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Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's answer to a question from the Moscow Kremlin. Putin television programme, December 25, 2022

Question: What has been the main outcome of the year for you?

Sergey Lavrov: I think President Vladimir Putin will recap the year. He is still to have quite a few contacts with his foreign colleagues and Russian citizens.

The Foreign Ministry reviews the results of our foreign policy, which is determined by the President. I think the main conclusion and outcome is that the situation is finally and irreversibly clear. What is happening in the world, who is taking action on the international arena and with what intentions and plans, who is open to negotiations and who must not be believed any longer. President Vladimir Putin has talked about this many times in his recent appearances.

This is the fundamental conclusion from the developments we are witnessing today. They are a result of the Western countries' consistent years-long course for turning Ukraine into an anti-Russia state – and not in isolation from other factors but with the main purpose of preventing Russia from participating in international affairs as an independent, strong and increasingly influential actor.

The frantic response of our Western colleagues, taking their cue from the United States, to our actions during the special military operation, confirms our main conclusion. It means that the operation (and we have proof of this already) was absolutely necessary to derail the plans to turn Ukraine into a constant security threat for the Russian Federation. This kind of response reflects the realisation of the West that our actions caused a collapse of their geopolitical games and plans.

We will see how things go. We have an agreement with our closest allies, primarily Belarus. Today, the presidents of Russia and Belarus reaffirmed the unwavering course for strengthening our independence, the sovereignty of Russia and Belarus and the Union State. We have plans for the EAEU, the CSTO, the CIS, the SCO and BRICS. We are successfully developing relations

with a whole range of countries and regional organisations in Africa, Asia (in particular, ASEAN) and Latin America. The overwhelming majority of the countries, obviously, does not support the attempts we have seen in the past years to secure the dominance of the United States and its Western allies on the international arena through force, illegitimate sanctions, ultimatums, blackmail and threats. Nobody likes it.

I believe that the historical process has already handed down the verdict. Yes, it will be a long historical era of establishing genuine multi-polarity. The West will put up serious resistance. We can already see it. Our Western colleagues are demanding that the developing countries across all continents join the anti-Russia sanctions and break off contacts with Russia. These attempts are futile. Aside from votes in a number of international organisations, achieved by dishonest means, these vain attempts of our Western colleagues have not been able to take any tangible shape.

I believe this is the main outcome: everything has become perfectly clear. It is perfectly clear to us, our Belarusian friends and allies and other like-minded countries. It is a moment of clarity for the overwhelming majority of countries. From now on, we will proceed from this realisation as we build our foreign policy, relying only on the partnerships that have proven to be with people who are capable of negotiating, keeping their word and not trying to benefit from infringing on the interests of others.

Our motto is the balance of interests. This balance is the core of our foreign policy. It is the only approach that has prospects in international affairs.



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