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Российской Федерации
при
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Наций



Permanent Mission
of the Russian Federation
to the United Nations

136 East 67th Street
New York, NY 10021

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S T A T E M E N T

**BY AMBASSADOR LEONID A. SKOTNIKOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA,
IN THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 59-TH SESSION
OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Mr. Chairman,

In today's rapidly evolving world which is confronted with new challenges and threats it is objectively of a greater importance for the international community to take concerted action in maintaining security and stability. The Russian Federation consistently advocates that the UN plays the central role in resolving this task vital for the humanity. The UN has a necessary potential for that. As the President of the Russian Federation stressed "...an adequate response to the most serious threats of the 21st century - international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and regional conflicts – can only be provided by the united efforts of the world community relying on the tools of the UN and international law."

One of the most important areas for the international community to exert joint efforts is non-proliferation, arms reduction, and disarmament.

Non-proliferation of WMD, means of their delivery and related materials and technologies is particularly urgent in the current environment. Negative trends have been piling up in this area. To overcome them joint efforts of all nations are needed. This work should be aimed at both strengthening multilateral instruments and mechanisms in this area and at taking effective national measures. The Group of Eight has laid down its ideas to this effect in the Plan of Action approved in June, in Sea-Island.

A particular topicality of effective measures in non-proliferation today is dictated also by a threat of WMD falling into the hands of terrorists. To remove this threat the UN Security Council, with Russia's most active participation, has worked out and adopted Resolution 1540. It lays a sound groundwork for countering WMD black markets which are the most probable channels for terrorists to lay their hands on these weapons and relevant materials. It is now necessary to ensure a full-fledged implementation of this resolution by all states. We would also like to stress that the tasks of countering WMD proliferation and combating terrorism should be

resolved in strict conformity with the norms of international law, and taking into account legitimate interests of security and development of all states.

The central role in strengthening the regime of nuclear non-proliferation is played by the NPT. Russia strictly and consistently implements its obligations and initiatives in nuclear disarmament, particularly within the framework of Article VI of the Treaty. Our practical deeds are there to prove it. Russia has submitted detailed information on this account to the third session of the Preparatory Committee of the NPT Review Conference. We believe that a step-by-step advance towards comprehensive and total nuclear disarmament based on a comprehensive approach is needed with no unreal benchmarks and objectives to be proposed. Nuclear disarmament cannot be conducted outside the context of the situation with other kinds of weapons and without taking into account political developments in the world and particularly in Europe including evolution and enlargement of military-political alliances.

We attach extremely great importance to the success of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. Regretfully, the results of the previous session of the Preparatory Committee inspire no optimism. It is important that by the 2005 Conference, all Treaty members are conscious that the main thing that unites them is the need to preserve NPT and to enhance on its basis the efficiency of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Russia views the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a key instrument in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Its significance is evidenced by the foreign ministers' new joint statement in support of the CTBT adopted by the General Assembly on 23 September 2004. We call on all countries, which have not yet signed and ratified the CTBT to do so as soon as possible. First of all we have in mind those states whose ratification of this Treaty is needed for it to come into force. It is also important that until this moment the moratorium on nuclear weapons test explosions and any other nuclear explosions is maintained.

In his address to the current UN General Assembly the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia drew once again attention to the task of keeping outer space weapons-free. As is known, in the interests of achieving this aim Russia and China in co-authorship with a number of other states submitted to the Conference on Disarmament a draft of basic elements of a comprehensive agreement on non-placement of weapons in outer space. The draft sets forth the following fundamental obligations: not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying any kinds of weapons, not to install such weapons on celestial bodies and not to station such weapons in outer space in any other manner; not to resort to the threat or use of force against outer space objects. The conceptual discussion of this issue has advanced over the last year. We hope that the work of the Conference on Disarmament will be unblocked and an Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space will be reestablished to start multilateral substantive discussion of a draft agreement.

Russia is pursuing a steady course of preventing the arms race in outer space. Let us recall that as far back as 1983 the Soviet Union assumed an obligation not to be the first in placing any kind of anti-satellite weapons in outer space. We remain committed to this obligation up to the present day. Moreover, we shall not be the first to place any weapons in outer space. We call on all nations with an outer space potential to follow our suit, which will make it possible to maintain a peaceful status of outer space. We are confident that this will benefit all the nations with no exception.

We believe that missile non-proliferation is also a priority. Regrettably, the respective UN Group of governmental experts which has been working this year on the Secretary General's draft report on missiles failed to achieve progress due to serious contradictions in the positions of certain states. Nevertheless, the UN should continue a substantive discussion of missile issues.

Fulfillment by all countries of commitments under the Convention on Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, primarily those related to the destruction of such

weapons is of great importance. Russia supports the efforts aimed at making the CPCW universal and at setting up national mechanisms of its implementation.

We continue to advocate the strengthening of the Convention on Biological and Toxic Weapons (CBTW) regime by creating its verification mechanism. Such a mechanism could really facilitate prevention of hazardous biological materials and technologies from spreading and from their falling into the hands of terrorists. Work needs to be carried on to make the Convention universal.

From our perspective, the UN group of governmental experts on information security, set up in conformity with the General Assembly Resolution submitted by Russia, made a good start. This is the first experience of a joint analysis with a view to working out an agreed approach in this area. We deem it important that this session of the General Assembly adopts another resolution on the item "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security" to reaffirm general framework and directions in the Group's activities. Hopefully, drawing on previous experience the draft will be adopted by consensus.

We positively evaluate the work of the Geneva-based Group of governmental experts within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The adoption of the new fifth Protocol to the CCW aimed at reducing humanitarian aftermath of the explosive remnants of war became a significant event. What is now important for all States is to fulfill all national ratification procedures with respect to the new document so as to ensure its prompt entry into force.

We would like to underscore once again the UN leading role in shaping a holistic approach to the solution of the problems regarding small arms and light weapons. In conformity with Resolution 58/241 of the UN GA the first session of the open-membership working group, held last June, proceeded to the elaboration of a draft international paper enabling to detect and track down illicit traffic of the

SALW. Russia will continue its constructive participation in the activities of this group that is quite capable of putting forward specific proposals for the 2006 SALW Review Conference.

Progress in promoting security and disarmament at the regional level could undoubtedly have a positive impact on relevant global efforts. In July 2004 Russia joined three other states, namely Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine and ratified the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe. It envisages a considerable adjustment of the limitations system and other CFE provisions account taken of the changes in the political and military situation on the continent. It also opens up a possibility for a wider membership to the Treaty. The Agreement should provide a considerable input to the European security. The prompt entry of the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty into force would be in the interests of all Parties. It would be a fulfillment of the commitment "to move forward expeditiously to facilitate completion of national ratification procedures", contained in the Final Act of the 1999 Conference of the States Parties to the CFE Treaty. Russia sees no constructive alternative to the expeditious entry into force of the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty.

Regrettably, we have not succeeded in launching substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament. The UN Commission on Disarmament has been stalling as well. The main reason is again the lack of political will in seeking compromises. Nevertheless, this year, although in an unofficially format, a range of important discussions of the substance of items on its agenda was held. These debates have shown that Conference is facing a lot of work before it and revealed the willingness of most of its participants in seeing the Conference to go down to business at last. We hope that the efforts aimed at bringing closer the positions and thus finding agreement on the program of work of the Conference on Disarmament would build up and lead to a long-awaited breakthrough.

Russia remains open to further discussions of ways for making the work of the First Committee more efficient. With this in mind, it is especially important to take into account a specific nature of its tasks and scope of competence, have respect for Member-States' rights, and ensure an interlink with the enhancement of activities of the General Assembly as a whole.

Thank you.