Statement by H. E. Dr. Javad Zarif
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran
before the First Committee
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In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you at the outset and express the confidence that with your diplomatic skill and experience, the Committee will conclude its work at this important juncture with success. I seize this opportunity to also express my special thanks and gratitude to Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his leadership and dedication to promote the cause of disarmament.

The current international situation is characterized by a reinvigorated global effort to review the existing security doctrines in search of a new foundation for fostering peace and security. The prevalent international security paradigm has in fact proven incapable of providing a comprehensive understanding of the new developments in international affairs, much less articulating appropriate responses to them.

It is self-evident that security has become a much more complex and multifaceted issue. The traditional zero sum approach to security which ultimately prescribes the enhancement of one's security at the expense of others seems to be a concept of the past. In a globalized and interconnected world of common threats and common vulnerabilities, security could no longer be attained without considering the interest of all and without cooperation among all based on the principle of the equal right of all to peace and security.

The new threats to national, regional and even international security emanating from non-state actors in fact shattered traditional security perceptions and calculations. Yet, the response in terms of exacerbated recourse to unilateralism, greater reliance on military hardware and emergence of national security strategies founded on a new doctrine of pre-emption and an unprecedented new nuclear posture further aggravated the situation. The emergence of a new phase in international arena requires a different perspective on world affairs.
September 11th illustrated the imperative of revising the existing security doctrines based on the acquisition of huge arsenals of weaponry including nuclear weapons as claimed means of maintaining peace and stability. Weapons of mass destruction envisaged once to guarantee the security of their possessors are today more than ever the sources of real concern and dangerous tools in the hands of irresponsible entities. The Nuclear Weapon States have therefore a moral and legal duty and obligation to pursue the total elimination of their stockpiles in order to open the way to a complete global ban.

Today, nuclear weapons serve no other purpose than to antagonize, and are in fact a persistent menace to international peace and security. Nuclear weapons continue to inhibit genuine confidence so essential in reforming international relations and enhancing cooperation. The threats of nuclear arms are thus not removed until and unless such weapons are eradicated and a nuclear weapon free world is established.

This, Mr. Chairman, is not just an ideal or utopian vision of our future; it is a serious demand of the world community, supported by sound political and legal assertions. The Nuclear Weapon States are required and committed by the obligations to pursue systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally with the ultimate goal of their elimination. In this context, the preservation of nuclear weaponry for future use, not only questions the credibility of bilateral arms control efforts, but ignites more dangers for security through their possible submission to accidents, misuse and terrorist attacks.

While complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament is our collective goal and commitment, the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime should be accorded high priority on the international agenda. It is a source of grave concern that the emergence of new doctrines, based on pre-emption and enlarging the scope of the use of nuclear weapons, as defined in the Nuclear Posture Review, undermine the very foundations of the non-proliferation regime with grave consequences for the regional as well as international security environment.

On the positive side, I congratulate the Government of Cuba for its decision to accede to the NPT. We sincerely hope that this initiative would serve as a further step towards universality of the Treaty. I would also like to welcome the realization of a nuclear weapon free zone in Central Asia. The establishment of nuclear weapon free zones is an essential instrument to consolidate nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Yet, the impediments towards the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East have aggravated tension in the region. The States in the region have continuously expressed their serious concern over the well documented Israeli pursuit and acquisition of a wide range of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. It is indeed ironic that a regime which has posed the gravest danger to regional and international peace and security for decades, rejected and violated every single resolution of the Security Council and General Assembly, and flouted all international regimes on weapons of mass destruction has received not only acquiescence, but in fact material support for its WMD program from the very state which has made leveling of baseless allegations about others a priority in its global policy. Even more ironic is the fact that Israel itself has been an active source of misinformation and propaganda about others. It is thus absolutely essential for the international community to actively pursue the
implementation of a 30 year old decision of the General assembly on the establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman,

The individual and collective efforts by Nuclear Weapon States to reduce their arsenals toward a total elimination of nuclear weapons should be complemented through revitalization of nuclear disarmament negotiations on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, disarmament negotiations have faced severe setbacks, which in some important areas have undermined the decade-long endeavors by the international community to ban weapons of mass destruction. The negotiations on a Protocol strengthening the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention, which was blocked at the very final stage of its conclusion and adoption, await good will and practical initiatives to exit from the impasse. The situation is more difficult to be justified in an era which is overwhelmed by the threats of the weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

The multilateral approach to international peace and security is the only viable option in the new international environment. This General Assembly has been identified with strong and unanimous support from the international community for such a multilateral approach. We are hopeful that this sentiment could be faithfully translated into proper practical measures in the interest of revitalizing multilateral diplomacy.

Last year, the First Committee considered the matter and adopted a resolution in this regard. This year, with the expression of such an unprecedented commitment of States for the pivotal principle of multilateralism, a more comprehensive resolution is reasonably expected. Collective efforts are underway to work out a draft for consideration on the issue of promotion of multilateralism in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in the First Committee this year. I hope that this draft could create a new momentum for promoting multilateralism as the sole vehicle towards maintenance and strengthening of peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of Missiles has rightly attracted attention in the United Nations. The United Nations resolutions on "Missiles" led to the establishment of a panel of Governmental Experts to address the issue in all its aspects. We are happy that this panel succeeded in preparing a first-ever United Nations report on this complex issue. I congratulate the Chairman and members of the panel for their tireless efforts and commitment to conclude a substantive review on different aspects of missiles. The Chairman of the panel Ambassador Guerrero of Brazil has had an important role in achieving consensus within the panel and I seize this opportunity to express my special thanks for his dedication and excellent leadership.

This report primarily conducted an overview of the evolution of missiles production and staged development and their existing capabilities. In this framework, the report has enumerated missile characteristics within the technical and strategic purview which have made missiles a suitable choice for states in the military and civilian fields.
The Secretary-General’s report furthermore has outlined driving factors in the acquisition and development of missiles and most importantly addressed the issues relating to missiles in various aspects of their relation to the WMD, conventional capabilities, technology transfer, military doctrines and confidence building measures.

This report, however general, provides a sound basis for further work and prepares the ground for more detailed and action-oriented recommendations.

Mr. Chairman,

The Tenth anniversary of the establishment of the UN Registry of Conventional arms provides a useful opportunity to substantively review the overall operation of the Registry and its effectiveness as well as possible measures to strengthen this initiative.

One of the basic issues in the operating process of the Registry is the misgivings of states to fully participate in the Registry. The founding fathers of the Registry established, through this framework, a basis for exchange of information on armaments as a contribution to openness and confidence in the military sphere. This notion is clearly underlined even in the title of the resolutions: “Transparency in Armament”.

Unfortunately, the implementation of the resolution and the operation of the Registry have been narrowly interpreted by some, against the letter and spirit of the original resolution, to be limited to the seven categories of conventional arms and all efforts to expand the scope of the Registry into a broader context of information exchange including on weapons of mass destruction faced opposition and rejection. This is a sad experience which should be rectified in order to increase the efficiency and plausibility of the whole process. A decision to share information about nuclear arsenals, fissile materials and related technologies could produce an important impetus for the successful operation of the Registry.

Mr. Chairman,

Macro and Micro disarmament are today indispensable aspects of achieving security. Less reliance on weapons, particularly weapons of mass destruction, should be recognized as a key common denominator to advance and promote peace and security. The world today is smaller than ever and its security more indivisible. We hope that we can unite in preventing catastrophes arising from our un-preparedness to face the new security challenges against our common future.

Thank you.