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## A UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCE FOR UKRAINE?

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### A PEACE-KEEPING MISSION FOR UKRAINE?

#### *Introduction*

The war scenery in Eastern Ukraine in 2015 showed Kiev in a disadvantageous military position, in its efforts to stop the separatists' advances in the occupied territories.

At the same time, the possibilities that the self-proclaimed authorities of the "Donetsk and Lugansk Popular Republics" would honor the military clauses of the 2014 and 2015 Minsk Agreements were remote. Neither were the authorities in Kiev inclined to honor the political clauses for which they were responsible.

This difficult situation led the President of Ukraine to present a proposal for the deployment of a peace-keeping mission under the mandate of the United Nations Security Council. Nevertheless, such an initiative was not given on that occasion, any support or follow-up. (For the whole text, see Annex I)

Today, as this article is being written, a Russian initiative presented in September 2017(see text in Annex II) is being analyzed, mainly, in some European Union Countries, Canada, the Russian Federation and the United States, among others. Germany, Canada and several international organizations have already expressed their support for this initiative.

-pressed their support for this initiative.

The majority of Ukraine's experts consider that the main differences between Russia and Ukraine (and their respective allies), lie in the scope of the mission's mandate and in the magnitude of the forces to be deployed.

Regardless of Ukraine's efforts to keep the initiative alive, there have been no meaningful advances however on the matter.

The special negotiators from both the United States and the Russian Federation involved in this matter had their last meeting in January this year.

On the other side, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the Normandy Group member countries - Germany, France, the Russian Federation and Ukraine- met on June 11<sup>th</sup> 2018, in Berlin.

The defining moment for the proposal's eventual success, will be during the United Nations Security Council's debate, unless a consensus project is reached prior to the voting.

It is worth noting, in this context, that the Russian Federation's President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, was reelected in March 2018, while presidential elections in Ukraine are scheduled to take place in March 2019.

### ***Development***

#### **- Ukraine's proposals**

In a Press Communique from Ukraine's Foreign Affairs Ministry, dated September 5<sup>th</sup> 2017, attention is drawn to the “the fact that in March 2015, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko officially sent a letter the UN Secretary-General and the President of the UN Security Council, asking to deploy a peacekeeping mission in Ukrainian territory under the auspices of the United Nations.” This communication was distributed on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015, as an official document of the United Nations Security Council. (See whole text in Annex 1)

“UNIAN” News Agency (Ukraine) informed on August 25<sup>th</sup> 2017, that on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko had made an announcement before the United Nations General Assembly, indicating that Ukraine intended to present the following autumn an initiative oriented to the deployment of United Nations peace-keeping forces in zones out of their control in Donbass.

#### **- The Russian Federation's proposal**

During a press conference that took place after the BRICS -Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa and the Popular Republic of China- summit in China, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, revealed an initiative to deploy an international force in Eastern Ukraine, whose objective was the protection of the Organization for Peace and Security in Europe's (OSCE's) Monitoring Mission in the contact zone. (See the Draft Resolution's text in Annex II)

Later on, on a phone call with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the Russian President expressed “his will to study the idea of deploying United Nations troops in Eastern Ukraine, in other areas where OSCE's monitors are working”.

He added that “the idea is that United Nations troops could safeguard OSCE's observers not only on the contact line, but also, after the disengagement of both parties and their equipment, on other locations where the OSCE's Monitoring Special Mission is performing its inspection visits”.

Ratifying Russian President's statement, a communique from the German Chancellor's Office stated that Putin “had agreed to eliminate the previous limitations for the deployment of a United Nations mission”, after Chancellor Merkel had considered that “some modifications to the mandate were necessary”.

Different points of view at present

*Ukraine*

Regarding the proposal advanced by the Russian Federation, the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a Press Release dated September 5<sup>th</sup> 2017, stated:

a) The deployment of the Peace-keeping mission could contribute to the restoration of peace and security in Eastern Ukraine.

b) All international peace-keeping presence must be deployed on the base of consensus and only after extensive consultations with the Ukrainian Party.

c) The retreat of all the occupying forces and mercenaries must be involved.

d) A trustful control over the Ukrainian-Russian border, must be secured, to avoid Russian military, weapons, equipment and mercenaries being able to enter Ukrainian territory.

e) Any presence of military or any other personnel from the Aggressor State, disguised as members of the mission, on Ukrainian territory, must be inhibited.

During a press interview, President Poroshenko declared that “as of today, more than 40 countries have agreed to take part in a peace-keeping operation -like Canada, and even European Union countries that are not NATO's members, such as Austria, Sweden, Finland, among others”.

The Ukrainian President added: “(Mr. Putin) You can make this very easy indeed – just don't use your veto power (when the decision should be taken by the United Nations Security Council). That is all that shall be needed from you.”

*Russian Federation*

After the meeting that the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Normandy Group held in Berlin on June 11<sup>th</sup> 2018, the Russian Federation's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergei Lavrov, updated his country's position as follows:

“Russia's position is very clear, we have presented a proposal to the United Nations Security Council.....We have explained that the ideas forwarded by the United States and Ukraine to transform this peace-keeping mission into a kind of political and military Commanding Office that should control all the territory of the Self-proclaimed Popular Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk, and will decide who will be elected and how he will be elected.... these proposals absolutely demolish the Minsk Agreements”.

*Germany*

In declarations of then German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sigmar Gabriel, on September 7<sup>th</sup> 2017, Germany welcomed President Vladimir Putin's declaration on the deployment of a peace-keeping mission in Eastern Ukraine. Minister Gabriel said that “he was very pleased to see this first signal” that Putin “wishes to continue analyzing a request that Russia had rejected in the past , that is to say, the deployment ...of a Blue Helmets Mission in Eastern Ukraine to implement a cease-fire”. According to Gabriel, “even more important, this proposal of a United Nations mission in Eastern Ukraine shows that Russia has modified its policies and we should not waste that”.

On the occasion of a visit to Kiev on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018, then Minister Gabriel requested the establishment of a peace-keeping mission in Ukraine before the presidential elections in Russia, which should take place in March the same year.

Prior to the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Normandy Group in June 2018, the new German Foreign Affairs Minister, Heiko Maas, told journalists that “to deploy a United Nations peace-

keeping force in the region would be an 'appropriate decision' to assure that the agreements signed in Minsk, Belarus, could be finally implemented with the support of the United Nations”.

After the conclusion of the meeting, Minister Maas declared that “the Heads of Political Affairs in the respective Ministries have received instructions to elaborate the parameters of the mission. They will held consultations between them in the following weeks”.

#### *United States*

a) In a September 6<sup>th</sup> 2017 statement, the State Department declared that the United States would request from the United Nations Security Council the deployment of UN troops, to patrol the front line that divides the Ukrainian troops from the separatists supported by Russia, and that it considered “its exploration (a peace-keeping mission) worth taking”.

b) On the occasion of a State Department statement on the peace-keeping operation (in Eastern Ukraine) (State Department Briefing for the Foreign Press) on September 12<sup>th</sup> 2017, the State Department's Spokeswoman declared:

“As regards the number of troops, we support our Normandy Group partners. That hasn't changed. They are making an effort, which is to try and implement the Minsk Agreements. We firmly support that. With that purpose, we have called on Ambassador Kurt Volker (as a Special Negotiator for Ukraine) to facilitate the task.

“The second point I would like to mention: we believe in the feasibility of a peace-keeping force in Eastern Ukraine. We consider it possible to protect the Ukrainian citizens regardless of their ethnica or their nationality. We look at this as a potential way to re-establish sovereignty as well as territorial integrity.

“However, I want to be clear about this, and that is

any such force should have a broad mandate for peace and security throughout the occupied territory of Ukraine up to and including the border with Russia in order to avoid deepening or institutionalizing the divisions inside Ukraine. Other nations, European nations – Germany is one example – agrees with us on this matter. Our goal is simple. We would like to restore Ukraine's territorial integrity and also protect Ukrainians no matter what their religion is, no matter what their ethnicity is, or their language.”

In an update of its Government position, on September 12<sup>th</sup> 2018, Ambassador Kurt Volker, United States Special Negotiator for Ukraine, answered to a question posed by the German News Agency Deutsche Welle:

Question: Conversations on an eventual peace-keeping mission in Donbass have been taking place for more than a year. How robust should the command of a mission conducted by the UN be?

Volker: It needs to be sufficiently robust to be able to control security in the whole area. The best option would be a progressive deployment of the peace-keeping mission that is going to grow, in order to be able to control security in the whole area. I don't have a number of troops, but it will have to be sufficiently robust to perform that. When you look at our diplomatic efforts in the last year, we have clearly demonstrated Russia's responsibility on this conflict, but the Russians have not showed any interest in making any advances. We have increased our sanctions, we have increased our support to Ukraine, we have done all this jointly with the Atlantic Community, in close coordination with France and Germany, which are leading the Normandy Group, as well as with Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden and many others”.

#### *Negotiations between the Russian Federation and the United States on the Draft project*

At the time of these lines being written, the Russian Federation and the United States Special En-

voys had maintained three meetings, in Minsk (8/21/2017), Belgrade (9/13/2017) and Dubai (United Arab Emirates, 1/26/2018).

Shortly after this last meeting, Mr Vladislav Surkov was cited as declaring to TASS Agency and to Kommersant Newspaper: “the main question (in the United States proposal) is a largely detailed plan for a progressive deployment of a United Nations mission in conjunction with the application of the political clauses in the Minsk Agreements”.

He added that “this is a balanced point of view, on which we are going to insist and on which we have already insisted”.

On the other hand, the United States Special Envoy for Ukraine declared that “Russia has been more inclined to accept United States suggestions on an eventual United Nations peace-keeping mission in the area of Eastern Ukraine affected by the military clashes”; but he also expressed that Washington and Moscow “are still far from reaching an agreement”.

#### *Canada*

A significant Ukrainian community living in Canada and a Foreign Affairs Minister (Chrystia Freeland) whose grandfather was Ukrainian, help to explain the country's disposition to actively cooperate with Ukraine in several fronts. Not only in the diplomatic champ, but also in other areas, comprising from agricultural to military cooperation.

In a Communique dated November 9<sup>th</sup> 2017, Minister Freeland declared that Ottawa “has been leading conversations with a group of countries, on the viability and utility of maintaining peace and order in Ukraine”. She expressed that “personally, I have explored the viability and the perspectives of such mission with the UN Secretary General”.

Freeland added that “the First Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, has discussed this subject with the Ukrainian President and the German Chancellor”.

“In the past weeks, I have spoken to representatives of several European Governments and I have discussed this important subject with them”, explained Freeland. Canada has as well reaffirmed its “unwavering” support to Ukraine's territorial unity and condemned Russia's “illegal annexion” of Crimea and the violence in the region.

In further comments to the Toronto Sun and Globe and Mail Newspapers, Mrs. Freeland said that “last week, I personally explored the feasibility and perspectives of the mission with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Special Envoy Kurt Volker and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

The Canadian declaration took place a few days before the celebration in Vancouver, on November 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 2017, of a UN Peace-keeping Conference, which would be attended by Defence Ministers of many countries.

#### *Austria*

In spite of the Austrian Government's position of greater openness to the Russian Federation, Ukraine maintains a close relationship with Austria, based on their bilateral exchanges, as well as on the fact that the Organization for European Security and Cooperation (OSCE) Headquarters are in Vienna.

The Ukrainian President thanked Austria for its solid support to the deployment of a peace-keeping force under UN Security Council's mandate in Eastern Ukraine. He said that “it is very difficult to over-estimate the assistance of a country with such a degree of international confidence, with a neutral status, such as Austria, and I am very grateful for its firm and consistent position.”

“For his part, the Austrian Chancellor underlined the importance of reinforcing the efforts to re-establish peace in Eastern Ukraine. “I would like that the situation in eastern Ukraine could improve and that peace could be achieved on a permanent basis, so we could finally talk of a positive development of the situation in Ukraine”.

On the occasion of an interview with the Austrian President, the latter reassured Vienna's will to contribute to a UN peace-keeping force deployment and to the implementation of Security Council's decisions. He added "we are going to study the subject very seriously. Federal Chancellor Kurz has expressed his disposition to give assistance on this matter".

#### *France*

At the conclusion of the Meeting of the Normandy Group's Ministers of Foreign Affairs in June 2018, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian, declared that "France is ready to work on the guidelines of a possible UN Mission in Eastern Ukraine".

#### *United Nations Organization*

During the 54<sup>th</sup> Security Conference in Munich, Ukrainian President, Petro Poroshenko, held a meeting with the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, on February 16<sup>th</sup> 2018.

On the occasion, the Draft Project for a UN peace-keeping force deployment in Donbass was analyzed, and it was agreed that the main task for the future UN mission should be to assure the pacification of Donbass, as well as the re-establishing of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

#### *European Union*

Since the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and the outbreak of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the European Union has been involved in support of Ukraine vis a vis both situations and their consequences. This support was not only limited to political declarations, but went further on in the economic sphere, through the application of economic sanctions to the Russian Federation for both cases.

As regards the subject of this article, on the occasion of a visit to Ukraine, the EU External Rela-

tions Commissioner, Federica Mogherini, transmitted to Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko the firm support of the EU to the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, as well as the continuity of the efforts oriented to the Minsk Agreements' full implementation. Though without making a concrete reference to the subject of a UN peace-keeping deployment in Ukraine, Mrs. Mogherini signaled: "We always give a unified support on these matters".

#### *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe*

A spokesman for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) declared to the Russian News Agency TASS, on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2017, that "even though in the past, the idea has been evoked, neither the Austrian Presidency nor the OSCE Secretariat have had any knowledge of any concrete proposal on a peace-keeping operation in Ukraine. Anyway, such operation should be authorized by the United Nations Security Council".

Nevertheless, the DOC Research Institute published in April 2018 a document entitled "Priorities for 2018 and beyond. THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE: BREAKING THE DEADLOCK", where it says:

"The efforts made by OSCE should include an analysis on the creation of a United Nations peace-keeping operation in Donbass - an idea that Russia presented to the Security Council in September 2017. The Russian proposal figures a light peace-keeping force, that should be stationed the long of the line which divides the Ukrainian forces from the separatists in Eastern Ukraine, with the objective of providing security to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission.

Such analysis should aim not only to eliminate every concern about the other Party expectations, but - and most significant- to clarify how such Mission will be able to cooperate in finding a sustainable outcome to the conflict in the long term. Given

that all the actors involved in the negotiations over the Ukrainian conflict are OSCE members, the Organization becomes the ideal forum for this kind of debate.

The mere deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping operation will not solve the crisis. The United Nations peace-keepers will not represent a miraculous solution to the delayed implementation of Minsk II Agreements, or to Kiev's internal political problems, which require the appropriate reforms by Kiev's authorities.

#### *North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*

On the occasion of the Munich Security Conference on February 2018, and during a meeting with the Russian Federation's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov, NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said that there has been very little progress in the conversations on a peace-keeping operation in Eastern Ukraine.

Stoltenberg added that “we shall see if it is possible” to deploy a United Nations peace-keeping force to end the hostilities between the separatists supported by Russia and the Kiev forces in Eastern Ukraine.

#### **FINAL COMMENTS**

The present collaboration aims to present a subject that is considered relevant in Ukraine's present situation, in addition to the question of the Minsk I and II Agreements' compliance/not compliance.

This new subject matter relates to the eventual negotiation and approval of a draft proposal presented by the Russian Federation, on the deployment of a peace-keeping mission in Ukraine, under the mandate of the United Nations Security Council.

As it was already mentioned above, this draft pro-

posal had its origin in a former Ukrainian proposal, presented in 2015. Nevertheless, the draft proposal was effectively presented in September 2017 by the Russian Federation.

Ukraine hopes that this project's approval could lead to a cease-fire and the retirement of heavy weapons and armed illegal groups, in order to be able to begin the implementation of the Minsk Agreements' political components.

Nevertheless, since the first moment, the great difference between the Parties has been the kind of mandate that the eventual mission should have. In Moscow's vision, it should be limited to the protection of OSCE's monitors. Ukraine, the United States and other Western allies consider that it should have a “robust” mandate (Washington dixit).

As it was also mentioned above, Moscow does not accept a “robust” mandate because it would imply that the Minsk Agreements would be diminished in their force, particularly in respect to their political clauses, which are favorable to Moscow's interests.

It is also worth noting that, if Moscow returns to its original position -that the Mission be located in the contact line, instead of on the Ukrainian-Russian border- that would mean stepping back on the engagement taken by Russian President Putin with the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, by which he accepted the second alternative (NR: see Reference 5).

At present, experts on the subject consider that Vladimir Putin will not promote contacts on this proposal until the celebration of Presidential elections in Ukraine, due to take place in March 2019.

ANNEX I

United Nations' S/2015/225 Security Council  
Distr.: General 2 April 2015 Original: English 15-  
05354 (E) 080415 \*1505354\*

Letter dated 30 March 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Pavlo Klimkin, on the issue of the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Ukraine (see annex). I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yuriy Sergeyev Ambassador Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 30 March 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council Further to my letter dated 23 February 2015,

I have the honour to inform you that on 17 March 2015 the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) of Ukraine adopted a decision on the approval of the address on behalf of Ukraine to the United Nations Security Council and the Council of the European Union on the deployment of an international peacekeeping and security operation in the territory of Ukraine. I therefore have the honour to forward to you the address by the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, dealing with the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Ukraine (see enclosure). I count on your leadership in taking forward this important issue, in particular through the early dispatch to Ukraine of a preliminary assessment mission as requested by President

Poroshenko, so as to bring, as soon as possible, lasting peace and stability to the affected areas of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions of Ukraine in accordance with the Minsk agreements. (Signed) Pavlo Klimkin S/2015/225 15-05354 3/4 Enclosure Address on behalf of Ukraine to the Security Council on the deployment of an international peacekeeping and security operation in the territory of Ukraine Based on the decision of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine on the address to the United Nations and the European Union on the deployment of a peacekeeping and security operation in the territory of Ukraine adopted on 18 February 2015, Recognizing the key role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security and its capacities to that end to take effective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace in conformity with the norms and principles of international law, Considering the important long-term contribution of Ukraine to the maintenance of international peace and stability, including through participation in the United Nations peacekeeping operations, With the aim to ensure effective implementation of the Minsk agreements (Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014 and Minsk Memorandum of 19 September 2014), the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements and the declaration by the President of Ukraine, the President of the French Republic, the President of the Russian Federation and the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany in support of the package of measures adopted and signed in Minsk on 12 February 2015, which envisage, inter alia, an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, pull-out of all heavy weapons, withdrawal of all foreign armed formations and military equipment, as well as mercenaries, from the territory of Ukraine, disarmament of all illegal groups, reinstatement of full control of the State border by the Government of Ukraine, and ensuring the release and exchange of all hostages and unlawfully detained persons, Recognizing the important role of the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) of the Organization for Securi-

ty and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the monitoring and verification of the implementation of the Minsk agreements, Taking into account that the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, being a strictly civilian mission, has neither means nor tools at its disposal to ensure compliance by all signatories with the commitments undertaken under the Minsk agreements, Acknowledging the fact that the security situation in Donbas remains extremely tense with the prospect of further undermining the integrity and trust within the whole peace process based on the Minsk agreements, Proceeding from the need to involve additional instruments in order to prevent further violations of fundamental principles and norms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to guarantee lasting peace and stability in certain areas of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions of Ukraine in accordance with the Minsk agreements by ensuring a United Nations peacekeeping presence in our country in S/2015/225 4/4 15-05354 parallel with enhancing current OSCE SMM capacities, as mutually reinforcing tracks, On behalf of Ukraine I address the Secretary-General and the Security Council of the United Nations to initiate appropriate procedures for the deployment of a United Nations international peacekeeping operation in the territory of Ukraine, with the exact modalities to be defined in consultations with the Ukrainian side, in accordance with established practice. In particular, I request that a preliminary assessment mission be dispatched to Ukraine in order to assess the situation and put forward recommendations for consideration by the Security Council. (Signed) Petro Poroshenko

[http://repository.un.org/bitstream/handle/11176/310208/S\\_2015\\_225-EN.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](http://repository.un.org/bitstream/handle/11176/310208/S_2015_225-EN.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y)

*ANNEX II*

S/2017/754

2/3

17-15441

Annex to the letter dated 5 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: Russian]

The Security Council,

Recalling the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and reaffirming its full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine,

Expressing its grave concern at the tragic events and violence in eastern regions of Ukraine,

Supporting the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission (OSCE SMM) to Ukraine,

Firmly convinced that the resolution of the situation in eastern regions of Ukraine can only be achieved through the full implementation of the “Package of measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements”, endorsed by resolution [2202 \(2015\)](#) and adopted and signed in Minsk on 12 February 2015,

1. Reaffirms unconditionally its resolution [2202 \(2015\)](#), which endorsed the “Package of measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements”, adopted and signed in Minsk on 12 February 2015;
2. Calls for the full, comprehensive and consistent implementation of the “Package of measures”, including a comprehensive ceasefire as provided for therein;
3. Calls further for the Contact Group to agree upon and subsequently take practical steps to implement arrangements for the disengagement of forces and equipment from the de facto line of contact

and supports the deployment of OSCE SMM observer groups in the disengagement zones for effective monitoring in accordance with its mandate;

4. Stresses the need to ensure the security of the OSCE SMM observer groups monitoring the de facto line of contact;

5. Decides to establish for a period of six months, following the complete disengagement of forces and equipment from the de facto line of contact, a United Nations Support Mission to Protect OSCE SMM in Southeast Ukraine, the head of which shall report directly to the Secretary-General;

5. Decides to establish for a period of six months, following the complete disengagement of forces and equipment from the de facto line of contact, a United Nations Support Mission to Protect OSCE SMM in Southeast Ukraine, the head of which shall report directly to the Secretary-General;

6. Decides further that the United Nations Support Mission to Protect OSCE SMM in Southeast Ukraine shall be a mission equipped with small arms and light weapons mandated exclusively to ensure the security of the OSCE SMM observer groups exercising 24-hour monitoring in zones where forces and equipment have been disengaged from the de facto line of contact between territory under the control of the armed forces of Ukraine and territory of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine;

7. Decides also that the mandate of United Nations Support Mission to Protect OSCE SMM in Southeast Ukraine shall include the coordination of its activities on the ground with the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to start preparatory work without delay and to present as soon as possible to the Security Council for its consideration and approval detailed recommendations with regard to the size and national composition of the United Nations Support Mission to Protect OSCE SMM in Southeast Ukraine and also regarding the other aspects of its mandate set out in paragraphs 6

and 7 above, agreed with the Government of Ukraine and representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine;

9. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

### ANNEX III

Comment by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine regarding mass media publication of 5 September 2017 concerning the recent statements by the Russian leadership on the prospect of deployment of UN peacekeepers in Donbass

05 September 2017, 13:43

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has taken into account the statement made by the President of the Russian Federation concerning the prospect of deployment of UN peacekeepers in Donbas as published by mass media. The Ministry believes that the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation could contribute to the restoration of peace and security in the east of Ukraine. In this context, the MFA would like to draw attention to the fact that, in March 2015, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko sent an official request to the UN Secretary General and the President of the UN Security Council with regard to the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation in the Ukrainian territory.

This request was circulated on 2 April 2015 as an official document of the UN Security Council. The corresponding initiative of the President of Ukraine had been previously supported by the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine and by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

The UN peacekeeping operation of this nature would aim at ensuring lasting peace in certain parts of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions of Ukraine on the basis of the Minsk Agreements and in line with the fundamental principles and norms of the UN Charter, along with the simultaneous enhancement of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission.

Since that time Russia, the aggressor state, has con-

tinuously sabotaged Ukraine's proposals, refusing to take our request to the UN Security Council into consideration and even claiming, as was the case in June 2016, that Ukraine had never made its request to the Security Council.

Ukraine has always advocated a clear position that any international peacekeeping presence must be deployed by consent of and after extensive consultations with the Ukrainian side, that it must involve the withdrawal of all occupation troops and mercenaries as well as their weapons from the territory of Ukraine, and ensure reliable control over the Ukrainian-Russian border to prevent Russian military, weapons, equipment and mercenaries from infiltrating the Ukrainian territory.

In the event the decision is made to launch a peacekeeping operation, any presence of military or other personnel of the aggressor state in the territory of Ukraine disguised as peacekeepers would be out of the question, as it would contradict the basic principles of UN peacekeeping activities. Equally out of the question would be any need to seek approval for launching the peacekeeping operation by the illegal military formations operating in the territory of certain parts of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions backed by support, funding, and inventory and logistics management provided by the Russian Federation.

The information published by mass media concerning the statement by the President of the Russian Federation shows that Russia, as a party to the conflict, is once again attempting to present its aggression as an internal Ukrainian conflict and distort the very idea and purposes of launching a peacekeeping operation, which would not work towards achieving the principal objective of establishing sustainable peace in Donbas and restoring territorial integrity of Ukraine.

At the same time, as a consistent supporter of the initiative to deploy a UN peacekeeping operation in Donbas, Ukraine is ready to address this matter. In this context, the Permanent Mission of Ukraine in New York has been instructed to hold corresponding consultations with the delegations to the

UN Security Council.

We are also convinced that strict compliance by the Russian side with the permanent and complete back-to-school ceasefire declared at the end of August 2017 should create a favorable basis for starting a dialogue with a view to the deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission in Donbass.

Ukraine Foreign Affairs Ministry Statement , September 5<sup>th</sup> 2017 available at <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/446395.html>

Dispatch published in the Unian Agency News, August 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 available at <https://www.unian.info/politics/2100111->

Dispatch published at the Russian Federation under the title “Vladimir Putin’s news conference following BRICS Summit” September 5<sup>th</sup> 2017. Available online en: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55535>

Article published on the RFE/RL website, based on information from AFP, TASS and Interfax agencies, dated September 5<sup>th</sup> 2017. Available online at <https://www.rferl.org/russia-ukraine-putin-warns-us-supply-lethal-weapons27117863.html>.

Statement from the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2017. Available online at <https://mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/59526-komentar-mzs-ukrajini-u-zjazku-z-informacijejuzmi-vid-5-veresnya-pro-ostanni-zajavi>

Article published on the Ukrainian Presidency's website on April 13<sup>th</sup> 2018. Available online at <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/bilshe-soroka-krayin-pogodilisya-vzayti-uchast-v-sklade-mira-46974>

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Article by Yuri Zoria, dated September 7<sup>th</sup> 2017, published by Euromaidan Press. Available online at <http://euromaidanpress.com/2017/09/07/putin-wants-peacekeepers-in-donbas/#arvlbdata>

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