



Statement by

**H.E Mr. Itzhak Levanon**

**Permanent Representative of Israel to the  
United Nations in Geneva**

60<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly  
Statement of Israel to the First Committee

United Nations, New York  
7 October 2005

Mr. Chairman,

Since it is my first participation in the First Committee, allow me to congratulate you, and to express my delegation's full support in the important work the Committee you chair is doing. The issues at stake are important and need to be addressed with clarity.

For the past few years the world of disarmament has been ditched in stagnation due to inability of the parties to agree on a common agenda, on the way to face the different challenges and on the priorities in its work: the stalemate we witness in the CD and the UNDC is a clear reflection of the situation the world of disarmament is in. The inability to agree only recently on language dealing with disarmament and non-proliferation in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, underlines this stalemate all too well.

These fora do not operate in a vacuum. The objective we seek in disarmament is to tackle threats to global security and find solutions to the existing challenges. If we leave behind us our obstinacy to deal with outdated or irrelevant issues, and if we abandon the obstructive approach that has become a norm of having "all or nothing" and come to realize that instead we need to have a pragmatic and realistic approach, then substantive work in the different fora will restart.

I would like to enumerate the threats and challenges we are facing today:

The further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and its technology, by States and Non-State actors;

The irresponsible behavior of States, their non compliance with the obligations they have taken when adhering to the different regimes and the clandestine WMD projects disguised by those states as civilian projects;

Terrorism in all its aspects. On this matter, it is not only the phenomenon that represents the threat but also it's possible connection with weapons of mass destruction, the intentional use of MANPADS and other type of weapons capable of causing large scale casualties of civilians, and the accumulation of small arms and light weapons, ammunitions, explosives and short range rockets;

Words can be as deadly as weapons. The continuous incitement to violence and hatred by States secular and religious leaders, the repeated use of threatening language against the very existence of States can be as a destabilizing factor as are certain types of weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

The perception of certain concepts needs to be adjusted:

The international community needs to choose the adequate tools according to its target, with the perspective of strengthening global stability, peace and security. When disarmament is applicable and is relevant, then it ought to be the chosen tool. When

the reality is such that disarmament becomes irrelevant, for example in cases of conflict or existential threats, other instruments need to be considered.

In the current state of affairs, confronting the challenges we are facing today, we are of the view that substantive weight should be given to non-proliferation efforts, based on policy of a results oriented diplomacy with close cooperation on both bilateral and multilateral levels.

Moreover, the conceptual and traditional association between progress in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation has become irrelevant. These are two issues of different nature that need to be conceptually and practically de-linked. The International Community needs to strengthen the steps taken in the field of non-proliferation without seeking to link it to progress, or to the lack of progress in the field of disarmament. It is obvious that total and global disarmament, starting with peace between neighbors and good neighborliness remain an important goal.

The conceptual separation between Fuel Cycle Technology for military purposes and the technology for civilian purposes needs to be reviewed.

The developments of the last years have made it clear that the incautious proliferation of fuel cycle technologies could be diverted towards the development of military programmes.

It is incumbent upon us to ensure that States acting in bad faith should be prevented from exploiting the loopholes existing in the current international regimes and norms. These States, by doing so, hamper the right of all members of the international community to peaceful nuclear energy.

Issues concerning the Fuel Cycle:

As we have clearly witnessed during the last years, the right, granted under article IV of the NPT, to benefit from nuclear technology for peaceful purposes has been misused by some countries, primarily Iran, in their effort to develop clandestine military nuclear programs.

It has emerged that, notwithstanding its importance and advantages, the IAEA safeguards regime does not provide a sufficient basis for uncovering clandestine nuclear programs and facilities.

It has also transpired that the technology, know-how and equipment needed to develop military nuclear programs especially dual-use technologies in the field of the fuel cycle, and specifically uranium enrichment, have become much more accessible.

The revelation of the existence of the Khan black-market and proliferation networks, through which equipment, technology, whole facilities and even blueprints of weapons have been transferred, has shown that we are no longer facing just a small group of countries of concern in their export behavior, but increasingly also important non-state actors.

We are of the view that the traditional mechanisms of non-proliferation, important as they are, have proven to be insufficient to deal with the current challenges. It is therefore our belief that new arrangements and tools need to be developed in order to complement those mechanisms and address the real challenges.

As for terrorism:

This year, this ugly scourge has stricken again on many occasions and has caused thousands of casualties among innocent civilians. It is obvious that the establishment of a linkage between terrorism and WMD is only a question of time: terrorist groups that will acquire the technological capability to develop any type of WMD will use it. This dangerous trend, combined with the continuous trend of suicide terrorism that has hit lately, not only in our part of the world but also in London, Sharm El-Sheikh, Bally and elsewhere, have the potential to perturb significantly the security and stability of all, be it on personal, global or regional level. We therefore welcome UN security Council resolution 1540 as it has made a significant in enhancing the joint struggle against WMD terrorism

The attempt by some parties to grant a certain level of legitimacy to terrorist organizations and to tolerate the use of certain types of weapons by non-state actors is dangerous and inadmissible. No non-state actor should be allowed to obtain weapons such as land-mines or MANPADS. Israel for its part has taken recently concrete measures in this regards by its decision to prolong its moratorium on the export of any anti personal mines and undertook to adhere to the Wassenaar Guidelines on MANPADS.

Terrorism cannot exist in vacuum; Terrorist organizations are supported and financed by states. Therefore, international community must take action to curb the flow of resources and arms to terrorist groups and their sponsors.

MANPADS:

In our view, equal determination should be attached to the efforts taken by the International Community to prevent terrorists and other non-state actors from acquiring and using MANPADS, very short range rockets and other types of missiles.

Last year this forum has adopted for the first time a resolution providing guidelines for measures to be taken by States in order to prevent the unauthorized proliferation of MANPADS. I would like to emphasize the importance of this resolution and to see more steps taken to deal with this issue in a concrete and efficient way.

### Export Controls

Israel supports and participates in international efforts to identify concrete and effective steps against the proliferation of WMD. We believe that cooperation between states should increase and be strengthened significantly.

Subsequently, Israel stresses the importance of the implementation of UNSC resolution 1540 at a national level by all members of the international community. In this regard, Israel has also expressed its support for the PSI and other initiatives in this regard such as the Mega Port and the CSI and will continue to do so in the future.

We are of the view that tight Export Control regimes are a crucial instrument in the efforts of States to prevent both State and Non-State Actors from acquiring WMD-related material. My country fully associates itself with the efforts made by the different export control regimes to encounter the challenges I have described before. We think that, notwithstanding the significance of the bilateral and multilateral efforts to confront these threats, it needs to be done primarily at the national level, since each state is responsible and accountable for its own actions.

For its part, Israel adopted last year an Export and Import Control Order designed to consolidate and further regulate the control over the export of a chemical, biological and nuclear nature. This Order includes a "catch all" provision that prohibits the export of materials and items designated for WMD and establishes licensing requirements for sensitive items based on the lists of the Australia and Nuclear Suppliers Groups. By doing so and in addition to the unilateral adherence to the MTCR guidelines since 1991 Israel is de-facto, in compliance with the different export control regimes.

Our part of the world continues to be characterized by clear and vigorous hostility towards Israel in which violence and terrorism are unfortunately still part of the daily life.

The international community has devoted much of its attention to address the threats related to weapons of mass destruction. It is only in the recent past that the threat of illicit spread of conventional arms has been taken up more seriously. Conventional arms in particular in unauthorized hands are increasing human suffering in many parts of the world.

There are few principles that guide Israel while addressing the issue of conventional arms:

First, arms as such do not pose threats, as aptly phrased many years ago in the saying, "A sword never kills anybody; it's a tool in the killer's hand". The poisonous combination of extensive armaments and hostile intentions is the genuine threat.

Second, armaments are in many cases a legitimate response to a given situation in which States are compelled to defend and secure their territory and populations. Building confidence in a region will reduce the need for arms. When nations will live together in a spirit of peace and good neighborliness, it will be possible to reduce armaments and increase transparency.

Third, arms must be controlled, and restraint must be exercised by every state, in order to prevent unnecessary human suffering and loss of human life.

The uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons, their acquisition by terrorist or criminal elements, invariably results in the loss of life. It is for this reason that my government views the irresponsible use and transfer of conventional arms as a serious threat to regional and global security and stability.

Though we note substantive progress in the field of conventional arms control, there is yet no place for complacency in this regard. The UN Programme of Action to Prevent and Eradicate Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons has made a significant breakthrough that has demonstrated the political determination needed to address the problem of illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. We however continue to believe that the lack of a clear call to prevent SALW from terrorists as well as from unauthorized entities is one of its shortcomings; nevertheless the POA constitutes a good basis for addressing the phenomenon of illicit of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Israel welcomes the positive outcome of the open-ended working group that has negotiated the new instrument on tracing illicit small arms and light. The implementation of this new instrument as well as the POA would contribute to reducing human suffering if implemented by all states. We are looking forward to the review conference of the POA next July here in New York.

We hope the disengagement plan we have just realized from Gaza will alter for the better the security environment and significantly reduce the existential threats Israel is facing today.

We expect the Palestinian Authority to implement its commitment to collect Small Arms and Light Weapons from terrorist organizations, thus barring terrorists from obtaining Small Arms and Light Weapons and munitions as well as denying financial and other resources to acquire them. For Israel as well as for other states in our region and the international community, the implementation of the UN Programme of Action has become even more relevant. This situation presents an opportunity for the provisions set out in the Programme of Action. We consider this as a fundamental and crucial step for progress in the peace process.

At present, some neighboring countries, and countries in our region, have resolved to develop weapons of mass destruction, therefore ignoring their legal obligations, and supporting terrorist organizations. The combination of these acts, together with public threats to the very existence of the State of Israel is moving our region away from the vision of Peace and security.

The Middle East needs a restructured security architecture laying on the foundation of cooperation in the field of security, whereby each state will be reassured of the safety of its population and its peaceful existence, allowing the development of normalized relations, bringing prosperity to all.

We can start with confidence-building measures, enhancing trust and strengthening security. Measures that will set the conditions for sustainable peace and stability, ease tensions and enable us to confront together the new threats to the region. Reducing threats to regional security will pave the way for the reduction in arms accumulation and arms race in all its aspects, thus giving the economy, education and social components of national security the leading role it deserves.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding WMD free zone, it is well known that Israel supports the eventual establishment of a mutually and effectively verifiable zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as their means of delivery. The establishment of such a zone should be based on arrangements freely arrived at by all the States of the region.

Israel believes that the political realities in the Middle East mandate a practical step-by-step approach. This process should begin with modest Confidence Building Measures followed by the establishment of peaceful relations, reconciliation and good neighborliness, that could possibly be complemented by conventional and non-conventional arms control measures. This process could eventually lead to more ambitious goals such as the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

This objective can only be reached as the result of direct dialogue between all States of the region. Artificial or imposed measures whose goal is to reduce Israel's capacity to defend itself cannot help establishing trust, security and peace in the region.

In conclusion,

We see the duty of this forum to find consensus that will be achievable, realistic and practical, that will eventually address the actual challenges to international peace and security. If we are to improve meaningfully human security and enable sustainable development, we should adopt an approach that would enable us to engage seriously in finding a solution. Trying to circumvent consensus will only hinder the integrity of our work and may hinder the important task we have been entrusted.

Thank you