

Постоянное Представительство  
Российской Федерации  
при Организации  
Объединенных Наций



Permanent Mission  
of the Russian Federation  
to the United Nations

136 East 67<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10065

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## STATEMENT

**by Ambassador Vitaly Churkin,  
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations  
at the 2009 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission**

April 15, 2009

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Our Forum is taking place at a time when the state of today's world is most often defined as "crisis". Unfortunately, the same word characterizes the current situation in the field of disarmament. Indeed, we are facing serious problems in reaching consensus on the core issues of the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Although the attempts of some groups of like-minded states to address problems, bypassing the existing disarmament fora, could lead to some individual achievements, in the long term they would undermine established multilateral mechanisms and sow new elements of discord in the sphere of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which is already full of contradictions.

At the same time we see that the need to overcome this most intensive financial and economic crisis is uniting all states. We are forced to seek new approaches to the solution of the existing problems, which, in the end, must normalize the situation.

Evidently, the time has come to search for such approaches in the disarmament field as well.

We are convinced that the deadlock can be overcome through stepping up multilateral diplomacy, strengthening active international disarmament mechanisms, and establishing new ones as appropriate. Russia has always stood up for the need to strengthen the central role of the United Nations, and primarily of its Security Council, and the “triad” of disarmament in maintaining peace and strategic stability.

I would like to note that we continue to remain committed to establishing a global security system based on respect for international law and States’ compliance with their obligations. To set up such an equitable system, consistent and proactive steps in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation are required. We are ready, in cooperation with our partners, to look for universally acceptable approaches to deal with these issues which are relevant to everyone.

The Russian Federation considers the United Nations Disarmament Commission to be an integral part of the United Nations multilateral disarmament mechanism, providing recommendations to the General Assembly with regard to major disarmament and nonproliferation issues. Unfortunately, following the Commission's previous three-year work cycle, no decisions on substantive agenda items were adopted.

We are satisfied with having been able to agree on the agenda of our forum. This will allow us for a detailed discussion of the most pressing problems of multilateral disarmament, as well as non-proliferation. Considering that during the 2009 session we will focus on two issues, I would like to express relevant Russian approaches related to the issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as elaboration of the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade.

We reaffirm our commitment to nuclear disarmament. We also believe that total elimination of nuclear weapons is possible only as the ultimate goal of a step-by-step process, involving the participation of all nuclear-weapon States, and on condition that

strategic stability is strengthened and the principle of equal security for all States is rigorously respected.

For Russia's part, we are fully complying with our international obligations in the field. We are reducing our nuclear arms way ahead of schedule. Back in 2001 we reached the reduction levels for strategic delivery vehicles and warheads fixed in the START Treaty. In accordance with the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, Russia and the US have totally eliminated two classes of such ground-based weapons. Implementation of the SORT Treaty is well underway.

The statement of the President of the Russian Federation Dmitry A. Medvedev, read by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey V. Lavrov at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on March 7, reflects key Russia's approaches to elaboration of a new comprehensive agreement with the US on further mutual and controlled reduction and limitation of strategic offensive weapons. In particular, Russia favors a legally binding agreement that should limit not only warheads but also means of their delivery – intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and heavy bombers, and should also exclude the possibility of deploying strategic offensive weapons beyond national territory.

At the meeting in London on April 1, the Presidents of Russia and the United States Dmitry A. Medvedev and Barack Obama adopted a joint statement expressing the mutual aspirations of the US and Russia to further proceed with the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive weapons. They agreed to launch talks on this issue while both parties strive to reach strategic offensive weapons limits that would be lower than those set in the currently valid Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions (1700 – 2200 warheads). Long and painstaking work awaits us. No one should have any doubt that a comprehensive agreement on strategic offensive weapons will require much time and serious effort.

We would like to emphasize that there is an inseparable link between strategic offensive and defensive (we mean anti-missile defense) weapons. It is impossible to succeed in nuclear disarmament if this link is undermined by the unilateral development of strategic ABM systems. It can both damage strategic stability and upset the system of checks and balances in the world.

Russia is offering a constructive alternative to unilateral plans in this area, namely the unification of efforts by all States in order to prevent potential missile threats. We firmly believe that ABM issues require a well-balanced approach taking into account the fact that anti-ballistic missile defense may have a stabilizing as well as destabilizing impact on the strategic situation. We deem it necessary to find a proper balance between politico-diplomatic and military-technical means for coping with threats. We are ready to work together with those who share our ideas, and are prepared to act in the spirit of equitable partnership.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the fundamental mechanisms of the international security system is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Right after our Commission finishes its work here, the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference will begin in New York. We are ready to do everything possible to ensure its most constructive and efficient outcome.

We hope that during the 2010 NPT Review Conference we will be able to reach consensus on understanding the challenges facing the international non-proliferation regime, and to elaborate a coordinated package of measures aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the Treaty. We need to see to it that all its parties unconditionally implement their obligations on the basis of unity of three fundamental elements – non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of atomic energy.

We welcome constructive steps capable of extricating the disarmament process from the prolonged crisis. At the same time, it is essential, in our view, to create an

international atmosphere favorable to complete renunciation of nuclear weapons with strengthened strategic stability and universal security. We expect to hold during the 2010 NPT RevCon frank talks on what additional contribution other nuclear states – members of the NPT can make to this process.

At the same time, we believe that intensification of disarmament efforts is also a task for those states that remain outside the NPT. A goal on such a scale as reaching “nuclear zero” cannot be considered separately from other international problems, including the settlement of international conflicts, ensuring viability of key disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, withdrawal of all nuclear weapons to the territory of possessor states, renunciation of unilateral deployment of global ABM systems, and the prevention of placement of weapons in outer space, as well as verifiable cessation of conventional capabilities’ development.

We are convinced that an early entrance into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of crucial importance for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear arms limitation regime. For all the importance of this measure, implementation of the moratorium on nuclear tests cannot replace the legal commitments under the CTBT. We welcome the intentions of the new US Administration to review its attitude to the CTBT with a view to submitting it for ratification. Russia ratified the CTBT in 2000, and calls on all states, especially those crucial for the Treaty's entrance into force, to sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

We support the idea of developing a global agreement on security safeguards for the non-nuclear-weapon states, on the understanding that it should take into account cases when nuclear weapons can be applied in accordance with national military doctrines.

We also advocate the development of the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty for weapons purposes within the framework of a balanced programme of work of the

Conference on Disarmament. We believe that such verifiable Treaty could become a significant step in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Russia continues to advocate strengthening the nuclear disarmament regime and, in this context, the necessity to enhance the efficiency of the IAEA safeguards system, inter alia through universalisation of the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement, as well as the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions.

We believe that the NPT review process should, among other things, put an emphasis on issues of providing unhampered access of all the NPT parties to the benefits of peaceful nuclear use on condition that they comply with all their non-proliferation obligations. These are the aims of the Russian initiative to develop global atomic energy infrastructure and establish international centres on providing services of the nuclear fuel cycle; the first step in its implementation was the creation in partnership with Kazakhstan of the International Centre on Uranium Enrichment in Angarsk. We welcome Armenian and Ukrainian adherence to it, and the interest shown by a number of other countries. There are also plans to create under the Centre in Angarsk an IAEA-supervised buffer stock of low-enriched uranium to ensure guaranteed fuel supplies in case of a market failure.

One of the top priorities of the Russian policy in enhancing strategic stability and international security is the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space. We proceed from the assumption that it is easier to prevent the appearance of weapons in outer space than to get rid of new stockpiles of weapons afterwards. The Russian-Chinese initiative on developing a treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space has met with wide support, and only a small number of states at the Conference on Disarmament have spoken against launching the relevant negotiations. We are sure that prevention of arms race in outer space will contribute to

predictability of the strategic situation and to the preservation of orbital property, which is, undoubtedly, in the interest of all states enjoying the benefits of peaceful outer space.

Our proposal to develop an international legal agreement on elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles remains in force. We have already received quite a number of responses to this initiative, and the majority of them are positive. We call on states to continue the dialogue on the key elements of the potential agreement on intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles.

Mr. Chairman,

Russia has consistently advocated both enhancing national and regional efforts to address illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons (SALW), and strengthening the coordinating role of the United Nations in this matter. We regret to note that in some regions no significant progress has been made in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Despite the existing financial, political and other difficulties, the Programme of Action has not yet exhausted its potential, and states still have a long way to go to fully implement it.

First of all, additional efforts should be made to increase the effectiveness of national laws governing control over internal arms trafficking, and also to prevent the diversion of arms from legal to illegal markets. It is the governments of countries, who should be responsible for control over the trade in SALW on their territories. In our view, both SALW exporting and importing states should be responsible for preventing the diversion of SALW into illicit markets.

Russia appreciates the role of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, particularly in monitoring key patterns of arms transfers. We are confident that the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms will recommend further development of this important transparency mechanism, which will contribute to its universality.

We are interested in seeing conventional arms control regime develop in a sustained manner, and in the elaboration of new confidence and security building measures at both regional and subregional levels. With the agreement of all the States concerned, that would contribute to enhancing regional peace and security, and save funds which could later be channeled to social ends. We support measures and initiatives in this area. We believe that the European experience gained under the OSCE auspices in this field should be used in creative ways in other regions.

Russia's initiative regarding a treaty on European security as proposed by the Russian President Dmitry A. Medvedev in 2008 is also designed to contribute to strengthening regional security. The treaty would allow for the establishment of a genuinely collective system in this area, based on the principle of the indivisibility of security, with no State strengthening its security at the expense of the security of others.

We are ready to explain our stand on this and other issues in greater detail during the upcoming substantive discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

The Russian delegation looks forward to constructive work. We will spare no effort to find mutually acceptable solutions.