



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA, AMBASSADOR RODNEY LÓPEZ CLEMENTE, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE, UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY . NEW YORK, 13 OCTOBER 2003.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me, first of all, to commend you on your election as Chairman and ensure the firm support of the Cuban delegation to the works of the First Committee. I would also like to commend the rest of the Chair members.

Mr. Chairman,

If the Cold War period was allegedly surmounted, how can we explain that global military expenditures continue to increase, reaching a figure over a billion dollars this year, almost the half of which corresponds to only one country?

Under what justification do nuclear weapons continue to be created and their role reinforced on certain countries' security doctrines?

How to explain the development of new conventional weapons of great destructive power arms that jeopardize the security of States and may cause irreversible harm to the environment?

What is the aim of the efforts made to militarize outer space?

How much could be accomplished, if only a part of that colossal amount of money were invested for the search of solutions to poverty, underdevelopment, insalubrity and the gap reduction among the richest and the poorest countries?

Mr. Chairman,

The outbreak of a unipolar world, where only a super Power maintains the military capacity to control the international scenario, has established a situation where hegemonism prevails, as well as, direct or disguised interventionism, insecurity for the weakest countries, jointly with the attempt to validate the pre-emptive use of force doctrine and become unaware of the basic principles of International Law, such as, sovereign equality among States, self-determination, non-intervention, non-threat or use of force and the solution to controversies by pacific means, among others.

This situation is reflected in the attempts to question the validity of established international bodies and instruments in disarmament and arms control field, and draw the attention of the international community to non-proliferation in detriment of disarmament. Cuba is firmly convinced that the only secure and effective way of avoiding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is achieving their total elimination.

Cuba reiterates the need to preserve multilateralism in international relations, under the principles of International Law and the UN Charter, an issue noted in the Millennium Declaration.

We reaffirm multilateralism as a basic principle not only of the negotiations in the disarmament and non-proliferation field, but also to solve any other problem or concern that may arise among States party in the implementation of agreement provisions in the field. These consultation and negotiation processes shall be carried out by means of the appropriate international procedures in the framework of the United Nations, or within the treaty mechanism, in order to preserve the collective security system enshrined in its constitutive Charter.

Thus, we ratify the importance for the First Committee to adopt, once again this year, a resolution on the promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

The dangerous trend to adopt decisions on disarmament and arms control, outside the United Nations, in unclear negotiating processes and the attempts that this Assembly further on endorses what was established in such exercises, results unacceptable.

In this regard, we recall that the United Nations First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament are the only universal deliberating and negotiating bodies, respectively, for these issues. In order to improve the stagnation of the Disarmament Agenda, reflected in the functioning of the mechanism established to deal with it, a renewed political support from the international community, especially from those countries questioning the priorities on disarmament and non-proliferation established in the first General Assembly session devoted to disarmament.

Cuba believes that a real, effective and comprehensive democratizing process of the United Nations must be undertaken, without any delay, to guarantee the capacity of the Organization to preserve peace and lead a complete and comprehensive disarmament struggle, including nuclear disarmament, which humankind looks up to. The reform and revitalization of the General Assembly shall be a unique and integrated process undertaken within the scope of the working group established to this end. It is there where important decisions should be made to guarantee a more effective and efficient work of all General Assembly Main Committees, including the First Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

On a reiterated and dangerous basis, high-ranking officials of the United States government have been launching a series of totally false and unfounded accusations against Cuba, alleging, without any proofs at all, that our country has a limited capacity of research and development of biological weapons.

Once more, we strongly reject such lies that attempt to link Cuba to bioterrorism. Differently from the United States, my country neither has nor intends to ever have any weapon of mass destruction; neither is my country the one opposing the strengthening of the Conference on Biological Weapons through a Protocol that includes international, transparent and non-discriminatory control measures.

My country's biological and biotechnological potential is used in favor of health, life and development not only for the Cuban people, but also in solidarity with other peoples of the world.

The allegedly link of Cuba with bioterrorism is used to justify the intensified subversion against our country and the criminal economic, commercial and financial embargo policy, which has brought about enormous human and economic damages. It represents a permanent threat to our country's national security, contravenes International Law and the UN Charter.

Mr. Chairman,

During the last years, the Cuban government has been taking steps forward that reflect its political will and commitment with an effective disarmament process, especially with nuclear disarmament.

Last 18th September, Cuba signed a Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and an additional protocol to such agreement in Vienna, pursuant to the commitments as a State Party of the Tlatelolco and Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaties.

Cuba's ratification on the Tlatelolco Treaty has enabled this international instrument to be comprehensively implemented and the consolidation of the first world densely inhabited zone completely free of nuclear weapons, which will be officially acknowledged by the XVIII General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of the Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), to be held from 5-6th November, 2003 in Havana. The celebration of such important event in Havana constitutes a new proof of our commitment to peace, disarmament and multilateralism.

Thank you very much