



PAKISTAN

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Statement by

**Ambassador Munir Akram,
Permanent Representative of Pakistan
to the United Nations**

at the

**Substantive Session of the
UN Disarmament Commission**

**New York
01 April 2003**

Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, at the Substantive Session of the Disarmament Commission on April 1, 2003

Mr. Chairman,

It is a pleasure to see you – a skilled and experienced diplomat from a great country – a country imbued with a 5000-year history replete with triumphs and greatness. In particular, it is a pleasure to see you, a good friend, preside over the UNDC meeting, at a time which presents great challenges to the international community, and at the same time offers significant opportunities.

2. The UNDC is also fortunate in the selection of the replacement chairs of its two important Working Groups.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The UNDC was created at the First Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD I) to provide a forum where all UN Member State would have an opportunity to “deliberate” on major disarmament issues. The idea was that such deliberations could identify the issues and, if possible, prepare the ground for the multilateral disarmament negotiations which were to be undertaken in the Geneva Committee – now Conference on Disarmament.

4. Some may feel that the UNDC has not lived up to the potential role envisaged for it: but then neither the CD in Geneva, nor other disarmament forums and negotiations. The fact is that the success curve of the multilateral disarmament process, after rising at the end of the Cold War, has declined sharply once the shock of the collapse of the second super-power was absorbed by the international system. The maintenance of nuclear deterrence in a multi-polar equation is likely to be more complex and difficult than the bi-polar balance of terror. In recent years, the levels of security enjoyed by various states have become increasingly asymmetric – some enjoy absolute security, others none at all. Asymmetric security is accompanied by asymmetric means of conflict, including the regrettable use of terrorism. Conflicts are still about territory, but increasingly ideology, beliefs and value systems are also being invoked to justify state policy or state conduct, including acquisition of armaments and the use or threat of use of force.

5. In the new international circumstances, Mr. Chairman, many of the premises of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation are being questioned, if not discarded. For instance, the concept of nuclear deterrence has changed from a static bi-polar equation to a dynamic multi-polar calculation involving not two, not five but at least 8 nuclear-weapon states. The presumption of non-proliferation was an interim endeavour, a commitment by the non-nuclear-weapon States to exercise temporary self-restraint until

nuclear disarmament was achieved by all the nuclear-weapon States. This is no longer a widely accepted presumption, notwithstanding the declaration of the last NPT Review Conference.

6. Reliance on international treaties as a medium for disarmament and arms control has also eroded. The role of multilateral forums, both for deliberation and negotiation, has become stalled and the scope is narrowing. Even the capabilities of the United Nations for independent analyses of disarmament issues appears to be eroding.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The UNDC session should be utilized to reverse at least some of these disturbing trends which will significantly erode international and regional peace and stability over the long-term.

8. The UNDC has two items on its agenda – dealing with both nuclear and conventional disarmament. These can be utilized to identify the actions that are required, at the international and regional levels in the two areas, to revive the prospects for effective disarmament and its meaningful contribution to international and regional peace and security. The UNDC's identification should lead to closer considerations of these issues – either in this body or elsewhere – and eventually result in agreed approaches and negotiations.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Let me try to attempt an identification of some of these issues which require such closer consideration.

First, in the nuclear arena, the two major nuclear powers need to quickly ratify and implement the Moscow Treaty. Their nuclear weapons have to be reduced – whether it is done unilaterally, bilaterally or plurilaterally – to a level of rough parity with the other nuclear-weapon States. Thereafter, multilateral nuclear reductions can start and progress rapidly down to what is the commitment i.e. zero. The commitments undertaken at the NPT Review Conference by the five nuclear-weapon States need to be implemented i.e. the CTBT and FMCT brought to life again.

Second, the implications of the demise of the ABM Treaty and the search for effective Missile Defences need to be examined to ascertain whether a mix of offensive and defensive weapons is consistent with the preservation of stable nuclear deterrence in a multi-polar context.

Third, the issue of missiles must be addressed within a comprehensive and, I underline, a cooperative framework responsive to the security needs of all concerned States.

Fourth, commencement of in-depth examination of a possible multi-lateral legal instrument to prevent arms race in outer space may be helpful in evolving deterrence and stability.

Fifth, until nuclear disarmament is achieved, credible military, political and legal modalities need to be evolved and agreed to prevent a deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons, and to progressively reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in national defence postures and strategies of all States, especially the major powers. In this context, a Conference on the Reduction of Nuclear Dangers as proposed by the Secretary General, could be useful as would a legally binding international instrument on negative security assurances and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, where such weapons do not exist.

Mr. Chairman,

10. In the conventional arena, there is insufficient attention to the threat to the global and regional peace and stability posed by the expansion, proliferation and increasing sophistication of conventional weapons. Military expenditures consumed about US\$ 900 billion a year, a substantive part of which was spent on the procurement of increasingly sophisticated conventional weapons. The widening gap of technological capabilities and the size of military budgets between the rich and poor, the big and the small, is leading to imbalances in conventional force capabilities at international and regional levels. This asymmetry is increasing the proclivity of the stronger powers to attempt solutions to conflicts and disputes by recourse to the use of force rather than the pacific settlement of disputes in accordance with the UN Charter.

Mr. Chairman,

11. The principal threats to international peace and security now emanate not from an on-going strategic confrontation between the major powers but from regional conflicts and tensions. It is both, the impetus for global power status as well a regional ambitions and confrontations which now fuel the conventional and often the nuclear arms race. Special attention, therefore, should focus on the probable flash points of conflicts and confrontation i.e. the Korean Peninsula; the Middle East and South Asia. The United Nations General Assembly has asked for consideration of principles for conventional disarmament at the regional and sub-regional levels by the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. This issue is assuming growing urgency. The pacific settlement of disputes is one of the most vital principles that needs to be promoted in this context.

Mr. Chairman,

12. South Asia has been rightly described as "the most dangerous place in the world". The conflict over Jammu and Kashmir festers due to the non-implementation of Security Council resolutions prescribing the exercise of the right of self-determination by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Also the reckless build up of conventional and strategic weapons by the one State in South Asia which seeks political, military and economic

hegemony over the entire sub-continent, is escalating tensions and the threat to peace and to development in our region.

13. Pakistan opposes a debilitating arms race in South Asia. We have frozen our defence budget since 1999. However, Pakistan will maintain the credibility of its deterrence posture. The growing imbalance in conventional military capability will have wider strategic implications. It could, among other things, lower the nuclear threshold. It could also escalate the incentives for aggression by the stronger power.

Mr. Chairman,

14. Pakistan has proposed the establishment of a mutual Strategic Restraint Regime in South Asia - incorporating nuclear as well as conventional arms balance and a political mechanism for the resolution of outstanding disputes and conflicts, especially the core dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan remains prepared to pursue these proposals at the bilateral level or under the United Nations auspices, or through third party mediation.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.