

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

INFORMATION AND PRESS DEPARTMENT



32/34 Smolenskaya-Sennaya pl., 119200, Moscow G-200; tel.: (495) 244 4119, fax: 244 4112
e-mail: dip@mid.ru, web-address: www.mid.ru

**Transcript of Remarks by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at the
Plenary Session of the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, February 12, 2008**

186-12-02-2008

Mr. Secretary-General,

Mr. President,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to welcome all the participants in the Conference on Disarmament. I appreciate the opportunity to address this representative forum and to share our views on the state of the disarmament and non-proliferation process, which cannot but cause concern.

Scientific achievements and the use of advanced technologies offer unheard-of opportunities for addressing the primary task for any State, i.e. to ensure sustainable development and prosperity. The growing interdependence of the globalizing world and the emerging multipolar system create a favorable environment for expanding international cooperation with a view to taking maximum advantage of such opportunities for the benefit of all the countries and peoples. On the other hand, the new global threats and the aggravation of many existing ones, ranging from terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to climate change, require from the international community to come up with a joint response. This is the imperative of the time.

Mankind has no other acceptable alternative but to ensure security collectively, through working together. This task is too tough, both in financial and military terms, for a single State or any narrow coalition to tackle. The very logic behind the evolution of present-day international relations proves futility of unilateral and bloc-based schemes, particularly force-oriented ones. Their champions are incapable of guaranteeing security even for themselves and only show the limits of what such a response can achieve. But the main thing is that such actions undermine stability by forcing other countries to take care of their security on their own. And this, as a rule, does damage to non-proliferation.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a pivotal element of the modern international security system. Here, in Geneva, a second session of the

Preparatory Committee for a regular review of the NPT will be held in a few months' time. We are interested in as constructive and efficient as possible work of this forum, which is called upon to create favourable conditions for a successful 2010 Review Conference. The important thing is to ensure further effectiveness 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 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. Therefore, we suggest that all the best elements of the existing Treaty be borrowed and placed in the foundation of a new agreement. Such a document, which should, of course, be legally binding, could provide for new, lower ceilings subject to verification on both strategic delivery vehicles (intercontinental ballistic missiles, sea launched ballistic missiles and heavy bombers), and their warheads. However, it has so far been impossible to arrive at acceptable solutions.

We hope that US negotiators will pay heed to the call of such authorities in this field as George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn and William Perry, who argued in a convincing manner in favour of the need to continue nuclear disarmament, strengthen international non-proliferation regimes and maintain strategic stability on a multilateral basis. Many of their ideas are in line with Russia's initiatives, though there are, of course, aspects that call for further discussion in seeking agreement on specific ways of resolving these not that simple tasks.

I wish to note specifically that 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 in account in future military planning. The desire to acquire an anti-missile "shield" while dismantling the "sheath", where the nuclear "sword" is kept is extremely dangerous. And if one also places on the balance pan the "global lightning strike" concept providing for striking with nuclear and conventional strategic means targets in any point of the Globe in a matter of an hour after a relevant decision has been made, the risks for strategic stability and predictability become more than obvious.

We think that strategic stability can no longer remain an exclusive domain of Russian-US relations. This residual bipolarity needs to be overcome through opening up this sphere to all interested states prepared to actively cooperate with a view to strengthening common security. It is our strong belief that such cooperation should be based on equality, mutual respect, a constructive dialogue, joint analysis and due account of the interests of all the sides in working out and making decisions.

It is these principles that Russia will continue to uphold in its foreign policy. The same principles traditionally underlie the work of the Conference on Disarmament which is a unique and indispensable international negotiating forum possessing a solid intellectual and professional potential. The Conference has made a substantial contribution to strengthening peace and security, as well as promoting disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery through developing most important international legal instruments in this area.

However, the results produced by the Conference in the past cannot solve all current problems: new and highly grave challenges and threats that call for an urgent joint response have been emerging here. A delay is fraught with dangerous risks.

Like a great majority of other States, Russia is of course dissatisfied with a situation where the substantive work of the Conference has been blocked for ten years now, while there has been stagnation in the sphere of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. We are convinced that, given political will, the situation can be reversed. And the key prerequisite for this lies in favourable international conditions for a disarmament process that can only advance on the basis of reciprocity, the principle of equal security and compliance with international law.

Among the issues requiring the use of the Conference's potential is ensuring predictability of military activities in space. Without preventing an arms race in space international security will be wanting. Strategic stability which is central to the world's military and political equilibrium will be endangered.

The activities in the exploration and use of outer space have substantially expanded lately in their scale and importance. The interests of further dynamic development of international space cooperation require insistently measures aimed to prevent turning space into an arena of confrontation and to keep space free from any weapons.

Speaking last year in Munich, President Vladimir V. Putin, warned against the emergence of new high-tech destabilizing types of weapons and new areas of confrontation, particularly in outer space. He emphasized that militarization of outer space could trigger unpredictable consequences for the international community - no less serious than the onset of the nuclear era. The President also noted that a draft special treaty was being prepared aimed at preventing such a development. The document was developed by us jointly with the People's Republic of China and circulated unofficially among interested delegations at the Conference last June. The overwhelming majority of our partners reacted positively to the document. Many states are looking forward to substantive work on this issue.

Today, the Russian Federation together with the People's Republic of China, are officially submitting 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) to the Conference on Disarmament for consideration. Given its mandate, agenda and high expert potential on military space issues, we believe that the Conference is the most appropriate forum for multilateral work on the draft treaty.

The draft takes into account the proposals made by Member States of the Conference in

the course of their joint work on the Treaty elements that were submitted earlier to the CD by Russia and China together with a group of co-sponsors and fruitfully discussed here over more than five years.

We are submitting the draft Treaty with a research mandate. It has been supported by the majority of Member States of the Conference and does not add any complications to achieving a compromise on the programme of work of the Conference. We hope that subsequently, when appropriate conditions are there, our work can be channeled into a negotiating format with establishment of a relevant ad hoc committee of the Conference.

Modern international space law does not prohibit deployment in space of weapons which do not belong to WMD. However, such weapons, if deployed in space, would have a global reach, high employment readiness and a capability for hidden engagement of space objects and rendering them inoperative. In contrast to WMD, such weapons would be fit for real use, generate suspicion and tensions among states and frustrate the climate of mutual trust and cooperation in space exploration, rather than being a means of containment.

Apart from this, weapons deployment in space by one state will inevitably result in a chain reaction. And this, in turn, is fraught with a new spiral in the arms race both in space and on the earth.

The draft PPWT prohibits the deployment of weapons of any kind in space, and the use or threat of force against space objects. The Treaty is to eliminate existing lacunas in international space law, create conditions for further exploration and use of space, preserve costly space property, and strengthen general security and arms control.

The task of preventing an arms race in space is on the Conference's agenda. It's time, by way of preempting, to start serious practical work in this field. Otherwise, we can miss the opportunity. Indeed, to prevent a threat is always easier than to remove it.

Let us not forget that the nuclear arms race was started with a view to preserving the monopoly to this type of weapons, but this monopoly was to last only four years. However, that spell was sufficient to channel the world politics along the "Cold War lines", which lasted for over four decades and resulted in a gigantic waste of material and other resources at the expense of finding solutions to the problem of development. Is it worthwhile "to repeat the history"?

All states have an equal and inalienable right to accessing space, its exploration and uses. It is logical that 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 as would work for strengthening international security and stability. We have no doubts that the PPWT is an effective and, at the same time, a realistic way to achieve that goal. We are prepared to closely cooperate with all Member States of the Conference.

There is another pressing issue that affects considerably strategic stability and international security and is linked to missile proliferation. 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 UN General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament. The majority of the international community members welcomed it. However, there are States that were 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.

To this end, we propose that a new multilateral agreement based on the relevant provisions of the existing INF Treaty be elaborated and concluded. Such an international legal arrangement could comprise the following basic elements.

Firstly, the obligation of the parties not to conduct flight testing and not to manufacture medium- and shorter-range missiles or their stages and launchers.

Secondly, the undertaking by states parties to eliminate, by an agreed deadline, all their medium- and shorter-range missiles, launchers thereof and associated supporting facilities and equipment.

Thirdly, the arrangement should set rules for counting and defining the types of medium- and shorter-range missiles, their deployment and movement, in the process of getting them ready for elimination, procedures for their elimination and compliance verification.

We will circulate unofficially the elements of the proposed Agreement for study by Member States of the Conference on Disarmament. We are open for a constructive dialogue and invite our partners to join us in this work.

To conclude, I would like to dwell briefly on the new Russia's foreign policy philosophy in the context of disarmament issues.

In the new age, the goal of any state is to play and to win in the world competitive struggle, rather than on battlefield. Russia's entire foreign policy is oriented towards preserving the historic prospect for an independent development, truly based on its identity, in the family of other nations, that has been offered to it for the first time. This will be impossible without continuing accelerated social and economic growth in the country, which will be one of the key guarantees of our security. Externally, Russia's security should be ensured by a more just and genuinely democratic architecture of international relations. Unfortunately, the world that shook off "the Cold War", has so far failed to attain a new equilibrium. The conflict potential, including in the areas close to the Russian frontiers, is very high.

That is why we have been consistently favouring collective actions being reaffirmed and legal principles strengthened in regional and global affairs on the basis of the UN Charter and recognition of indivisibility of security and development in the modern world.

That is why we favour setting up open collective security systems, first of all the formation of a single security space in the Euro-Atlantic area. We are convinced that there

is no need for security against each other or against anyone, we need security against transnational threats.

That is why, as President V.Putin stated recently, we will not allow to draw us into a costly confrontation, including a new arms race detrimental to the internal development of the country.

That is why we favour maintaining continuity in the process of disarmament and arms control, its further development in terms of treaties and law and in the spirit of strategic openness.

It is not Russia that throws challenges to its international partners, it is life itself that throws challenges to all states without exception, first of all, to major states, which largely determine the future of the world. We have made our choice and are prepared to work jointly.