

STATEMENT
of the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation
to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva
Ambassador Gennady GATILOV
at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament
(Geneva, 23 January 2025)

Dear Mr. President,

Distinguished Colleagues,

First of all, let me congratulate you, Your Excellency, on the beginning of your Presidency at the Conference on Disarmament. I wish you and the entire team of presidents of 2025 patience and perseverance in leading this forum. And of course, you can count on the comprehensive support and full assistance of the Russian delegation during your Presidency.

Mr. President,

The past year was not marked by any significant event that could have a positive impact on the situation in the sphere of international security. We must state that the situation continued to deteriorate due to the irresponsible actions of the West, led by the United States, which are trying to preserve at any cost their former dominance and hegemony in the world. They are trying to reverse the natural course of history towards the establishment of a more equitable polycentric world order based on the principles of sovereign equality of States and the indivisibility of security enshrined in the international law.

This is proved by a number of destructive steps taken by Washington and its minions in violation of not only existing security agreements with other countries, but also specific provisions of multilateral legally binding instruments in the sphere of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. And the most destructive, in

terms of their potential consequences for international peace and security, are the actions of the United States and its NATO allies in the military-strategic sphere.

Contrary to its obligations under the NPT, Washington has continued to strengthen its advanced-based nuclear weapons capabilities in Europe while carrying out deep modernization of warheads and their means of delivery as well as preparations for the re-entry of the base for deployment of its strategic arsenal in the UK. It also brought into operation a modern NATO missile defense system in Poland – the country which is now talking about plans to host American nuclear weapons.

In Asia the situation is no better. It is noteworthy that since recently the North Atlantic Alliance has declared the entire Eurasian continent as its zone of interest. The waters of the South China Sea and East China Sea are already included in NATO's "agenda". The cooperation between the US and the Republic of Korea in the military sphere is deepening. Their joint nuclear planning, under the pretext of implementing Pentagon's guidelines in the field of the so-called "expanded nuclear deterrence", implies the involvement of Japan in this process. Cooperation is increasing within the framework of so-called AUKUS partnership, which is turning into a nuclear alliance. All of this increases the imbalance and tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, with a negative projection on global security and stability.

Plans of Washington to deploy intermediate-range missiles in Germany and the Philippines are also alarming. It is clear that after its demonstrative and groundless withdrawal from the INF Treaty in 2019, the United States is making purposeful efforts to fundamentally shift the balance of power in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region in its favor. These efforts are aimed at the military deterrence of Russia and China. It is obvious that their practical implementation will nullify the moratorium declared by our country in good faith on the deployment of ground-based intermediate-range missiles in regions where such systems are not installed.

Not without the help of the United States and its allies, the Middle East continued to blaze on the verge of descending into a full-scale regional war, including the risk of using WMD. At the same time, the number of civilian casualties sets an unfortunate negative record for such conflicts. The recent events in Yemen,

Libya, Lebanon and Syria are evidence of the further deterioration of a situation in the region. We should not also forget about Afghanistan, where the United States is trying to restore its presence using neighboring countries while it is thinking about returning its military infrastructure there.

The recent steps taken by the so-called “collective West” in the situation in and around Ukraine are of particular concern. It’s not an exaggeration to say that by its reckless actions, including missile strikes against strategic and environmentally dangerous facilities on the territory of our country, aimed at further inflaming the conflict and provoking Russia to escalate it in response, the West, represented by the States sponsoring the Kiev regime, has actually brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. Of course, the US, UK and France bear particular responsibility for that, as their leaders committed themselves to avoid any military confrontation between the nuclear powers by signing on 3 January 2022 the Statement of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

I would like to remind you that it was the Russian Federation that initiated such a statement. And we strictly follow its provisions. All actions of our country have always been retaliatory, intended to ensure its national sovereignty and security, carried out in compliance with existing obligations and commitments, and aimed solely at neutralizing the threats caused by the destructive anti-Russian course of the “collective West”.

At the same time, I would like to emphasize that Russia has always taken a balanced position and has never refused to engage in dialogue, including with Washington. However, we have consistently proceeded from the premise that such bilateral dialogue must be built on an equal and mutually respectful basis, taking into account the significant role played by the two States in a whole range of key issues on the world agenda, including the strengthening of strategic stability and security.

Russia remains open for a dialogue with the new US Administration, including on the Ukrainian conflict. However, it is fundamentally important for us, first and foremost, to eliminate the root causes of this crisis. As for the settlement of the

situation itself, the main goal should not be a brief truce, but a long-term peace based on a respect for the legitimate interests of all States and all peoples living in the region.

Mr. President,

Even the simplest superficial analysis of the current events shows that the source of all the troubles and threats to international security is precisely the obsession of Western and a number of Asian countries with the so-called “Euro-Atlantic solidarity”. In fact, sovereign States find themselves in the position of vassals who implement the will of their masters. Being directly dependent on the decision-making centers in Washington and Brussels, these countries obviously lose their international legal personality as independent participants in interstate relations and are very limited in pursuing independent policies. Perhaps, that is why governments of these countries, in most cases, make very questionable decisions that contradict the interests of their peoples? As a result of this situation, a serious economic downturn in Europe. And now we face a very real threat of a large-scale war on the whole continent.

In order to prevent extremely dangerous developments, back in June 2024, President Vladimir Putin proposed his vision of a new security system in Eurasia, which, as he stressed, has to be created actually anew. The initiative is based on the principles of the UN Charter and the rule of international law. Its implementation is aimed at preventing the fragmentation of Eurasia into opposing blocs and is designed to prevent the outbreak of a large-scale armed conflict involving Eurasian and extra-regional powers.

At the same time, and I wish to emphasize this, Russia welcomes any sound initiatives and ideas aimed at reducing international tension and normalizing interstate relations. That is why we supported the initiative of the Republic of Belarus to develop a framework document “The Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the XXI century”. This could formulate not only the framework principles of Eurasian security architecture, based on the international law, but also

in a broader sense a strategic understanding of multilateralism and multipolarity as a basis for a new system of international relations.

Of course, the key role in such a system can and should be played by time-tested multilateral security mechanisms and, above all, by the UN Disarmament Machinery, including our forum. The Conference on Disarmament continues to remain the most appropriate and promising platform for discussing current international security issues and developing new multilateral agreements in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe that it is necessary to make every effort in order to normalize its activities and to create favourable conditions to ensure that its mandate is fulfilled within the framework of the key topics of its traditional agenda which are critical for international security including the issues of nuclear disarmament, the prevention of nuclear war, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Mr. President,

We reaffirm our country's unwavering commitment to its obligations under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which places the goal of achieving a world without nuclear weapons in the context of general and complete disarmament. We believe that the nuclear disarmament should be carried out step-by-step, on the basis of consensus and in such a way that steps towards this direction do not harm anyone's security but lead to the strengthening of international stability, peace and security for all.

As a consequence, the efforts of the entire international community, including non-Nuclear-Weapon States, to create appropriate conditions and a favorable security climate are required for the resumption of the nuclear disarmament process. Attempts to impose on Nuclear-Weapon States the early and unconditional elimination of their arsenals without taking into account existing strategic realities and their legitimate interests in ensuring their own security are undoubtedly not only futile but also counterproductive. That should be the premise underlying the work of the Conference under Agenda item 1 "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament".

At the same time, in light of the real threat of direct armed confrontation between nuclear powers, the topic of Agenda item 2 “Prevention of nuclear war, including all related issues”, is of particular relevance. Here, as in other key areas of the international agenda in the sphere of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, the whole range of problems related to the root causes, risks and consequences of the respective behavior of States in this area should be considered.

No less relevant in the current circumstances is a substantive discussion on the topic of “negative” security assurances (NSA) under Agenda item 4 of the forum. We reaffirm that if the program of work of the Conference is adopted, which provides for the resumption of the negotiation process, we will be ready to engage in the most active way in the development of a relevant single multilateral international treaty on this topic.

At the same time, in order to prepare for such negotiations, we consider it important to study carefully the experience of nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs). Nuclear-weapon-free zone agreements, along with the provisions of the NPT, constitute an important instrument for protecting the vital interests of non-Nuclear-Weapon States.

Our country has provided more than one hundred States Parties to NWFZs with legal assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We are also in favor of expanding the geography of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in the context of resolving the problem of security assurances – this, however, makes sense only if both Nuclear-Weapon States and all non-Nuclear-Weapon States fulfill their obligations in good faith and responsibly.

In this respect, we believe that such work on the platform of the Conference will complement and enrich international efforts undertaken within the framework of UNGA resolution 79/241 “Comprehensive study of the question of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in all its aspects”.

The study of the topic of NWFZs is all the more relevant as in the current conditions the number of negative factors that can undermine the effectiveness and reliability of this instrument has increased dramatically. This includes, among other

things, the policy of States that rely on “positive” nuclear assurances from the US and the NATO nuclear bloc. The desire of some non-Nuclear-Weapon States to ensure their own security through so-called “extended nuclear deterrence” only stimulates the modernization and qualitative build-up of nuclear arsenals by Western Nuclear-Weapon States, primarily the US.

In recent years, this phenomenon, which is destructive for international security, has taken on an additional dimension through the involvement of non-Nuclear-Weapon States in regional military-bloc structures with a nuclear element. In this regard, the possible threats emanating from the evolution of the AUKUS partnership require the most serious analysis. This creates a risk that a State Party to the NWFZ Treaty in the South Pacific will have the infrastructure of Western Nuclear-Weapon States as well as nuclear weapon carriers. All the more so, since today we are already facing the plans to expand this partnership by involving new States and to create “AUKUS plus”.

Mr. President,

One of the priorities of the Conference is the activity under Agenda item 3, “Prevention of an arms race in outer space” (PAROS). This issue is particularly urgent in the conditions when many Western States, following the example of the US, have adopted documents in the field of defense policy for outer space, in which they treat near-Earth space as yet “another operational environment” for warfare. What is this if not a declaration of intent to deploy combat strike systems in near-Earth orbits? In this connection we consider inadmissible any attempts to replace international efforts in the area of PAROS by consideration of some norms, rules and principles of so-called “responsible behavior” of States in outer space, that would give these countries a green light for further unimpeded military exploration of outer space.

In this area, the outcome of activities of the Group of Governmental Experts on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, established on the Russian initiative by the UN General Assembly resolution 77/250, is very useful for this forum. It is gratifying that its consensus final report

recommended not only to continue the consideration of the substantive elements of a future international legally-binding instrument including, *inter alia*, on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, but also formulated, among other things, a list of issues that should be studied in order to develop such legally binding instrument on PAROS. Equally useful in this regard are the findings of a similar GGE which was active in 2018-2019.

The Conference is the only specialized platform where negotiations on this issue can be conducted. And we plan, with the support of other States, to facilitate the negotiation process on PAROS taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the above-mentioned GGE. We propose to take as a basis for discussion the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT) which was introduced by the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China at the Conference on Disarmament in 2008 and amended in 2014, which remains relevant to this day.

Mr. President,

We are confident that in the context of unstable geopolitical situation and aggravation of the conflict potential in various regions of the world, Russian initiative to develop a draft International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Chemical and Biological Terrorism is still in demand. The document is designed to eliminate gaps in international law that prevent prompt and effective response to the WMD terrorism, which has acquired a large-scale, systemic and transboundary nature.

We also recognize the interest of a number of States in bringing to the Conference the issue of military application of new technologies, including artificial intelligence. Nevertheless, we would like to caution against steps that are fraught with undermining the work of specialized international platforms that are already studying the most relevant aspects of this issue. We are referring primarily to the GGE on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems on the platform of the Convention of Certain Conventional Weapons, as well as the UN Disarmament Commission.

Mr. President,

Our delegation confirms its interest in building of a mutual, respectful dialogue and finding compromise solutions on a comprehensive and balanced Programme of Work for the 2025 session that would take into account the interests of all Member States of the forum.

We would also like to emphasize that we consider the intention of the Member States of the Conference, for the second year in a row, to take a decision on organizing the work of the session by re-establishing the five subsidiary bodies to be a positive signal.

For our part, we will work to ensure that the Conference will be able to adopt such a decision in the very near future and launch the work of the subsidiary bodies as soon as possible. At the same time, we believe that the establishment of such bodies is justified only if their activities effectively facilitate the search for “points of convergence” and allow us to carry out meaningful work in the forum in the near future. To that end, it is important to ensure that the coordinators agree as soon as possible on a list of questions for each of the subsidiary bodies in order to structure our discussion and avoid their politicization the repetition of already well-known national positions.

We are convinced that any decision to organize the work of the session should be aimed at facilitating the launching of negotiations on the main Agenda items.

Finally, we have consistently advocated for the principles of inclusiveness and multilateralism in the work of the Conference. However, we believe that those States that are admitted to the forum as observers should work exclusively in a constructive fashion, contribute to the realization of the goals and objectives of the Conference and the fulfillment of its negotiation mandate. Any misuse of this platform for political purposes leads to deepening divisions and aggravating disagreements among Member States, and it is therefore not in our common interests and is absolutely unacceptable.

Overall we are convinced that we should no longer tolerate any attempts to use this forum to promote some national political approaches or narrow group

interests and to replicate groundless accusations against Member States of the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations. Moreover the Conference shall not deal with issues that are not falling directly within its terms of reference just because we are unable to agree on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, as it was laid down in the outcome document of the First Special Session of the UNGA on Disarmament in 1978.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that the Russian delegation is open to productive co-operation with the Presidencies of the current session and with all other Member States of the Conference as well as invited observers in order to achieve results satisfactory to all as soon as possible and to work constructively for the benefit of peace and international security.

I thank you for your attention.