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STATEMENT

by the Alternate Head of the Russian Delegation
at the First Committee of the 64th session of the UN General Assembly
Mr. Viktor L. Vasiliev

on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament

New York, 15 October, 2009

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

We believe that the 2010 NPT Review Conference will become a landmark event for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The international community continues to pay a steadily growing attention to this Conference and legitimately expects it to yield practical results for strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

Russia is for considering a “package” of specific steps to strengthen and increase the NPT efficiency on the basis of a well-measured balance of its three pillars – non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful use of atomic energy.

Russia has been consistently fulfilling its obligations under Article VI of the NPT in the area of nuclear disarmament.

The implementation of the Soviet-American Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) has allowed us to totally destroy 1846 ballistic and land-based cruise missiles of 500 to 5500 km range and their 825 launchers. On the whole, more than 3 thousand nuclear warheads vehicles of total yield over 500 thousand kilotons have been deactivated. We have consistently called for making this Treaty global in nature.

Russia has completely removed its nuclear weapons from the territory of Eastern Europe and republics of the Former Soviet Union.

The Russian Federation has fully and before time completed its obligations under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). Under this Treaty Russia was to keep 1600 strategic delivery vehicles and 6000 their accounted warheads. We have exceeded these obligations.

The Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions (SORT) signed in Moscow in May 2002 has ensured the continuity of disarmament and arms control process. Under this Treaty Russia and the USA are to reduce their levels of strategic nuclear warheads to 1700 – 2200 units by 31 December 2012 – thrice as less as the threshold level established by the START Treaty. The SORT implementation is well underway.

By 2009 we had eliminated over 1500 ICBM and SLBM launchers, over 3000 ICBMs and SLBMs as well as dozens of SSBNs and over 50 heavy bombers.

These facts clearly demonstrate that Russia is implementing its consistent policy towards nuclear disarmament. Moreover, pursuant to our obligations under NPT Article VI we intend to continue to move forward along the road towards further reductions of nuclear weapons. As a development of this approach on the basis the Joint Understanding signed by Presidents of Russia and the United States in Moscow on the 6th of July 2009, we have started together with the United States the intensive work with a view to signing a new full-format legally binding arrangement to replace the START Treaty. Our goal is to complete these negotiations by December 2009. We hope that we will be able to reduce levels of nuclear warheads and substantially lower – many times down – the number of strategic delivery vehicles – ICMB, SLBM and heavy bombers – to be recorded in the agreement currently being elaborated.

Mr. Chairman,

We also take note of the fact that under the NPT the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the final goal of a gradual and stage-by-stage process of complete and general disarmament under efficient international control. The progress toward “global nuclear zero” is possible only in a situation of strengthened strategic stability and strict compliance with the principle of equal security for all. This means that all States must implement a set of measures to ensure sustainable development of the disarmament process. We would like to emphasize the following of these measures:

First, all nuclear-weapon States must continue their efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament with a prospect of turning the Russia-US dialogue into five-party negotiations. In addition, these efforts should also be joined by other States. One cannot imagine the situation when nuclear-weapons States who are Parties to the NPT would disarm themselves while other States without relevant treaty obligations would maintain and build-up their nuclear military potentials.

Second, nuclear reductions may not be compensated for by building up of the strategic offensive arms with conventional warheads.

Third, nuclear disarmament should be accompanied by measures to ensure that the States do not have the so-called “upload nuclear potential”. The nuclear warheads

and their means of delivery should be eliminated irreversibly. Otherwise, real nuclear disarmament is out of question.

Forth, unilateral steps to build up the strategic anti-missile defense should be avoided. Strategic defensive and offensive arms are intrinsically linked. One can hardly imagine a situation when deep cuts in nuclear weapons would be accompanied by deliberate build-up of anti-missile defense assets that can give a military advantage to one of the sides.

Fifth, we must ensure that the weapons are not placed in outer space. Russia and China have tabled jointly a draft international treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and on the non-use of force against outer space objects at the Conference on Disarmament.

Sixth, all States must make efforts to ensure a controlled limitation of conventional weapons combined with parallel resolution of other international problems including the settlement of regional conflicts.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me emphasize that we should not forget about a close link between nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We call on all States to promote the implementation of the following measures to:

Strengthen the NPT. It is essential that all States strictly abide by their non-proliferation obligations under the Treaty.

Increase the efficiency of the IAEA verification activities. We believe that the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement is an efficient instrument that can help increase the Agency's capacity in this field. In the future, the Additional Protocol together with the Safeguards Agreement must become a universally recognized norm for verification of States' compliance with their non-proliferation obligations as well as a substantial new standard in the area of nuclear export control.

Ensure the earliest possible entry in force of the CTBT. We urge the 9 remaining States on whom the CTBT entry into force depends, to sign and/or ratify this Treaty. Let me stress that the compliance with the nuclear test moratorium – no

matter how important this measure is – cannot substitute legal obligations deriving from the CTBT.

Start the FMCT negotiations at the Conference on disarmament. We believe that all required conditions are there.

Resolve regional problems in the field of non-proliferation by political and diplomatic means.

Promoting the nuclear weapon-free zones. In this connection we welcome the entry into force of the Semipalatinsk Treaty on a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia as well as entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty on a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in Africa. At the same time, we note that the decision of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference on creating in the Middle East a zone free not only of nuclear weapons but of all WMDs and their delivery means has not yet been implemented. We are ready to engage in a substantial dialogue with all interested countries with regard of constructive proposals to implement this resolution.

Develop an effective international “safety net” to prevent the nuclear weapons and nuclear material from falling into the hands of non-State actors. Much has been already done in this area. Suffice it to mention the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and the launch of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and joint activities in the framework of multilateral export control regimes, and strengthening of the IAEA control activities. However, a lot remains to be done to effectively implement the decisions already taken.

Mr. Chairman,

In light of the increasing interest of a growing number of countries in the world to the development of nuclear energy, we would like to emphasize the importance of a wider use of atomic energy with reducing the risks of proliferation, first of all, associated with the so-called “sensitive” nuclear technologies. Of a particular importance in this context are the multilateral approaches to nuclear fuel cycle.

Russia has contributed to these multilateral approaches by launching the 2006 initiative of the President of the Russian Federation to develop a global nuclear energy infrastructure and establish international NFC centers. The establishment of the International Uranium Enrichment Centre (IUEC) in Angarsk in 2007 together with Kazakhstan is the first practical step to its implementation.

This summer Armenia joined this centre and Ukraine is currently completing its accession procedure. Our initiative is open for accession to all States, which develop nuclear energy and comply with their non-proliferation obligations. The participation in the IUEC does not require State-Parties to abandon the “sensitive” NFC elements, but provides an alternative for their development at the national level.

Moreover, in response to the initiative of the IAEA Director-General, the Government of Russia offered to establish at its own expense a reserve stock of low-enriched uranium under the management of the Agency to help countries facing shortages of fuel supplies due to non-commercial reasons. We intend to promote this initiative in the IAEA and the NPT Review process.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.