



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
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**STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA, AMBASSADOR ORLANDO REQUEIJO, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION IN ITS SUBSTANTIVE SESSION. NEW YORK, 1 APRIL 2003.**

Mr. Chairman:

The delegation of Cuba would like to commend you for chairing the current substantive session of the UN Disarmament Commission. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Mr. Chairman:

The Disarmament Commission meets in circumstances when Iraq is subjected to a military aggression. We have said that it is not only an unnecessary war, under non-credible pretexts, in violation of International Law, but also unequal as one of the aggressors is the hegemonic super-power with all its overwhelming military and technological force.

With this war the US Government reinforces its unilateralist vocation, evidenced previously in the negotiations of the Protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention, the repeal of the ABM Treaty and the advances in the deployment of a national antimissile defense system, its opposition to CTBT, among other well-known examples.

Additionally, we also witness the elaboration of the so-called nuclear posture review and the new national strategy to combat weapons of mass destruction, in which the potential uses of nuclear weapons are widened including States, which do not possess them among their potential targets. At the same time, it is intended to impose on us the so-called doctrine of "pre-emptive war" which is a clear violation of the letter and spirit of the UN Charter.

Cuba defends the necessity of preserving multilateralism in international relations, including disarmament and arms control. It is worth remembering, in this context, that Resolution 57/63 entitled: "Promotion of Multilateralism in the Area of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation" was adopted by a vast majority, during the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly, which showed a clear support of the international community to this important issue.

At the same time, just as other Non-Aligned Countries, Cuba rejects unfounded accusations of failure to comply with international instruments on weapons of mass destruction and reiterates the necessity that the State Parties, when making such imputations, use the procedures established in those instruments and provide the necessary evidence.

Mr. Chairman:

Nuclear disarmament shall continue to be the highest priority in the sphere of disarmament, just as it has been agreed on by Member States for more than 20 years. Despite it has been affirmed that the so-called "Cold War" period has come to an end, tens of thousands nuclear weapons still exist, which jeopardize humankind's mere existence. Defense doctrines have also been established, which broaden the scope of situations where such arms could be used.

It is not possible to solve all the problems posed by nuclear weapons only through non-proliferation means. In this sense, we reiterate that the total elimination of such weapons shall be the only guarantee that they are not used by States that possess them, and that the threat to use them, is neither possible, as a pressure element in the relationship with other States.

Despite the complex international juncture and permanent hostility against our country by the main nuclear power and the only one in our hemisphere, Cuba recently became State Party of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is better known as Treaty of Tlatelolco, and of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Our country strictly complies with the provisions of such Treaties. At the same time, we reiterate that our adherence to NPT shall not be interpreted as a change in the well-known position of Cuba as regards the weaknesses of such Treaty and its discriminatory nature. Within the framework of the preparatory process of the coming NPT Review Conference, we will actively work together with other State Parties that share our concerns on the limitations of the Treaty and the lack of fulfillment, by the nuclear powers, of their commitments within this framework.

Mr. Chairman:

In practice, the Disarmament Commission is currently the only universal deliberative forum that discusses matters related to concrete ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament. It would be useful to remember that, unfortunately, the Conference on Disarmament held in Geneva has not been allowed to adopt a work program during the last years.

In such scenario, the final document to be adopted by the Working Group I on "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" cannot be limited to its theoretical elaboration. It is particularly important that the deliberations on this issue in our agenda be aimed at implementing concrete recommendations on how to advance towards nuclear disarmament.

The section on "Achievements and situation in the sphere of nuclear disarmament" shall contain a critical and objective balance on the current situation in this sphere.

In this regard, we consider that the new version of the document of the Working Group I has now a higher level of elaboration and constitutes, in general, a good basis to continue and conclude the negotiations on the item this year for which it is required, above all, political will of all States, particularly of nuclear-weapon States.

Mr. Chairman:

We consider that the new version of the document prepared by the former Chair of the Working Group II on "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms" constitutes a good basis to lead the discussions.

Our delegation wishes to reaffirm the voluntary character of the confidence-building measures. It reiterates that individual recipes cannot be imposed in this field, as they may be well-implemented in certain countries and regions but not necessarily in others. Thus, it is a basic principle to take into account that those measures depend, ultimately, on the concrete security conditions and some other factors existing in a specific country, region or subregion.

The design and implementation of confidence-building measures also presuppose the firm respect of the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, particularly the non-interference in the States' domestic affairs; respect to sovereignty; the non-use or threat to use force; the peaceful settlement to controversies; the right to legitimate defense; the compliance in good faith of international treaties, among others.

It is important to have in mind the complementary nature of the confidence-building measures at regional and subregional levels, with those at global level.

Little progress shall be made in the achievement of real confidence, if military threats and the hostile and aggressive policies some States are subjected to, do not disappear; or if military doctrines that give priority to the concept of offensive measures against States or groups considered hostile, including the "pre-emptive war", or if new conventional weapons with more devastating effects are designed or manufactured.

Mr. Chairman:

We are willing to contribute constructively to the success of this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, which shall achieve the results that the international community needs and expects. You may rely on our support.

Thank you very much.