



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF CUBA, H.E. AMBASSADOR BRUNO RODRÍGUEZ
PARRILLA, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST
COMMITTEE. NEW YORK, 1 OCTOBER 2002.**

Mr. Chairman:

First of all, I would like to commend you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and assure full support from the Cuban delegation. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Mr. Chairman:

Due to its importance, I would like to begin by reiterating the announcement made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, in his statement at the Debate of the General Assembly, last 14 September. On that occasion, Mr. Felipe Pérez Roque stated that our country has decided to become a State Party to the **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**, as a signal of the clear political will of the Cuban Government and its commitment to an effective disarmament process that ensures world peace.

In doing so, we reaffirm our hope that all nuclear weapons will be totally eliminated under strict international verification.

Cuba intends to actively join the preparatory process of the coming NPT Review Conference, and work together with other State Parties that share our concerns on the limitations of the Treaty and the lack of fulfillment of obligations by the nuclear States.

In addition, and despite the fact that the only nuclear power in the Americas pursues a policy of hostility towards Cuba that does not rule out the use of force, Cuba will also ratify the **Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean**, known as Treaty of Tlatelolco, that had been signed by our country in 1995.

The Government of the Republic of Cuba has already initiated the necessary national domestic procedures to become a State Party of both Treaties in the shortest possible time-frame.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the numerous delegations that have welcomed or intend to welcome Cuba's decision, in this debate or in any given moment.

Mr. Chairman:

The emergence of a unipolar world has been far from resulting in greater security for most of us.

Despite the end of the Cold War, **military expenditures** continue to increase on an accelerated basis, instead of devoting more resources to development.

How much could be achieved worldwide if only a part of 849 000 million dollars that are currently used annually on military expenditures, almost half of the figure by only one country, were invested in the assistance of 815 million hungry people, 1.2 billion people in abject poverty, 854 million illiterate adults and 2.4 billion people without basic sanitation or the 40 million human beings sick or having contracted the AIDS virus.

Wouldn't it be much better to use those huge amounts of money to reduce the difference in income between the richest and the poorest countries, which was 37 times in 1960, and it now stands at 74 times?

Thus, Cuba restates the proposal of agreeing, as an immediate step, that 50% of what is currently earmarked for military spending be channeled to a fund available to the UN for sustainable development. That would instantly raise more than US\$ 400 billion.

Mr. Chairman:

Some US Government senior officials have addressed slandering accusations against Cuba, alleging that our country carries out a "limited offensive research work and biological warfare development".

Once again, Cuba rejects with strong determination such lies. In contrast to the United States, Cuba does not possess, nor does it intend to ever possess, any weapon of mass destruction.

It is the United States and not Cuba who opposes to the strengthening of the **Biological Weapons Convention**, by means of a protocol that includes transparent and non-discriminatory international verification measures.

Cuba restates the validity of the Ad Hoc Expert Group mandate, which has been negotiating the aforementioned protocol for more than six years, and calls on the United States to discontinue their insistent attempts of overseeing so many years of effort by the international community.

Mr. Chairman:

Multilateral Diplomacy in the field of disarmament is at a critical point.

It is a matter of urgent concern the unilateral trend that the government of the major military power shows, which is reflected, among many other examples, in the negotiations of the protocol to strengthen the **Biological Weapons Convention** and the abrogation of the **ABM Treaty** this year. We can also appreciate the steps towards the **Antimissile Defense System** deployment, the opposition to **CTBT** and to the inclusion of key proposals in the **Program of Action to combat illicit trafficking in small and light weapons**.

Through pressures, including the threat to stop paying its financial contributions, the United States had the Director General of the **Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons** dismissed in April this year.

It is unacceptable that a country, no matter how powerful it is, maneuvers at its whim who can and cannot take key posts in an international organization, according to narrow national interests.

On the other hand, the US **Nuclear Posture Review** was revealed early this year, through which the potential uses of nuclear weapons are enhanced, including among the possible targets, countries that do not possess such weapons and try to legitimize the indefinite possession of these weapons.

Additionally, they are now trying to impose on us the so called “pre-emptive war” doctrine, a clear violation of the spirit and letter of the UN Charter, while Iraq is being threatened by a unilateral military action, if the Security Council does not yield to the pressures to endorse this new war.

Nowadays, when being more threatened than ever, Cuba strongly supports the necessity to preserve multilateralism in international relations.

Keeping unilateralism from consolidating and eroding the role of the United Nations is a collective responsibility and begins with such elementary actions like that of ensuring resources and the appropriate number of meetings for specialized bodies on disarmament.

The Department for Disarmament Affairs is the smallest one in the UN and the First Committee is the one that less meets, if compared to the rest of the main Committees. Yet, the celebration of an even more concise session was actually proposed this year, which fortunately did not succeed.

The UN Disarmament Commission, the only universal deliberative specialized body on disarmament, could not celebrate this year session, for other events were considered of higher priority in the UN Agenda.

The Conference on Disarmament remains stagnant and it has not been able to begin negotiations on the highest priority disarmament issue, the nuclear disarmament, due to some countries’ inflexible positions.

Cuba considers of major importance the adoption by the First Committee this year of a resolution on the full validity of multilateralism in the field of disarmament. We expect this resolution receives a strong support by Member States.

Thank you very much