

Unofficial translation

Постоянное
представительство
Российской Федерации
при Организации
Объединенных Наций
в Нью-Йорке



Permanent Mission
of the Russian Federation
to the United Nations
in New York

STATEMENT

by Mikhail I.Uliyanov

**Acting Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation
at the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty
on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
(General debate)**

New York, April 27, 2015

Madam President,

Let me first extend our condolences to the people and the government of Nepal in the wake of the tragic events in this country. Russia is ready to render utmost assistance to the victims.

I would like to convey the welcoming address of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin to the participants and guests of our Conference:

“I am glad to welcome you on the occasion of the opening of the Conference.

The agenda of the meeting includes a range of issues related to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that for more than four decades has been a cornerstone of the international security system ensuring strategic parity and global stability.

We are convinced that the equilibrium between the three main pillars of the NPT — nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful use of nuclear energy — remains a pledge of its viability in the future. It is exactly that approach, combined with the focus on the universalization of the Treaty, that prevailed at the 2010 Conference and paved the way towards reaching concrete agreements that continue to be fully relevant.

Russia consistently implements all the provisions of the NPT, including Article VI. We have reduced our nuclear arsenal to a minimal level, which is a significant contribution to general and complete disarmament. We intend to continue working in that direction, as well as to maintain a balance between mastering the «peaceful atom» and strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, including the IAEA safeguards system. Russia is willing to closely cooperate with all interested parties in establishing an up-to-date, sustainable and safe architecture of international cooperation in the field of nuclear energy.

Your meeting takes place in the year of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. This is a historic milestone that serves as a reminder of our joint responsibility for the well-being of the planet, as well as of the need to preserve peace and to collectively respond to the present day threats, including the spread of nuclear weapons.

I hope that in the course of the Conference all the NPT States Parties will reiterate their readiness to strictly fulfill their obligations under the Treaty. That will certainly become an important factor in enhancing global peace, security and stability.

I wish you fruitful work and all the best.

V.Putin”

Madam President,

Our Conference is intended to review the functioning of the non-proliferation regime over the last five years and to determine the ways to further strengthen the NPT, which for already forty-five years has been rightfully regarded as one of the key international legal instruments to enhance global strategic stability and security.

It is beyond doubt that preserving and strengthening of the NPT regime serve fundamental interests of all its States Parties. Therefore, our common objective is to ensure careful treatment of the NPT and to collectively respond to challenges it faces. Any attempts to raise the issue of tradeoffs and linkages questions within the NPT or to deliberately contrapose nuclear and non-nuclear States are detrimental to a sustainable functioning of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and may result in the loss of its effectiveness.

The Conference has for objective to reaffirm the commitment of all the NPT States Parties to the Treaty goals and their obligations arising from it on the basis of the 2010 Action Plan. That Plan is of a long-term character and

remains fully relevant. It is important not to upset the delicate balance of interests of all States Parties reflected in the Plan. The Plan's consensus provisions based on the balance between the three pillars of the NPT – nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy – should be fulfilled. We hope that this Review Conference will also succeed in working out new solutions in furtherance of the document.

As a State Party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and one of its depositaries, the Russian Federation consistently fulfills its obligations and confirms its strong and invariable support for it. Our activities and achievements in the area of implementation of the Treaty and 2010 Action Plan in recent years are detailed in our National Report to be distributed at the Conference.

Madam President,

The complexity of challenges facing the global community also affects the situation in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. We commend the willingness of the majority of States to look for compromises to help achieve further progress in ensuring global and regional security and stability.

Russia is strongly committed to the goal of nuclear disarmament. A vivid demonstration of that is our consistent implementation of the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. Our priority objective for the time being is to reach by 2018 the Treaty-set levels with regard to nuclear delivery vehicles and warheads.

We are ready to discuss nuclear disarmament issues in the most serious and meaningful way. That was reaffirmed once again by President Putin in his address to the participants of the Valdai Forum in Sochi last October. But that should be a no-nonsense discussion, free of double standards. It can only be productive if the participants are guided by the fundamental principle of

undiminished and equal security for all. But now we see just the opposite, not to mention the lack of progress in removing threats to the strategic stability and, as a result, affecting the work on disarmament. Our common challenge is to reverse that dangerous trend and Russia is ready to take further efforts to that end.

At the same time, it is important to be aware that we have come very close to the stage when the advancement towards “nuclear zero” is only possible through the involvement of all nuclear-weapon-capable States without exception.

The solution of this task will obviously require relevant policy and regulatory frameworks. We certainly welcome the unilateral steps undertaken by some States to reduce their nuclear potential. But we cannot ignore the fact that such measures are not international legal obligations, they do not presuppose verification and can be revised at any moment.

At this stage, one of the major challenges to the non-proliferation regime is the extremely unsatisfactory situation with regard to convening the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction (WMDFZ). Despite considerable efforts made by Russia among others, this very significant event could not take place within the fixed time period. Nevertheless, the goal to establish the WMDFZ remains on the international agenda, and we consider it important to continue to vigorously work to urgently convene the Conference. This will be facilitated by the ongoing unprecedented process, which, for the first time in many years, gathered representatives from the countries of the region at the negotiating table to resolve differences through dialogue. It is important not to lose this experience and benefit from it in future work in this area. We expect that consideration of this issue in the coming four weeks will give a strong and positive impetus to further efforts to convene the Helsinki Conference as soon as possible.

Establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones is essential to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. A year ago, joint efforts of the Central Asia countries and the five nuclear-weapon States culminated in the signing of the Protocol to the Treaty on the establishment of such a zone in the Central Asian region. Russia has completed its ratification.

We expect that in the near future we will come close to signing the Protocol to the Treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Southeast Asia. Russia is ready to do this.

We are deeply concerned by the lack of any tangible progress in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) coming into force. We recall that our country ratified the CTBT in 2000, and we are working hard to make it universal both in bilateral and multilateral formats. We call on all States especially remaining 8 from the so called List of 44 countries whose ratification and/or signature are necessary for the CTBT to enter into force, to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and without any preconditions.

Madam President,

We are convinced that modern challenges in nuclear non-proliferation can and must be addressed on the basis of the NPT and the inviolability of its provisions, in strict compliance with international law standards and in line with the legitimate interests of security and development of all States. The latest developments concerning Iran's nuclear programme have convinced us that this way is real and productive.

We hope to reach a comprehensive agreement by June 30 that will become a crucial milestone in the nuclear non-proliferation regime history. It is a welcome fact that these negotiations are based on the principles proposed by Russia such as a step-by-step approach and reciprocity, the recognition of Iran's right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including the enrichment of uranium under strict and effective international control. Russia will continue to make the

utmost effort in this respect. Our future agreement should be certainly based on universally recognized rules of the international law, as well as instruments of the IAEA safeguards system, without setting any harmful precedents.

The progress achieved in the settlement of the Iran's nuclear issue proves vividly that regional non-proliferation challenges can only be addressed by political and diplomatic means through negotiations. We expect that a similar approach will also prevail in relation to the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula, which requires immediate resolution in the interests of regional and international peace and security.

The confidence of the NPT States Parties in the IAEA safeguards is pivotal to render the whole nuclear non-proliferation system sustainable. This confidence has always been based on the IAEA unbiased verification mechanism of compliance with non-proliferation obligations, its technical feasibility and political impartiality.

If we wish to see the NPT strengthened, the IAEA safeguards system must further meet the above requirements. It is important to keep it unaffected by politics and bias. The Agency policy-making bodies – the General Conference and the Board of Governors – must play the key role in making decisions on any changes to the procedures of implementation of the IAEA safeguards, in monitoring the Agency Secretariat's activities, as well as in making decisions on the IAEA actions when cases of States' non-compliance with the NPT obligations are detected.

Madam President,

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to ensuring and maintaining nuclear security not in our country alone, but all over the world. Russia is a party to all existing international legal instruments in the sphere of nuclear security – the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the 2005 Amendment to it as well as the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We are convinced that earlier

accession to these legal instruments by all States possessing significant stockpiles of nuclear and radioactive material, especially those that consider and declare strengthening nuclear security to be first-priority, is crucial to foster global nuclear security.

We underline the need to join international efforts to counter the threat of nuclear terrorism. Important role in this regard belongs to the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism launched by Russia and the US which has become an efficient instrument for cooperation and exchange of best practices in practical countering the threat of nuclear terrorism and strengthening nuclear security in the world, which brings together 86 States.

Madam President,

In its own way, the NPT is the basis and guarantor of the ever-expanding international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. A growing interest in peaceful nuclear power is an objective trend in the modern world and there is no alternative to its further development in the near future. The world community is overcoming the psychological shock caused by the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi. In the wake of it, relevant lessons were learnt, conclusions drawn, and additional security measures undertaken to turn nuclear energy into a reliable and environmentally friendly power source.

We hope that discussions at our Conference will contribute to further widening the access to the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy for the NPT States Parties as well as the development of international cooperation in this area. Russia intends to do its utmost to contribute to this task. We will present a detailed position on this subject later during a relevant thematic discussion.

Madam President,

In spite of our deep concerns regarding numerous aspects of the US policy in the areas of strategic stability, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, we did not intend to engage in controversy at the NPT Review

Conference. We assumed that there were other formats to that end. Yet, after the statement delivered by the American delegation today we have to touch upon this subject.

According to Washington, the US is willing to and ready to negotiate further reductions of deployed nuclear warheads by up to one third. But the stance of the Russian Federation allegedly constitutes a major obstacle as it refuses to accept such a “generous offer”. In fact, it is the US policy that hinders further nuclear reductions. This can be explained by its intransigent course, which effectively undermines strategic stability in the world through unilateral build-up of the global missile defense system, gradual advancement towards implementing the “prompt global strike” concept, attempt to stop in the tracks the negotiations on banning the placement of weapons in outer space, and lack of progress in ratifying the CTBT at the national level.

Today, the American side has once again groundlessly accused us in violating the INF Treaty. The United States refuses to substantiate these accusations by specific facts, or, which is more likely, is unable to do that. We get an impression that the US aims to discredit Russia and hence to divert attention from its actions, whereas the United States interprets the INF Treaty provisions rather liberally when they might interfere with developing weapons Washington deems significant.

We particularly refer to the MK-41 launchers in the land-based Aegis Ashore missile defense systems that the US is going to place in Romania and Poland. Installed on ships, these launchers are capable of firing both Standard 3 interceptors and Tomahawk intermediate-range cruise missiles, if a missile of such range appears on land that will be a material violation of the INF Treaty.

We have a number of questions concerning target missiles of characteristics similar to intermediate-range and short-range which the US uses when testing missile defense facilities. Specifically, there are certain reasons to infer that under the disguise of testing missile defense facilities the United

States could work on issues pertaining to the production and military engagement of the banned ballistic missiles.

Notwithstanding, for many years the US has been producing and using combat drones which obviously fall under the Treaty definition of ground-based cruise missiles. At that, our attempts to find out how such actions agree with the Treaty, notes exchanged by the Russian and American governments on May 12, 1988, and the detailed analysis of the INF articles presented by President Ronald Reagan to the Senate for the Treaty ratification, stumble on memory loss and deliberations which are not directly related to the terminology and the conceptual structure of the Treaty.

Russia has repeatedly stated that it is committed to fulfill its obligation under the INF Treaty. We are always ready to discuss and address concerns of another Party to the Treaty regarding the implementation of an agreement in a professional manner. However, it would be hard to find a subject for a substantial conversation when the claims put forward are not specific and are backed solely by referring to certain “reliable confidential sources” in order to render them somewhat credible. What references of that kind are worth and how credible they are is revealed by the notorious myth of Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction which was inflated by Washington and later exploded causing a stir.

Accusing others of noncomplying with the NPT obligations, the US forgets that its own compliance record is far from being perfect. It would be appropriate to remind that Article I of the Treaty stipulates that nuclear-weapon States undertook not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or control over such weapons directly, or indirectly. Non-nuclear weapon States in their turn under Article II of the NPT undertook not to receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or of control over such weapons directly, or indirectly. Both articles are violated during so called “nuclear sharing” when servicemen from NATO non-nuclear weapon States are trained

to apply nuclear weapons and participate in the nuclear planning process. We call on the US and those NATO Member States concerned to ensure due compliance with the NPT obligations. If they cease to violate the Treaty, they will make their best contribution to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In conclusion, I would like to express hope that our Conference will further continue in a more benevolent and pacific atmosphere and will ultimately prove to be fruitful. The Russian delegation will nonetheless take the utmost effort to attain that objective.