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**Letter dated 19 August 2021 from the Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to forward to you an updated version of Russia's concept of collective security in the Persian Gulf area, which is aimed at launching collective efforts of the States of that subregion to bring peace and stability to the whole Persian Gulf (see annex). We consider formation of a collective security system in the area a necessary part of international efforts to bring stability to the Middle East and North Africa.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its attachment as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 37, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vassily Nebenzia



Annex to the letter dated 19 August 2021 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 Russian concept of collective security in the Persian Gulf area

Ensuring security and building confidence in the Persian Gulf area is a foreign policy priority for Russia and the current global agenda. Given the subregion's enormous hydrocarbon resources concentrated, its strategic location and the connectivity of its waterways, developments there have an impact on international relations and on global economic, energy and transport stability. Hence the need for appropriate collective efforts at the international and regional levels to promote genuine peace, good-neighbourliness and sustainable development in the Persian Gulf.

The establishment of a subregional collective security system would contribute to achieving that objective. This means adopting a long-term programme of joint actions to strengthen stability and security, including confidence-building measures, creating mechanisms for the settlement of disputes and conflicts, and defining the basic benchmarks and parameters for the future architecture of inter-State cooperation.

Building on proposals developed in the late 1990s and supplemented in 2004, 2007 and 2019, the updated Russian security concept in the Persian Gulf area is based on the following principles:

1. The commitment of all States to international law, the fundamental provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. Our common goal is a prosperous Middle East that supports interfaith peace and coexistence. The establishment of a security system in the Persian Gulf area is seen as an integral part of the overall effort to ensure stability in the Middle East as a whole. The key provisions are those on respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, the diversity of their sociopolitical systems, and the resolution of internal political problems without unlawful external interference, within the rule of law and through comprehensive national dialogue, as an important prerequisite for maintaining domestic stability and interfaith harmony;
2. Multilateralism as the means for all stakeholders to participate in undertaking a joint assessment of the situation and in the adoption and implementation of decisions. Excluding any party from the process, for any reason, is counterproductive;
3. The universality of the security system in the Persian Gulf. The relevant multilateral architecture is based on the principle of common and indivisible security, and respect for the interests of both regional and extraregional players, including the military, economic, energy, transport and environmental dimensions;
4. A step-by-step progression towards an inclusive Persian Gulf security system, beginning with addressing the most pressing and urgent challenges facing the subregion. This relates to ensuring freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, a commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and the joint fight against the acute challenges of our time, primarily international terrorism;
5. The principle of step-by-step action will also apply to the adoption by the States of the Persian Gulf of confidence-building measures and to the provision of mutual security guarantees in the subregion.

Practical work on the establishment of a security system in the Gulf area could begin with bilateral and multilateral consultations among the parties concerned, involving regional and extraregional States, the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. In the course of these contacts, it is envisaged that a task force will be established to develop measures in the field of regional security. This task force would aim to agree on the geographical parameters of the future security system, the participants in the discussions, the agenda and other issues.

As possible steps towards implementing the principles of this concept, Russia proposes that the States of the subregion and extraregional actors:

- Reaffirm their commitment to fulfil in good faith their obligations under international law, in particular the obligation not to use or threaten to use force to resolve disputes, including territorial and border disputes, to prevent armed incidents and emergencies involving military force in adjacent territories or in the sea or airspace, and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States in the subregion;
- Develop and implement a set of collective confidence-building measures in the military sphere with a view to ensuring transparency and long-term predictability in this area (dialogue on military doctrines, subregional meetings of defence ministers, the establishment of hotlines, the exchange of prior notifications on military exercises and military aircraft flights, the exchange of observers, and the exchange of information on arms transfers and on the status of their armed forces);
- Conclude arms control agreements, including, for example, the establishment of demilitarized zones, the prevention of destabilizing stockpiles of conventional weapons and the balanced reduction of armed forces by all parties;
- Take steps, given the objective of strengthening in the Middle East the nuclear non-proliferation regime based around the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to make the entire Middle East and North Africa Region a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery;
- Strengthen multilateral cooperation in the economic, humanitarian, environmental and other spheres;
- Seek to foster the integrated development of regional energy, transport infrastructure and communications systems;
- Establish collective cooperation in the interests of environmental protection and for the prevention of and recovery from natural and human-made disasters;
- Work towards a unified humanitarian environment with the establishment of regional centres to promote common objectives in the areas of tourism, medicine (combating the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic and preventing new health threats), and culture and education (including training centres for leading and promising industries of countries in the subregion);
- Conclude agreements on combating international terrorism, illegal arms trafficking and migration, drug trafficking and organized crime.

Russia is ready to cooperate with all interested parties to discuss these and other constructive proposals in order to ensure reliable security in the Persian Gulf area. Our strategic objective is a stable and conflict-free Middle East, open to broad international cooperation.