



PAKISTAN

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Statement

by

Ambassador Zamir Akram,
Permanent Representative of Pakistan
to the United Nations,
Geneva,

at

the Thematic Debate on
Nuclear Weapons

in the First Committee,

63rd United Nations General Assembly

New York
15 October 2008

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At its First Special Session on Disarmament, the General Assembly recognized that nuclear weapons posed a threat to the very survival of humanity. It agreed that disarmament and arms limitation, especially in the field of nuclear weapons, were essential for the prevention of the danger of nuclear war and the strengthening of international peace and security.

However, thirty years down the road, humanity is still faced with the danger of more than 25,000 nuclear warheads – many of them on hair trigger alert. The security of over half of humanity is undermined and threatened by the presence of huge nuclear weapon stockpiles.

Despite substantial reductions in existing arsenals, nuclear disarmament remains an elusive objective. Recent trends have witnessed a progressive erosion of international arms control and non-proliferation structures, which is evident from: disavowal by most of the NPT Nuclear Weapon States of complete Nuclear Disarmament; demise of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty; the prolonged non-entry into force of the CTBT; and prospects of new tests by some States; the emergence of doctrines envisaging the use of nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear weapon States; plans to develop such “usable” nuclear weapons; pursuit of selective non-proliferation; discriminatory conditions for peaceful nuclear cooperation; growing asymmetry in military power among States; the danger of acquisition of Weapons of Mass Destruction by terrorists and other non-state actors.

Even as we struggle to erect barriers against proliferation at the state level and the threat of acquisition of nuclear weapons by non-state actors and terrorists, we sometimes tend to lose sight of the broader picture that the best defence against the possible use of nuclear weapons is through the total elimination of such weapons.

Both non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are important to international peace and security. Their simultaneous pursuit alone can erect effective barriers against risks of proliferation. Vertical proliferation, or

improvement in nuclear weapon systems, compounds uncertainties and instabilities, and spurs new strategic competitions. The determination of few powerful states to retain the option of WMDs while prescribing strict regimes for the weaker states only aggravates the sense of insecurity among states.

Till the time we agree to revive the international consensus regarding the need for general and complete disarmament under effective international control, the quest for an environment of peace and security would remain elusive. The International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion of 1996, has called for negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention to secure complete and irreversible disarmament.

Conference on Disarmament

By demonstrating political will to move forward towards promoting the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation, member states can enable the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the sole multilateral negotiating body, to address all the priority issues on its agenda – Nuclear Disarmament, Security Assurances to Non-Nuclear Weapons States, Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and a verifiable Fissile Material Treaty.

The proposals presented in the Conference on Disarmament in 2007 as well as 2008 negated the principle of equal security for all, served interests of few states and undermined the agreed basis of negotiations of a verifiable fissile material treaty.

Fissile Material Treaty (FMT)

Pakistan supports negotiation of a verifiable treaty on fissile material in the Conference on Disarmament. Such a treaty is an essential condition for the effective cessation of a nuclear arms race. To make it a genuine nuclear disarmament measure, it should include 'verification' and 'stocks'. It should also be equitable and balanced for the following reasons:

One, it would in part bring non-NPT nuclear states into the non-proliferation regime. These states will fulfill their obligations as responsible nuclear weapon states.

Two, a treaty without verification will just be a soft law and simply a half-hearted non-proliferation measure. Such an outcome will not only take us away from the goal of world free of nuclear weapons, but will also fail to ensure full compliance.

Three, a verifiable FMT on past and present production will plug any possible leakage to nuclear terrorists and stop other kinds of illicit diversion of fissile materials.

The proposed treaty must also address the question of production – past, present and future – in its entirety at both regional and global levels. The rationale for inclusion of stocks in the scope of a treaty includes:

One, a cut-off in future production alone will simply finalize and formalize the status quo. For states with huge stockpiles, the only cost would be to accept the safeguards on their non-operational enrichment and reprocessing facilities.

Two, a mere cut-off will run the risk of both vertical and horizontal proliferation, since existing stockpiles, unless accounted for and monitored, could be used for the development of new and more sophisticated nuclear weapons.

Three, the asymmetry in the stockpiles at the global and regional levels will be a factor of strategic instability. An FMT, which freezes regional asymmetries, will, in our view, accelerate not arrest nuclear weapons proliferation.

Four, an FMT will have little credibility if existing stocks of military fissile material are not addressed in some form. In addressing the question of existing stocks, upper limits of fissile materials as well as the principles of proportionality and sufficiency must be taken into account.

Negative Security Assurances (NSAs)

The UN Charter obligates nations not to use or threaten to use force. This obligation extends to nuclear weapons. The right to self-defense in this context is not unrestricted.

The demand for negative security assurances was raised by the non-nuclear-weapons States in the 1960s, and it crystallized in 1968 during the concluding phase of the negotiations for the NPT. The response of the nuclear-weapon States reflected in Resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995) of the Security Council is considered inadequate by the non-nuclear-weapon States. The demand for assurances persists and continues till today.

The United Nations General Assembly every year adopts a resolution calling for effective, credible and legally binding assurances for non-nuclear weapon States. Last year's resolution reaffirmed the urgent need to reach an early agreement of effective international arrangements on negative security assurances. It appealed to all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to work towards an early agreement on this issue.

Pakistan, since 1978, has spearheaded the efforts to seek legally binding assurances from nuclear weapon states in the UN General Assembly and the CD. Pakistan, after the nuclear tests in May 1998, remains committed to the cause and has declared not to use or threaten to use our nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear weapon State.

Equitable access to peaceful use of nuclear technology

Unfair restrictions on the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes only serve to strengthen the monopoly of few over nuclear technology and thus aggravate the sense of discrimination and existence of double standards. Such discrimination is dangerous for the integrity of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Black market networks owe their existence in part to restrictions on technology transfers also for peaceful purposes. Non-proliferation arrangements have focused on the supply side of the problem while ignoring the demand factor. An international agreement on universal and non-discriminatory criteria for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including nuclear power generation, should be evolved.

The restricted nature of certain export control arrangements is an impediment to the global implementation of non-proliferation standards. If states are required to meet standards set by these arrangements then they should be given opportunity to participate in these arrangements and benefit by sharing best practices and experiences of the founding members of these

arrangements in the area of export controls and keep abreast of technical developments.

Resolution of inter-state conflicts

Finally, objectives of peace, stability, security and socio-economic development will continue to elude various regions should they fail to address the central issues of inter-state conflicts. Efforts should be intensified to remove underlying security concerns of states that act as motivation to seek WMDs and other advanced weapons systems. Redressal of socio-economic disparities also remains imperative to comprehensively address the security challenges confronting states.
