STATEMENT
by Evgeny P. Buzhinsky,
Deputy Head of Delegation of the Russian Federation at
the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty
on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)
on Article VI of the Treaty

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to take this opportunity to once again emphasize the enduring significance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty as one of the most important international legal instruments of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and as a factor of regional and global stability.

While we note the progress made in the nuclear disarmament and, accordingly, in the fulfillment of the obligations under Article VI of the Treaty, the Russian side believes that complete elimination of nuclear arms can only be achieved through a gradual, phased movement towards the ultimate objective on the basis of a comprehensive approach and with the participation of all nuclear powers and, certainly, in conditions of sustained strategic stability.

The Treaty of unlimited duration between the USSR and the US on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles (the INF Treaty) that entered into force on June 1, 1988, was a major step forward in this direction. This actually unprecedented Treaty completely eliminated two classes of land-based missiles with a range of 500 to 5500 km and banned future production and testing of such missiles.

The next step was the conclusion of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I) which entered into force on December 5, 1994, after all the nuclear weapons of the former Soviet Union had been returned to the
Russian territory, and after Kazakhstan, Belarus and Ukraine had joined the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon states.

Under that Treaty the Parties assumed the obligation to reduce, after seven years following its entry into force, the number of their strategic delivery vehicles to 1600 and the number of nuclear weapons attributed to them to 6000 for each side. Russia fulfilled its obligations completely and ahead of the Treaty schedule with respect to those reductions and, as of the target date of December 5, 2001, reduced the actual number of its deployed strategic delivery vehicles (intercontinental ballistic missiles, sea-launched ballistic missiles and heavy bombers) to 1136 and the number of weapons attributed to them to 5518.

The last nuclear warhead pulled back from the territory of Ukraine to Russia was eliminated in October 2001.

While the Russian Federation has implemented its obligations under the START 1 Treaty, it is continuing to eliminate its strategic offensive arms. To date, the Russian side has eliminated 1250 ICBM and SLBM launchers, 2580 ICBMs and SLBMs, 43 strategic nuclear submarines and 65 heavy bombers. As of January 1, 2004, Russia possessed 1031 deployed strategic offensive delivery vehicles and 4978 warheads accountable under the START 1 Treaty. This constitutes the Russian Federation’s real contribution to the fulfillment its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions.

As you know, the Moscow Treaty calls for the obligation by Russia and the US to reduce and limit, within 10 years (by December 31, 2012), their respective strategic nuclear weapons to the aggregate number not exceeding 1700-2200. The START 1 Treaty itself will remain in force until December 5, 2009, and may be extended.

Obviously, the Moscow Treaty as well as signing of the Russian-US Joint Declaration on the New Strategic Relationship of May 29, 2002 have been a major step towards nuclear disarmament that will have great importance for shaping the international security environment of the 21st century as a whole.

The Moscow Treaty basically ensures continuity of the arms control and disarmament process in a situation where the START 2 Treaty has not and will not enter
into force, the 1972 ABM Treaty was terminated and other arms control agreements face serious challenges. Thus, the Moscow Treaty will significantly contribute to strengthening the nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime.

As any new undertaking, the Moscow Treaty was a subject of some criticism. Moreover, the main critical comments mostly focused on the fact that, unlike other agreements in this area (the START I Treaty and the INF Treaty), the Moscow Treaty does not establish specific procedures and mechanisms for its implementation and verification of strategic offensive arms reductions.

In this connection it is worth mentioning that for the purposes of implementation of the Moscow Treaty the Bilateral Compliance Commission was established under the Treaty’s provisions, and its first session was held in Geneva on April 8-9, 2004.

It is also very important that the Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions allows us to reduce the two sides’ strategic nuclear forces to the level of minimum sufficiency without being concerned over our security. President Putin has repeatedly expressed our country’s willingness to reduce its nuclear arsenal to a much lower level than that provided for by the Moscow Treaty, namely 1500 warheads and even less. We feel that today and over a longer term this level will be quite sufficient to ensure our national security. This level fits into the very notion of minimum sufficiency that has been much talked about recently.

Since 1991 the non-strategic (tactical) nuclear weapons have been reduced pursuant to Unilateral Presidential initiatives. In the course of implementing these initiatives:

- all of the Russians non-strategic nuclear weapons have been stationed strictly within our national territory and moved to the Ministry of Defense central storage facilities;

- more than 50% of the total number of nuclear weapons for sea-launched, air-launched tactical missiles, air defense missiles and nuclear air bombs have been eliminated.
We would like to once again call your attention to the Russian proposal on pulling back all nuclear weapons to the territories of the nuclear states that possess them. This will increase confidence in their safety and security.

Thus, Russia has practically completed all its initiatives concerning non-strategic nuclear weapon reductions, except for eliminating the Army's nuclear munitions. Elimination of nuclear warheads for land-based tactical missiles, nuclear artillery shells and nuclear mines is pursued on the basis of technological capabilities of the nuclear weapon complex and available financing. Furthermore, Russia continues to consistently and scrupulously abide by its treaty obligations concerning elimination and reduction of conventional weapons, strategic offensive weapons and elimination of its chemical weapons stockpiles.

The Russian nuclear weapons are kept under reliable control. Improving the effectiveness of this control is achieved through organizational and technical measures. In particular, from 1991 the total amount of nuclear weapons stockpiles has been reduced more than fivefold, and the number of nuclear weapons storage facilities has been cut by more than four times. This has made it possible to concentrate financial resources on ensuring the safety and reliable protection of the nuclear munitions storage facilities using state-of-the-art technical means of security and physical protection.

Russia has developed and introduced a set of measures to counter terrorist actions. We carry out periodic comprehensive checks of all facilities which pose nuclear and radiation risks in terms of security and readiness to prevent terrorist actions.

In the process, the principle underlying anti-terrorist activities is the of "track down, block and destroy". One of the most important areas in its realization is training rapid reaction groups personnel and improving the systems of physical protection of storage facilities for both nuclear weapons and nuclear materials.

One of the key elements of narrowing down the geographic scope of nuclear weapons' presence is establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ) in various parts of the world.

The Russian Federation supports the efforts by states seeking to establish such zones and believes that in light of the need for intensifying the struggle with new
challenges and threats. NWFZs provide a real contribution toward strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In our view, the NWFZs are also an important element of improving confidence among states, international stability and security and promoting arms control processes at the global and regional levels.

I would also like to make the following points.

One of the steps taken by the Russian Federation to reduce the nuclear threat was the statement by the Russian President of May 27, 1997, on detargeting strategic nuclear weapons. As a result of this initiative, the launch of missiles becomes technically impossible in the absence of a real flight mission plan.

Along with treaties on nuclear weapons limitations and reductions we attach particular importance to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Russia ratified the CTBT in 2000 and is pursuing a principled course toward ensuring the earliest possible entry into force of that treaty, one of the most important instruments in the area of nuclear weapons non-proliferation and nuclear weapons limitation.

At the same time we are alarmed by the situation with the Treaty’s entry into force. To date, not all of the countries whose accession to the Treaty is key to its entry into force have ratified it.

I also wish to note that our steps toward nuclear disarmament are accompanied by relevant structural changes in the Russian Federation’s nuclear weapons sector.

We have reduced by one half our production capacity that is excessive for defensive purposes.

Together with the United States we are working toward shutting down the Russian industrial uranium-graphite reactors for the weapon-grade plutonium production. The material produced by those facilities is not used for military purposes.

The production of uranium in Russia for manufacturing nuclear weapons was terminated long ago.

We attach great importance to the earliest possible start of disposition by Russia and the United States of 34 tons of weapon-grade plutonium for each side that is no
longer required for defensive purposes. This would ensure the start of the process of irreversible transformation of excessive amounts of weapon-grade plutonium into forms unusable for manufacturing nuclear weapons.

Russia supports an early beginning of negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament to achieve a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

The Russian Federation has consistently opposed placing any types of weapons in outer space. The emergence of weapons in space would not only mean expansion of spheres of military competition, but a qualitative breakthrough fraught with unpredictable consequences for the entire arms control process, strategic stability and international security as a whole.

Thus, the Russian Federation is demonstrating its resolve to really address the issue of nuclear weapons reductions and disarmament. We urge all other nuclear countries to join in this process.

At the same time I believe it should be stressed that nuclear weapons reductions require huge financial resources and major organizational efforts. Therefore, forcing the pace of this process may result in the emergence of unrealistic and hardly achievable objectives for its participants.

Thank you.