for the rest of the world as well.

But as we meet today, the U.N. Charter – the U.N. Charter’s very basis of a stable and just rule-based order is under attack by those who wish to tear it down or distort it for their own political advantage.

And the United Nations Charter was not only signed by democracies of the world, it was negotiated among citizens of dozens of nations with vastly different histories and ideologies, united in their commitment to work for peace.

As President Truman said in 1945, the U.N. Charter – and I quote – is “proof that nations, like men, can state their differences, can face them, and then can find common ground on which to stand.” End of quote.

That common ground was so straightforward, so basic that, today, 193 of you – 193 member states – have willingly embraced its principles. And standing up for those principles for the U.N. Charter is the job of every responsible member state.

I reject the use of violence and war to conquer nations or expand borders through bloodshed.

To stand against global politics of fear and coercion; to defend the sovereign rights of smaller nations as equal to those of larger ones; to embrace basic principles like freedom of navigation, respect for international law, and arms control – no matter what else we may disagree on, that is the common ground upon which we must stand.

If you’re still committed to a strong foundation for the good of every nation around the world, then the United States wants to work with you.

I also believe the time has come for this institution to become more inclusive so that it can better respond to the needs of today’s world.

Members of the U.N. Security Council, including the United States, should consistently uphold and defend the U.N. Charter and refrain – refrain from the use of the veto, except in rare, extraordinary situations, to ensure that the Council remains credible and effective.

That is also why the United States supports increasing the number of both permanent and non-permanent representatives of the Council. This includes permanent seats for those nations we’ve long supported and permanent seats for countries in Africa [and] Latin America and the Caribbean.

The United States is committed to this vital work. In every region, we pursued new, constructive ways to work with partners to advance shared interests, from elevating the Quad in the Indo-Pacific; to signing the Los Angeles Declaration of Migration and Protection at the Summit of the Americas; to joining a historic meeting of nine Arab leaders to work toward a more peaceful, integrated Middle East; to hosting the U.S.-Africa Leaders’ Summit in – this December.

As I said last year, the United States is opening an era of relentless diplomacy to address the challenges that matter most to people’s lives – all people’s lives: tackling the climate crisis, as the previous spoker [sic] – speaker spoke to; strengthening global health security; feeding the world – feeding the world.

We made that priority. And one year later, we’re keeping that promise.

From the day I came to office, we’ve led with a bold climate agenda. We rejoined the Paris Agreement, convened major climate summits, helped deliver critical agreements on COP26. And we helped get two thirds of the world GDP on track to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

And now I’ve signed a historic piece of legislation here in the United States that includes the biggest, most important climate commitment we have ever made in the history of our country: $369 billion toward climate change. That includes tens of billions in new investments in offshore wind and solar, doubling down on zero emission vehicles, increasing energy efficiency, supporting clean manufacturing.

Our Department of Energy estimates that this new law will reduce U.S. emissions by one gigaton a year by 2030 while unleashing a new era of clean-energy-powered economic growth.

Our investments will also help reduce the cost of developing clean energy technologies worldwide, not just the United States. This is a global gamechanger – and none too soon. We don’t have much time.

We all know we’re already living in a climate crisis. No one seems to doubt it after this past year. We meet – we meet – much of Pas- – as we meet, much of Pakistan is still underwater; it needs help. Meanwhile, the Horn of Africa faces unprecedented drought.

Families are facing impossible choices, choosing which child to feed and wondering whether they’ll survive.

This is the human cost of climate change. And it’s growing, not lessening.

So, as I announced last year, to meet our global responsibility, my administration is working with our Congress to deliver more than $11 billion a year to international climate finance to help lower-income countries implement their climate goals and ensure a just energy transition.

The key part of that will be our PEPFAR [PREPARE] plan, which will help half a billion people, and especially vulnerable countries, adapt to the impacts of climate change and build resilience.

This need is enormous. So let this be the moment we find within ourselves the will to turn back the tide of climate demastation [sic] – devastation and unlock a resilient, sustainable, clean energy economy to preserve our planet.

On global health, we’ve delivered more than 620 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine to 116 countries around the world, with more available to help meet countries’ needs – all free of charge, no strings attached.

And we’re working closely with the G20 and other countries. And the United States helped lead the change to establish a groundbreaking new Fund for Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response at the World Bank.

At the same time, we’ve continued to advance the ball on enduring global health challenges.

Later today, I’ll host the Seventh Replenishment Conference for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. With bipartisan support in our Congress, I have pledged to contribute up to $6 billion to that effort.

So I look forward to welcoming a historic round of pledges at the conference resulting in one of the largest global health fundraisers ever held in all of history.

We’re also taking on the food crisis head on. With as many as 193 million people around the world experiencing acute – acute food insecurity – a jump of 40 million in a year – today I’m announcing another $2.9 billion in U.S. support for lifesaving humanitarian and food security assistance for this year alone.

Russia, in the meantime, is pumping out lies, trying to pin the blame for the crisis – the food crisis – onto sanctions imposed by many in the world for the aggression against Ukraine.

So let me be perfectly clear about something: Our sanctions explicitly allow – explicitly allow Russia the ability to export food and fertilizer. No limitation. It’s Russia’s war that is worsening food insecurity, and only Russia can end it.

I’m grateful for the work here at the U.N. – including your leadership, Mr. Secretary-General – establishing a mechanism to export grain from Black Sea ports in Ukraine that Russia had blocked for months, and we need to make sure it’s extended.

We believe strongly in the need to feed the world. That’s why the United States is the world’s largest supporter of the World Food Programme, with more than 40 percent of its budget.

We’re leading support – we’re leading support of the UNICEF efforts to feed children around the world.

And to take on the larger challenge of food insecurity, the United States introduced a Call to Action: a roadmap eliminating global food insecurity – to eliminating global food insecurity that more than 100 nation member states have already supported.

In June, the G7 announced more than $4.5 billion to strengthen food security around the world.

Through USAID’s Feed the Future initiative, the United States is scaling up innovative ways to get drought- and heat-resistant seeds into the hands of farmers who need them, while distributing fertilizer and improving fertilizer efficiency so that farmers can grow more while using less.

And we’re calling on all countries to refrain from banning food exports or hoarding grain while so many people are suffering. Because in every country in the world, no matter what else divides us, if parents cannot feed their children, nothing – nothing else matters if parents cannot feed their children.

As we look to the future, we’re working with our partners to update and create rules of the road for new challenges we face in the 21st century.

We launched the Trade and Technology Council with the European Union to ensure that key technologies – key technologies are developed and governed in the way that benefits everyone.

With our partner countries and through the U.N., we’re supporting and strengthening the norms of responsibility – responsible state behavior in cyberspace and working to hold accountable those who use cyberattacks to threaten international peace and security.

With partners in the Americas, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific, we’re working to build a new economic ecosystem while – where every nation – every nation gets a fair shot and economic growth is resilient, sustainable, and shared.

That’s why the United States has championed a global minimum tax. And we will work to see it implemented so major corporations pay their fair share everywhere – everywhere.

It’s also been the idea behind the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, which the United States launched this year with 13 other Indo-Pacific economies. We’re working with our partners in ASEAN and the Pacific Islands to support a vision for a critical Indo-Pacific region that is free and open, connected and prosperous, secure and resilient.

Together with partners around the world, we’re working to ser- – secure resilient supply chains that protect everyone from coercion or domination and ensure that no country can use energy as a weapon.

And as Russia’s war rolls [sic] – riles the global economy, we’re also calling on major global creditors, including the non-Paris Club countries, to transparently negotiate debt forgiveness for lower-income countries to forestall broader economic and political crises around the world.

Instead of infrastructure projects that generate huge and large debt without delivering on the promised advantages, let’s meet the enormous infrastructure needs around the world with transparent investments – high-standard projects that protect the rights of workers and the environment – keyed to the needs of the communities they serve, not to the contributor.

That’s why the United States, together with fellow G7 partners, launched a Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. We intend to collectively mobilize $600 billion

in investment through this partnership by 2027.

Dozens of projects are already underway: industrial-scale vaccine manufacturing in Senegal, transformative solar projects in Angola, first-of-its-kind small modular nuclear power plant in Romania.

These are investments that are going to deliver returns not just for those countries, but for everyone. The United States will work with every nation, including our competitors, to solve global problems like climate change. Climate diplomacy is not a favor to the United States or any other nation, and walking away hurts the entire world.

Let me be direct about the competition between the United States and China. As we manage shifting geopolitical trends, the United States will conduct itself as a reasonable leader. We do not seek conflict. We do not seek a Cold War. We do not ask any nation to choose between the United States or any other partner.

But the United States will be unabashed in promoting our vision of a free, open, secure, and prosperous world and what we have to offer communities of nations: investments that are designed not to foster dependency, but to alleviate burdens and help nations become self-sufficient; partnerships not to create political obligation, but because we know our own success – each of our success is increased when other nations succeed as well.

When individuals have the chance to live in dignity and develop their talents, everyone benefits. Critical to that is living up to the highest goals of this institution: increasing peace and security for everyone, everywhere.

The United States will not waver in our unrelenting determination to counter and thwart the continuing terrorist threats to our world. And we will lead with our diplomacy to strive for peaceful resolution of conflicts.

We seek to uphold peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits.

We remain committed to our One China policy, which has helped prevent conflict for four decades. And we continue to oppose unilateral changes in the status quo by either side.

We support an African Union-led peace process to end the fight in Ethiopia and restore security for all its people.

In Venezuela, where years of the political oppression have driven more than 6 million people from that country, we urge a Venezuelan-led dialogue and a return to free and fair elections.

We continue to stand with our neighbor in Haiti as it faces political-fueled gang violence and an enormous human crisis.

And we call on the world to do the same. We have more to do.

We’ll continue to back the U.N.-mediated truce in Yemen, which has delivered precious months of peace to people that have suffered years of war.

And we will continue to advocate for lasting negotiating peace between the Jewish and democratic state of Israel and the Palestinian people. The United States is committed to Israel’s security, full stop. And a negotiated two-state solution remains, in our view, the best way to ensure Israel’s security and prosperity for the future and give the Palestinians the state which – to which they are entitled – both sides to fully respect the equal rights of their citizens; both people enjoying equal measure of freedom and dignity.

Let me also urge every nation to recommit to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime through diplomacy. No matter what else is happening in the world, the United States is ready to pursue critical arms control measures. A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

The five permanent members of the Security Council just reaffirmed that commitment in January. But today, we’re seeing disturbing trends. Russia shunned the Non-Proliferati- – -Proliferation ideals embraced by every other nation at the 10th NPT Review Conference.

And again, today, as I said, they’re making irresponsible nuclear threats to use nuclear weapons. China is conducting an unprecedented, concerning nuclear buildup without any transparency.

Despite our efforts to begin serious and sustained diplomacy, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea continues to blatantly violate U.N. sanctions.

And while the United States is prepared for a mutual return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action if Iran steps up to its obligations, the United States is clear: We will not allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon.

I continue to believe that diplomacy is the best way to achieve this outcome. The nonproliferation regime is one of the greatest successes of this institution. We cannot let the world now slide backwards, nor can we turn a blind eye to the erosion of human rights.

Perhaps singular among this body’s achievements stands the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is the standard by which our forebears challenged us to measure ourselves.

They made clear in 1948: Human rights are the basis for all that we seek to achieve. And yet today, in 2022, fundamental freedoms are at risk in every part of our world, from the violations of – in Xinjiang detailed in recent reports by the Office of U.N. – U.S. – reports detailing by the U.S. [U.N.] High Commissioner, to the horrible abuses against pro-democracy activists and ethnic minorities by the military regime in Burma, to the increased repression of women and girls by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

And today, we stand with the brave citizens and the brave women of Iran who right now are demonstrating to secure their basic rights.

But here’s what I know: The future will be won by those countries that unleash the full potential of their populations, where women and girls can exercise equal rights, including basic reproductive rights, and contribute fully to building a stronger economies and more resilient societies; where religious and ethnic minorities can live their lives without harassment and contribute to the fabric of their communities; where the LGBTQ+ community individuals live and love freely without being targeted with violence; where citizens can question and criticize their leaders without fear of reprisal.

The United States will always promote human rights and the values enshrined in the U.N. Charter in our own country and around the world.

Let me end with this: This institution, guided by the U.N. Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is at its core an act of dauntless hope.

Let me say that again: It’s an act of dauntless hope.

Think about the vision of those first delegates who undertook a seemingly impossible task while the world was still smoldering.

Think about how divided the people of the world must have felt with the fresh grief of millions dead, the genocidal horrors of the Holocaust exposed.

They had every right to believe only the worst of humanity. Instead, they reached for what was best in all of us, and they strove to build something better: enduring peace; comity among nations; equal rights for every member of the human family; cooperation for the advancement of all humankind.

My fellow leaders, the challenges we face today are great indeed, but our capacity is greater. Our commitment must be greater still.

So let’s stand together to again declare the unmistakable resolve that nations of the world are united still, that we stand for the values of the U.N. Charter, that we still believe by working together we can bend the arc of history toward a freer and more just world for all our children, although none of us have fully achieved it.

We’re not passive witnesses to history; we are the authors of history.

We can do this – we have to do it – for ourselves and for our future, for humankind.

Thank you for your tolerance, for listening to me. I appreciate it very much. God bless you all. (Applause.)

[Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s remarks at the General Debate of the 77th Session of the United Nations](https://mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/1831211/)

[General Assembly](https://mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/1831211/)

September 24, 2022. United Nations Headquarters. New York

Madame President,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are meeting at a both challenging and dramatic moment. Crisis situations are growing, and the international security situation is deteriorating rapidly.

Instead of engaging in honest dialogue and searching for compromises, we must deal with misinformation, as well as coarsely staged incidents and provocations. The policy line adopted by the West undermines trust in international institutions, which are tasked with coordinating various interests and international law as a guarantee of fairness to protect the weak from arbitrary rule. We are witnessing these negative trends in their quintessential form here in the United Nations, which rose from the rubble of German fascism and Japanese militarism and was established to promote friendly relations among its members and to prevent conflict among them.

The future world order is being decided today, as any unbiased observer can clearly see. The question is whether this world order will have a single hegemon that forces everyone else to live by its infamous rules, which only benefit this hegemon and no one else. Or whether this will be a democratic and just world free from blackmail and intimidation against the unwanted, as well as free from neo-Nazism and neo-colonialism. Russia firmly opts for the second option. Together with our allies, partners, and like-minded countries, we call for efforts to make this a reality.

The unipolar global development model, which served the golden billion who for centuries had been fuelling its excessive consumption by relying on Asian, African, and Latin American resources, is receding into the past. Today, with the emergence of sovereign states that are ready to stand up for their national interests, an equal, socially-minded and sustainable multipolar architecture is taking shape. However, Washington and the ruling elites in Western countries that have fully submitted themselves to this rule have been viewing these objective geopolitical processes as a threat to their dominance.

The United States and its allies want to stop the flywheel of history. Having declared itself victorious in the Cold War at some point in the past, Washington elevated itself almost to the rank of the messenger of the Lord God on Earth, endowed with no obligations, but only sacred rights to act with impunity wherever it wants. Any state can become the next target for such actions, especially if this state displeases the self-proclaimed masters of the world in some manner. Everyone remembers how wars of aggression were unleashed under far-fetched pretexts against Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, in which hundreds of thousands of deaths were claimed among civilians. Were the West’s legitimate interests at stake in any one of these countries? Have they banned English or languages of other NATO member states, or Western media, or culture? Have they labelled Anglo-Saxons as subhuman or used heavy weapons against them? What were the outcomes of the reckless undertaking by the United States in the Middle East? Have they helped improve the human rights situation or promote the rule of law? Have they helped stabilise the socioeconomic situation or improve the people’s livelihoods? Name a country where life has changed for the better following Washington’s forceful intervention.

In its attempts to revive the unipolar model under the label of a rules-based order, the West has been imposing dividing lines everywhere, following the logic a of bloc-based confrontation where you either with us or against us. There is no third option available or compromises. The United States persisted with its irrational policy to expand NATO to the east and bring its military infrastructure closer to Russia’s borders. Now the US wants to subjugate Asia. At the June NATO Summit in Madrid this self-proclaimed defensive alliance, announced the indivisibility of security for the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific region. Closed frameworks are being created as part of the Indo-Pacific strategies, which undermine ASEAN’s open and inclusive regional architecture that has taken shape over decades. Building on all these developments, they decided to play with fire regarding Taiwan, even promising it military support.

Clearly, the notorious Monroe Doctrine is becoming global in scope. Washington is trying to turn the entire globe into its own backyard while it uses illegal unilateral sanctions as a tool for coercing those who disagree. For many years now, these unilateral sanctions have been imposed in violation of the UN Charter and used as a tool for political blackmail. The cynicism of this practice is obvious. The restrictions take a toll on ordinary people, preventing them from accessing basic goods, including medicines, vaccines, and food. The blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba for more than 60 years now is one such egregious example. For quite some time now, the UN General Assembly by an overwhelming majority has been demanding with great resolve that this blockade be immediately lifted. The Secretary-General, whose duties include facilitating the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions, must pay special attention to this problem. He also has a special role to play when it comes to mobilising efforts to overcome the food and energy crises that have resulted from uncontrolled money printing in the United States and the EU during the pandemic, as well as the European Union’s irresponsible and unprofessional actions on hydrocarbon markets. Defying the most basic common sense, Washington and Brussels compounded the situation by declaring an economic war against Russia. This resulted in higher global prices of food, fertiliser, oil, and gas. We welcome efforts by the Secretary-General, who helped broker the July 22, 2022, Istanbul Agreements. However, these agreements must be carried out. So far, most of the ships carrying Ukrainian grain have not been directed to the poorest countries, while the United States and the EU have yet to fully remove the financial and logistical obstacles that prevent Russia from exporting its grain and fertiliser. We have been saying for several weeks that 300,000 tonnes of fertiliser have been held up at European ports and have been proposing to ship them free of charge to the African countries that need them, but the European Union has not responded.

Official Russophobia has taken on unprecedented and grotesque dimensions in the West. They do not have the scruples anymore to declare their intention to not only defeat our country militarily, but also to destroy and fracture Russia. In other words, they want a geopolitical entity that is too independent to disappear from the world’s political map.

How have Russia’s actions over the past decades actually infringed upon the interests of its opponents? Could it be that they cannot forgive us because it is the position of our country that made the military and strategic detente possible in the 1980s and 1990s? Or that we voluntarily dissolved the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, depriving NATO of its raison d’etre? Or that we supported Germany’s reunification without any conditions and contrary to the positions of London and Paris? That we withdrew our armed forces from Europe, Asia, and Latin America, and recognised the independence of the former Soviet republics? That we believed the promises by the Western leaders that they would not expand NATO to the east by a single inch, and when this process started, we agreed to basically legitimise it by signing the Russia-NATO Founding Act? Could it be that we infringed on the West’s interests when we warned it that bringing its military infrastructure closer to our border would be unacceptable to us?

With the end of the Cold War, Western arrogance and American exceptionalism have taken on an especially destructive nature. Back in 1991, US Under Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz frankly acknowledged during a conversation with NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe Wesley Clark that after the end of the Cold War they could use their military as they pleased… and that they have five or maybe ten years to clear out surrogate Soviet regimes like Iraq and Syria before a new superpower emerges to challenge them. I am certain that one day we will learn from someone’s memoires how the United States built its Ukraine policy. However, Washington’s plans are already obvious.

Could it be that they cannot forgive us for supporting, at the request of the United States and the European Union, the agreement reached between then President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich and the opposition to resolve the February 2014 crisis? Germany, France, and Poland guaranteed these agreements, but the next morning the leaders of the government coup trampled upon them, humiliating the European mediators. The West simply shrugged and looked on in silence as the putschists started bombing eastern Ukraine where people refused to accept the government coup. They looked on when those behind the coup elevated Nazi accomplices involved in atrocious ethnic cleansings against Russians, Poles, and Jews during World War II to the rank of national heroes. Did we have to sit idly in the face of Kiev’s policy to impose a total ban on the Russian language, education, the Russian media and culture, its insistence that Russians be expelled from Crimea, and when it declared war against Donbass? The authorities in Kiev back then, as well as the current leadership, have designated these people as creatures, not people – this is what we hear from the country’s most senior official. How could we tolerate this?

Or maybe Russia interfered with Western interests when it played a key role in stopping the hostilities unleashed by Kiev neo-Nazis in eastern Ukraine, and then insisted that the Minsk Package of Measures be implemented, as approved unanimously by the UN Security Council in February 2015, but then buried by Kiev with the direct involvement of the United States and the European Union?

For many years, we have been repeatedly offering to agree on the rules for co-existence in Europe based on the principles of equal and indivisible security as set forth at the highest level in the OSCE documents. Under this principle, no one can seek to reinforce one’s security at the expense of the security of others. The last time we came forward with a proposal to work out legally binding agreements to this effect was in December 2021, but all we got in response was an arrogant refusal.

Considering the inability of the Western countries to engage in talks, and the fact that the Kiev regime was continuing the war against its own people, we were left with no choice but to recognise the independence of the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics and launch a special military operation to protect Russians and other people in Donbass, while also removing threats to our own security, which NATO has been consistently creating on Ukrainian territory, and which is de facto right on our border. This operation is being carried out in execution of the treaties of friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance reached between Russia and these republics under Article 51 of the UN Charter. I am certain that in this situation any sovereign, self-respecting state that realises the responsibility it has to its own people would do the same.

The West is now in a temper tantrum over the referendums in Ukraine’s Lugansk, Donetsk, Kherson, and Zaporozhye regions. However, people there are simply reacting to the advice from the head of the Kiev regime, Vladimir Zelensky. In one of his interviews in August 2021, he advised all those who consider themselves Russians to leave for Russia for the benefit of their children and grandchildren. This is what people living in the regions I have mentioned are doing, taking the land where their ancestors had lived for centuries with them.

It is obvious to any unbiased observer that for the Anglo-Saxons who have completely subjugated Europe, Ukraine is merely an expendable material in their fight against Russia. NATO declared that our country poses an immediate threat to the United States in its quest for total dominance, while designating the People’s Republic of China as a long-term strategic challenge. At the same time, the collective West, led by Washington, is sending intimidating signals to all other countries without exception: anyone who disobeys can be the next in line.

One of the consequences of the crusade declared by the West against unwanted regimes is that multilateral institutions are declining at an ever-increasing pace. The United States and its allies use these institutions as tools for achieving their selfish interests. This is the approach they have been sticking to in the United Nations, its Human Rights Council, UNESCO, and other multilateral associations. The OPCW has been de facto privatised. There are fierce attempts to undermine efforts to set up a mechanism as part of the Biological Weapons Convention to ensure the transparency of hundreds of military biological programmes the Pentagon has around the world, including along Russian borders and across Eurasia. Irrefutable evidence discovered on Ukrainian territory demonstrates that these programmes are far from innocuous.

We are witnessing an assertive push to privatise the UN Secretariat and imbue its work with a neo-liberal discourse, which ignores the cultural and civilisational diversity in today’s world. In this connection, we call for paying attention to ensure equitable geographical representation, as required by the UN Charter, of member states within the Secretariat so that no one single group of countries dominates it.

There is an intolerable situation with the failure by Washington to perform its obligations under the agreement between the UN Secretariat and the US Government regarding the headquarters of the United Nations in terms of ensuring normal conditions that enable all member states to take part in UN’s work. The Secretary-General has his own obligations under this agreement. Inactivity is unacceptable here.

Efforts by certain countries to undermine the Security Council prerogatives are of course a matter of concern. Clearly, the Council, and the UN in general, must adapt to today’s reality. We see opportunities for injecting more democracy into the work of the Security Council but only – I would like to make special emphasis on this – through broader representation of African, Asian, and Latin American countries. This applies in particular to India and Brazil as key international actors and worthy candidates for becoming permanent Council members, subject to enhancing Africa’s standing at the same time.

Today, it is essential like never before that all member states reaffirm their clearly stated commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter without any reservations. This would be the first and necessary step to restoring their collective responsibility for the human destinies.

This was precisely the purpose of establishing the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations. Co-founded by Russia, it already includes about two dozen countries. The group strives to ensure strict compliance with the universal norms of international law as a counterweight to pernicious unilateral approaches. We call on everyone who shares this position to join in. In this context, we believe that the Non-Aligned Movement, BRICS, the SCO, and ASEAN have considerable positive potential.

By aggressively imposing their vision of democracy on all countries as a social model, our Western colleagues categorically refuse to follow the norms of democracy in international affairs. The situation with Ukraine is the most recent example. Russia has gone to great lengths to justify its position and has been doing this for several years now. But the West announced that it disagreed. One would think that it would be up to the other members of the international community to decide on their position: to support one side, or the other, or remain neutral. Is this not the way this is done in democracies when politicians competing against one another make their case and try to win popular support? However, the United States and its allies are denying others the freedom of choice. They are threatening and twisting the arms of anyone who dares to think independently. They use threats to force others to join in sanctioning Russia. They have not been very good at it, but it is obvious that actions of this kind by the United States and its satellites are a far cry from democracy. In fact, it amounts to dictatorship, pure and simple, or at least an attempt to impose it.

One gets the firm impression that Washington, as well as Europe, which is subjugated to Washington’s rule, use only prohibited methods to retain their vanishing hegemony. Time and again, they have used illegal sanctions instead of diplomatic methods against strong competitors, be it in economics, sports, information space, cultural exchanges, or overall in people-to-people contacts. Take, for example, the visa issue for delegates to international events in New York, Geneva, Vienna, and Paris. These are also attempts to remove competitors and insulate multilateral discussions from any alternative points of view.

I strongly believe in the need to defend the United Nations and to rid it of anything confrontational or superficial so that it re-emerges as a platform for honest discussions to balance the interests of all member states. It is this approach that guides us in our efforts to promote our national initiatives within the United Nations.

It is a matter of principle that we achieve a universal ban on the deployment of weapons in outer space, which is the purpose of the draft international treaty prepared by Russia and China. The UN Conference on Disarmament is reviewing it.

Defending cyberspace deserves special attention, including efforts to agree on ways to ensure international informational security within the General Assembly Open-Ended Working Group, as well as drafting a universal convention on countering the use of ICTs for criminal purpose within the Special Committee.

We will continue supporting the Office of Counter-Terrorism and other counter-terrorist entities within the United Nations.

We also remain committed to promoting closer ties between the UN and the CSTO, the CIS, and the EAEU in order to coordinate and unite our efforts across Greater Eurasia.

Russia calls for the stepping up of efforts to settle regional conflicts. We believe that priority objectives include overcoming an impasse in establishing an independent Palestinian state, restoring statehood in Iraq and Libya after they were ruined by NATO’s aggression, neutralising threats to Syria’s sovereignty, putting national reconciliation on a stable footing in Yemen, and overcoming NATO’s devastating legacy in Afghanistan. We are working to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme in its original form, and to bring about a fair and comprehensive resolution of the problems the Korean Peninsula faces. The multiple conflicts in Africa require that we resist the temptation to play a zero-sum game there and instead consolidate external actors to support the African Union’s initiatives. The situation in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina causes concern, where the United States and the EU are stubbornly seeking to break apart the international legal framework as set forth in UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Madame President,

In times of change, people tend to rely on and find solace in the wisdom of their predecessors who went through hardships that were just as challenging. Former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold, who remembered the horrors of World War II, aptly noted: “The United Nations was not created in order to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell.” These words have never been more relevant. This means that we must all recognise our individual and collective responsibility for creating conditions that would facilitate development for future generations in safety and harmony. For this, everyone will have to demonstrate political will.

We are ready to work in good faith and strongly believe that the only way to ensure the world order’s stability is to go back to the roots of UN diplomacy, which are based on the respect for sovereign equality of states as the key statutory principle for a genuine democracy.