

STATEMENT

**by the Deputy Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation at the
Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-
Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
(Cluster I, Nuclear Disarmament)**

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, we would like to draw attention to the working paper of the Russian Federation entitled "Nuclear disarmament: an area of shared responsibility" containing views on a number of aspects of nuclear disarmament issues, which is available on the websites of the Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2020/WP.56).

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear disarmament is at the forefront of the international agenda. Despite visible progress in strategic arms reduction, the nuclear powers are accused of almost sabotaging their disarmament obligations. We cannot agree with this interpretation, at least with regard to the Russian Federation.

Russia seeks to make its practical contribution to freeing the world from the threat posed by WMDs, including nuclear weapons. We are committed to the noble goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. In fully complying with our international obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we bear our fair share of responsibility for preserving peace and strengthening global security.

As a result of reductions, the total strategic arms capacity of the Russian Federation has been successively reduced by 85 percent from its peaks in the 1980s. The Russian Federation has reduced its non-strategic nuclear weapons (NSNWs) by three-quarters of what the USSR had in 1991. All NSNWs have

been transferred to the non-deployed category, are located exclusively within the national territory, and are concentrated in centralized storage facilities with the highest security regime, which provides a reliable guarantee against accidental or unauthorized use, not to mention theft.

The Russian Federation continues to fulfill its obligations under the 2010 START Treaty without exemptions or reservations. As of 1 March 2021, Russia possessed 526 deployed strategic offensive means of delivery and 1,474 warheads attributed to them under the Treaty. The aggregate number of deployed and non-deployed ballistic missile launchers and heavy bombers as of that date was 761. The limiting levels we have achieved are significantly lower than those stipulated in the START Treaty. We publish quantitative data on levels of strategic offensive weapons for greater transparency. In November 2019, the Russian Federation held a demonstration for the U.S. side of the Avangard missile system with a hypersonic boost-glide vehicle. This step serves as further confirmation of the strict fulfillment of our obligations under the Treaty, aimed primarily at ensuring the viability and effectiveness of its implementation.

The United States has announced that some of its strategic offensive weapons have been converted and can no longer be used for nuclear weapons. However, in the context of the implementation of the START Treaty, we cannot yet confirm this. As a result, the United States actually possesses more nuclear-weapon-delivery vehicles than required by the Treaty. This exceedance allows the United States to build up its strategic nuclear capability by about 1,200 nuclear warheads in the shortest possible time. We continue to work towards resolving this issue.

At Russia's initiative, the START Treaty was extended for five years in February 2021. By agreement between the Presidents of Russia and the United States, a composite dialogue on strategic stability was initiated. Its key objective was to lay the foundations for future arms control and risk reduction measures. We managed to agree on the parameters for building such work. Its ultimate goal,

as we saw it, was to develop a new "security equation" that would take into account all factors of strategic stability and encompass both offensive and defensive nuclear and non-nuclear weapons capable of meeting strategic challenges.

However, the positive achievements have not been implemented due to the U.S. policy of achieving military superiority while completely ignoring Russia's "red lines" in the field of security. Washington used Russia's rebuff to the attempts to put us in a vulnerable position as a pretext to "freeze" the strategic dialogue. However, in the absence of cooperation, strategic stability challenges and contradictions only accumulate and intensify, and the system of arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation treaties and agreements that has served as the foundation for international security for decades continues to be subjected to unprecedented tests. We hope that the understanding of the objective need to avoid total chaos in strategic affairs and to prevent the development of events in the worst-case scenario will sooner or later prevail.

Mr. Chairman,

Against this background, it is not surprising that many states are increasingly expressing serious concerns about the growing nuclear risks and uncertain prospects for nuclear disarmament. This theme is becoming more and more apparent in the current NPT review cycle as well.

We note that the possibility of implementing ideas concerning nuclear risk reduction should be considered in the general context of moving toward reducing confrontational potential and preventing crises that could lead to direct military clashes involving nuclear-weapon states.

In this regard, we would like to draw the attention of delegations to the working paper of the P-5, in which last December a common vision on this issue was outlined, and to which we remain committed.

More generally, in our view, amid global turbulence and international political fragmentation, there is a demand, primarily within the NPT framework,

for respectful and engaged dialogue as the only possible means of overcoming disagreements, increasing the level of trust, and finding common ground.

As for nuclear disarmament itself, we are convinced that there are no shortcuts. It is impossible to achieve real progress in this area simply by outlawing nuclear weapons.

The international security situation is such that the consolidated efforts of the "NPT community" to create a favorable global climate for the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons and to make this process consistent and sustainable are now particularly needed to make progress toward this goal. In this respect, the contribution of each NPT state party is valuable. Non-nuclear-weapon states, along with nuclear-weapon states, should contribute in deed, not in word, to the overall reduction of international tensions, the promotion of stability, and a realistic global disarmament agenda, especially in the implementation of Article VI in its entirety.

Practical progress in disarmament can only be achieved by consensus and by pursuing a path towards calibrated and phased reductions in the context of Article VI of the NPT, as well as by respecting the mandatory requirement to maintain strategic balance based on the principle of equal security. We respect the views of those who advocate the immediate and unconditional renunciation of nuclear weapons. At the same time, the attempts to impose on countries possessing nuclear weapons the speedy elimination of their arsenals are clearly futile in isolation from existing strategic realities and legitimate security interests of each of these countries.

The Russian Federation is open to all constructive ideas for multilateral discussions on nuclear disarmament and on strengthening international security and stability. Discussions on the topic should be based on consensus and respect the legitimate interests of all participants in the process. Attempts to force anyone to participate in them are counterproductive. In our view, the engagement in such discussions of France and the United Kingdom, as NATO allies of the United

States, would be of priority. They possess nuclear arsenals not limited by any international agreements, which we have to take into account when working on matters of ensuring the national security of the Russian Federation. We also take into account the plans announced by London to increase the number of nuclear warheads.

At the same time, we would like to draw the attention of participants in the Conference to the fact that NATO openly defines itself as a nuclear alliance, which was recently reconfirmed by its members at the end of the June summit in Madrid. U.S. nuclear weapons are still on the territory of non-nuclear allied states. Practical scenarios for its use involving non-nuclear-weapon states are being exercised within NATO. The anti-Russian character of such activities has recently been, in fact, stated by the Minister of Defense of the Federal Republic of Germany. For his part, the NATO Secretary General has publicly allowed the deployment of American nuclear weapons in European countries to the east of Germany.

Such irresponsible actions not only continue to be a significant factor affecting international and European security, but also increase the risk of nuclear conflict and generally hamper nuclear disarmament efforts. We have repeatedly called for the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons to national territory, the elimination of the infrastructure for their deployment in Europe, and the cessation of NATO "joint nuclear missions".

This policy of the North Atlantic Alliance raises even more concerns about the creation of the AUKUS partnership by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Despite claims that no nuclear warheads will be transferred to Australia, the military infrastructure of nuclear-weapon states is in fact expected to be located on its territory. In addition, the planned acquisition by Australia of nuclear-powered submarines, which are effectively weapons of unlimited range, is forcing other countries to consider such a massive build-up of its military capabilities. This raises the question of the goals that the participants

in this format of cooperation set for themselves. They need to clarify the situation and provide complete information on the objectives of their interaction, which are clearly broader than what is on the surface. Overall, we are concerned about the trend towards political-military groupings, whose activities may have negative implications for strategic stability and far-reaching implications for regional and global security.

Mr. Chairman,

In the current circumstances, 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. The commitment to this principle was reaffirmed by Russia and the United States in the Presidential Joint Statement of 16 June 2021, as well as by Russia and China in the Joint Statement of 28 June 2021 on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Treaty of Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation. Furthermore, Russia and China took a further step by stating that every effort should be made to prevent any armed conflicts between states with military nuclear capabilities.

This commitment was reaffirmed on 3 January 2022 by the leaders of the P-5 in the Joint Statement on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races. One of the key points of the document is the intention to continue seeking diplomatic approaches to avoid military confrontations, strengthen stability and predictability, increase mutual understanding and confidence, and prevent an arms race that would benefit none and endanger all. It is important that each of the nuclear-weapon states follow the provisions of this statement in their entirety.

Russia is consistently reducing the place and role of nuclear weapons in its Military Doctrine. Russia's policy in this area is aimed exclusively at protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. At the same time, priority is given to the implementation of a set of political and diplomatic measures to prevent aggression. In the military area, the emphasis is shifted to non-nuclear means as part of the non-nuclear deterrence system.

In accordance with the provisions of the current Military Doctrine, the Russian Federation reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in two exceptional cases: in response to the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction against it and (or) its allies, as well as in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons, when the very existence of the state is threatened.

The vision of our country of the essence of nuclear deterrence, the definitions of military risks and threats to be neutralized through nuclear deterrence, are specified in the Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence. This document, issued in June 2020, details the provisions of the Military Doctrine on nuclear deterrence and allows the general public to learn in detail about our approaches to their implementation.

Russia's state policy in the area of nuclear deterrence is strictly defensive in nature and is aimed at maintaining its nuclear capability at a level that provides guaranteed protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state, and at preventing aggression against the Russian Federation and its allies. Furthermore, Russian doctrine documents do not define any state as a military adversary of Russia. This gives us grounds to implement nuclear deterrence measures only against those states and military coalitions that consider the Russian Federation as a potential adversary and at the same time possess nuclear weapons or significant combat potential of general purpose forces that can be used for aggression against our country.

It is also worth noting that the possession of nuclear weapons, primarily for deterrence purposes, is the only possible response to certain significant external threats to the Russian Federation. The development of the situation around Ukraine confirms the validity of our concerns in this area. By grossly violating the principle of equal and indivisible security, the NATO bloc has made a bet on malicious expansion aimed at weakening our country. At the same time, the United States and its allies rejected the Russian initiative to work out legally

binding agreements that would guarantee the restoration of predictability and stability on Russia's western borders. The countries of the "collective West" used our forced response to protect our external security contour as a pretext to move into a fierce hybrid confrontation with Russia, dangerously balancing on the edge of open military conflict. Under these circumstances, abandoning nuclear weapons would not only drastically weaken our national security but would also be able to provoke a serious intensification of threats with the risk of further escalation up to a large-scale military confrontation.

Mr. Chairman,

The U.S. withdrawal from the INF Treaty on 2 August 2019 nullified the international legal prohibitions on the deployment of land-based intermediate-range and shorter-range missile weapons.

In order to prevent a new devastating nuclear arms race, the Russian Federation has made a unilateral commitment not to be the first to deploy systems subject to the Treaty in the relevant regions unless similar U.S.-made missiles are deployed in there. We call on the U.S. and its allies to undertake similar commitments.

On 26 October 2020, the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin in his Statement on Additional Steps to De-escalate the Situation in Europe in the Context of the Termination of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, reiterating the initiative on reciprocal moratoria, invited all parties concerned to consider specific options of reciprocal verification measures to address existing concerns. Our initiatives remain in force. Please give them your utmost attention.

We reiterate with a sense of responsibility that Russia has never had and does not have intermediate- and shorter-range land-based missiles. To assert otherwise means to create a deliberately false picture and shield those who are truly responsible for the breakdown of the INF Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

In recent years, nuclear disarmament verification has been actively promoted in international forums as the hottest topic, and some have presented it as a panacea for all troubles, capable of overcoming all obstacles on the path to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The Russian position on this issue is well known; it has been tested by time and experience in implementing disarmament agreements. We are convinced that verification procedures cannot be considered in isolation from specific arms reduction and limitation agreements and must be consistent with the subject matter and scope of the limitations contained therein. Therefore, we do not consider the idea of developing procedures and technologies for nuclear disarmament verification in advance for their possible use in some speculative future arrangements to be reasonable from a logical, pragmatic, or negotiating perspective. In fact, it is a waste of time and resources for a result that knowingly cannot be implemented in practice.

That said, of course, in the event of substantive work on possible future arms control arrangements to which Russia will be a party, we will pay due attention to the verification aspects.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to stress once again that the Russian Federation fulfills all of its nuclear disarmament obligations strictly and fully.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.