

3 April 2013



General Assembly

DC/3427

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Disarmament Commission
2013 Substantive Session
332nd & 333rd Meetings (AM & PM)

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION 'PLACE WHERE WE CAN THINK AND DEBATE', SAY DELEGATIONS

HOPING TO REFRAME DISCUSSION, FIND CONVERGENCE ON CRITICAL ISSUES

Central to Concerns: Accelerating Pace of Nuclear Disarmament, Stemming Proliferation, Building Confidence in Conventional Weapons Realm

The Disarmament Commission was a unique forum where delegates could “think and debate” and — after years of stalemate — there was now a need to build on positive momentum and find convergence on critical issues, speakers said today as they wrapped up the general debate of their substantive session and moved into focused working groups to tackle the most pressing items on their agenda.

Voicing the aspirations of many, France’s delegate expressed hope that the current session would be part of the “constructive momentum” demonstrated over the past three years. Progress made at various summits on nuclear security confirmed that, when there was a productive and pragmatic mentality, the international community moved towards a safer world. The Commission’s session last year was “rich and useful”, and featured significant discussions on disarmament.

Similarly, Lebanon’s delegate, on behalf of the Arab Group, said the Commission — as the United Nations specialized deliberative body to present recommendations for disarmament — should be a “source of new ideas”, many of which could promote its unique character. The task before it was heavy. “But this should not limit our ambition,” she said. “It should push us to exert more efforts.” She emphasized in particular the need to fulfil the priority goal of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in line with several initiatives, the latest being the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Action Plan.

Throughout the debate, delegates similarly stressed that while nuclear disarmament was the highest priority, it had not been sufficiently reflected in the work of the disarmament machinery, making it all the more important for the Commission to live up to its mandate. Several voiced hope that the current session would adopt specific recommendations on the agenda items — on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and confidence-building measures in the conventional weapons sphere — and submit them to the Assembly.

Other speakers anticipated that the Assembly’s high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament, on 26 September, would catalyze action, and that the Commission’s Working Groups would offer new ideas in the run up. Indeed, multilateral diplomacy would bring about progress, they insisted.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, Bangladesh’s representative urged the conclusion of a universal, legally binding instrument on unconditional security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against their use or threat of use as a matter of high priority. The establishment of nuclear weapon-

free zones and accession to their protocols were other interim steps.

As for practical confidence-building measures, stockpiles were especially important, following the Assembly's recent adoption of an Arms Trade Treaty. Steps that built confidence were particularly effective at the regional, subregional and bilateral levels, where they took on their most authentic worth, said Ecuador's representative. His country, along with the Union of South American Nations, was promoting "confidence- and security-building" measures: information exchange and transparency in defence spending systems, he noted.

Also speaking today were the representatives of Viet Nam, Moldova, Syria, Norway, Mexico, Nigeria, and Benin.

The representative of Morocco spoke on a point of order.

Exercising their right of reply were the representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran and the Republic of Korea.

The Commission will reconvene in plenary at 10 a.m. 19 April to continue and conclude its 2013 substantive session.

Background

The Disarmament Commission met in plenary today to continue the general debate of its 2013 session, which will run until 19 April. The Commission operates in plenary meetings and working groups, with the number of working groups depending on the number of substantive items on its agenda. This year's session features two agenda items: recommendations for achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Statements

MAYA DAGHER (Lebanon), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said agreed solutions in the multilateral framework were the only way to address disarmament and international security issues. She called on all States to implement their obligations — individually and collectively. The Commission was the specialized, deliberative body to present recommendations for disarmament, and as such, it should be a "source of new ideas", many of which could promote its unique character, including the holding of informal meetings for testing new ideas. Nuclear disarmament was the highest priority, but it had not been sufficiently reflected in the work of the disarmament machinery.

She went on to say the General Assembly would hold a high-level meeting on 26 September to mobilize political will for nuclear disarmament. In that context, she hoped Working Group I would offer new ideas. There was no higher priority than meeting the deadlines outlined in the work plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The first deadline focused on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. "This was not fulfilled," she said, stressing that non-commitment to such obligations undermined non-proliferation work. All parties must fulfil their commitments to an issue that should receive due attention in the Commission.

As for practical confidence-building measures, she said that the issue was important, especially in light of the recent Final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. Such measures should address the increasing stockpiles of conventional weapons in the hands of exporters. All production and stockpiles should be placed under international control. Common accountability prevented the abuse of those weapons. There was no deeper threat to international peace and security than foreign occupation and aggression. The Arab Group had put forward its priorities to be discussed during the Commission's session, and more broadly, understood that the Commission had a heavy task before it. "But this should not limit our ambition," she said. "It should push us to exert more efforts."

MARTIN BRIENS (France), aligning with the European Union, expressed hope that the session would be part of the “constructive momentum” demonstrated by the international community for the past three years. Progress made through various summits and meetings on nuclear security confirmed that when there was a productive and pragmatic mentality, the international community moved towards a safer world. Last year’s Commission session was “rich and useful”, where significant discussions on disarmament had taken place and where delegates had agreed that this forum was a place where “we could think and debate”. He called for the complete implementation of the action plan adopted in 2010, particularly from the standpoint of the 2015 plan. While nuclear-weapon States under the NPT had special responsibility, he welcomed the contribution and participation of all States.

He said that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s pursuit of nuclear programmes was in clear violation of Security Council resolutions. Its recent tests reminded the international community of the gravity of the situation. In addition, he was particularly concerned that Iran continued to pursue its nuclear programme and develop a new generation of centrifuges. He was committed to a diplomatic resolution in the Middle East and hoped that Iran would demonstrate “true will” to cooperate with Member States at the meeting at the end of the week.

Member States should commit to a moratorium on fissile material for nuclear weapons, as the United Kingdom, Russian Federation and his country had already done. He expressed regret that the conference on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East had not been held in 2012. He hoped that it would take place as early as possible, and he called on all countries in the Middle East to refrain from taking initiatives that would “take us away from the goal”. He recognized that efforts were dependent on the full participation of all stakeholders and said that it was essential to universalize and strengthen all multilateral instruments.

The use of inhumane weapons was topical, he said, encouraging the Secretary-General to launch an investigation on all weapons used in Syria. He urged all States to join the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions, as those were vital tools for collective security. France also was committed to combat the proliferation of ballistic missiles, which was of particular concern as some were being developed under the guise of space development. Lastly, he welcomed yesterday’s adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty and said it met his delegation’s expectations.

PHAM VINH QUANG (Viet Nam), associating with the Non-Aligned Movement, said that disarmament deliberations within the United Nations framework should be conducted in “good faith”, in accordance with basic principles and practices agreed upon at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. While welcoming new initiatives to overcome the current stalemate in several disarmament bodies, he said it was important to bear in mind the central role of the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament, and other relevant United Nations bodies as well as their established rules of procedure, as they were critical to past successes. There was a need to focus adequate attention and resources to issues of great urgency in the field of disarmament. He called for the balanced implementation of the 64-point Plan of Action adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and added that the earliest possible convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction was crucial.

He also called for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) without any delay, and urged nuclear-weapon States to take the leading role in its ratification. All States meanwhile should maintain moratoriums on nuclear and related tests. He supported global efforts aimed at nuclear non-proliferation as well as adherence to internationally agreed technical standards in the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Deliberation on measures in the field of conventional arms should take into account the legitimate right of States to self-defence, and thus, the right to import, maintain and produce conventional arms for legitimate defence and security needs. As a country that had gone through great suffering caused by conflict and the inhumane use of weapons, Viet Nam understood first-hand the need for international and regional peace, which in turn ultimately rested on the establishment of environments conducive to confidence-building, peaceful resolution of disputes and the principle of non-use of force in

international relations.

VLADIMIR LUPAN (Republic of Moldova), associating himself with the European Union, said he trusted that multilateral diplomacy would bring progress in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The NPT was a key multilateral instrument for the promotion of nuclear disarmament and prevention of nuclear proliferation and he thus called strict and full compliance with its provisions to ensure international security. Additionally, the CTBT's timely entry into force should constitute a top priority for all States parties.

He said that confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons would contribute to achieving genuine security at the international, regional, and national levels. Parallel processes of arms regulation and disarmament in both mass destruction and conventional weapons were also necessary. He supported the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, calling it an important element in standardizing the arms commerce and excluding negative factors that affected States' security. He believed in the implementation of the global arms control arrangements and in the importance of viable and comprehensive regional arrangements, particularly in Europe. His country was a participant in the main European arrangements on conventional arms control and involved in confidence- and security-building measures.

He firmly believed that, among other important elements, a new arrangement should reinforce the principle of host-nation consent for the stationing of foreign military forces. In that respect, he reiterated Moldova's longstanding position regarding the need to finalize the withdrawal of Russian military forces and munitions from the Transnistrian region. "Let me remind that the stationing of this military presence does not enjoy the consent of the Republic of Moldova and it is in contradiction with the international commitments as well as the relevant provisions of the Republic of Moldova's Constitution," he said. Any steps towards increasing or modernizing foreign military presence were of serious concern for his Government. In the context of conflict settlement process, such actions undermined efforts to find a peaceful and negotiated solution to the Transnistrian conflict in the framework of the internationally accepted "5+2" talks.

ABDULLAH HALLAK (Syria), emphasizing the Commission's importance as the only deliberative United Nations body for disarmament, said the absence of political will by some States had impeded the achievement of a final document on nuclear disarmament for some time. He hoped that the current session would see tangible results in the field, as well as in the area of confidence-building measures for conventional arms. The world faced numerous challenges, and foremost among them was to ban nuclear weapons, vertically and horizontally. Some nuclear-weapon States did not view their commitment seriously, having deliberately violated their obligations and disregarded their promises to non-nuclear armed States.

He went on to say that States biased towards Israel were supplying it with materials that had allowed it to build new nuclear weapons, which threatened the entire Middle East. He warned delegates about the danger of continued international silence towards Israel's position, which had moved from one of "nuclear ambiguity" to a declaration that it possessed nuclear weapons, which encouraged an arms race. The hesitation of some parties to follow up on the implementation of resolutions and the findings of previous review sessions had impacted their credibility. He cited the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which called for freeing the region from nuclear weapons.

He recalled Syria's initiative in 2003, on behalf of the Arab Group, during its membership of the Security Council, to introduce a resolution to free the Middle East from weapons of mass destruction. Yet, that had been countered by an influential Council member. Syria also had participated in negotiations during the 2010 NPT Review Conference, notably on the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. An action plan for a conference in 2012 had been devised, but the United States and Israel had stated that it could not be convened during the so-called "current situation" in the Middle East. Those were "flimsy" reasons, which had been used to change the international consensus achieved at the 2010 Review Conference. It also covered up Israel's continued acquisition of nuclear weapons, which disregarded a singular truth: "Israel represents the sole nuclear threat in our region."

Supporting the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, he said the only way to ward off the threat of nuclear weapons was through accession to the NPT, especially its article 3, regarding compliance

with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. As for confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, he underlined States' right to defend their sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. Such measures could not be a precondition for disarmament, despite their importance in creating conducive conditions to achieve that goal. The most important yard stick of credibility for confidence-building measures should be the achievement of solutions in a fair manner and divorce from hidden agendas of exporting countries.

KNUT LANGELAND (Norway) said it was unfortunate that the Arms Trade Treaty Conference had been unable to agree on a treaty, which illustrated the "weakness of a strict interpretation of the consensus principle in multilateral negotiations". While most Member States had been ready to accept the draft treaty, it could not be adopted since less than a handful of delegations objected. In the same vein, in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, it was a small number of countries that could block commencement of negotiations aimed at moving closer to the common objective of a world without nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless the world was moving forward on securing nuclear material, he said, adding that he was pleased that 119 Member States were implementing the IAEA Additional Protocol on safeguards.

Hopefully more would follow suit. It was obvious, however, that the international community was lagging behind in realizing the multilateral commitments of the 2010 NPT Action Plan. The Conference on Disarmament remained "paralyzed", despite the overwhelming support for a treaty to ban the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes and address the issue of existing stockpiles.

He said that the Geneva-based Conference's "paralysis" had repercussions in other parts of the disarmament machinery. Indeed, the Disarmament Commission had been "plagued" for many years by lack of substantive progress. "A person born in the year the Commission last made a substantive recommendation is now almost a high school student," he said. Norway, therefore, fully agreed with those who feared that the Commission might increasingly be perceived as irrelevant.

While the traditional multilateral disarmament machinery was struggling, the picture on multilateral arms control was not so bleak, he said. The international community moved forward in implementing the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Ottawa Mine-Ban Treaty. Those two instruments set fundamental norms to which States, not formally party to the texts, adhered. He hoped that the high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament in September would re-energize multilateralism. He also hoped that the Commission, in the coming weeks, would engage in genuine deliberations and identify areas where differences could be bridged.

MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN (Bangladesh), aligning with the Non-Aligned Movement, said the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery had reached a deadlock, as for more than a decade, hardly any progress had been made in the fields of nuclear or conventional weapons. He hoped the current session would adopt specific recommendations on the agenda items and submit them to the Assembly, in line with its mandate. Regarding nuclear disarmament, he said the elimination of nuclear weapons was the only guarantee for a peaceful world. Bangladesh supported the global nuclear disarmament agenda, recognizing that, while significant gains had been made in non-proliferation, tens of thousands of nuclear weapons were still a threat and billions of dollars were being spent to maintain and upgrade them.

He said that nuclear-weapon States must complete the elimination of their arsenals, in line with their legal obligations, and halt all plans to modernize, upgrade, refurbish or extend the lives of those arms.

Pending the goal of irreversible, verifiable and transparent disarmament, non-nuclear-weapon States had the right to receive negative security assurances. But commitments of such assurances by nuclear Powers had not been adequate to dispel security concerns, due to their non-binding nature. As such, he urged the conclusion of a universal, legally binding instrument on unconditional negative security assurances as a matter of high priority. The establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones and accession to their protocols could be an interim step towards such assurances.

Touching on other items of importance to his delegation, he said that nothing in the NPT should be

interpreted so as to affect the inalienable right of States parties to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. The Test-Ban Treaty was a practical step towards eliminating nuclear weapons, and in that context, he underlined that the commitment to disarmament by all States signatories to that Treaty — especially the five nuclear-weapon States — was essential.

Bangladesh had been the first so-called “Annex II” South Asian nation to have adopted the treaty, however the instrument had not yet entered into force, and he called on all States that had not done so to sign and ratify it. Pending its entry into force, all States should must maintain a moratorium on nuclear tests and refrain from activities that undermined its provisions. Bangladesh had an impeccable non-proliferation record, having committed to full compliance of the NPT and the CTBT. It also had voted “yes” on the Arms Trade Treaty resolution.

RODRIGO PINTADO (Mexico), associating himself with statement made by Cuba, called the General Assembly’s adoption yesterday of the Arms Trade Treaty “historic” for those States that believed that combating weapons diversion was a major priority. The Treaty would contribute to preventing violations of human rights and humanitarian law. The adoption by a recorded vote confirmed once again that the aim of consensus could lead to paralysis on multilateral treaties. Consensus should never be understood as a rule but rather a goal, to which the United Nations should aspire. Perceiving consensus as a goal, knowing that there was a possibility to resort to a vote, would foster an attitude that would lead to agreements. On the other hand, consensus established as a rule enticed delegations to block agreements because they had the right to do so. Mexico opposed the veto in all multilateral forums and would continue to do so.

Concerning the Commission, consensus as a rule had caused stalemate, he said, adding that 14 years had passed without substantive deliberations. The Commission had not effectively met its mandate as set forth in the General Assembly resolution of 1978. That situation was not justified, given the ongoing threat of nuclear weapons and the excessive stockpile of conventional arms. Mexico had always been a strong promoter of nuclear disarmament, and thus he was concerned with the “paralysis” of the NPT process. No State was prepared to take on the consequences of a nuclear attack. As part of its commitment, Mexico had introduced at the General Assembly a resolution establishing a working group that would create a space conducive to nuclear disarmament and include all Member States and civil society in the process.

ABIODUN RICHARDS ADEJOLA (Nigeria), aligning with the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, underscored the Commission’s role as the sole deliberative body in the United Nations disarmament machinery. Nuclear weapons would only be eliminated through multilateral efforts. Their existence was an existential threat and a breach of civil norms, robbing nations of resources that could otherwise be used in peaceful, humanitarian efforts. He urged addressing that threat with a view of achieving the NPT goals, and he expressed support for a nuclear weapons convention, particularly during this cycle, to highlight that issue.

He welcomed the high-level meeting scheduled for 26 September to find ways and means for eliminating nuclear weapons, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and he called on States to promote that goal. Africa must remain a nuclear-weapon-free zone and, in that context, he encouraged States with reservations — especially nuclear-weapon States — to ratify the protocols. Nigeria also supported the call for negative security assurances as a minimum commitment. The NPT offered a clear road map for addressing challenges and “we need to be more ambitious” in the Commission and the Conference on Disarmament on that issue.

While disarmament was the ultimate goal, each State should maintain the sanctity of the NPT’s three pillars, he said, as those offered a valuable mix for enriching deliberations on all topics. The Commission should take a further step by “translating concepts to reality”. Since the 2012 substantive session, Nigeria had been aware of the need to address illicit small arms and light weapons. He hoped this session would underline the importance of upholding commitments in that regard. As for the Arms Trade Treaty — a seven-year battle — he expressed hope that the working group to discuss that instrument would highlight the need to elaborate it. He underlined the important inputs by the United Nations regional centres

for peace and disarmament in that context.

THOMAS ADOUMASSE (Benin), associating with the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, said although the role of the Commission was reaffirmed each session, previous cycles had not met the legitimate expectations and had failed to produce substantial results within its reach. That situation risked the Commission's very existence, which had been created out of an absolute need to build a safer world free from weapons of mass destruction. The stalemate was alarming, as States continued to participate in an arms race. It was essential, therefore, to adopt small steps without the need to agree on all things.

He said his country attached great importance to the NPT and invited States that had not yet done so to join it. Africa was a zone free of nuclear weapons and he encouraged all regions of the world to commit decisively to that goal. In particular, he expressed dissatisfaction that a nuclear-weapon-free zone had not been created in the Middle East, and he hoped that the future conference on the matter would succeed to pacify the region.

He welcomed the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty and hoped its implementation would put an end to human suffering, particularly in Africa. Peace was an essential precondition to solving all global challenges, whether economic or social, he added.

XAVIER LASSO MENDOZA (Ecuador), aligning with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Non-Aligned Movement, said his country was committed to agreements made in the first Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-1), and supported the Commission as the deliberative body in the United Nations disarmament machinery. Ecuador's Constitution had been the first in the world to recognize the rights of nature. Nature was not an object but a subject, and Ecuador's Constitution outlined that its existence, functions, and evolutionary processes had the right to be fully respected. In that way, Ecuador closed the "circle of interrelationship" with humans. He condemned the existence of weapons of mass destruction in that context.

Disarmament and non-proliferation should be parallel, interrelated and conclusive processes, he continued, with the ultimate goal of bolstering the NPT regime. He was concerned that the NPT pillars would be exposed to gradual erosion and urged the prompt establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions that did not have them. Along similar lines, Ecuador supported implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, as well as the decision of the 2010 Review Conference on that point. No effort should be spared to hold a conference on the creation of such a zone in the Middle East as soon as possible.

The topic of practical confidence-building measures was also crucial, he said, especially at regional, subregional and bilateral levels, where they took on their most authentic worth. Ecuador, along with Union of South American Nations, was promoting "confidence- and security-building" measures: information exchange and transparency in defence spending systems. Ecuador also supported the Programme of Action goals for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. It upheld its commitments made in 2012 on that Programme of Action. Anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions threatened civilians along its border areas, he said. Ecuador had always respected the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference, sovereignty, territorial integrity, self-determination and the right to self-defence. The Arms Trade Treaty was adopted by a vote — rather than by consensus — because the text weakened those principles.

On a point of order, the representative of Morocco commented on the Commission's programme of work, saying the working group spent too long negotiating paragraphs in the working paper. The Disarmament Commission had to come to conclusions on the format of recommendations to the General Assembly. It did not have to necessarily agree on a "lost list of paragraphs". He suggested that the deliberations on paragraphs be kept brief to exchange views. It was essential to move on to the second section of the paper on recommendations. Once the recommendations were agreed upon, he was willing to go back to the paragraphs in the first section, whereas doing that first would take too long. He reminded

members that the Commission's mandate was to reach conclusion on recommendations.

The Chair said he agreed that time was limited and that there were many issues that needed to be considered. He encouraged both working groups to consider Morocco's timely proposal and to seek to focus primarily on the recommendations and to make optimal use of the time available to the Commission. It was essential to focus on the middle ground and on areas where convergence was possible.

Right of Reply

Exercising his right of reply, the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said he was concerned with the remarks made by the United Kingdom and France, which stemmed from "a lack of understanding". The situation was becoming very dangerous, reaching an irreversible point and increasing concern among countries in the international community. The so-called missile program that France mentioned referred to the satellite launch. That was not a missile in itself but rather a missile that carried the satellite. The launch was for a peaceful purpose and was exercised within his country's right to defend itself.

Concerning December's satellite launch, he said that the United States and North American Command had acknowledged that it was a satellite launched into space and was orbiting Earth, however, the United States was distorting that fact for political gain and self-interest. He wondered why that country was misleading the international community and misusing its permanent seat in the Security Council. That seat was not given to the United States to help it infringe upon the sovereignty of other States, he said.

It was the United States that had launched the most missiles and satellites and, yet, that was not discussed in the Security Council, he said. The United States was the "champion" of launching satellites and having excessive stockpiles and missiles and threatening international peace and security. He requested that the French delegation have a clear understanding of that. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea had conducted a nuclear test in January, in response to the Security Council resolution, which condemned the satellite launch, and was "an extreme reflection of hostility" of the United Nations against his country.

He said his country had no choice but to test its weapons in self-defence. If the issue of nuclear weapons was discussed in the Security Council, it should focus on the United States. The people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had been living for 60 years under "nuclear blackmail" since 1957, when the United States planted the first nuclear weapon in "South Korea". Currently there were more than 1,000 stockpiled in South Korea. The risk was monumental compared to the damage done in Hiroshima and Nagasaki with two bombs.

Current escalation was reaching the possibility of nuclear war, he warned. The United States had, three days ago, made a "historic deployment" when a fighter plane flew over the Pacific Ocean, and CNN broadcast bombs dropping — images reminiscent of Iraq and Afghanistan. "The danger level is increasing beyond control," he said. "It is not a question of whether war would break out or not, but when." His country had no option but to consider a pre-emptive strike, which he said was not a "monopoly" of the United States. There was a blatant double standard in the Security Council, which was silent when the United States, Japan, and South Korea launched their satellites and long range missiles. He called on the United Kingdom and France to tell the United States to drop its hostile policies and nuclear blackmail.

Also speaking in right of reply, Iran's representative addressed remarks made about his country's nuclear programme, saying that one earlier statement had expressed concern over the new generation of centrifuges in Iran. He assured the delegation that neither the old nor the new generation of centrifuges — in Iran or any other part of the world that was party to the NPT — was a source of concern, as long as they were under safeguards and verified by the IAEA as the sole international technical body to do so.

Another concern discussed today was the danger of nuclear weapons, he said, noting that those concerned about centrifuges owned hundreds — even thousands — of nuclear weapons, in clear non-

compliance with their NPT obligations. What was worse was that they — the member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) — tried to threaten other countries with those weapons. In fact, NATO's strategy was to remain a nuclear alliance. He had seen other information that stated that NATO would rely on the nuclear weapons of its three weapon States, again fully contradicting NPT obligations. "Let's be honest," he said, cautioning against diverting attention from the real threat: the danger of the existence of nuclear arsenals.

The representative of the Republic of Korea said the joint exercise mentioned by the representative of "North Korea" was meant to enhance combined efforts against North Korean military actions. "It is purely defensive in nature," he said. Also, North Korea stated that it categorically rejected Security Council resolutions and that it was not bound by their terms. Articles 45 and 48 of the United Nations Charter referred to actions for carrying out such resolutions, outlining that they shall be taken by all Member States. Resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009) and 2094 (2013) had been adopted under Chapter VII and all Members — including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — must carry out their obligations.

He went on to say that the Charter's article 4 restricted United Nations membership to peace-loving nations. If North Korea insisted on rejecting its basic duties, he questioned whether it was qualified to "be among us". The Security Council and more than 80 Member States had issued national statements condemning North Korea's nuclear tests and urging it to abide by Council resolutions.

Noting that North Korea received more than \$10 million in assistance from the United Nations annually, he said it was a pity that it had abandoned its basic duty to its people by squandering those resources on nuclear development, instead of on improving peoples' lives. North Korea had spent an estimated \$3 billion on developing nuclear and ballistic missile technologies — the equivalent of 10 million tonnes of grain to supply that country for three years. That country should use such resources to save its people from daily dire situations.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said South Korea had tried to deceive and mislead the international community. First, that country's delegate had quoted the wrong articles of the United Nations Charter vis-à-vis nuclear weapons and Council resolutions. His Government totally rejected Security Council resolutions, owing the Council's flagrant infringement on his country's sovereignty, which was initiated by the largest nuclear-weapon State, the United States. South Korea had never invited nuclear weapons from the United States; no nation would allow external nuclear weapons in its own territory. Even European countries were asking the United States to take out nuclear weapons.

Why was South Korea "hell bent" on clinging to the nuclear umbrella of the United States? he asked, adding that "that cannot guarantee your security". For 60 years, the entire Korean nation had been suffering. The power of death of 1,000 nuclear weapons would be "more than enough" to eliminate the Korean nation, which was why his country had no other option than to become a nuclear-weapon State. The United States had listed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the axis of evil and as a pre-emptive strike target. As for living conditions in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea "there is no need to worry about it". His country had defended its sovereignty against the United States' hostilities, which had compelled it to increase its defence power. South Korea should take care of its own people. It ranked as number one for people committing suicide and he wondered whether that was because of their living conditions.

Taking the floor for the second time, the representative of the Republic of Korea said that there were no nuclear weapons on its territory. He said that South Korea was party to the 1992 Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. He quoted the United Nations Charter saying that all Member States shall refrain in their international relations from the use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

* * * * *

For information media • not an official record