

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and thirty-eighth plenary meeting

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President: Mr. Ravinatha Aryasinha(Sri Lanka)

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The President: I call to order the 1438th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Excellencies, dear colleagues, let me address the list of requests from non-member States of the Conference who wish to participate in our work during the 2018 session. Requests received by the Conference on Disarmament secretariat up to yesterday, 5 February 2018 at 3 p.m. are contained in document CD/WP.604/Add.2, which is available on your tables. Any requests from non-member States received after the date indicated above will be presented for your consideration and decision at the next plenary meetings.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure? I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: Allow me to suspend the meeting for a brief moment to allow the representatives of the non-member States who have just been invited to participate in the work of the Conference to take their seats in the Council Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, we were pleased by the constructive exchange that took place during the formal and informal plenary meetings last week. You put forward concrete ideas on ways of doing things differently and advancing with the Conference agenda. It was interesting to note that most delegations decided to speak during the formal plenary meetings, but important contributions also came during the informal plenary meeting. Some proposals were new, while others tried to bridge different positions and create a middle ground.

I am thankful to all of you for this exercise, which I believe has been very useful to us all and fully meets the Sri Lankan presidency's intention when we circulated the compendium of proposals which had been made previously in the Conference on Disarmament since 2000.

Towards the end of the last session, one delegation noted that there were converging elements in the various proposals put forward and suggested that those ideas should not be allowed to wither away, but rather be captured and presented to States so that they can assess how to translate them into something to be looked at more concretely. I have therefore met with a number of States in an attempt to find synergies among approaches. First, I consulted with individual States which had put concrete proposals on the table to discuss them further. Then I met with those States as a group in order to put together all the raw material that had been put on the table during the formal and informal plenary meetings of last week.

Let me emphasize that our focus is not about having a programme of work to work with immediately but, given the great degree of divergence on this matter, to find common ground to approach a programme of work in a meaningful and a credible way. I intend to continue my consultations in the coming days and then present you with the results of these consultations.

With that, let me move on to my list of speakers for today. First on my list is the Ambassador of Canada, followed by the representatives of the United States of America, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Colombia, Bulgaria on behalf of the European Union, Poland, Hungary and Pakistan. I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Canada.

Ms. Hulan (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I take the floor to make a statement on behalf of the delegation of Canada and in my capacity as Chair of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) expert preparatory group.

Before I begin, I would like to thank the Ambassador of Myanmar, Mr. Lynn, for his remarkable work coordinating the working group on the way ahead in 2017. In the context of this initiative, Germany led an in-depth discussion on the fissile material cut-off treaty and I would like to thank Ambassador Biontino for the role he played in the Group.

I am thrilled at the opportunity to be a part of the group's constructive efforts to formulate recommendations on key elements of the treaty. The group, which met for the

first time here, in Geneva, last July and August, has had important and highly interactive discussions. I was particularly struck by the goodwill and collegial atmosphere which prevailed from the outset of the meetings. It is a real privilege to preside a group of such distinguished and professional experts, some of whom are here with us today.

(spoke in English):

Mr. President, clarity of purpose has been key in ensuring that the discussions of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group remain productive and substantive. The first point which is important to underscore is that this group is preparing but not conducting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Since we are not negotiating, the group has not sought to narrow the range of options for a future treaty. While we have harvested points of convergence that have occurred naturally, the group remains focused on distilling a concise plain-language menu of potential treaty provisions across all treaty aspects, including its definitions, scope, verification and legal and institutional framework.

Experts are also not expected to make concessions on their national positions which would of course be detrimental to any future negotiating posture. This approach has created the freedom for this group to openly and collectively debate the merits of all options and examine how they would relate to one another as part of a future treaty's architecture. I am grateful for the genuine effort made by experts to build on and not duplicate the substantial reflection on treaty aspects carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT in 2014 and 2015. I believe we can rest assured that whatever recommendations can ultimately be agreed at the group's final session, these will have been fully considered from every angle.

While I do not intend to go into great detail on the specifics of the work carried out in the preparatory group, I did wish to highlight some unexpected substantive progress made during its first session. In addition to advancements made by the group towards a list of potential treaty elements, I was also impressed by the strides made by the group in mapping out concrete institutional models for a future treaty. We have accomplished more than a superficial review. In fact, as we dug deeper into the details of each model, important and novel questions surfaced regarding the interlinkages between the treaty's institutional arrangements and its verification regime as well as the tasks that would need to be carried out by the various governance organs.

I would underscore also that this group is not triaging or setting aside contextual issues, including the challenging dynamics in the international security environment, nor are we seeking to resolve political issues preventing action here in the Conference on Disarmament. Instead, we are doing everything possible short of actual negotiations to facilitate that work when it can occur. I found the detailed and technical discussions that occurred on core issues, which went well beyond the well-known and well-worn political positions, including among States that possess nuclear weapons, to be heartening. In fact, while Canada is determined to see a successful outcome from this process, we also firmly believe that this type of dialogue pays dividends of its own in building trust and confidence among States. This goodwill was encouraging and I truly hope to see this conversation continue into the final session this year. While I am pleased at our success so far, I would note that the group is very pressed for time. We are already halfway through our mandate and a great deal of work remains at our second session.

While the tone of the first session bodes well for success, it is too soon to speak of results. I can, however, give you a sense of what Canada hopes to achieve. If the report were to contain a clear articulation of options for treaty elements – in plain language – across all treaty aspects, I believe this would provide future negotiators with an excellent point of departure for their work. Their task would be similarly expedited were the preparatory group able to lay out concisely the considerations that negotiators should take into account when deliberating on these options.

As mandated in General Assembly resolution 71/259, I will convene a second informal consultative meeting in New York on 15 and 16 February. As Chair, I am personally committed to ensuring that the views of the entire international community are taken into account in the preparatory group's work at every step of the process. The

inclusive character of this effort and the iterative path it follows between the preparatory group and the General Assembly is something I view as one of the greatest strengths of the preparatory group as it moves forward towards its outcome. It is clear that the General Assembly is keen to be engaged in this process and that it continues to hold this body – the Conference on Disarmament – to account for its negotiation.

Perhaps a word on the value of an FMCT and what is at stake is necessary at this juncture. In a context where fissile material production for nuclear weapons continues in some parts of the world – and there are worrying expansions in some arsenals – no doubt should be cast on the value of an FMCT. Even in the context of a fully enforced prohibition treaty, it bears reminding that an FMCT would still be necessary given the continued production of fissile material and the need to verify that it is not diverted to weapons programmes. It is in fact a measure of how broad the acceptance of the need for an FMCT is that players on all sides of the prohibition treaty debate have consistently noted the complementarity of the two initiatives. Support for an FMCT is not waning, on the contrary, as demonstrated by the last FMCT votes in the General Assembly, it is near universal.

The benefits of this process reach well beyond its substantive contribution to non-proliferation at this particular time. The reality is, and we all know it, that we are at a crossroads. The cooperative spirit that led to the 64-point action plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has mostly dissipated. There is widespread frustration at the lack of progress on disarmament, and real doubt has been cast on the ability of nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to work constructively together towards the shared goals of a nuclear-weapon-free world. This dual motivation – to make substantive progress towards the long overdue negotiation of this treaty, while reinvigorating nuclear disarmament initiatives that bring stakeholders together – underlies the focused pursuit of an FMCT by Canada.

As we all know, there remain deep divisions within the membership on the basic purpose of an FMCT. For some it is vital that this treaty make a direct contribution to disarmament. Others see it as primarily a non-proliferation tool, others still see it as a non-proliferation tool with disarmament impact. How this is ultimately resolved will have a major impact on the treaty's content. Understandably, some might question the value of the work of the preparatory group in the absence of agreement on the basic objective of the treaty; but it is possible to make progress towards preparing negotiations, even in the absence of agreement on this fundamental point.

Regardless of whether the international community chooses a broad treaty or a narrow one, we still need a clear sense of what different types of fissile material could or should be restricted by a treaty and why. Member States still need to explore what the different options are for a treaty's institutional arrangements. The verification implications of the different approaches still need to be elaborated and understood. The process of exploring these issues is not a mere exercise in summarizing what is already known. As we explore these issues, new and important questions are being raised that deepen our understanding of the consequences of the choices before us in crafting an FMCT.

Ultimately, having the full range of options for each of the treaty's main aspects articulated in plain language will also be invaluable to the large majority of member States who do not possess fissile material and do not have fixed positions on these matters, but will nonetheless be party to these negotiations, and will be affected by their outcome. It is therefore essential that we put the full range of considerations and options down in one place, and it is possible to do so even in the absence of agreement on the treaty's basic purpose.

I would like to conclude with some of my personal reflections on what comes next. We are not oblivious to the risks that the preparatory group ends well, but that the product of their effort is not pursued here in Geneva. Political dialogue on the real impediments to FMCT negotiations is urgently needed, and this cannot take place in an expert group. If the Conference on Disarmament cannot address even the most well-ripened issues, scepticism about the Conference's continued relevance will grow stronger and reasonable questions will be raised about why we continue to invest so heavily in this institution. It also

amplifies the risks that Conference on Disarmament issues will be pursued outside this forum, and under circumstances that might create an illusion of progress without the reality of progress. I firmly believe that the process of FMCT negotiations will lend itself to finding approaches and solutions that would help blunt concerns that an FMCT is inimical to anyone's security interests. It is also essential that we move past the tit-for-tat conditionality between an FMCT and other core issues in this body. We have been bound up for far too long in that web.

It is not in anyone's interests, Mr. President, that the FMCT process lapse after the Secretary-General transmits what will hopefully be a consensus preparatory group report to the Conference on Disarmament. That is why, in conjunction with our German and Dutch partners, Canada is deploying considerable resources, both human and financial, over the course of the preparatory group's life cycle to make a real push for progress. We see this as a concerted year of diplomacy – capping 25 years of Canadian investment on this file; but getting to negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament cannot be delivered by Canada alone. In order to ensure that these issues come out in the right way, States with a direct interest in the negotiation of an FMCT need to put their shoulder to the wheel and make sure that the necessary diplomacy is conducted to bring key players to the table. I have personally witnessed the genuine dedication and commitment of preparatory group members – who represent the full spectrum of interests – in that effort. It is an honour to be part of it, and I assure you of the Canadian Government's fullest commitment to producing a successful outcome.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Canada for her statement and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, distinguished colleagues, I take the floor today to share with you some highlights from the United States Nuclear Posture Review which was released last Friday. In January 2017, President Trump tasked the Secretary of Defense with a new Nuclear Posture Review to “ensure the United States nuclear deterrent is modern, robust, flexible, resilient, ready and appropriately tailored to deter twenty-first century threats and reassure allies”. The Department of Defense, along with the Department of State and the Department of Energy, conducted a deliberate, comprehensive review that assessed the roles of nuclear weapons in today's very serious threat environment and determined the strategy and capabilities required to support those roles.

Throughout the review process, we consulted with allies, partners and experts from inside and outside the Government. The resulting 2018 Nuclear Posture Review reflects the strategic priority of the Department of Defense to maintain a safe and effective nuclear arsenal that will successfully: deter nuclear and non-nuclear attacks; assure our allies; respond should deterrence fail; and hedge against potential risks and uncertainties.

Some have criticized the United States for not adopting a sole purpose for nuclear weapons. Let us be clear: the last administration, in 2010, did not see the conditions as appropriate for such a policy in a more benign security environment. Those security conditions have worsened since then – that is indisputable.

Mr. President, for years the United States has consistently pursued reductions in the number and role of nuclear weapons. Doing so was a policy priority highlighted in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review. However, since then certain other States have done the opposite: in contrast to the United States they have vigorously pursued the modernization of their existing nuclear forces. They have also developed and fielded new nuclear capabilities. Russia, China and North Korea are growing their stockpiles, increasing the prominence of nuclear weapons in their security strategies and, in some cases, pursuing the development of new nuclear capabilities to threaten other peaceful nations.

As a result, today's security environment is more dynamic, complex, demanding and threatening than any since the end of the cold war. This environment is characterized by great Powers and rogue States increasingly challenging the international order. They are violating borders and increasing their ability to threaten the United States and our allies. Of particular concern is the large disparity between Russian and United States non-strategic nuclear arsenals. Together with Russian nuclear doctrine, investment by Russia in non-

strategic systems suggests it sees an exploitable, coercive advantage in limited nuclear use. At the same time, military modernization by China has resulted in an expanded nuclear force with little or no transparency as to its intentions.

The United States does not wish to regard either China or Russia as an adversary and seeks stable relations with both. Nevertheless, the Nuclear Posture Review, by necessity, candidly addresses the challenges posed by these and other States' strategic policies, programmes and capabilities and the United States capabilities required to protect the United States allies and partners. As we have discussed in this forum many times in the past, North Korea has accelerated its provocative pursuit of nuclear weapons and missile capabilities and has expressed explicit threats to use nuclear weapons against the United States and its allies in the region. North Korean officials insist that they will not give up nuclear weapons and North Korea may now be only months away from the capability to strike the United States with nuclear-armed ballistic missiles. Given the current and emerging capabilities of North Korea and its extremely provocative rhetoric and actions, it has come to pose an urgent and unpredictable threat to the United States, its allies and partners. Consequently, the Nuclear Posture Review reaffirms that the illicit nuclear programme of North Korea must be completely, verifiably and irreversibly eliminated, resulting in a Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons.

While the security environment worsened, the United States repeatedly deferred the much-needed recapitalization of our nuclear weapons delivery systems and infrastructure. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review therefore reflects an overarching imperative to protect the United States and our allies, including by strengthening our nuclear deterrent while renewing United States commitments to non-proliferation.

While the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review must and does take these challenging realities fully into consideration, it is largely consistent with United States nuclear policies and posture since the end of the cold war. For example, the fundamental role of United States nuclear weapons remains the deterrence of nuclear and non-nuclear attacks against the United States, its allies and partners. The nuclear capabilities of the United States cannot deter all crises and conflict; however, they contribute uniquely and essentially to the prevention of war and the escalation of conflicts. The declaratory policy described in the Nuclear Posture Review is an element of continuity. The policy states that "the United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States, its allies and partners". The Nuclear Posture Review then goes on to explain these circumstances: "Extreme circumstances could include significant non-nuclear strategic attacks. Significant non-nuclear strategic attacks include but are not limited to: attacks on the United States, allied or partner civilian population or infrastructure and attacks on United States or allied nuclear forces, their command and control or warning and attack assessment capabilities."

The Nuclear Posture Review also states that "the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States that are party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations". Finally, the Nuclear Posture Review states "The United States has never adopted a no-first-use policy and, given the contemporary threat environment, such a policy is not justified today. It remains the policy of the United States to retain some ambiguity regarding the precise circumstances that might lead to a nuclear response by the United States."

It is worth noting that the extreme circumstances language and the negative security assurance match the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review and are consistent with decades of United States nuclear policy. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review in no way lowers the nuclear threshold of the United States. Rather, by convincing adversaries that even limited use of nuclear weapons will be more costly than they can countenance, it raises that threshold. Our intention is to reduce the risk that others might miscalculate or gamble that they have some exploitable advantage. The objective is to make clear that it is not in others' interests to use nuclear weapons.

I would now like to focus on some parts of the Nuclear Posture Review that are relevant to the Conference on Disarmament. The United States remains committed to the

long-term goal of disarmament, as conditions permit, and will continue to adhere to our New START Treaty obligations, including the central limits which we reached in August of last year. We remain committed to nuclear non-proliferation, continue to abide by our commitments under the NPT and will work to strengthen the NPT regime. Credible extended nuclear deterrence by the United States will continue to be a cornerstone of United States non-proliferation efforts.

The United States will pursue the political and security conditions that could enable further nuclear reductions. We will work to increase transparency and predictability, where appropriate, to avoid potential miscalculation among nuclear-weapon States and other possessor States through strategic dialogues, risk reduction communications channels and sharing of best practices related to nuclear weapons safety and security. Furthermore, the United States remains committed to finding long-term solutions to the technical challenges of verifying nuclear reductions and will therefore explore new concepts and approaches for this goal, including continued support for the international partnership for nuclear disarmament verification.

The highest priority of the Department of Defense is deterring nuclear attack and maintaining the nuclear capabilities needed to do so. As has been recognized by all previous Nuclear Posture Reviews, the United States nuclear triad is the necessary foundation for United States deterrence capabilities. Consequently, consistent with the previous administration's programmes, we will sustain and rebuild the nuclear triad, each leg of which is now operating far beyond its originally planned service life. After many years of delay, and, in some cases, virtual neglect, we will also modernize our ageing nuclear infrastructure and command and control system to meet twenty-first century needs. Strengthening deterrence is not simply a matter of nuclear capabilities. We will work with allies and partners to ensure that potential adversaries can have no doubt about the cohesion, determination and broad alliance capabilities needed to deter and maintain our common security.

After historical review and extensive consultations, it is clear that this Nuclear Posture Review is largely consistent with several decades of United States and allied thinking regarding nuclear weapons policies and posture. It strengthens United States commitments to nuclear non-proliferation as one of the underlying conditions supporting our deterrence objectives and continues our goals of nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and countering nuclear terrorism. This Nuclear Posture Review differs from previous Nuclear Posture Reviews in that it responds to adversary developments in order to deter nuclear use throughout the entire range of conflicts, places increased emphasis on a declaratory policy that clarifies United States stakes in any conflict involving the United States or our allies to convince adversaries that the United States will always prevail, even if they attempt to escalate their way out of a failed conventional conflict. More explicitly, it addresses hedging intended to ensure that the United States fully accounts for foreseeable risks to our nuclear deterrent.

In conclusion, the Nuclear Posture Review is a foundational review that clarifies the roles for our nuclear weapons, enunciates a new strategy and commits to supplementing our nuclear capabilities. These changes have been carefully tailored to address the adverse changes in the strategic environment and to ensure our nuclear deterrent is unquestionable in its abilities. President Trump remains firmly committed to non-proliferation and we will pursue non-proliferation goals vigorously. But we are also determined to ensure that, as long as nuclear weapons exist, the United States will maintain a nuclear deterrent that is second to none and to prioritize protecting our nation first along with our allies and partners.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States for the briefing on the United States Nuclear Posture Review. I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Han Tae-song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, first my delegation strongly rejects the unacceptable reference made by the United States representative in his statement to the self-defensive nuclear deterrent of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

My delegation takes the floor to make the following statement in order to highlight the recent dangerous moves by the United States that run counter to the positive atmosphere on the Korean Peninsula. The proactive initiatives and sincere efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have resulted in a dramatic change in the situation of the Korean Peninsula, moving towards inter-Korean reconciliation and relaxation of tension. Such a development enjoys worldwide welcome and support and the international community is looking forward to its continued development. In contrast to this, the United States, which is unhappy with this trend, is seeking to intentionally aggravate the situation by deploying huge nuclear assets nearby the Korean Peninsula, including nuclear aircraft carrier strike groups.

In view of the nature and scale of these military reinforcements, they are designed to make a pre-emptive strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States has also announced its plans to conduct large-scale aggressive joint military exercises immediately after the Winter Olympic Games. This is indeed intended to impede the current positive process on the Korean Peninsula and to escalate tension.

Mr. President, with your permission, let me elaborate with a few more examples. Last month, the Washington regime, in collusion with Canada, convened a meeting of foreign ministers meeting in Canada with the participation of mostly those countries who took part in the Korean war. At the meeting, the United States incited increased pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea led by the United States, and the Defense Secretary even called out belligerent and threatening words about a military option. A short while ago, the United States held the second meeting of the Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group in Washington with South Korean senior officials to discuss expanding rotational deployments of the United States strategic assets in and around South Korea. Meanwhile, the United States officials, including the Secretary of Defense and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, have repeatedly talked about the nuclear and missile threat by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to justify their argument for a military option. And a new concept, the so-called "bloody nose" – a limited pre-emptive strike on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea – is under consideration within the United States administration.

All these facts show that the Washington regime is desperate in its attempt to block the hard-won process of improved inter-Korean relations. They also reveal the true intention of Washington, which is to deliberately seek confrontation and tension that could drive the situation once again into an unpredictable phase. After all, peace on the Korean Peninsula is not what the United States is after; war is their keen interest.

Mr. President, whenever joint military exercises led by the United States have taken place, peace and security on the Korean Peninsula have been gravely threatened and mistrust and confrontation between North and South have reached an extreme level. If the current atmosphere is undermined due to the United States having aggravated the situation for many years by deploying nuclear war equipment, the United States should not evade responsibility. The United Nations should not turn a blind eye to the dangerous game played by the United States of aggravating the situation and driving the whole world towards the possible disaster of nuclear war.

In this vein, last week, the Foreign Minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea sent a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations urging him to call for a vote to halt the military build-up by the United States around the Korean Peninsula and the planned joint military exercises that undermine the improvement of inter-Korean relations and the easing of tension. As an immediate step forward, he requested the Secretary-General to raise at the Security Council the issue of welcoming the process of improved inter-Korean relations and discouraging neighbouring countries from disturbing this process. Those countries in this chamber who have often expressed their concern over the situation on the Korean Peninsula should have a correct understanding of the primary factor which escalates tension on the Korean Peninsula and harms peace and stability in the region. They should speak out and call for the immediate halt of the military provocations by the United States in order to promote the current positive atmosphere and prevent a deterioration of the situation.

The international community should also be highly alert to the ambition of the United States to put the whole world under its control based on the “America first” doctrine and nuclear superiority, as expressed in its Nuclear Posture Review and President Trump’s State of the Union address. This will certainly endanger global peace and security and trigger off a new nuclear arms race that could bring the whole world close to a horrible catastrophe.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is determined to make every effort to improve inter-Korean relations, but will not remain silent on any ill-intentioned attempt to stifle its efforts. It would be the best option for the United States to give up its anachronistic hostile policy against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and refrain from all military adventures that could jeopardize the current process of inter-Korean relations.

The President: I thank the representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. I have noted that there are requests for a right of reply, I will take them in the sequence in which they have been made. Next on my list is the Ambassador of Colombia.

Ms. Londoño Soto (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time I have taken the floor at the 2018 Conference on Disarmament, allow me to congratulate you and to thank you for all your efforts to ensure that we will be able to overcome the obstacles faced in previous years, which have resulted in a lack of tangible results or concrete tools to build a safer world. Colombia maintains its longstanding commitment to the Conference, which we consider a key forum within the United Nations in which to concentrate efforts on international disarmament. However, we must work together in a committed way to overcome the challenges faced by the Conference. We need a programme of work that can serve as a road map to enable us to work towards a common objective. As you said earlier, it is not a question of having this programme immediately, but of following an intelligent, sustainable approach that leads to concrete results.

With regard to representation, as we recommended when we held the presidency of the Conference in 2011, we believe it is time to urgently expand the composition of this forum and to establish the means to enable the responsible and genuine participation of civil society. As to substantive issues, while Colombia considers that the emergence of alternative mechanisms is a symptom of the frustration with the impasse in this forum and the absence of concrete results, we are also of the view that these mechanisms are not mutually exclusive with the mandate of the Conference but, rather, are complementary and can contribute to revitalizing and reframing the issues being discussed. A case in point are the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, which reaffirmed that such a treaty would no doubt make a practical contribution to increasing global security. The Group also recalled that the Conference on Disarmament is the ideal forum for future negotiations on the issue. We agree with the views expressed by the delegation of Canada concerning the need to identify and look at the various options and carefully consider the potential scenarios and results associated with each one.

The issues discussed by the Conference are so varied that, if we were to make progress on any of them, we could achieve positive results in terms of reducing the threats we face. Working towards a world free of nuclear weapons is a responsibility that must be shared by both nuclear weapon States and non-nuclear weapon States. It is important to create synergies and complementary processes between existing mechanisms, such as the second Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and new initiatives developed in the international community, ensuring that such processes are geared towards formulating and adopting measures to free the world of the threat to humanity posed by the possession and use of nuclear weapons.

Colombia is of the view that the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference should form the basis for the development of practical measures related to disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy that support the work of the preparatory committees and the 2020 Review Conference.

Mr. President, Colombia remains committed to international disarmament, and our efforts to further that aim, together with those of other countries, feed into regional and international action aimed at strengthening cooperation between States to combat common threats. To give just one example, and recalling the efforts of Argentina and Brazil under presidents Alfonsín and Neves in developing confidence-building measures in the 1980s, which strengthened regional security in Latin America, Colombia has also been seeking to strengthen international cooperation through bilateral activities. To this end, in the framework of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and with the support of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States, in 2017 the first peer review in the hemisphere and the second worldwide was conducted between Chile and Colombia with a view to evaluating and sharing experiences, procedures and best practices in the national implementation of the resolution. As part of this bilateral effort, the bodies with direct responsibility for implementing the resolution had the opportunity to share with their counterparts and identify good practices, shortcomings and potential areas for further cooperation, with the aim of preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons as well as their means of delivery by non-State agents, particularly for terrorist purposes.

These small efforts being made by our States every day, combined with a Conference on Disarmament that is more active and relevant on the international stage, will ensure that the results we achieve together will be sustainable and will improve the security situation in our countries. Finally, on behalf of Colombia, I would like to extend a special greeting to Ambassador Alexey Borodavkin and wish him every success in his future missions, which I am sure he will lead with the same commitment he has shown during his time as Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Colombia for her statement and I now give the floor to the delegation of Bulgaria on behalf of the European Union.

Ms. Kemppainen (Bulgaria): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey; the country of the stabilization and association process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, let me thank Ambassador Heidi Hulan, the Canadian Chair of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) expert preparatory group for her briefing to the Conference on Disarmament. We commend Ambassador Hulan and her team for their tireless efforts to steer this important process to a successful end.

For more than two decades, the European Union and its member States have been in the forefront of advocating the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. We recall that there is broad support within the international community for such a treaty, considering that it would represent a significant practical contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. At the 2010 NPT Review Conference, 188 States parties reaffirmed the urgent necessity of negotiating and bringing to a conclusion the non-discriminatory multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In this fiftieth anniversary year of the NPT, we expect all States parties to act upon this commitment.

The European Union and its member States are convinced of the continued importance and relevance of an FMCT on the Conference on Disarmament's agenda. Last year's discussions facilitated by Germany in the working group on the way ahead contributed to further understanding of the possible scope and objectives of a treaty, definitions, verification and legal and institutional arrangements. Again, we encourage all Conference on Disarmament members to exert their utmost flexibility and to agree on the immediate commencement of negotiations on an FMCT. We also believe that confidence-

building measures can be taken immediately without the need to wait for the commencement of formal negotiations. Therefore, we continue to call upon all States possessing nuclear weapons that have not yet done so to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on their production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

All European Union member States supported United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/53 on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices which established the Group of Governmental Experts for the period of 2014–2015. Several European Union member States participated actively in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to identify areas of convergence on key aspects of a treaty and contributed to the final consensual report. The importance of the Group's report was recognized in General Assembly resolution 70/39. We should continue to build on that work.

Furthermore, in 2016, all European Union member States supported General Assembly resolution 71/259 presented by Canada, Germany and the Netherlands. We welcome the inclusive consultative process set up by this resolution that will help bring the views of the broader United Nations membership to the attention of the high-level expert preparatory group. Again, several European Union member States participated in the work of the high-level FMCT expert preparatory group whose mandate is to make recommendations on elements of substance for a future treaty without prejudice to national positions in future negotiations. We are looking forward to the upcoming open-ended consultative meeting, to be held in New York, as well as to the second session of the high-level group, which will take place in Geneva in May. We also look forward to examining the group's final report at this year's session of the General Assembly, with a view to starting negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament at the earliest opportunity.

As a powerful demonstration of our long-standing commitment in support of an FMCT, on 11 December last year, European Union foreign ministers decided to provide support to African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean countries to facilitate their participation in the FMCT consultative process. The technical implementation of this European Union project, worth more than 1.2 million euros, has been entrusted to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs through its Geneva branch, its regional disarmament branch and the three regional centres for peace and disarmament. They will reach out to as many stakeholders as possible over the next three years. These activities include subregional workshops, expert meetings, substantive support at country level and the establishment of a repository of relevant information and publications. The overall aim of this decision of the Council of the European Union is to facilitate dialogue at regional level and identify national needs and policy priorities. As an important horizontal priority for the European Union, we believe that the active and equal participation and leadership of women in decision-making and action will be crucial in achieving a successful outcome for this valued process.

In conclusion, the European Union would like to thank Canada for its remarkable leadership and engagement in promoting FMCT negotiations. The European Union and its member States are actively contributing to these efforts through diplomatic outreach and the above-mentioned Council decision, as well as various seminars and workshops, with the aim of enhancing knowledge and understanding of the security, political and technical issues involved.

The President: I thank the representative of Bulgaria for her statement on behalf of the European Union. I now give the floor to the delegation of Poland.

Mr. Broilo (Poland): Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Madam Director, Poland highly appreciates and actively participates in the work of the group of experts on a high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We therefore very much welcome the presence and the messages delivered by its Chair, Ms. Heidi Hulan.

Let me now add our voice to the debate we held last week on the challenges of the Conference on Disarmament and I would like to briefly refer to the statement made by the Ambassador of the United States. Mr. President, the method you proposed at the outset of this session seems to fit well the current mindset of the Conference on Disarmament. The

exchange of views we had a week ago was a very interesting one. Many valuable observations, comments and ideas were presented in an open and sincere manner. In some cases, the preferences or even red lines concerning the substance were stated or reiterated. We think it is important to be fully aware of them in framing the scope of our possible work. In terms of procedural matters, I would like to refer to a few of them.

The Ambassador of India proposed a set of interesting ideas, including changing the length of the term of presidency from four to eight weeks, an interesting proposal that is worth further analysis. In such an arrangement, however, the cooperation and division of labour among presidencies would be even more crucial than it is now. We agree with the Ambassador of Brazil, who drew our attention to the notion of consensus in the Conference. Consensus is one of the key elements in this body; but it should be used with caution to allow consensual decisions but not to block our deliberations. The main question remains, however, of how to find a method for the notion of a programme of work. Practical suggestions have been made by several States: Hungary, the Netherlands, Switzerland and also by Poland. We need to get back to the roots of the Conference on Disarmament and agree on a simple procedural document without objectives but with a schedule of activities that would frame our debate in a way that allows us to accommodate our common preferences.

Let me refer in this context to the intervention of Ambassador of Germany at the last meeting. He presented a very comprehensive concept containing some ideas which could constitute elements of our agreement, like for instance the adoption of a non-binding document, as also proposed by the Italian Ambassador. While it needs further examination, let me quote one particular sentence from Ambassador Biontino's speech: "The channels for communication the Conference on Disarmament is offering are more and more important in a global context with conflicting security interests." This is indeed a very important asset of the Conference on Disarmament. This all shows us that there is potential for thinking of new ways out for the Conference. What we need now is to set a dialogue to engage collectively in order to pave the way for a compromise without prejudging what its outcome will be.

I would also like to briefly refer to the statement made by Ambassador Robert Wood. Since the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review is a very fresh document, let me make only three brief remarks. We share the sober assessment of the international security environment, its reasons, challenges and consequences. As a Chair of the second session Preparatory Committee of the 2020 NPT Review Conference, we welcome confirmation of the central role of the NPT in the non-proliferation system. We also welcome the openness of the United States to achieving appropriate conditions for further nuclear disarmament, including such elements as transparency and verification. As I mentioned, these are very initial remarks; this document is still being analysed in Warsaw.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Poland for his statement and now give the floor to the delegate of Hungary. Madam, you have the floor.

Ms. Kroll (Hungary): I would like to thank Ambassador Heidi Hulan for sharing with us the state of play and her thoughts on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). I would like to put two questions to her. I would also like to thank Ambassador Wood for the information on the Nuclear Posture Review. We are fully in line with what has been said by the representative of the European Union. I would like to add that Hungary has always emphasized that the ultimate goal of a world free of weapons can only be achieved through a gradual and inclusive process which fully engages nuclear-weapon States and, at the same time, promotes international security and stability.

One of the essential building-blocks still missing from the legal architecture is starting negotiations on an FMCT. We believe that concluding a non-discriminatory multilateral internationally and effectively verifiable FMCT would constitute a significant contribution to both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and to the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Hungary was privileged to be a member of the Group of Governmental Experts and also supported the establishment of the high-level FMCT expert preparatory group to take this important process forward. We are looking forward to having the report by the preparatory group in April.

My first question is quite theoretical: if we manage to adopt the programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament, I would be interested to know how the Conference could contribute to the current state of play on an FMCT here this summer. My other question is what does Canada intend to do if the Conference does not take up substantive work even after the report is adopted by the preparatory group this summer. I would like to repeat what Ambassador Hulan has said before: Canada cannot start negotiations alone. So we would therefore like to encourage all the delegations to work together to start the FMCT negotiations here in the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank the representative of Hungary and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Pakistan.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor in a formal plenary meeting this year, let me begin by congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference. We are very pleased to see you in the Chair and assure you of our full support and cooperation. We thank you for the extensive informal consultations that you have undertaken so far and appreciate all your efforts in facilitating a useful discussion among member States aimed at the resumption of substantive work in the Conference. Let me also acknowledge the commitment and dedicated support of the Conference secretariat.

Pakistan attaches very high importance to the work of the Conference on Disarmament and remains committed to its effective functioning. As the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference is an integral and vital part of the United Nations disarmament machinery. Its strength and effectiveness lies in its representative and inclusive nature. All militarily significant States participate in the Conference on an equal footing and are able to protect their vital security interests under the consensus rule. These attributes are indispensable for any forum dealing with disarmament and security issues.

A breakthrough in the Conference on Disarmament can be achieved by exercising genuine political will to cooperatively advance the goals of international and regional peace and security and disarmament on a non-discriminatory basis. The overarching objective guiding this work should be the cardinal principle of equal and undiminished security for all States.

Pakistan stands ready to actively support any effort towards this end in the Conference. However, Pakistan, like any other State, cannot be expected to join any endeavour, whether inside or outside the Conference, that is detrimental to its legitimate national security interests.

Pakistan supports negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a universal, non-discriminatory, verifiable and comprehensive nuclear weapons convention as well as on an international treaty on negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Pakistan also stands ready to join substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament on other contemporary issues affecting international peace and security, such as chemical and biological terrorism, cyberwarfare and lethal autonomous weapons systems.

We are of the view that disagreement over the start of negotiations in the Conference should not prevent us from undertaking substantive discussions on all agenda items. The working group on the way ahead last year featured an extremely valuable and in-depth consideration of all Conference agenda items. It helped in developing a better understanding of each other's concerns and expectations, providing an opportunity to build on the convergences and narrow down the differences. There is a need to sustain that momentum by putting into place a realistic and practical framework for substantive work this year in the Conference that can enjoy consensus.

We heard a statement today by the distinguished representative of Canada, Ambassador Heidi Hulan, Chair of the so-called high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) expert preparatory group. The Pakistani position on the issue of fissile material and on the establishment of this expert group is well known and remains unchanged. The work of the expert group is severely hamstrung by its limited and incomplete composition,

which excludes key stakeholders, as well as by its restrictive mandate and the basis of its work, which not only lacks clarity on the scope and objective of the treaty under discussion, but rather skews it towards an outcome that would contribute little to nuclear disarmament and prove detrimental to regional and international security.

I want to place on record that Pakistan will not be in a position to accept any conclusion or recommendation produced by this expert group, including any attempt to force its report on the Conference on Disarmament. Also, Pakistani engagement with the process of open-ended consultations conducted by the group's Chair in New York should be seen neither as an endorsement of this expert group, nor as a substitute for the full participation of Pakistan in it.

We regret that this group was established outside the Conference on Disarmament by a vote in the United Nations General Assembly. It was most unfortunate that a deliberate decision was taken to persist with a divisive approach aimed at seeking pseudo progress towards a contentious treaty with unclear objectives and a contested scope, rather than addressing the concerns of States that harbour reservations and creating the right conditions that would facilitate genuine progress towards a treaty dealing with the past and future production of fissile materials.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Netherlands.

Mr. Gabriëlse (Netherlands): Mr. President, I would like to thank Ambassador Hulan for her briefing today and to commend her and her team for the exceptional stewardship of the high-level expert preparatory group process. The Netherlands is proud to be a co-sponsor of the process, together with Canada and Germany. More generally, we are grateful for the long-term leadership of Canada with respect to a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), a treaty to which the Netherlands continues to attach great importance. The Netherlands aligns itself with the European Union statement and would like to make some remarks in its national capacity.

The need for such a treaty remains strong. The international community has long been striving towards realizing a treaty that would effectively and verifiably halt production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. A treaty that would serve to cap nuclear arsenals and help put an end to nuclear arms races. The previous Group of Governmental Experts and the current high-level expert process have been laying important ground work for the negotiation of an FMCT. To that end, we very much look forward to the final report of the high-level expert group. It is up to the Conference on Disarmament to take the needed action to commence negotiations on a treaty without delay. The discussions last year in the working group on the way ahead were very useful in both facilitating and exchanging views on substance and exploring possibilities for flexibility in approaching the issue. We look forward to continuing these discussions and looking at ways of increasing our common understanding with a view to making progress. In our view, an FMCT remains a crucial step towards advancing nuclear disarmament objectives in line with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Netherlands for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, in line with the "National Security Strategy" and "National Military Strategy" reports issued by the United States not long ago, the "Nuclear Posture Review" recently issued by the United States Department of Defense clings to an outdated cold-war mentality and zero-sum-game mindset, exaggerates the role of geopolitics and great-power competition and boosts the role of nuclear weapons in its national-security policy, defying the call of the international community for nuclear disarmament and deviating from the dominant theme of our times, of peace and development. Although it already possesses the largest and most advanced nuclear arsenal in the world, the United States is still vigorously building up its nuclear force, which will exacerbate the global strategic imbalance. Developing low-yield nuclear weapons and lowering the threshold for using nuclear weapons increases the risk that nuclear weapons will be used; abandoning the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world jeopardizes the international nuclear-disarmament process.

China has been actively engaged in building a community with a shared future for humankind, advocating the new concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and strongly and consistently upholding a self-defensive nuclear strategy. China has always stood firmly for the ultimately complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and adheres to a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons and the commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China has never and will never take part in a nuclear arms race of any kind, and will continue to keep its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for its national security. All these policies have remained unchanged for more than half a century since China first came into possession of nuclear weapons.

In this report, the United States vainly seeks to justify the expansion and strengthening of its own nuclear arsenal by deliberately distorting China's policies and practices, which is clearly a futile effort. We hope that the United States will abandon its cold-war mentality and zero-sum thinking, forgo its confrontational perspective on great-power relations, comply with the great peace and development tide of the times, and conscientiously shoulder its special and primary responsibilities in the area of nuclear disarmament. It should continue to significantly and irreversibly reduce its nuclear arsenal, diminish the role of nuclear weapons in its national security and maintain international peace and stability through concrete actions.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of China. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of France.

Ms. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): First, let me thank you, Mr. President, for all the energy and effort you have invested in our work, as well as for the broad consultations you have undertaken. In the French delegation's view, the constructive atmosphere of the discussions held thus far is positive. It reflects a collective desire to make progress, including in innovative ways, on revitalizing the substantive work of the Conference, an institution to which, as you know, France is deeply attached.

In this spirit, a number of ideas were put forward at previous sessions and I would like to respond them with a few general considerations. First, with regard to form and process, several of us have insisted on the importance of ensuring greater continuity in the efforts of the Conference's successive presidencies. Without necessarily coming back to the point about the rules of procedure, I believe that this goal can be achieved through enhanced coordination at the level of the six session Presidents, with the support of the secretariat. Continuity could also be achieved through the establishment of one or more subsidiary groups of the Conference whose mandate would be renewed each year. This is a solution that, frankly, we would have found useful to apply to the working group on the way ahead last year. Ensuring greater regularity and predictability in our work can only strengthen discussions and their odds of succeeding.

Another improvement that we could actively seek to achieve might, as the High Representative mentioned last week, be to better integrate the Conference with the other disarmament mechanisms and the multilateral processes stemming from them. In addition to the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the First Committee of the General Assembly, I am thinking of the recently established groups of governmental experts on the fissile material cut-off treaty, verification, outer space issues, etc. In that connection, I warmly welcome the presence this morning of the Canadian Chair of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group, congratulate her on her comprehensive statement and fully associate myself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

Reconnecting the Conference with the various areas of its work is an opportunity not only to boost the inclusiveness and transparency of discussions but also to ensure that everyone is correctly informed and that discussions are more coherent and effective. Lastly, I believe that, in order to re-establish trust in dialogue at a time when there are such acute divisions within the disarmament community, it is indispensable to once again tie our discussions in with the current world context.

On 23 January, I presented the main thrust of the strategic review of defence and national security that was conducted in France. The finding was that the current strategic context is characterized by growing tension and escalating threats, including nuclear threats, either as a result of proliferation or of deliberately opaque posturing that, at times, serves aggressive strategies. In this light, it seems to us that priority needs to be given to measures aimed at building trust and improving transparency, while fully respecting the interests of all involved. This also implies recommitting to the challenging path that is the search for consensus.

I now turn to the substance. France continues to advocate for the immediate launch of negotiations, in the Conference, on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of the provisions contained in document CD/1299. We intend to continue playing an active and constructive role in the work of the high-level expert preparatory group and in the continuation of that work, as we hope will occur under the auspices of the Conference.

In an increasingly unpredictable and tense strategic environment, let us be clear: the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons which places a cap on current stocks of fissile material that could be used for nuclear weapons would constitute a major step forward and would put a definitive end to any possibility of another nuclear weapons race.

However, we will not make any progress if we merely reaffirm our national priorities; we must also work pragmatically on the basis of known positions and the headway made thus far. I would like to return more specifically to two suggestions mooted at previous sessions. The first is the interesting idea put forward by Germany of expanding the Conference's future negotiations to other types of agreement than only new instruments of international law. In order to meet objectives that are collectively defined and agreed upon, the idea of exploring other possible avenues, such as codes of conduct, guidelines and political statements, could be of great interest and should be something that we could all consider.

The second suggestion is emerging issues – about which we are hearing more and more – i.e. scientific and technological advances. In a rapidly changing world, the technological progress we are seeing is a true source of opportunity both in the civil domain, where its applications are already numerous, and in the military domain. Technological progress can also raise security challenges that may cause vulnerability and instability, especially in the event of proliferation among non-State actors. Owing to the multiplicity of private and public actors and the potential for a fluid legal framework, the question of science and technology is, by definition, double. It covers not only many political and security issues but also industrial, economic, commercial and even societal and ethical ones. In this context, the French delegation wishes to express its interest in and openness to discussing these issues but also wonders, at this juncture, what the limits and objectives of such exchanges would be.

France will continue to prioritize the achievement of meaningful progress, on the basis of consensus, in the formal discussions held in connection with the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons on the topic, this year again, of lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Please be assured, Mr. President, of my delegation's full cooperation in the aim of achieving promising results.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of France and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President. I requested the floor to exercise my right of reply to respond to the comments made by the representative from North Korea.

Despite the claims made by the representative from Pyongyang, the situation on the Korean Peninsula has not changed. The regime continues to work on its ballistic missile and nuclear programmes. This charm offensive, as I would call it, frankly is fooling no one. He also made comments with regard to the meeting convened recently in Vancouver to

discuss the situation on the Korean Peninsula. That meeting demonstrated that there is a great deal of support for continuing to put pressure on North Korea to live up to its international obligations and to end its provocative actions and behaviour.

Let me make one thing clear. As I have said many times in this forum, the United States will defend itself and its allies, and that commitment to our allies is ironclad. Despite what was said by the representative of North Korea, it is indeed North Korea that is seeking confrontation through its nuclear and ballistic missile tests. I would just say to the representative of the regime that, if you claim to want peace: end your nuclear and ballistic missile tests; stop the provocative behaviour and threats; give your people an opportunity to choose how they want to be governed.

One last point, Mr. President. It was noticeable that the representative of the regime here did not mention anything to do with United Nations Security Council resolutions that address the country's ballistic and nuclear programmes. It needs to live up to its obligations, it needs to adhere to the obligations outlined by previous Security Council resolutions. So in summary, Mr. President, everyone in this room knows what North Korea needs to do and we are waiting for it to take the steps towards denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula – which, by the way, it agreed to do in previous agreements. So again, we call on the regime to end the provocative acts and behaviour, stop threatening the region and beyond and come into compliance with its obligations.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States. I now give the floor to the delegation of Australia. But first the representative of the Republic of Korea has requested a right of reply.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): Thank you Mr. President for giving me the floor. It is not a right of reply. I asked for the floor to thank three people, three distinguished Ambassadors today. First, formally, I thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership in conducting the work of the Conference on Disarmament and, of course, you can count on our full support.

Next, I thank Ambassador Hulan for speaking here today and pay tribute to all her efforts and her leadership for the success of the preparatory group of which I have the privilege of witnessing first-hand as a member of the group.

Third, I thank Ambassador Wood for his statement on the very recent Nuclear Posture Review. In our view, the Nuclear Posture Review focuses on strengthening deterrence to protect the United States and allies within the existing framework of basic principles, in the face of the changing international security environment, including the increasing nuclear threat in our region. We would like to point out that the Nuclear Posture Review reaffirms the commitment of extended deterrence to allies, including the Republic of Korea. We will keep up our cooperation with the United States to enhance the effectiveness of this commitment.

Lastly, with the Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games starting in three days, I would like to state again that we are making efforts to keep up the momentum of dialogue between South and North Korea and will closely cooperate with the international community towards the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue and the establishment of lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his comments and I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Wood (Australia): Thank you Mr. President. Thank you also to Ambassador Hulan for her comprehensive briefing on the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) expert preparatory group and also to Ambassador Wood for his briefing.

The Australian Government welcomes the release of the 2018 United States Nuclear Posture Review. It is timely and appropriate that the United States re-examine a national policy that underpins global and regional security, given evolving geostrategic challenges. It is indicative of the high level of transparency shown by the United States on nuclear issues. The Nuclear Posture Review assessment of the current global strategic landscape provides a clear picture of current and emerging strategic and security challenges. The

Australian international policy framework, as set out in our Foreign Policy White Paper and the 2016 Defence White Paper, also acknowledges that we live in an increasingly complex strategic environment. Despite some differences in emphasis, the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review represents continuity with past United States policy and practice on the need for a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal as a deterrent for both the United States and its allies.

We welcome the reaffirmation in the Nuclear Posture Review of the commitment of the United States to non-proliferation and verifiable and enforceable arms control including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Australia remains firmly committed to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and counter-proliferation. We share with the international community the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Australia strongly supports the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the cornerstone of international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. In the Conference on Disarmament, we prioritize negotiations on an FMCT and support the expert group's work to elaborate treaty elements, which is essential groundwork for future negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. We will continue to work closely with international partners, including the United States, to promote practical and meaningful non-proliferation and disarmament objectives. These efforts need to be based on realistic assessments of the global and regional security environment.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for her statement and I now give the floor to the delegation of Canada.

Ms. Hulan (Canada): Mr. President, I take the floor to respond to two questions that have been put to me by the distinguished representative of Hungary. Her first question was what the Conference on Disarmament's contribution towards a high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) could be, if the Conference adopts a programme of work. I would just note that the resolution creating the preparatory group is extremely clear on this point. It says that, should the Conference on Disarmament agree upon and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work that includes the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, all activities mandated by the present resolution, that is the preparatory group, shall conclude and the work of the high-level FMCT expert preparatory group shall be submitted to the Secretary-General for onward transmittal to the Conference on Disarmament. That continues to guide our understanding of what will happen should there be a programme of work here in the Conference on Disarmament.

The representative of Hungary also asked what Canada would do if the Conference on Disarmament does not take up the work of the preparatory group, a prospect drawn into sharp relief by the subsequent statement of the distinguished representative of Pakistan. I would just make few points here: one is that it is not simply up to Canada what happens after the work of the preparatory group has concluded. There are many in the General Assembly that have a direct interest in this file and views on how to proceed. The Canadian delegation's own view is that the Conference on Disarmament is the logical place for FMCT negotiations. We regret that mechanisms outside this body have been necessary to keep this issue moving forward. Everything we have done in organizing the preparatory group has been done very consciously with a view to ensuring that its work and this issue reverts to the Conference on Disarmament, where it belongs, at the earliest possible moment.

In terms of practical next steps, it is clear to me from the first meeting of the preparatory group that this group will not be able to conclude all of the technical issues associated with an FMCT and the preparation of FMCT negotiations, including for example on verification issues and institutional and legal issues. Some thought needs to be given to how those issues are pursued in the months and years ahead. For that work, the normal range of options will be available to the First Committee, which I would fully expect will wish to pronounce itself on these points.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Canada and now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ju Yong-chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, just to quickly respond to what the representative of the United States has just mentioned: his assertion that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to bring tension on the Korean Peninsula is groundless and unacceptable. His remark is exactly what my delegation wanted to ask the United States.

The United States should refrain from intentionally aggravating the situation on the Korean Peninsula by deploying large nuclear assets around the Korean Peninsula. It should stop at once interfering in an internal issue of the Korean nation. As for the remarks made by the South Korean delegate, the nuclear issue is something that they cannot talk about. The nuclear issue should be resolved or settled between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. Nothing can be gained by the South Korean authorities from continued reliance on outside forces in resolving an internal issue of our Korean nation.

The President: I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I would align myself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union, but I wanted to say a few words of personal thanks to Ambassador Hulan and her team for the leadership Canada has brought to the issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty. This remains a priority for the United Kingdom and, as I said in my opening remarks at the start of this session, it is an obvious step forward whichever route you believe is the most appropriate for securing a world free of nuclear weapons. I think the challenging state we find ourselves in now simply underlines the obvious nature of that step, making it more evident, not less.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Davydov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The content of the new nuclear doctrine of the United States of America (the so-called "Nuclear Posture Review") of 2 February was a great disappointment to us. Even on first inspection, the document's confrontational attitude and anti-Russian stance are unmistakeable. It is with regret that we note that the United States is justifying its move towards a large-scale build-up of nuclear weapons by referring to the modernization of Russian nuclear forces and the supposed expansion of the role of nuclear weapons in Russian policy. They are blaming us for lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons and unspecified "aggressive strategies".

None of this bears any relation to reality. Russian military doctrine clearly limits the possibility of using nuclear weapons to two hypothetical scenarios related strictly to defence: only in response to aggression against Russia and/or our allies involving the use of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction; or – and this is the second scenario – aggression using conventional weapons, but only if the very existence of our State is under threat. In 2014, the term "non-nuclear deterrence system" was introduced into Russian military doctrine, underlining the focus on preventing military conflicts, primarily with the support of conventional forces, rather than nuclear capability.

As a result, it appears that, in the above-mentioned Review, the American declaration of its readiness to resort to nuclear weapons to discourage Russia from using its own nuclear weapons constitutes an attempt to call into question our right to defend ourselves against aggression in situations critical to the existence of the State. I would like to hope that, for all that, they are aware in Washington of the high degree of danger that arises when translating doctrinal positions like as those of the United States into practical military planning.

Indeed, Washington's "no-limits" approach to the issue of using nuclear weapons is of concern: for example, mention has been made of the possibility of using them in "extreme circumstances", which the authors of the doctrine by no means restrict to military scenarios. And even military scenarios are not clearly defined, enabling American "planners" to regard practically any use of military force as a reason for launching a nuclear strike against anyone considered an "aggressor". If this is not raising the significance of

nuclear weapons in its policy, then what precisely does the United States mean when it uses this term in relation to Russia?

It is against this backdrop that plans were announced for the further modernization of the nuclear assets of the United States. The principal danger in this context lies in the projects mentioned in the new American nuclear doctrine to create “low-yield” munitions for nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles and a “low-yield” warhead for Trident-II submarine-launched ballistic missiles. Nuclear weapons with such characteristics are clearly intended as “battlefield weapons”. This dramatically increases the temptation to use them, particularly in combination with the right to launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike that is claimed in the doctrine. Assurances that the realization of such intentions “in no way ... lowers the nuclear threshold”, is, in our view, at the very least an attempt to deceive the international community. Even more dangerous is the belief that the nuclear doctrine is giving rise to among American military and other national security specialists in their ability to accurately model the development of conflicts in which it is permissible to use “low-yield” nuclear warheads. We take the opposite view: markedly lower “threshold conditions” can lead to the start of nuclear war even in low-intensity conflicts.

We will, of course, have to take into account the approaches now prevailing in Washington, and take the necessary measures to ensure our own security.

The American document is full of various types of anti-Russian cliché, beginning with baseless reprimands for “aggressive behaviour” and all manner of “interference” and ending with equally unsubstantiated allegations of “violations” of a whole list of arms control agreements. These kinds of arbitrary labels have been doing the rounds continuously in Washington of late. We consider this an unprincipled attempt to blame others for the deteriorating international and regional security situation and the imbalance in arms control mechanisms that has resulted from a series of steps taken by the United States itself.

Russia rigorously fulfils its obligations under all international agreements. We comply strictly with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Treaty on Open Skies. In no way are we violating our obligations under the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures or the Budapest Memorandum. We have repeatedly and publicly explained what we consider to be the slanderous nature of statements to the contrary. As regards the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, it is not possible for Russia to violate this document as we ended our participation in 2007 because the Treaty, developed during the stand-off between two military-political blocs – the Warsaw Treaty Organization and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) – bears no relation to present realities, with one bloc long since disbanded, and the other, conversely, increasing its capabilities and broadening its geographical reach. These realities were reflected in the Agreement on adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which NATO countries, led by the United States, refused to ratify, in contrast to Russia.

The nuclear policy of the United States contains far-fetched assertions, alleging that Russia is shying away from implementation of the Presidential nuclear initiatives of 1991–1992, which relate to political commitments to withdraw combat personnel and reduce non-strategic nuclear weapons. Russia has implemented the initiatives: it has destroyed the majority of the weapons concerned, reducing its arsenal by three quarters, reclassified the remainder as non-deployed weapons and concentrated them in central storage sites within its borders. This was action on an unprecedented scale to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons and review their role and place in national nuclear doctrine. Although the initiatives do not have the status of legally binding documents, they are still fully relevant for us today.

It is notable, against this backdrop, that the United States has maintained, and is even modernizing, its tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, positioning them in close proximity to the Russian border. Moreover, NATO holds so-called joint nuclear missions, with non-nuclear members of the alliance participating in planning the use of American nuclear weapons and in the relevant training, which, in our view, is a serious violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Yet another example of flagrant “manipulation” is the assertion in the document that Russia is supposedly ruling out further reductions in nuclear weapons. We have repeatedly emphasized our commitment to our obligations under article VI of the Treaty, and stated our openness to discuss any issues related to strengthening international security. We have drawn attention, including among Americans, to the fact that the creation of appropriate conditions for continued nuclear disarmament would be facilitated by the resolution of key problems in the context of ensuring strategic stability, such as the unilateral and unlimited expansion of the United States comprehensive anti-ballistic missile system, the realization of the “global strike” concept, and the refusal of the United States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and exclude the possibility of deploying weapons in space.

It is also clear that efforts in the field of disarmament require the involvement of all States with nuclear weapons capabilities, particularly the United Kingdom and France, as military and nuclear allies of the United States. That is ever more relevant in view of the intention expressed in the new nuclear doctrine to contain Russia using the combined nuclear capabilities of all NATO members. We note in particular that the document makes no reference at all to the obligations of the United States under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In view of what has been stated, the passages on Washington’s interest in “stable relations” with us and its attitude to constructive work in the interests of reducing related risks appear hypocritical. Nonetheless, for our part, we are ready for such work. We call on the United States to work seriously with us to find solutions to the accumulated problems with the aim of maintaining strategic stability.

I would also like to say that, on 5 February, Russia announced that it had met its obligations under the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. The statement on this subject from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be found on the table.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I apologize for taking the floor again. I just needed to respond to some of the comments made, first and foremost, by the representative of North Korea. Just very briefly, the nuclear issue in North Korea is an issue not between North Korea and the United States, but between North Korea and the entire international community.

Now to the comments made by my distinguished colleague from the Russian Federation. First and foremost, we certainly did not expect Russia to like the Nuclear Posture Review, but the reality of the international security environment is such that we had to point out where the problems exist and what needs to be done to rectify these problems. I do not even know where to start here, but I will not be very long.

There was a reference to the shift in national policy in the Nuclear Posture Review. This shift is, as I said, primarily required because of the changing threat environment. What we have seen over at least the last 10 years is an effort by Russia to rapidly modernize its strategic nuclear forces. This is of great concern to the United States and it has been for some time. As you know, over the last eight years, we have been trying to lessen the role of nuclear weapons and our strategic nuclear doctrine; we have reduced the numbers of nuclear weapons. We have done a number of things with regard to transparency to show that we are committed to adhering to our obligations under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. However, that has not been reciprocated by Russia and the other countries that I mentioned earlier. So we have had no choice but to adopt this different posture.

With regard to the charge that developing a low-yield ballistic missile to be placed on submarines, first, let me just say that having this kind of low-yield weapon does not lower the threshold for nuclear use. In fact, what it does is raise the threshold for those who might be looking for ways to poke holes through United States deterrents.

One other point is that we have been very clear with regard to the Treaty. We want Russia to come back into compliance with it and we have said that we are going to take

some steps that will hopefully encourage it to do so. We are also concerned about violations of the Open Skies Treaty. We have been concerned over the years that Russia has not been willing to engage in a discussion on non-strategic nuclear weapons. They have a large number of these weapons, but they have been unwilling to engage in a discussion.

I will just make the last point brief. Russia once again charged the United States with violating the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Let me just be very clear, the United States is not in violation of the Treaty and all of these charges that we have been are just ludicrous.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States. I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, this time it is a right of reply of course on the remarks of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

I should not need to say this, but the Republic of Korea is a well-respected member of the international community and a friend of all the members. This is reflected in the fact that we are hosting the Olympic Games, which stand for peace and friendship for everyone. With this in mind, I would like to remind the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that the international community has stated, through multiple Security Council resolutions, its most clear and immovable position that it will never accept the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has to return to the path of the non-nuclear age.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea and now give the floor to the Ambassador of Ukraine.

Mr. Klymenko (Ukraine): Mr. President, first of all I would like to thank the Canadian Ambassador and her team for the work done. In this regard, I would like to highlight the full support of the Ukrainian delegation for the efforts aimed at making possible the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty as soon as possible.

I would like also to thank the Ambassador of the United States, Mr. Robert Wood, for the presentation he made today in this chamber on the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review. I understand that this document is a rather new one and is being thoroughly analysed by international and national experts throughout the world. But at this stage I would like, first of all, to express appreciation for the timing of the presentation of this document here in this chamber, the way in which it was presented and for the American delegation's openness in the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the commitment of the United States to nuclear non-proliferation and to arms control objectives.

I would also like to make some comments with regard to the speech delivered today by the Russian delegation, first of all, with regard to the allegation that the Russian Federation sticks to a non-aggressive strategy and to non-aggressive behaviour. This allegation does not have anything to do with reality. We all know that, since 2014, the Russian Federation has been waging a hybrid war against my country, having bluntly violated the Budapest Memorandum on security assurances to Ukraine. As a result of this hybrid war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, a part of my country, namely the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, is temporarily occupied. Russian regular troops and mercenaries are in the south-east of Ukraine.

The Russian Federation regularly provides the illegal armed groups in the south-east of Ukraine with sophisticated weaponry, sophisticated munitions and mercenaries. There are many reports by reputable international organizations, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine about these wrongdoings by the Russian Federation. So I would say that there are drastic changes in the security environment, in the European continent and in many other regions of the world. But what is very threatening, not only to European security, but also in a broader sense, is the further militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, which is being illegally occupied by the Russian Federation.

According to our information, new and sophisticated weaponry systems are now being deployed on this territory, and the Russian Federation, as it has repeatedly stated, does not at all exclude the possibility of deployment of nuclear forces there. So we call upon the Russian Federation to stop its aggressive behaviour, stop its aggressive strategies and de-occupy Crimea.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Ukraine and I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea followed by the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ju Yong-chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I thank you Mr. President and apologize for taking the floor again. It is to exercise the right to reply to the comments made by the delegations of the United States and South Korea before about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As a matter of fact, the nuclear issue came into existence because of the long-standing nuclear threats and hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by the United States. So the argument that it is a world global issue is illogical. The United States should be reminded that, whatever pressures or sanctions it imposes against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and however intense they may be, they will never threaten the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States is left with no other option than to recognize the status of my country as a nuclear power and find a way to coexist with it.

As for the comments made by the South Korean delegate, they forgot that the Security Council resolutions are politically motivated documents which were based on the hostile policy of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As we have already mentioned and stated very clearly on a number of occasions, the nuclear force of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a self-defence deterrent to prevent war and protect national security and the right to the existence of its people against the long-standing nuclear threat and military provocations.

Therefore, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will never place its self-defence deterrent on the negotiating table unless the United States drops its hostile policy and nuclear threat against my country. The South Korean authorities are advised to refrain from joining military provocation by the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that will only ruin the current positive climate in inter-Korean relations.

The President: I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I take the floor in the right of reply to some remarks made by our Russian colleague and, in doing so, I draw on the only security review that the United Kingdom has conducted, from 2015, but which continues to guide our approach to our national security. We said then that, at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit in Lisbon in 2010, the United Kingdom had committed itself to work with its allies to build a partnership with Russia. But, since then, Russia has become more aggressive, authoritarian and nationalist, increasingly defining itself in opposition to the West. Its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and continuing support to separatists in eastern Ukraine through the use of deniable hybrid tactics, and media manipulation have shown the willingness of Russia to undermine wider international standards of cooperation in order to secure its perceived interests.

Russia is midway through a programme of major investment to modernize and upgrade its military forces, including its nuclear forces. It has also increased its nuclear exercises and rhetoric, with threats of basing nuclear forces in Kaliningrad – that have now been followed through – and the Crimea. Its military activity around the territory of our allies and close to United Kingdom airspace and territorial waters is designed to test our responses. The behaviour of Russia will continue to be hard to predict and, although highly unlikely, we cannot rule out the possibility that it may feel tempted to act aggressively against NATO allies.

Our commitment to collective defence and security through NATO remains as strong as ever. At the same time, Russia is one of the five permanent members of the

Security Council and, notwithstanding our differences, we will seek ways of cooperating and engaging with Russia on a range of global security issues.

Addressing the threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is one of those issues on which we have cooperated at the Security Council and, of course, the Council has been united in condemning the nuclear and ballistic missile tests conducted by that country and imposing on it the most rigorous set of sanctions that have been taken against any country this century.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom and I give the floor to the Russian delegation.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation has consistently spoken against discussion at the Conference on Disarmament of sensitive political issues that have little relevance to the Conference's mandate. However, as these issues have been raised by other delegations, we have no choice but to respond to them.

Firstly, esteemed colleagues, the Russian Federation has never uttered the word "aggressor" in relation to other participants at the Conference. It is therefore not us who started this war. I am referring in this case to a hybrid war, a war of information or something else entirely. We always react only to unfounded accusations of this kind. At the same time, this designation of Russia as an aggressor State is already officially reflected in a number of policy documents, and even in the legislation of certain countries. In this connection, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that, under the Budapest Memorandum, the main obligations of Russia as a nuclear power are to neither use, nor to threaten to use, nuclear weapons against Ukraine. Nothing like that has ever happened.

Secondly, regarding the positions in the Budapest Memorandum, there is no mention that Russia, or any other State, should compel any part of Ukraine to remain within its territory against the will of the population. In Crimea, nearly four years ago, almost 100 per cent of the multi-ethnic Crimean population expressed the desire to voluntarily unite with Russia. Only after this decision was the issue considered by the authorities of the Russian Federation, and a positive response to the request was taken. I won't presume to talk about what caused this situation. It is already history, and I won't recall the role played by the United States, the European Union and others – we would just be entering once again into useless, endless and fruitless debates.

The situation is the same with Donbass. This part of Ukraine did not want to live under the new rules handed down by the new authorities in Kyiv. As a result, we have a bloody civil war in the east, which has nothing to do with Russia. We are involved in the attempt to reach a political settlement in Donbass, in essence because Russia, together with the other Normandy Four countries, is a sponsor of the Minsk Agreements, although their fulfilment is the responsibility of the authorities in Kyiv and in the self-proclaimed republics. How to implement these Agreements is another question entirely.

The attempt to hide behind the opinion of leading international organizations has nothing to do with the issues under discussion here. I don't want to go any further into all of this, and certainly none of our comments would have been made were it not for the content of the revised American nuclear doctrine.

The President: I thank the delegate of the Russian Federation, the delegate of Ukraine has asked for the floor. The Ambassador of Ukraine please.

Mr. Klymenko (Ukraine): Mr. President, sorry for taking the floor once again, but I cannot but react to what was said by the representative of the Russian Federation. First of all, with regard to the Budapest Memorandum, the thing is that the Russian Federation reads this very important document very selectively, and I would like to refer to four main clauses of this document. I agree with the Russian Federation in the sense that it did not use the nuclear weapons with regard to my country, but there are four additional provisions in the document: first, to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine; second, to refrain from the threat or use of force against Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine; third, to refrain from using economic pressure on Ukraine to influence its politics; and fourth, to seek immediate Security Council action to provide assistance to Ukraine, if Ukraine should become a victim of an act of aggression or an object of a threat of

aggression in which nuclear weapons are used. These four main provisions of the Budapest Memorandum have been blatantly violated by the Russian Federation.

With regard to what happened in 2014 in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, of course, we all remember the media pictures of the green men with weapons in their hands. Later on, it was recognized that Russian soldiers were there and it was a fixed scenario, a treacherous scenario that played out in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The citizens of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea were actually pushed by force to take part in these quasi-elections which were not recognized by the international community. There were no international monitors, not to mention the gross violations that occurred in the organization of the scenario.

Another issue is with regard to certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the south-east of Ukraine where there is a Russian presence. Actually, I would like to address the question to the representative of the Russian delegation, and my question is rather simple: if the Russian Federation is really interested in stabilizing the situation in the south-east of Ukraine, then why does it block the issue of sending a United Nations peacekeeping monitoring mission to my country, to the south-east of Ukraine?

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Ukraine, I now give the floor to the Ambassador of France.

Ms. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Ambassador of the United States for this morning's presentation on the United States Nuclear Posture Review and to comment on the exchanges that followed, in particular some of the remarks made by the Russian Federation.

The nuclear deterrent of France is strictly independent. Nevertheless, we consider the broader American deterrent and associated security guarantees as an important factor of strategic stability. In this connection, France welcomes the Review's consecration of the nuclear deterrence role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in preserving peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

Given the emergence of a real military nuclear multipolarity and the increasingly serious nature of threats, including nuclear threats, France remains convinced of the need to strengthen the credibility of the nuclear deterrence role of NATO, mentioned in the Nuclear Posture Review, and the deepening of its nuclear culture. Close consultation and cooperation take place between France and the United States of America on all aspects of the nuclear question, through a regular dialogue of trust, and that must remain so. They are based on the solid foundation of our alliance and our singular responsibilities as a State that believes firmly in international peace and security.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of France and give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I would like to respond to a couple of comments made by the representative of North Korea. Let me remind him that Security Council resolutions are international law, not political documents that have been concocted by the United States or as representing United States policy.

Now some very final comments on the Nuclear Posture Review. This document was basically assembled over the last year. There have been many meetings within the United States Government with relevant government agencies to look at the threat environment that currently exists and what we think it will be like going forward. Certainly, within those discussions and meetings there have been differences of opinion, but at the end of the day we came out with a document that we think represents what we believe to be the current threats facing the United States and outlines the steps we believe we need to take to deal with those security challenges.

We are not happy having to take a much more difficult posture with regard to our nuclear engagement, but we felt we had no choice, given the threat environment. This is a document that is based on the world as it is, not the world as we would like it to be. We have to deal with these threats, we have responsibilities around the globe to provide security, and not just for our own citizens. So this document was carefully prepared and

will guide us going forward with regard to our engagement in the nuclear arena. We hope that those who have not read it will do so. My delegation of course remains open to any comments that representatives may have. But we wanted to make sure today that we outlined this new Nuclear Posture Review and provided a rationale for why we have taken this particular posture.

I want to thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to deliver this statement on the Nuclear Posture Review.

The President: I thank the Ambassador for sharing his thoughts on this and for the discussion which has been a very informed discussion. I see that the representative of the Russian Federation wants to exercise his right of reply.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will be brief and respond only to the question of the representative of Ukraine. As regards the deployment of peacekeeping forces in eastern Ukraine, it is worth stating that not only is this initiative supported by the Russian Federation, but it was the President of the Russian Federation who originally initiated it, in autumn last year, if I am not mistaken.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation. The representative of Ukraine wishes to have the floor. Please Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Klymenko (Ukraine): First of all, a very short comment on what was said by the representative of the Russian Federation about a United Nations peacekeeping monitoring mission in the south-east of Ukraine. The devil, as we all know, lies in the details. So it is very important first of all, to underline that the initiative from the very beginning was launched in the United Nations by the Ukrainian side.

Another thing is the content of the initiative. I do recognize that there were also some proposals made by the Russian Federation but, at the same time, it is very important to look at the content, to have an initiative that is first of all viable and will bring concrete results. In our estimation, and that of many other countries engaged, the Russian proposals are not viable and cannot bring peace and stability to the south-east of Ukraine, since there are Russian troops and mercenaries there and the Russian-Ukrainian border is not closed.

So from this point of view, it is very important, first of all, to start to implement the security component of the Minsk agreements, and to have a political view to discuss in the Security Council and in the United Nations, an initiative which really could bring peace and stability to the south-east of Ukraine.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador. I take it that there are no more requests for the floor and, before concluding, I wish to thank delegations for the kind words addressed to the Chair. This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting will be on Thursday, 8 February at 10 a.m. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.