

**Statement by Vladimir YERMAKOV,
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at the General Debate in the First Committee
of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly**

(New York, 4 October 2022)

Mr. Chair,

I congratulate you on your election to this post and wish you success in your work. I assure you of every kind of assistance the Russian delegation will provide to you to facilitate the substantive discussions.

The current session of the UN GA First Committee takes place under the emergency circumstances of the gravest crisis of international security. Those circumstances have been brought about by a group of countries that claim to be exceptional, and that, having failed to cope with its phantom pains of the colonial past, still continues to aggressively press for their selfish goals in defiance of the principle of undivided security and fundamental interests of other States and peoples. Such a destructive line escalated the risks in the area of strategic stability, and instigated the evolvment of crises in numerous directions having dire consequences for the international world community, first and foremost the developing countries.

The tragedy of Ukraine, transformed by the Western States into a tool to realise their geopolitical ambitions, has become the most burning issue, a challenge for the entire global system of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Supported directly by Washington, the anti-constitutional coup d'etat that took place in that country in 2014 ignited an 8-year Kiev's aggression against Donbass, residents of which few days ago took a landmark decision to become part of Russia. It is their historical choice, their answer to the

prospering Neo-Nazism, Russophobia, and violation of fundamental human rights, primarily in relation to the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine, all which was and remains the linchpin of the Kiev's policy.

The downfall has been observed since the beginning of the year. The US and NATO blatantly rejected our legitimate demand to stop the malign expansion towards our borders while turning Ukraine into the spearhead of the anti-Russian posture. Simultaneously we obtained the convincing evidence of Ukraine getting ready for a full-scale invasion of DPR and LPR with the aim of their elimination. And last mid-February the Kiev regime announced its possible rejection of Ukraine's non-nuclear status leading to acquisition of nuclear weapons. We had no other choice but to lend support to Donetsk and Lugansk – to conduct a special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine.

The recklessness of the destructive course of NATO states under the lead of the US aimed at open confrontation with Russia in Ukraine and their brinkmanship on the verge of direct armed conflict are obvious, and fraught with further escalation to the point of the military clash of the nuclear powers with the ensuing gravest consequences. Such a scenario should be prevented. As it has been repeatedly noted by the leadership of the Russian Federation, the current turbulent environment poses rather significant nuclear risks that cannot be underestimated. Nor should they be artificially “inflated”. Hence, it is imperative in this context for the entire P5 to remain committed to the postulate of inadmissibility of any war between nuclear-weapon States, as was reflected in the January joint statement of the leaders of the nuclear-weapon powers. Russia is fully committed to it.

The US activities related to the development and deployment of the assets being part of the global BMD system in various regions of the world coupled with the build-up of its potential of high-precision non-nuclear weapons capable to fulfil strategic tasks remain a negative factor involving significant risks for strategic stability. In violation of the NPT obligations, NATO continues its

“nuclear sharing” practice with the participation of non-nuclear European countries on which territory the US nuclear bombs are deployed. These arms and their means of delivery undergo destabilizing modernization. We have repeatedly stressed the need to return the US nuclear weapon to the national territory, eliminate the infrastructure for its deployment in Europe and stop “nuclear sharing”.

The demise of the INF Treaty brought about by the US withdrawal therefrom led to the world being thrown for over than 30 years back as regards the international agreements in the area of nuclear-missile disarmament. We call on Washington and its allies to take responsibility and assume, on a reciprocal basis, the obligations similar to those undertaken by Russia – not to be the first to deploy systems that have been earlier prohibited by the INF Treaty.

The world is changing rapidly. In the absence of a constructive dialogue, the accumulated contradictions will continue to escalate, leading to total chaos in strategic affairs and the worst-case scenario. To avoid this, a respectful and motivated dialog is required on the mutually acceptable rules of conflict-free coexistence to reduce tension, prevent dangerous escalation and arms race, including through arms control. The need to shape a more viable international security architecture based on genuine multilateralism and the principle of undivided security is particularly obvious in the current situation.

We are fully aware of our responsibility for maintaining global and regional stability and open to discuss any constructive ideas aimed at preventing further degradation of the situation in this area. Such discussion should be consensus-based and take into account the legitimate interests of all parties involved.

Mr Chair,

As a NPT initiator and depositary, Russia considers the Treaty a key element of the international security system. It is regrettable that the 10th NPT Review Conference, held this August, failed to elaborate a consensus final

document. The participants were unable to overcome the contradictions accumulated on acute issues and affecting all three NPT "baskets" – nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of atomic energy. Western delegations used this key nuclear non-proliferation event to settle political scores, and also demonstrated their inability to take into account the interests of all participating States.

As a result, the chances to adopt a final document were reduced to zero. However, we are firmly convinced that its absence does not at all mean the failure of the Conference. The very fact that the States parties to the Treaty were able to exchange views is of great value under the current difficult geopolitical conditions.

We consider the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) in various regions of the world as an important element in maintaining the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Our country has ratified all the signed protocols to NWFZ Treaties, providing appropriate security guarantees to more than 100 NPT member States. We are in favour of an early solution to the issue of establishing a Middle East nuclear weapon free zone (MENWFZ), as provided for by the resolution of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

The IAEA safeguards system, being the NPT control mechanism, is an essential element in maintaining the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We presume that its exclusive purpose is to verify the non-proliferation obligations of the States parties to the Treaty. We believe that to maintain the confidence of IAEA member States in the safeguards system, it is necessary to ensure an appropriate level of transparency, as well as a technically justified and politically unbiased approach, both to the implementation of safeguards, and to inspection conclusions.

Mr Chair,

We believe that the AUKUS partnership created by Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States has a negative impact both on the nuclear non-

proliferation regime and international security in general. There is a risk of military infrastructure of nuclear states emerging in another non-nuclear state. This increases the level of international instability and runs counter to the objectives of reducing nuclear arsenals.

This partnership also looks ambiguous in the context of Australia's participation in the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. This adds feasibility to clarifying reservations made by nuclear states when signing or ratifying protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.

More than a quarter of a century has passed since the opening for signature of the CTBT, but it has still not entered into force. We call on the remaining eight Annex 2 States, which are destiny-making for the Treaty, to ratify it as soon as possible.

We support multilateral efforts to restore full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to resolve the issue around Iran's nuclear program (JCPOA), endorsed by UNSC resolution 2231. We are convinced that the resuscitation of the "nuclear deal" is in the interests of the international community as a whole and will reduce the degree of tension around Iran and its nuclear program, and avoid irreversible consequences at the regional level and on a global scale. However, in order to do so, the US must correct all of its violations and re-enter the legal framework of the JCPOA and UNSC resolution 2231.

Mr. Chair,

The situation at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is totally unacceptable. This once very authoritative and purely technical international entity has, by efforts of Western countries, become a tool for pursuing their geopolitical interests in the Middle East and beyond. Such actions cause irreparable damage to the activities of the OPCW, its reputation, and erode the basis of the Convention on the Prohibition of

Chemical Weapons and the entire international system of disarmament and non-proliferation of WMD.

The absence of exhaustive explanations following the consultative meeting of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in connection with the US and Ukrainian military and biological activities on Ukrainian territory on the specific claims presented in detail by Russia regarding the compliance of these countries with Articles I and IV of the Convention only reinforce the need for strengthening the BTWC. First of all, we refer to resuming work on a legally binding Protocol to the BTWC with an effective verification mechanism. Russian initiatives to establish mobile biomedical units and a Scientific Advisory Committee, to modernize confidence-building measures, and to create a mechanism within the BTWC in order to investigate possible violations of the Convention are aimed at strengthening the institutional framework of the BTWC. The establishment of an open-ended working group would help to implement these tasks, as well as to consider constructive proposals from other States. We suggest that relevant decisions be taken at the Ninth Review Conference of the BTWC.

There is a need to strengthen the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, including by consideration of updating the principles and procedures, which have not been updated since their adoption in 1990. To this end, we submit the relevant draft resolution. We look forward to broad support and co-sponsorship.

Mr. Chair,

For decades, the Russian Federation has advocated the maintenance of space exclusively for peaceful activities of by States on an equal basis for the benefit of humankind. This goal can be achieved only through the development of universally recognized legally binding norms of international law that are comprehensive and aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space (PAROS), as stipulated by the First Special Session of the UNGA on Disarmament in 1978.

We call on UN Member States to pay close attention to the implementation of the policy of placing weapons in space and using outer space for warfare by Western countries, led by the United States, in order to ensure their dominance and supremacy.

A new extremely dangerous trend has emerged in the course of events in Ukraine. We refer to the use by the United States and its allies of components of civilian infrastructure in space, including commercial one, for military purposes. Such activities are, in fact, indirect participation in armed conflicts, and quasi-civilian infrastructure may be a "legitimate target" for retaliation. As a result of Western actions the sustainability of peaceful space activities, as well as the many social and economic processes on Earth that human well-being depends on, are put at undue risk. Such provocative use of civilian satellites raises questions in the context of the compliance with the Outer Space Treaty, which provides for its exclusively peaceful use, and should be strongly condemned by the international community.

Such irresponsible actions require urgent and decisive practical steps. It is necessary to begin developing a legally binding instrument on PAROS with guarantees to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against or by space objects. We consider as a foundation the Russian-Chinese draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against space objects.

An intermediate confidence-building measure is the international No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (NFP) initiative/political obligation, which is currently the only really effective instrument for keeping outer space weapon-free. More than 30 states are already its full-fledged members.

We submit draft resolutions on the NFP, on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities and on further practical measures in the field of PAROS for the First Committee's consideration. We count on their maximum support and co-sponsorship.

The Russian Federation is convinced that the United Nations should continue to play a central role in the negotiation process on international information security. We welcome the adoption of the first annual report of the United Nations Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on this topic. Russia joined the consensus on the document with reservations. Nevertheless, we believe that it reflects the tasks faced by the international community and sets the direction for further discussion. It is fundamentally important to continue the discussion of pressing security issues in the field of ICTs within the unified mechanism of the OEWG, while avoiding the "dispersion" of negotiations through the creation of duplicative formats. It is important that these provisions and this year's consensus are reflected in the relevant UN General Assembly resolution.

Mr. Chair,

We note the growing politicization of discussions on the ACDNP within the UN General Assembly, the UN Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We are witnessing the abandonment of substantive dialogue and the persistent attempts by Western countries to turn these bodies into an instrument of pressure on the "undesirable", to erode their mandate and to revise the rules of procedure and the fundamental principles of their functioning.

This destructive trend was fully demonstrated at the recently concluded session of the CD, where an orchestrated anti-Russian campaign became an obstacle to normal work. We see the reason for this state of affairs in the unwillingness, unavailability and simply inability of our Western colleagues to implement the decisions of the First UNGA Special Session on Disarmament.

An additional obstacle to the development of dialogue among UN Member States on the ACDNP is the negligent fulfilment by the US side of its obligations to issue visas to members of delegations travelling to events organized by the UN. This practice is unacceptable and is a flagrant violation of

the international legal obligations of the United States under the 1947 UN Headquarters Agreement, which provides for unhindered passage to the area of headquarters of the Organization for representatives or officials of UN Member States, as well as for the issue of visas "without charge and as promptly as possible". We do not intend to tolerate such irresponsible behaviour on the part of the United States authorities. In this connection, we continue to seek the immediate launch of arbitration proceedings against the host country of the UN Headquarters.

For our part, we have consistently promoted a unifying agenda. Thus, during the current session of the General Assembly, we will introduce a resolution entitled "Strengthening and developing the system of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements". We look forward to its adoption by consensus and its positive effect on constructive co-operation on the whole range of issues of international peace and security.

Thank you.