

Постоянное Представительство
Российской Федерации
при
Организации Объединенных
Наций



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STATEMENT

**of the First Deputy Representative
of the Russian Federation to the United Nations
at the 2008 session of the UN Disarmament Commission**

H.E. Mr. Igor N. Shcherbak

New York, 8 April 2008

Mr. Chairman,
Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Strengthening existing multilateral disarmament mechanisms and creating new ones where needed remain our priority. The Russian Federation consistently stands for reinforcing the central role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and international security, real disarmament, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, and arms control. We actively support the work of the entire multilateral disarmament triad – United Nations General Assembly First Committee, United Nations Disarmament Commission and Conference on Disarmament.

We are convinced that the emergence of new challenges and threats to the international security places particular emphasis on the importance of adherence of states to the obligations assumed by them earlier, and their neutralization should be effected on the basis of strict implementation of existing international legal documents and development of new ones. In our view, it is important to promote greater stability of the international legal disarmament base, to bridge current legal gaps in the field of non-proliferation, to prevent the creation of legal vacuum and new areas of confrontation and arms race, including high-tech one.

Russia is committed to the total elimination of nuclear weapons as an ultimate goal. The achievement of this goal is a gradual and complex process in which all nuclear states should participate and which should

provide for the maintenance of strategic stability and observance of the principle of equal security for all. We proceed from the necessity to ensure predictability, transparency, irreversibility and verifiability of the process of reduction and limitation of strategic offensive weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a pivotal element of the modern international security system. The second session of the Preparatory Committee for a regular review of the NPT will be held very soon in Geneva. We are interested in as constructive and efficient as possible work of this forum, which is called upon to create favorable conditions for a successful 2010 Review Conference. The important thing is to ensure further viability of the Treaty proceeding from the unity of its three fundamental elements: non-proliferation, peaceful uses of atomic energy and disarmament.

Russian-American relations in the area of limitation and reduction of strategic offensive arms are of key importance to real disarmament. Unfortunately, there is still no certainty about the future of this process. The SALT I Treaty expires in December 2009. Long in advance, as far back as three years ago, we offered the idea of developing and concluding a new full-fledged agreement on further and verifiable reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms. Our goal is to preserve stability and predictability in strategic relations between Russia and the United States. We cannot but feel concerned over the situation where, with the looming prospect of expiration of the treaty limitations on strategic offensive arms, there are increasing efforts by the United States to deploy its global ABM

system. It is well known that there is inseparable relationship between strategic offensive and defensive armaments, and it is impossible not to take that fact into account in future military planning.

Two days ago in Sochi Presidents of the Russian Federation and of the United States adopted the Strategic Framework Declaration. The Document sums up all that we have accomplished over these last years in the areas of security and non-proliferation, including the US - Russia initiatives on combating nuclear terrorism. It also reflects the differences that remain between us, above all concerning military and political matters. The Declaration reaffirmed readiness of the US and Russia to work on overcoming these differences.

Activities of various states in outer space is closely linked to strategic stability issues. Free access into outer space, its exploration and use in the interests of humankind are of vital importance for ensuring development of science, economy, maintaining international peace and security. In order to consolidate efforts of the leading space faring nations for these purposes further steps are needed. Elaboration of effective measures in order to keep outer space free from any weapons and to prevent its turning into a new arena of confrontation and a potential theatre of war remains a priority. Emergence of weapons in outer space could trigger particularly negative consequences for the international community. One may assume that should such weapons be placed in outer space, the strategic situation could become less predictable, since space weapons have a global reach, high operational readiness and a capability for hidden engagement of space

objects and rendering them inoperative. The placement of weapons in outer space could generate suspicion and tensions among states. In contrast to WMD, serving as a deterrence factor, such weapons would be fit for real use. Modern international space law is not sufficient to prevent such scenario.

On February 12, a draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects (PPWT) was officially submitted to the Conference on Disarmament on behalf of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. We invite all states to take an active part in the draft Treaty's consideration. The Russian Federation and other member-states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization have made an important step towards such Treaty – they declared that they would never be the first to place weapons of any type in outer space. We call upon other states to follow this suite.

The problem of ensuring security in space is a common one for all of us, and we should find jointly such a solution to it that would work for strengthening international stability. We have no doubts that the PPWT is an effective and, at the same time, a realistic way to achieve that goal.

In October 2007, President Vladimir V. Putin launched an initiative for rendering global the obligations set forth in the Treaty between the USSR and the USA on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles (INF Treaty). The initiative was supported by our American partners. Our common position on the matter was reflected in the

Joint Statement on the INF Treaty circulated as an official paper at the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament. The majority of the international community members welcomed it. However, there are States which are still not prepared to support the initiative for various reasons. We take note of their approaches and would like to continue searching jointly for a mutually acceptable solution to the problem.

On the margins of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference we intend to hold jointly with our American counterparts an informal briefing highlighting accomplishments of either Party in eliminating intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles, as well as their positive impact on the European and global security. We are also ready to set forth our approaches pertaining to the unofficial paper “Basic elements of an international legally-binding arrangement on the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range (ground-launched) missiles, open for broad international accession”, which was circulated on February 12, 2008. We would appreciate principle support of our ideas which constitute a promising objective on the way to ballistic missile and nuclear disarmament.

We advocate the necessity of concentrating main efforts of international community on combating illegal small arms and light weapons (SALW) supplies, strengthening national anti-trafficking legislations and practices, and expanding regional cooperation aimed at finding specific measures to prevent uncontrolled proliferation of these

weapons. The Russian Federation upholds the leading role of the UN in handling SALW proliferation issues. We believe that the UN Programme of Action (PoA) on SALW is far from exhausting its potential. We propose to discuss in detail ways and methods available to the international society to combat illegal SALW trafficking on 14-18 July, 2008 in New York during the United Nations Review Conference on SALW.

We note with appreciation the operation of the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

We advocate that the UN Disarmament Commission as a universal forum retains its functions of an integrator of specific ideas and concepts providing practical recommendations and outlining problems that call for multilateral arrangements to be adopted. We believe that the Commission's existing status is sufficient to effectively facilitate conclusion and implementation of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation agreements.

In the intersessional period we carefully studied the outcomes of the second year of the Commission's current work cycle. We are facing a challenging task, that of working out UN General Assembly recommendations on the main items of the disarmament agenda in a document acceptable to all. We intend to put forth our specific proposals during the meetings of the working groups.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, let me assure you and all our colleagues that the Russian delegation is ready to contribute to the search of consensus during the work of the current session.