

REPUBLIC OF POLAND
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



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Address
to the Conference on Disarmament
by His Excellency
Professor Adam Daniel ROTFELD
Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Poland

Geneva, March 17, 2005

Mr. President,

Allow me to begin with the expression of my highest esteem to You and your predecessors for the continued efforts to bring back the focus of the Conference on Disarmament on its primary interest which is: negotiating international disarmament treaties.

Let me stress that you, Mister President, as well as incoming CD Presidents, may rely on our full support in the process of fulfilling your difficult task.

I would also like to take this opportunity to greet the Secretary-General of the CD and Personal Representative of the Secretary General of the UN, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze as well as his deputy, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

The new international environment is characterised by qualitatively new phenomena like mega-terrorism, unprecedented proliferation of weapons, including both conventional and weapons of mass destruction, increasing number of states in distress and the emergence of new capabilities of non-state actors to attack states. Combination of these elements poses a major challenge to states, their stability and security.

Even the most powerful states are not able to face and deal with new challenges alone. We must therefore find the ways to make multilateral structures effective and adequate so states can co-operate and respond to threats within the existing multilateral institutional framework – first and foremost within the United Nations system.

However, it is a fact of life that new security structures emerge outside of the UN system, including in non-proliferation and disarmament area, and sometimes it is necessary. This should not lead to a marginalisation of the UN and re-nationalisation of security policies.

Today, more than ever, the UN must play a critical role as it strives to hammer out a new political consensus and advance possible progress in peace and security. There is room for optimism but much hard work lies ahead. In this context, Poland positively assesses the report of the High-Level Panel „A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility”. Most of the Panel’s recommendations properly respond to the major threats to peace and security in today’s world. The report successfully attempts a broad review of issues connected with the global system of collective security, from conceptual foundations to institutional matters. The report – in our view – offered a good basis for the preparation of UN Summit decisions in 2005.

We welcomed the fact that the report took into account certain Polish postulates. We are glad that on many points it is concordant with the initiative of a *New Political Act for the UN for the 21st Century*, presented by Poland in the UN General Assembly in 2002.

On 8 February I submitted to the UN Secretary General draft elements for a New Political Act, which could be adopted and preferably signed by Heads of State and Government at the planned 2005 summit. We conceive of the New Political Act as a new consensus over how the UN Charter could best serve the implementation of its principles and objectives at the dawn of XXI century. We need a concise and solemn declaration, which would contain commitments to a number of values-based principles of a code of conduct interpreted in light of global security phenomena to which every state is subject.

Mr. President

The key challenges on the international community's agenda are the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. We have some tools to counter them but today they are insufficient.

The nuclear non-proliferation regime is equipped with a number of acts of international law - like the Non-proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It is also enforced by the activity of the International Atomic Energy Agency as well as the export control regimes. We cannot underestimate the bilateral agreements between the United States and Russian Federation on the utilisation of the post-Soviet nuclear stockpiles - the legacy of the past. Hence the array of the agreements relevant to stop the proliferation of the fissile material is broad and so far works, however not effectively enough. The crucial missing link of its chain is the lack of Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force 35 years ago, has defied gloomy predictions that, today, we would find between 15 and 50 nuclear-weapon States. With 188 States parties, it is one of the most universally supported international treaties. Given the grave perils that nuclear proliferation poses for all States, the NPT has been a true cornerstone of global security. The final document adopted at the 2000 Review Conference clearly demonstrated that all the States parties to the NPT are seriously committed to the realisation of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Let me reiterate my Government's long-standing position that advancement of nuclear disarmament implies a successful mixture of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral measures which complement and strengthen one another. Furthermore, progress on and prospects for nuclear disarmament directly affect global peace and security. This is the reason for our strong belief that the role of multilateral forums on disarmament should not be diminished, although we highly appreciate and welcome unilateral or bilateral nuclear disarmament efforts by the nuclear-weapon States. Accordingly, Poland attaches great importance to the outcome of the 2005 NPT Review Conference as a significant achievement, and strongly hopes that this event will contribute to disarmament efforts in other bodies and forums, especially in this body. I would like to use this opportunity to call upon the NPT States-Parties to make every effort possible, to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and provide us with a substantial Conference outcome - comparable to those of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences.

Mr. President,

The Conference on Disarmament can contribute effectively to the progress of multilateral system. The CD played an important role in the past. It was a venue where the most important disarmament treaties were negotiated. It served well the goal of strengthening international peace and security through enhancing of multilateral disarmament. During the cold war and after its end the Conference was a forum of dialogue and confidence building. It was a place where states could discuss - and when time came - negotiate matters of utmost importance to their security interests. Although achieving consensus was never easy, the Conference and its predecessors were able to negotiate and agree on such important treaties as Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, Chemical Weapons Convention or Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty - to name but a few. The CD successes in the past were coming from the fact that there was genuine political will to advance multilateral disarmament.

Today the Conference on Disarmament – since eight years already – dwells in discussions about its programme of work. We see endless meetings about what CD should work on, instead of discussions on the details of the negotiated treaties. Some delegations do not show necessary flexibility, while the majority of delegations is ready to start substantive work.

We need to break the stalemate of the CD. We face growing challenges in the area of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. The nuclear non-proliferation regime is under huge pressure, illicit networks of supplying WMD-related materials and technologies have shown to be of far greater threat than we expected before. Man-portable air-defence systems (MANPAD) has become a deadly tool in the hands of terrorists and vast stocks of chemical and biological weapons are still posing threat – especially if they fall into hands of non-state actors. This list can follow.

Poland – with its allies and partners – acts with energy to prevent those threats. My country is participant of activities under the Proliferation Security Initiative, which was launched in Krakow, Poland. We support the full implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 1540. We assist partners in the destruction of chemical weapons. We are actively engaged in G-8 Global Partnership against proliferation of WMD.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

This Conference faces important tasks. Long-awaited negotiations of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) should strengthen nuclear non-proliferation regime and advance disarmament goal of international community. Discussions about nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances for non-nuclear weapon states should also help strengthen the role of this Conference in multilateral arms control and disarmament. It is our view that the CD should not refrain from addressing the issue of prevention of arms race in outer space. We should thus fulfil our obligation to preserve outer space for peaceful use.

Recently presented views by this and previous President of the CD on the state of affairs in the Conference, are realistic and give us hope to establish long-awaited program of work. Let me stress Poland's willingness to start substantial work in this body as soon as possible.

There are also other issues that could find their way to the schedule of activities of the CD – we should not limit ourselves to traditional issues. MANPADs, verification and compliance of disarmament treaties, conventional weapons, confidence-building measures – are just a few examples of what this Conference could reflect on.

Mr. President,

Voices of frustration, suggesting the suspension of the work of the Conference, could recently be heard. While sharing the overall feeling of a certain disappointment with the results of work of this body, I cannot agree with such suggestions. I must emphasize once again that the CD had proved its value in the past. I strongly believe that it still has important tasks to perform.

While strengthening our efforts to reach consensus on the substance of the work of the Conference, we should bear in mind that new challenges require new responses. Organisations created in the bi-polar world must adjust to the current reality. We do not need to change the rules of procedure or founding charters. What we need is a new political consensus, an expression of political will that may enable the international community to act.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to conclude by saying that we must have a courage to go beyond our narrow national security interests in order to enhance the international system which will be providing security for all.

General de Gaulle once said: "There are moments when the will of a handful of free men breaks through determinism and opens up new roads. People get the history they deserve".

Let me express my sincere hope that all countries represented in this body can be that free to open new perspectives. And I'm confident that you, Distinguished Delegates, deserve the commencement of long-awaited negotiations.

Thank you for your attention.