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Foreign Ministry statement on measures in response to hostile US actions

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The latest attack by the Biden administration against our country cannot go unanswered. It seems Washington is unwilling to accept that there is no room for unilateral dictates in the new geopolitical reality. Meanwhile, the bankrupt scenarios for deterring Moscow that the US myopically continues to pursue only promise to further degrade Russian-US relations.

In this context, the appeals from across the ocean to refrain from escalation and essentially accept this attempt to talk to us from a position of strength sound hypocritical. We have repeatedly warned and demonstrated in practice that sanctions and any other pressure will never succeed and will only have dire consequences for those who dare attempt such provocations.

We will introduce the following countermeasures in response to anti-Russian sanctions in the near future:

- Employees of US diplomatic missions will be expelled on a reciprocal basis in numbers proportional to the actions taken by the US authorities against Russian diplomats.
- Incidentally, we noted how quickly Warsaw played up to the US

administration by demanding the departure of three Russian diplomats from Poland. In turn, five Polish diplomats will be expelled from Russia.

- The US Embassy's practice of using short-term trips by State Department staff to support the functioning of diplomatic missions will be restricted. The issuance of visas to them will be reduced to a minimum: up to 10 people per year on a reciprocal basis.
- In strict conformity with the Vienna conventions on diplomatic relations and Russian law, including the Labour Code, measures will be taken to discontinue completely the practice of US diplomatic missions employing citizens of the Russian Federation and third countries as administrative and technical staff.
- The bilateral 1992 memorandum of understanding on open ground is declared invalid due to systematic violations of rules for trips in the Russian Federation by employees of US diplomatic missions.
- Plans are in place to halt the activities in the Russian Federation of American foundations and NGOs controlled by the Department of State and other US government agencies. These consistent, long-term efforts will be brought to an end, all the more so since the United States shows no intention of scaling back its systematic subversive efforts underpinned by a wide array of laws.
- Obviously, this very tense situation objectively requires the ambassadors of our countries to be in their respective capitals to analyse developments and hold consultations.

These steps represent just a fraction of the capabilities at our disposal. Unfortunately, US statements threatening to introduce new forms of punishment show that Washington is not willing to

listen and does not appreciate the restraint that we have displayed despite the tensions that have been purposefully fuelled since the presidency of Barack Obama.

Recall that after a large-scale expulsion of Russian diplomats in December 2016 and the seizure of Russian diplomatic property in the US, we did not take any response measures for seven months. We responded only when Russia was declared a US adversary legislatively in August 2017.

In general, compared to the Russian diplomatic missions in the United States, the US Embassy in Moscow operates in better conditions, enjoying a numerical advantage and actively benefitting from the work of Russian citizens hired in-country. This form of disparity frees up “titular” diplomats to interfere in our domestic affairs, which is one of the main tenets of Washington’s foreign policy doctrine.

Incidentally, soon the Foreign Ministry will publish on its website the names of eight incumbent and former high-ranking US officials and other figures involved in drafting and implementing anti-Russia policy. They will be permanently banned from entering the Russian Federation. This is our equivalent response to the sanctions against Russian officials that the US blacklisted last month.

Now is the time for the United States to show common sense and pull back from this confrontational course. Otherwise, the US will face a host of painful decisions, for instance, an order for US diplomatic missions to reduce personnel in Russia to 300 people. This will establish real parity at bilateral foreign offices because the US quota of 455 employees still includes the 155 people sent to the Russian Permanent Mission to the UN in New York. However,

this has nothing to do with our bilateral mission.

There are also other options. Of course, we realise that we are limited in our ability to squeeze the Americans economically as they have us. However, we have some resources in this respect and they will also be used if Washington chooses to follow the path of spiraling sanctions.

None of this is our choice. We would like to avoid further escalation with the US. We are ready to engage in calm and professional dialogue with the US in order to find ways of normalising bilateral ties. However, the reality is that we hear one thing from Washington but see something completely different in practice. There must be no doubt – not a single round of sanctions will go unanswered.

We have obviously heard President Joe Biden express interest in stable, constructive and predictable relations with Russia, including a proposed Russian-US summit. When this offer was made, it was received positively and is now being considered in the context of concrete developments.