

Islamic Republic of I R A N

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

**Statement by
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before the
United Nations Disarmament Commission
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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election to preside over this important session of the Disarmament Commission. The completion of two substantive agenda items requires a lot of work and effort during the coming weeks. You may rest assured of my delegation's support for your efforts to ensure that the Commission would have a successful session.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

Agenda item dealing with the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is of great relevance to international security. The greatest threat to international and regional security and stability arises from the continued existence of nuclear weapons. At the time of the conclusion of the NPT it was promised that nuclear threat, particularly against non-nuclear countries would be removed in all its aspects including through the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Not only this threat has persisted until now; but also we are witnessing that the commitment of some nuclear-weapon States to move in the direction of nuclear disarmament has been languished. Still some 27,000 nuclear weapons continue to exist.

The NPT is an agreement based on a basic bargain. According to the two components of this bargain, non-nuclear-weapon States pledged not to acquire nuclear weapons in exchange of a commitment from nuclear-weapon States to pursue nuclear disarmament negotiations aimed at total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The 2008 session of the Disarmament Commission begins at a time when, on the one hand, it has been widely recognized that non-proliferation obligations are being successfully implemented except in cases of transfer of nuclear weapon technology by certain nuclear-weapons States to non-parties to the NPT, and on the other hand, today's situation of

nuclear disarmament process seems frustrating and threatening to non-nuclear-weapons States due to the unfulfilled disarmament undertakings and a growing threat by certain nuclear-weapon States against non-nuclear-weapon States.

Against this backdrop, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, along with the overwhelming majority of member states, maintains its position that nuclear disarmament remains the most important priority in the field of disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

In the recent years, there has been a series of developments that has given rise to the pervasive concern that some nuclear-weapon States have no genuine will and intention of accomplishing the disarmament part of the NPT bargain. To depict the scale of this crisis, I draw your attention to some worrying trends and related developments taking place in the context of Article VI of the NPT.

A dangerous trend has been initiated by certain nuclear-weapon States to reinterpret their unequivocal undertakings to nuclear disarmament. They cunningly assert that the fulfillment of their disarmament obligations is subject to the emergence of an international security environment – the definition of which is only known to them. In fact, they are setting a precondition for compliance with their obligations and they are the ones who will decide how, when and under what circumstances this precondition is met. The speeches by the representative of the United States and the Secretary of Defence of the United Kingdom made respectively at the 2007 session of the First Committee and the 5th February meeting of this year's Conference on Disarmament are the most recent examples in this regard. By so saying, they not only flout what they have solemnly agreed to, but also set a counterproductive model for others, a model that is not in the interest of the integrity of the NPT.

I do not intend to rehearse the provisions of the NPT and the agreements of 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences but let me stress on a few points in this regard. First, Article VI is clear about the nuclear disarmament obligation. No conditionality. Furthermore, in 1995 all nuclear-weapon States acknowledged the fact that "nuclear disarmament is substantially facilitated by easing of international tension and the strengthening of trust between States which have prevailed following the end of the cold war." It was in line with this recognized fact that in 2000, they agreed to a blueprint known as 13 practical steps for the implementation of Article VI of the NPT with no conditionality. That is why the case against reinterpretation of the Article IV is overwhelming. We must ensure that within this Commission and the family of NPT, there is no place for such arbitrary and irresponsible interpretation.

Mr. Chairman,

It is unfortunate to see that the same States are engaged in destabilizing the international security environment either by building or advocating a "missile shield" in Eastern Europe based on declaratory assessments of hypothetical and non-existing threats.

Besides, some nuclear-weapon States instead of fulfilling their obligations as required by Article VI of the NPT and the agreements of the 2000 Review Conference, have chosen to build new nuclear weapons and modernize their nuclear weapons systems. This is a very dangerous trend. For instance, the U.S. administration, in an extensive and multi-billion dollar program, is seeking to build a new generation of nuclear warheads and new nuclear weapons facilities.

This case along with the other anti-nuclear-disarmament policies and actions constitute an intentional noncompliance in the context of Article VI of the NPT and the agreements of 2000 NPT Review Conference. The cases of U.S. noncompliance with the Treaty's disarmament obligations illustrate vividly the challenges facing the NPT. We should discuss and address such cases in the upcoming Preparatory Committee of the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

In 2000 NPT Review Conference, nuclear-weapon States undertook to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in their security policies as a step towards nuclear disarmament. It is truly regrettable that some nuclear-weapon States are acting in contravention of this obligation. They have adopted policies that have led to the augmentation of their reliance on nuclear weapons rather than diminishment. In recent years, this trend has been accelerated and has led to the prevalence of the role of nuclear weapons in international security. Clearly, the international community must withstand this tempting but dangerous trend.

In the wake of the year 2000, the U.S included in its military doctrine the notion of using nuclear weapons in combat against specific targets. In 2006, the United Kingdom has decided to procure a new generation of nuclear-armed Trident submarines, and to extend the life of the related nuclear missiles well into the next century. And recently, France has announced the addition of a new nuclear-armed ballistic missile-carrying submarine to its nuclear arsenals. The French president is quoted as saying "French nuclear forces are a key element in Europe's security." It appears that this country in defiance of its international obligations is seeking to find and define new roles and missions for its nuclear forces in order to justify the continued retention of them in the post-cold war era. In so doing, they have even resorted to irresponsible methods such as manipulation of intelligence and fear to promote programs that their people would otherwise not support. They will soon realize that their nuclear weapons have essentially lost any conceivable rationale because the conditions of today's world have become so different from cold war conditions.

Such developments if persist, will undermine norms and principles of nuclear disarmament laid down by the Final Document of the SSOD-I, the NPT and its 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. These norms and principles have been established as a result of a long and painstaking multilateral process. We hope that the outcome of our deliberations in this Commission will contribute to upholding these norms and principles.

Nuclear-weapon States need to take effective measures for confidence building by implementing fully their commitment to nuclear disarmament. In the coming days the sincerity and seriousness of nuclear-weapon States about their commitment to the objective of nuclear disarmament will be tested in this session of the Commission.

Mr. Chairman,

Non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as recognized by the NPT, are of high importance. These issues should be considered on their own merit with due attention to the rights and obligations of member states under relevant provisions of the NPT. Unfortunately, non-proliferation has been manipulated by a few countries as a pretext to advance their narrow national interests and to deprive developing countries of their rights to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The Commission needs to reflect on non proliferation in all its aspects and recommend certain measures to ensure the critical balance between non-proliferation obligations and the right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

My delegation acknowledges the merit of a concise draft for successfully concluding our work on the agenda item 1. The paper provided by the Chairman of the Working Group one contains elements of a consensus document. However, there is still room for refinement and improvement in order to strike a proper balance.

Mr. Chairman,

On the second agenda item, namely the "practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons" I would like to briefly elaborate main principles on which, in our view, such practical CBMs can work:

- CBMs are workable and can contribute to strengthening peace, security and stability when two sides of an agreement implement them reciprocally. So they are not one way roads.
- CBMs are merely "voluntary measures", and therefore, they can by no means be converted to legally binding obligations.
- CBMs in the field of conventional weapons at the international level have been manifested in the form of "UN register of Conventional Arms". However, we should not lose sight of the fact that the Register itself was established on the basis of GA Resolution 46/36 L which provided for "further development and on transparency measures related to weapons of mass destruction."
- It is a recognized fact that transparency in thousands of conventional weapons is not comparable with the transparency in existence or non-existence of one single nuclear warhead.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to conclude by reaffirming our belief that we should make every effort in the spirit of cooperation and good-will with the view to making progress in the important task before us. The successful conclusion of this meeting will positively contribute to the standing of this body within the disarmament machinery.