

## Russia's Lavrov Denounces NATO Interventionism

*Here are excerpts from the speech by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the Munich Security Conference on Feb. 2.*

...It is impossible not to notice the symbolism of the date of this meeting. Seventy years ago, one of the most frightful, bloody, and fateful battles of the Second World War ended: the Battle of Stalingrad. Hundreds of thousands of my compatriots gave their lives for the victory on the banks of the Volga, not only in defense of their homeland; they also fought for the sake of world peace, as did all of our Allies.

To prevent a recurrence of the tragedy of world war, efforts were also focused on diplomacy, which resulted in the creation of the United Nations. However soon afterward, the "Cold War" drew a dividing line across Europe, postponing for a long time the possibility of building a system of collective security, as embodied in the UN Charter. . . .

We must recognize that not in words, but in deeds, we are still very far from a truly collective Euro-Atlantic architecture, which would rest on a solid foundation of international law. There is still a desire for relations in Europe to be built around political-military issues—not on the principles of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] and the NRC [NATO-Russian Council], but by promoting a NATO-centric security concept, as though there were no alternatives.

We believe that such a narrow bloc approach does not help, and it is difficult for us to understand it based on objective and rational considerations; it is unlikely to provide an orientation for policies in today's global world, where we face common threats. It is time to look comprehensively and thoroughly at the full range of relations in the Euro-Atlantic area and try to identify the convergence of ideas and remaining differences between us, including with respect to conflicts in other parts of the world that affect the security of us all.

If we look at the regions that are the most unstable

today—the Middle East, North Africa, the Sahel—it is hard to avoid the sense of some kind of curvature of space. Many questions arise about the approaches of some of our partners with regard to the "Arab Spring." Does support for acts of regime change justify terrorist methods? Does it make sense to fight those in one conflict that you are supporting in another? If you illegally supply weapons to a conflict zone, how do you insure yourself against those weapons being turned against you? Which rulers are legitimate, and which are not? When is it permissible to work with authoritarian regimes (whether secular or not very), and when is it permitted to support their violent overthrow? Under what conditions is it necessary to recognize forces that have come to power in a democratic election, and in what conditions should contact with them be rejected? What criteria and standards determine all of this? . . .

We hope that by 2015, when we mark the anniversary [of the Helsinki+40 process], we will have succeeded in developing a common agenda that does not reflect mutual recriminations, but the determination of all of us to concentrate on reaching our common strategic objectives, based on the principle of indivisibility of security.

The issue of BMD has become an important test of the match between real deeds and solemn declarations of commitment to this key principle. We are all at risk of losing yet another real opportunity to build a unified Euro-Atlantic space. Russia proposes a simple and constructive approach: to work out strict guarantees that the U.S. global BMD system is not directed against any member country of the OSCE, and clear military and technical criteria for evaluating compliance with the stated objectives of the BMD system: the neutralization of missile threats coming from outside the Euro-Atlantic region. . . .

It is also important to clarify the definition of NATO's mission in the new circumstances, not to interfere in this process, but so that we can understand it. Progress towards a genuine partnership between Russia and NATO is still hampered by attempts to exploit the idea of the Soviet threat, which has now been converted to the idea of a Russian threat. Phobias are very tenacious, and we see how the process of military planning incorporates this thesis. Even with the deficit in financial resources, there is increasing military activity in northern and central Europe, as if these regions face growing security threats. . . .