

STATEMENT
by Mr. Igor Vishnevetskii, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the
Russian Federation at the 10th NPT Review Conference
(General Debate)

Mr. President,

First of all, allow me to voice the message from President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin to the participants in and guests of the 10th NPT Review Conference.

"Ladies and gentlemen,

I am happy to address you at the opening of the Tenth Anniversary NPT Review Conference.

In over half a century of its existence, the Treaty has become a key element of the international system of security and strategic stability. The obligations stipulated by the Treaty in the areas of non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy fully serve the interests of nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon states alike.

As a State party to the NPT and one of its depositary states, Russia consistently adheres to the letter and spirit of the Treaty. We have also fully implemented our commitments under our bilateral agreements with the U.S. on the reduction and limitation of relevant arms. We believe that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, and we stand for equal and indivisible security for all members of the global community.

We attach great importance to the IAEA safeguards system – as a verification mechanism for the Treaty – and consider it extremely important to ensure its objective, depoliticized and technically justified application.

We are convinced that all countries that comply with the provisions of the NPT should have the right to access to peaceful nuclear energy without

preconditions. We are ready to share our experience in nuclear energy with our partners.

We hope that the Conference will reaffirm the commitment of all States parties to the NPT to comply strictly with their obligations and contribute significantly to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and to ensuring peace, security and stability in the world.

I wish you success in your work and all the best.

Vladimir Putin".

Mr. President,

The Conference is called upon to take stock of the functioning of the non-proliferation regime over nearly seven years since the last Review Conference and identify ways to further strengthen the Treaty, which for more than half a century has been regarded as one of the key international legal instruments for ensuring strategic stability and international security.

The Russian Federation has consistently observed its obligations under the NPT and expresses its strong support for the Treaty. Our National Report that we have circulated details the progress made by our country in recent years in implementing its provisions.

Recently, the international security and strategic stability situation has been deteriorating rapidly. The accumulated conflict potential is escalating into open confrontation with serious risks of further escalation. A flagrant violation of the principle of equal and indivisible security resulting from the malicious expansion of the military bloc of countries seeking undivided military, strategic and geopolitical dominance has caused an acute crisis in the center of Europe. Russia, which is forced to defend its legitimate right to its core security interests, has been subjected to a hybrid military campaign fraught with a slide into a direct armed conflict between nuclear powers. Moreover, the arms control system, which has traditionally been a core pillar of international security and

stability, is currently facing a crisis that has no precedent in recent history in terms of its scale.

Against this background, it is not surprising that members of the international community have increasingly expressed concerns about the growing strategic risks and uncertain prospects for nuclear disarmament. This issue has also been raised within the current NPT review process.

We would like to emphasize that Russia has consistently made a significant practical contribution to freeing the world from the threat posed by WMDs. We remain committed to the noble goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. In fully implementing our international obligations, including those under Article VI of the NPT, we bear our fair share of responsibility for preserving peace and strengthening global security.

As a result of the reductions, including under bilateral treaties with the United States, Russia's total strategic arms capacity has been reduced by 85 percent from its peak in the 1980s. Russia continues to fulfill its obligations under the 2010 START Treaty. By 5 February 2018, the control date under the Treaty, we had reduced our arsenal even below the established limits. Russia's non-strategic nuclear weapons, after a fourfold reduction as compared to 1991 levels, have been transferred to the non-deployed category and concentrated in central storage facilities within the national territory.

On our initiative, the START Treaty was extended for five years in February 2021. In July 2021, a comprehensive dialogue on strategic stability was initiated by agreement between the Presidents of Russia and the United States. Its key objective was to lay the foundation for future arms control and risk reduction measures. An agreement was reached regarding the conditions for such work. As its ultimate goal, Russia proposed developing a new "security equation" that would take into account all factors of strategic stability in their interrelationship and encompass offensive and defensive nuclear and conventional weapons capable of meeting strategic challenges.

However, the positive achievements were devalued by the U.S. policy of ignoring Russia's "red lines" in the field of security. Washington used our rebuff to this destructive approach as a pretext to "freeze" the strategic dialogue. At the same time, the accumulated issues and contradictions will only continue to become more acute with the interruption of the dialogue. Sooner or later, an understanding of the objective necessity to avoid total chaos in strategic affairs and prevent the development of events in the worst-case scenario must prevail.

Under the current turbulent conditions, collective efforts are especially needed to create an international environment conducive to taking further steps toward nuclear disarmament. The advancement should be made comprehensively and in strict compliance with Article VI of the NPT, without taking its particular elements out of the integral context of general and complete disarmament. Progress in reducing nuclear arsenals is possible only through a calibrated, step-by-step approach based on strengthened international stability and equal security for all states without exception.

We need to give serious consideration as to how we can make the process of nuclear disarmament multilateral. All states with military nuclear capabilities should be engaged in the dialogue. This can be truly achieved only on the basis of consensus, equality and mutual respect for the interests of all parties.

Given the situation, it is more critical than ever that the nuclear powers behave with restraint and responsibility. The Russian Federation is strongly convinced that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. At Russia's initiative, the commitment to this principle was reaffirmed not only within Russia–U.S. and, later, Russia–China dialogues, but also in the Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races. The need to prevent not only a nuclear confrontation, but also any military confrontation between nuclear powers was emphasized. It is imperative that all signatories demonstrate in deeds their commitment to these provisions.

The possible negative scenarios that might occur after the termination of the INF Treaty following the U.S. withdrawal from it are deeply troubling. The collapse of the Treaty has set the world back by 30 years in terms of international contractual arrangements in nuclear and missile disarmament. In order to prevent a new destructive nuclear arms race and to ensure predictability and restraint in the missile area, the Russian Federation has made a unilateral commitment not to be the first to deploy systems previously banned under the Strategic Missile Treaty in regions where such American-made weapons will not be deployed. We have repeatedly called on the U.S. and its NATO allies to act responsibly and make similar commitments through reciprocal verification measures allowing us to address concerns on both sides.

In updating its doctrinal documents, Russia has significantly reduced the role of nuclear weapons in its defense policy, which is purely defensive in nature and is aimed at protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. In this case, priority is given to a set of measures to prevent aggression by political and diplomatic and other non-military means, as well as to the development of a system of non-nuclear deterrence.

We note the unacceptable situation around the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It has been more than a quarter of a century since the Treaty was opened for signature, but it has never evolved into a living international legal instrument. Responsibility for this lies with the eight Annex 2 states of the CTBT that have not yet acceded to the Treaty.

The U.S. position is worthy of note. It has been a year and a half since the new administration took office, but Washington's destructive approach to the Treaty outlined in the 2018 nuclear doctrine, which sets forth its refusal to ratify the Treaty, has not yet been reconsidered.

Mr. President,

Nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) constitute an essential element of the non-proliferation regime. Their establishment is provided for, *inter alia*, by

Article VII of the NPT. We consider the establishment of such zones and the signing of legally binding protocols on security assurances by nuclear-weapon states to be an important factor in strengthening the non-proliferation regime as well as regional security and stability. Russia has signed protocols to existing Treaties establishing NWFZs in Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Africa, and Central Asia, thus providing assurances to over one hundred states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

We would like to emphasize that the reservations and statements we make when signing the Protocols to the Treaties establishing NWFZs are in fact specifying in nature and stipulate that security assurances do not apply in cases where States themselves for some reason do not comply with the "letter and spirit" of the Treaties establishing NWFZs. That is, when they provide their territory for transit and storage of nuclear weapons or attack in alliance with nuclear-weapon States.

The relevance of clarifying reservations to the Protocols to the Treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones is confirmed by the situation around the recently formed AUKUS partnership between the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, within which the emergence of nuclear weapon states' military infrastructure in the territory of a State party to the NWFZ Treaty (Rarotonga) cannot be ruled out.

The establishment of a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone, as stipulated in the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, has always had a special place within the NPT. No progress has been made so far on this issue owing to the positions taken by several countries that are key in terms of establishing a WMD-free zone.

An important development in this regard was the decision taken by the UN General Assembly in December 2018 to convene the Conference on the Establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, under which two sessions of this forum have already been held. Russia took part in them as an

observer. Despite persistent difficulties and the non-participation of several major players, such as Israel and the United States, an important practical step has been taken towards the establishment of a WMD-free zone. An open and inclusive dialogue has been initiated to overcome the existing deadlock. For our part, we have been providing and will continue to provide full cooperation. It is important that the other P-5 states and, most importantly, all countries of the Middle East join this effort.

We have consistently advocated resolving regional challenges in the area of nuclear non-proliferation exclusively by political and diplomatic means based on the NPT.

We firmly believe in the need to resume full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian Nuclear Program (JCPOA) as soon as possible. To all intents and purposes, the JCPOA has become a unique achievement of multilateral diplomacy with proven effectiveness and viability. There is simply no alternative to these arrangements. Russia remains fully committed to the JCPOA and hopes for a similar responsible attitude on the part of its partners, as well as the assistance of the entire world community.

We hope that both U.S. and Iran's pledges of willingness to work towards agreements that will bring things back to normal and ensure full implementation of the JCPOA and UNSC resolution 2231 will materialize. Without a "relaunch" of the JCPOA at full capacity, it is unlikely that the previous level of transparency of the Iranian nuclear program will be achieved, which is what the "nuclear deal" was made for.

The situation of the JCPOA affects not only the current state of the nuclear non-proliferation regime but also the prospects for resolving other such crises, in particular, the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue.

We believe that the lack of progress in resolving the situation around the JCPOA is largely associated with the U.S. reliance on the power factor and the reluctance of the U.S. to provide Pyongyang with firm security assurances. We

emphasize that we do not recognize the DPRK as a nuclear-weapon state and advocate that Pyongyang return to compliance with its NPT obligations, but this requires mutual respect for the interests of all parties concerned.

The confidence of the NPT states parties in IAEA safeguards is a key factor in the sustainability of the entire nuclear non-proliferation system. We believe that the basic principles of the IAEA safeguards system should remain objectivity, technical objectivity, and consistency with the safeguards agreements concluded between states and the IAEA. The presumption of innocence and respect for sovereignty remain legitimate rights of all NPT states parties, and the application of safeguards should take this fully into account.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to strengthening nuclear safety at home and around the world. We are firmly guided by the fundamental principle of state responsibility for ensuring physical nuclear safety in its territory. All nuclear materials, their storage sites and related facilities in Russia, as well as the transportation of nuclear materials and radioactive substances, are subject to the necessary security measures.

Mr. President,

The most important achievement of the NPT is that the Treaty not only limits the proliferation of nuclear weapons but also ensures that States parties have access to the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Russia has consistently advocated the right to develop peaceful nuclear technologies and has actively promoted it by sharing its extensive experience in this area with other states. We will elaborate on the matter within the relevant thematic discussion.

It is crucial for all of us to clearly determine what tasks the NPT States parties should set for themselves during the Conference. In our view, the main goal is to make sure that this Review Conference contributes to strengthening the NPT rather than increasing divisions within it. All parties to the Treaty need to do their utmost and, if they can, produce a final document that explicitly

states the commitment to the NPT, to preserving its viability, and the intention to strengthen the Treaty. It would be a great achievement if we also succeed in reaffirming all of the commitments made by states in previous review processes.

We would like to strongly reject all the allegations that have been made against us concerning unprovoked aggression against Ukraine. The current regime came to power as a result of a coup and immediately began first the persecution of and then the armed struggle against the Russian-speaking population living in the Donbass. For eight years, Ukrainian nationalists were killing civilians on this territory with near impunity and preparing a large-scale military invasion of the republics that, in fact, broke away from Ukraine. Furthermore, the Kiev authorities, having signed the Minsk agreements, that were the only way to bring peace to this land, were not even going to implement them. The situation in Ukraine reached its limit, and Russia's actions were a necessary response to the atrocities that were taking place there, and they will be brought to their logical conclusion.

We will provide our detailed response to the insinuations about the alleged threats of nuclear weapons and actions aimed at undermining nuclear and physical nuclear safety of nuclear facilities in Ukraine later, when exercising our right of reply.

In conclusion, we would like to express our hope that the work of the Conference will take place in a spirit of goodwill and without confrontation, and will eventually become fruitful. The Russian delegation will contribute to this in every way possible.

Thank you.