

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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**Final record of the one thousand five hundred and fourteenth plenary meeting**


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 6 August 2019, at 10.10 a.m.

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**The President:** I call to order the 1514th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Distinguished delegates, prior to commencing our work today, I would like to express my deepest condolences to the Government of the United States of America, the delegation of the United States, the American people and the families of the victims of the two mass shootings last weekend in Texas and Ohio.

I wish to inform you, colleagues, of a letter of 15 July 2019 from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, informing me of his intention to appoint Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have sought the concurrence of the Conference and did not receive any objections from any member of the Conference by close of business, yesterday, 5 August. I therefore signed a letter of 6 August 2019 to Secretary-General António Guterres informing him that the member States of the Conference on Disarmament concur with the intended appointment of Ms. Valovaya as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, who shall also act as his personal representative, in accordance with paragraph 13 of the rules of procedure of the Conference.

Dear colleagues, as indicated previously, it is my intention to continue the discussions started last week on document CD/WP.621. Following useful exchanges with many of you during informal consultations yesterday morning, we have undertaken a thorough revision of the draft and issued document CD/WP.621/Rev.1, an advance version of which I asked the secretariat to circulate. I am cognizant that you might not have had the opportunity to share this document with your capitals and receive feedback or instructions from them. Nonetheless, I would like to take the opportunity of this plenary meeting to introduce the main elements of this document to you.

Firstly, the document has been renamed “Draft decision on possible elements for a programme of work”. This reflects the discussions and consultations we have been carrying out in recent days – that is Conference discussions and consultations on the elements that may be included in a future programme of work. It is our hope that the possible consensus reached on these elements of the draft decision will lay the ground for future work next year. In this connection, we added a new paragraph, paragraph 7, to the preamble to serve this goal. We also tried to strengthen the language of new paragraph 7 and paragraph 9 of the preamble.

Secondly, paragraph 11, which is a merger of paragraphs 10 and 11 of the first draft, is new. It is our view that the new paragraph will take into account the different views and the need for a simple yet equal and comprehensive document and that it reflects all the basic elements stated in the rules of procedure, which were adopted by all members of the Conference a long time ago. Like many members, I believe that if, as stated clearly in a very good working paper presented by the Netherlands, we can go back, look closely at the rules of procedure and work on the basis of the very basic principles of the Conference, we will be able to break the stalemate, which has lasted more than twenty years now.

Thirdly, we clarify paragraph 12 on the role of the President in the work of the subsidiary bodies, the possible main task of the President and the nomination of coordinators. This is a change made in accordance with the viewpoints of some countries, which we think were relevant.

Colleagues, I am certain that we all share the common objective of finding ways to overcome the two-decade stalemate of the Conference. Many ideas have been put forward; many efforts have been made in recent years. I am realistic but have not lost hope that the draft decision on possible elements for a programme of work might be positively considered and adopted, as with such a decision we can certainly have clarity with respect to the plan of work and the timetable and promote effective and balanced work on the substantive items on the Conference agenda, based on its already agreed principles and mandates. Discussion of any issue of interest to a party can be addressed properly once we agree on this document and proceed with the next steps, such as the sixth schedule of activities, the programme of work and the establishment of subsidiary bodies, without prejudice to the work of future Presidents.

Before opening the floor for interventions, I once again call on all Conference members to support the common efforts made by many of us in this room, including our

predecessors, to make positive contributions to the work of the Conference, for the sake of the Conference and its noble mandates.

I propose that the discussion on this draft decision take place in an informal setting, but before doing so, I would ask whether there are requests for the floor. I can see that the United States of America is asking for the floor.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to read a statement, dated 2 August 2019, that was issued by Secretary of State Pompeo on the withdrawal by the United States from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

On February 2, 2019, the United States provided its six-month notice of withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) due to the Russian Federation's continuing violation of the Treaty. The United States withdrawal pursuant to article XV of the Treaty takes effect today because Russia failed to return to full and verified compliance through the destruction of its non-compliant missile system – the SSC-8 or 9M729 ground-launched, intermediate-range cruise missile.

Russia is solely responsible for the Treaty's demise. Dating back to at least the mid-2000s, Russia developed, produced, flight tested and has now fielded multiple battalions of its non-compliant missile. The United States first raised its concerns with Russia in 2013. Russia subsequently and systematically rebuffed six years of United States efforts seeking Russia's return to compliance. With the full support of our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies, the United States determined Russia to be in material breach of the Treaty and subsequently suspended our obligations under the Treaty. Over the past six months, the United States provided Russia a final opportunity to correct its non-compliance. As it has for many years, Russia chose to keep its non-compliant missile rather than going back into compliance with its Treaty obligations.

The United States will not remain party to a treaty that is deliberately violated by Russia. Russia's non-compliance under the Treaty jeopardizes United States supreme interests, as Russia's development and fielding of a Treaty-violating missile system represents a direct threat to the United States and our allies and partners. The United States greatly appreciates the steadfast cooperation and resolve NATO allies have shown in responding to Russia's violation.

The United States remains committed to effective arms control that advances United States allied and partner security, is verifiable and enforceable and includes partners that comply responsibly with their obligations. President Trump has charged this Administration with beginning a new chapter by seeking a new era of arms control that moves beyond the bilateral treaties of the past. Going forward, the United States calls upon Russia and China to join us in this opportunity to deliver real security results to our nations and the entire world.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the United States of America for his statement 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, despite our repeated warnings, the United States and South Korea have finally started the joint military exercise targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This is an open denial and a flagrant violation of the joint statement of 12 June by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States and last year's inter-Korean declarations, all of which are agreements to establish new relations and build a lasting and durable peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Although the United States and South Korean authorities are playing every trick to justify this military exercise, they can neither conceal nor whitewash its aggressive nature in any manner. The joint military exercise code-named Focus Lens was conducted in South Korea in 1954, a year after the conclusion of the Armistice Agreement. Since then, the joint military exercises have been carried out on an annual basis for the last 65 years in preparation for an exceptionally aggressive war and surprise pre-emptive attack on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

What is more serious is that the United States is inciting military tension, targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, by deploying a large amount of the latest offensive military hardware in South Korea in disregard of its commitment to suspend joint military exercises made at the summit level on such occasions as the Singapore Summit and the recent Panmunjom Summit. Even after the Singapore Summit, the United States and South Korea have continuously staged various aggressive war exercises targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, such as Marine Corps joint exercises, Alliance 19-1, joint aerial drills, and the Proliferation Security Initiative. The United States even conducted a test to intercept our intercontinental ballistic missiles and test fired its intercontinental ballistic missile Minuteman III and submarine-launched ballistic missile Trident II D-5.

The United States also made clear in its nuclear deterrence policy report its opposition to "no first use" of nuclear weapons against my country and did not hesitate to expose its repulsion towards us by labelling my country a rogue State and a proliferator of nuclear technology, chemical weapons and ballistic missiles.

Recently, F-35A stealth fighters were brought into South Korea, and the United States nuclear-powered strategic submarine *Oklahoma City* entered the port of Busan, South Korea. The United States is also pushing ahead with its plan to deploy the high-altitude reconnaissance drone Global Hawk in South Korea. All these developments are seriously offending us. These facts prove that the United States and the South Korean authorities lack the political will to implement the joint statements in which they pledged to improve bilateral relations and show that they remain unchanged in their position to regard the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as their enemy.

Since the hostile military acts of the United States and South Korea have reached a dangerous level, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea released a statement strongly condemning and denouncing them. The spokesperson also made clear the following principal position: first, the United States and South Korean authorities will, under no circumstances, be able to avoid responsibility for compelling the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take countermeasures to eliminate the potential and direct threats to its national security.

We have already warned several times that the joint military exercises would block progress in relations with both the United States and South Korea, and this could also drive us to reconsider the major steps we have taken so far. There is no law requiring only my country to be bound by commitments that the other side freely walks away from. As the United States and South Korea claim at every opportunity that the joint military exercises are defensive in nature and an essential element for combat readiness, etc., we are compelled to develop, test and deploy the powerful physical means essential for our national defence.

Second, although the determination of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to resolve the issue through dialogue remains unchanged, momentum in respect of dialogue will further fade away as long as the hostile military acts against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continue. The prevailing situation is dramatically reducing our desire to implement the agreements with the United States and South Korea and affects the prospects for future dialogue. It is quite obvious that we cannot expect a constructive dialogue at a time when war games targeting the dialogue partner are under way. There is also no need to have fruitless and exhausting dialogue with those who do not have a sense of communication. The United States and South Korean authorities talk about a dialogue, but when they sit back they sharpen a sword with which to do us harm. If this is what they call a creative approach and imaginative power beyond common sense, then we will be forced to seek a new path, as we have already indicated.

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

**Mr. Gabriëlse** (Netherlands): Thank you, Mr. President. My delegation is taking the floor to introduce our working paper entitled "Back to basics – the programme of work", which was circulated yesterday by the secretariat, has been submitted as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and was mentioned in your introduction, Mr. President.

In the light of the current situation, it could be argued that we have hit a dead end when it comes to the organization of our work in the Conference. Given the current situation, the Netherlands deems it useful to collectively trace back our previous steps to uncover how we arrived there and, more importantly, how we can move forward. Our working paper seeks to contribute to this common endeavour to move the Conference forward by critically looking at the organization of our work.

Mr. President, the working paper argues that the Conference on Disarmament should return to its origins and go back to organizing its work on the basis of the programme of work, as intended in the rules of procedure and as in the first 15 years of its existence. During this period, the programme of work served merely as a planning tool in which the allocation of time for each agenda item was set for the session ahead. The decisions on the establishment of subsidiary bodies – their respective mandates – were taken separately from that on the programme of work.

The link made in contemporary proposals on the programme of work between the establishment of subsidiary bodies and the programme of work is not reflected in the rules of procedure. Neither rule 28 (which deals with the programme of work) nor rules 23 and 24 (on the establishment of subsidiary bodies) refer to each other. Moreover, the wording used in the different rules is clearly distinct, with rule 28 using the wording “shall establish”, which indicates that the programme of work is a requirement, in contrast to the wording of rule 23, which says, “Whenever the Conference deems it advisable for the effective performance of its functions ... [it] may establish subsidiary bodies”, thereby indicating that the establishment of subsidiary bodies is optional.

Moreover, rule 28 sets out only two requirements for the programme of work, namely: it must (1) be based on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament and (2) include a schedule of activities. The programme of work is thus intended as a planning tool to organize the work of the Conference, which is the purpose of a programme of work in most, if not all, multilateral disarmament forums.

Mr. President, the historical evidence also indicates that an approach whereby the programme of work is separated from the decision on subsidiary bodies is the most productive method of organizing our work. As demonstrated by the table in annex I of our working paper, in the first two decades of its existence, the Conference successfully established, on a yearly basis, one or more subsidiary bodies, separate from the programme of work. Many of these subsidiary bodies had a negotiating mandate and two treaties were negotiated by separately established subsidiary bodies in the Conference.

This is in stark contrast to the last two decades, where efforts have focused on combining the programme of work with the prescribed schedule of activities and the establishment of subsidiary bodies. This linkage between the programme of work and the establishment of subsidiary bodies, including their respective mandates, has made the programme of work a procedural hurdle that has prevented the Conference from working on the substance of its agenda.

It is with these considerations that the Netherlands suggests returning to the well-established and functioning practice of using the programme of work as a planning tool for the plenary meetings of the session ahead and delinking it from the establishment of subsidiary bodies, which should be done through a separate decision. Such a programme of work should follow the rules of procedure to the letter and thus provide only for a schedule of activities for that session based on the agreed agenda. An example of such an approach is contained in annex II of our working paper, which is based on the programmes of work of the 1990 session and the current agenda.

Taking this approach would allow the Conference on Disarmament to focus again on the substance of its agenda during its plenary meetings. During these meetings, the Conference should work on the substance of the agenda item under consideration and with the goal of launching negotiations. Once sufficient progress is made on an agenda item or a specific topic covered by it, the Conference could subsequently establish a subsidiary body on that topic, while work on the other agenda items continues under the programme of work.

An additional advantage to such an approach is that it provides all delegations, including the rotating presidency, with a clear plan that allows for sufficient time for all

delegations to prepare and to facilitate the participation of their capitals and the submission of working papers and other proposals.

Mr. President, in closing, I wish to underline three things: first, separating the programme of work from the establishment of subsidiary bodies is fully in line with the existing rules of procedure. Second, this approach offers a pragmatic way forward, which has proven successful in the past. And third, it allows the Conference to focus on the substance of its agenda rather than on procedural issues, which have stalled progress for far too long. Therefore, we encourage all delegations to study the working paper and look forward to any feedback and suggestions.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the Netherlands for his statement and the working group introduced. I now give the floor to Ambassador of the United States of America for the right of reply.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Mr. President, I am happy to take the floor, but I thought that there were other placards that went up before my second one.

**The President:** I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, and on behalf of the Russian Mission and the Russian Federation, I would like to express my sincere condolences to the United States delegation and to all the American people for the tragic events in the States of Texas and Ohio, which resulted in the deaths of innocent people. We empathize with the friends and families of the victims. The people of Russia feel their pain. It is through bitter experience, not mere talk, that we know the pain and suffering caused by such inhumane crimes. There is no justification for them.

Russia, as a country that has repeatedly survived terrorist attacks, unequivocally condemns terrorism and extremism in all their forms. We remain committed to multilateral efforts to combat the threat of terrorism.

Now, for today's meeting: allow me to note that the Russian delegation has consistently expressed support for the view that, at this stage, our task in the Conference on Disarmament should be to agree on a programme of work, which is a key requirement for the commencement of negotiations in the Conference, in accordance with its mandate. Accordingly, the Presidents, in addition to organizing in-depth consideration of agenda items and encouraging delegations to engage in interesting exchanges of views – activities that are clearly important – should focus primarily on this fundamental task. We welcome the efforts of the Vietnamese presidency in this regard and support its two-track approach.

We had a number of suggestions for the zero draft presented by Ambassador Duong, which we shared with him, and we are ready to continue working constructively, including on an updated draft, after it has been studied in Moscow. We also consider the working paper presented by the delegation of the Netherlands to be important and are prepared to take it into account in our future work.

Voices in this chamber suggested that it was not useful, if not downright pointless, to work on the draft programme of work so close to the end of the Conference session. We do not think that is the right approach. For a number of reasons, we have, regrettably, lost a lot of precious time this year that we could have used to reach a compromise on the programme of work. However, if, before the end of the session, we at least manage to prepare a framework or develop a set of considerations that could be taken into account in the preparation of the draft programme of work in the future, we will have given practical effect to the principle of ensuring continuity from the presidencies of one session to those of the next. This topic has been much talked about at the Conference lately – and with good reason.

A decision to that effect would lay a solid foundation for the 2020 session and allow it to begin in a businesslike, constructive atmosphere, with attempts to agree on a programme of work made not from scratch but on the basis of a vision of how we should proceed. For our part, we are prepared to engage in the closest cooperation with all delegations and presidencies to that end.

Distinguished colleagues, I would also like to exercise the right of reply to the statement made by the delegation of the United States and the Ambassador of the United States, Robert Wood. Russia has been groundlessly blamed for the withdrawal of the United States from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the collapse of this instrument, which is important for European and international security. The Russian Federation, which categorically rejects the accusations made in that regard, has repeatedly explained at various levels both its position on this issue and the reality of the situation around the Treaty.

The consistent efforts of the United States to dismantle the entire structure of modern nuclear arms control and nuclear disarmament agreements are evident. The United States has been making those efforts not just today or yesterday but also for several years. Using the logic of the United States, the Russian Federation should have withdrawn from the Treaty in 1999, with the first violations of the Treaty by the United States, which were connected with the use of unmanned combat aerial vehicles that fell under the definition of the intermediate- and shorter-range ground-based missiles that had been banned by the Treaty. But for ten years – I repeat, ten years! – the Russian Federation has literally been trying to persuade the United States to sit down at the negotiating table to address concerns.

Instead, the United States launched a campaign to portray the Russian Federation as not being a responsible party to the Treaty. And on 2 August 2019, amid the commotion caused by this campaign, the United States finished the job it had started a few years earlier – namely, the dismantling of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

In taking this step, the United States is opening a new chapter in human history. This chapter, however, is in no way linked to arms control, nuclear disarmament or restrictions on strategic arsenals. This new chapter is linked to the beginning of a new arms race in respect of missiles and nuclear weapons and the sharp deterioration in the security situation and erosion of trust among countries. This is evidenced by recent statements by John Bolton, the national security adviser to the President of the United States, and Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State of the United States, who not only announced the country's withdrawal from the Treaty but also expressed the reluctance of the current United States Administration to renew the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which is the sole remaining nuclear arms control agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States.

The other day, Ambassador Wood accused me of using Soviet propaganda methods. I will not say anything similar about Ambassador Wood's statement. Doing so would not be right; nor would it be of any use. One thing, however, I will note: it is symbolic that the steps and statements made by the United States in the past few days have been made on the eve of the historic date of 6 August, when the United States, in the city of Hiroshima, became the first country to use a nuclear weapon against civilians. That symbolism seems to reflect the real intentions of the United States in respect of security and the consolidation of international peace and global stability.

Unfortunately, it has to be stated that since 2 August, we have all found ourselves in a global situation that is new and far from safe. Full responsibility for the consequences of the recent steps taken by the United States in this area lies squarely with the current United States Administration.

The Russian Federation remains committed to the goals of engaging in dialogue, characterized by trust, on all issues of strategic stability and international security and is ready to cooperate with all interested countries with a view to making nuclear arsenals smaller still, bringing them under control and achieving the common goal, which, incidentally, was articulated by the previous United States Administration, of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

**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): Thank you, Mr. President. I am taking the floor just to respond to the remarks that were made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Let me just make very clear that the United States is not

inciting military pressure. The United States is committed to denuclearization of North Korea, as agreed by Chairman Kim and President Trump at their first summit meeting last year in Singapore. We very much look forward to returning to discussions with the North in order to carry out the vision laid out at that summit by President Trump and Chairman Kim.

**The President:** Thank you. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

**Mr. Li Song (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation joins you and the members of the Conference in expressing condolences to the victims of the two mass shootings that occurred recently in the United States of America. These acts show that terrorism and extremist ideology are still major factors threatening international and national security and social stability. The international community must attach great importance to this. All countries must make their own efforts to safeguard their own security, their people's safety and social stability, according to their different situations.

Mr. President, over the past few days, we have been actively participating and cooperating in the further discussions on the Conference's programme of work, held under your leadership. We have also received the latest text you have circulated and the working document submitted by the delegation of the Netherlands. We will carefully study these new documents. Just before the meeting began, I also spoke about these issues when chatting with colleagues here. I told my colleagues that the Conference has not carried out substantive work for more than 20 years, but that it is unfair to attribute this stalemate to the Conference itself, its rules of procedure or even the political will of its members. Of course, we can discuss whether the Conference, as a multilateral mechanism, has room for further improvement. However, we must always be mindful of what the Conference can do and what kind of progress it can make. I am afraid that what is most crucial in that regard is the international political and security situation outside this chamber. It can be said that, for more than 20 years, and even now, at this new and critical juncture, the international political and security situation has had a more important impact on the Conference's effectiveness and even on all multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms.

If I have taken the floor today, it is also to take this opportunity to share with all of you the views of China on the withdrawal of the United States from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty). The Chinese delegation deeply regrets the insistence of the United States on withdrawing from the INF Treaty in spite of the opposition of the international community. It firmly opposes it. Since the formal announcement by the United States of its withdrawal, on 2 August, senior United States Defense Department officials have publicly stated that the United States will seek to resume the development and deployment of intermediate-range missiles. This clearly shows that the country's withdrawal from the treaty is yet another manoeuvre by the United States to pursue unilateralism and to disregard its international commitments. Its real purpose is to free itself from commitments and seek unilateral military and strategic advantage. If the United States adopts this irresponsible unilateral measure, it will seriously affect global strategic balance and stability, aggravate tensions in international relations, undermine strategic mutual trust between the major powers, disrupt the international nuclear disarmament and arms control processes and threaten peace and security in the regions concerned. China shares the deep concern of the vast majority of the members of the international community about these negative developments.

China notes that in withdrawing from the INF Treaty, the United States declared that the era of bilateral nuclear disarmament between the United States and the Russian Federation had come to an end, and once again raised the issue of participation by China in multilateral nuclear arms control negotiations with the United States and the Russian Federation. China has on numerous occasions stated its position on this issue. The sole aim of the position advocated by the United States is to divert international attention. China has no intention to participate in such nuclear arms control negotiations, nor will it do so. Last week, when I introduced the White Paper entitled "China's National Defence in the New Era" to the members of the Conference, I once again set out the nuclear strategy and policy of China. Its nuclear self-defence strategy is completely transparent; China has a highly responsible nuclear policy and its nuclear arsenal is extremely limited in scale and never



poses a threat to international peace and security. China has never entered into a nuclear arms race with any country in the past; it will not do so now, nor will it do so in the future.

We call on the international community to maintain its vigilance with regard to the serious consequences of the withdrawal of the United States from the INF Treaty and to prevent the United States, under any pretext, from shirking its own special responsibility for nuclear disarmament. We urge the United States to exercise restraint, refrain from actions that harm the security interests of other countries, assume the international responsibilities of a major power and conscientiously safeguard international and regional peace and security. This is the common call of the international community.

We support and encourage the maintenance of a dialogue between the United States and the Russian Federation on the issues of strategic security and bilateral nuclear disarmament and the extension of the New START Treaty between the two countries. We believe that the differences between the United States and the Russian Federation on the implementation of nuclear disarmament treaties should be resolved through dialogue and negotiation. They should not and cannot be resolved through withdrawal or breach of the treaty. As the two powers possessing the largest nuclear arsenals, the United States and the Russian Federation must continue to drastically reduce those arsenals in a verifiable, irreversible and legally binding manner. That serves as an important guarantee for maintaining global strategic stability, international peace and security and the international arms control and non-proliferation regime. It will also create the necessary conditions for advancing the multilateral nuclear disarmament process. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

**Mr. Klymenko (Ukraine):** Thank you, Mr. President. In my intervention, I would like, for my part, to dwell on the issue of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), which is of direct relevance to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The relevant statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the termination of the INF Treaty was released on 2 August this year. In this document, Ukraine expressed its disappointment with the termination of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles following the situation around it caused by Russia's actions. Ukraine expressed its full understanding of the move by the United States in response to Russia's non-compliance. Over the last three decades, the Treaty was a cornerstone of strategic stability and global security. Ukraine was strictly adhering to its provisions throughout the entire period of its existence. Between 1988 and 1991, all ground-based shorter-range and intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles, as well as 25 related facilities, were decommissioned in Ukraine.

Ukraine, together with the United States, condemned the development and testing of the RS-26 Rubezh ballistic missiles, which have a range of 2,200 km, as well as further improvement of the battle and operational capabilities of the Iskander-M missile system. In Ukraine, we are particularly concerned with the fact that Russia developed and deployed nuclear-capable intermediate-range missile systems at a range within reach of several European capitals, as well as the fact that, in March 2019, Russia conducted military training, involving the use of Iskander-M, missiles in occupied Crimea.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Ukraine for his statement. I give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States of America.

**Mr. Wood (United States of America):** Thank you, Mr. President. I apologize for taking the floor once again, but I think it is important that I respond to a few things that have been said here, particularly by the Chinese Ambassador. As many of you who have read our Nuclear Posture Review know, over the last decade, while the United States has reduced its nuclear forces and the role of nuclear weapons in its defence doctrines, both Russia and China have moved in the opposite direction, and we could not continue to adhere to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty while Russia continued to violate it (and in a blatant fashion). Also, when you look at China's military posture – and if you look at what has been happening in the South China Sea – and the fact that China has in essence been modernizing its strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons over this period of time, you see that this is what has led my President to call for a new dialogue on nuclear

weapons that includes China. This is something we believe is important, and we will continue to make the case that we have a new situation globally and that it requires broadening the discussion, to include China, on strategic nuclear forces and beginning to look at other categories of weapons that have not been covered but that pose a threat not just to the United States but also to its friends and partners around the world.

We therefore think it is critically important that we move into this new era of arms control. It is a reality we face: growing threats, modernization of these forces, other players around the world that are also seeking nuclear weapons, seeking to intimidate countries, particularly countries that are allies of the United States. Again, we think the most important factor to consider is that when you enter into treaties such as these, you must adhere to them. When one party (or more) does not adhere to them, it is hard for a country to justify continuing to adhere to these important treaties. It is unfortunate that, after 30 or more meetings with the Russian Federation, Russia refused to admit that it was in non-compliance and to take the steps to remedy its non-compliance. We had no choice, Mr. President, colleagues around the room. My hope is that, going forward, we can begin to have a discussion not just with the Russian Federation but also with China, so that we can address some of these very challenging issues that we face. These are difficult security issues, and the only way that we can get at them is to sit at the table and deal with them.

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

**Mr. Li Song (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, I apologize for holding everyone up a bit longer but I must respond to the baseless accusations and attacks on the national defence strategy and defence posture of China that my colleague, Ambassador Wood, just made. We have heard these accusations and attacks from the United States here recently and have already heard the United States pronounce them in many forums. We firmly oppose them and find them absolutely unacceptable.

The United States Ambassador mentioned the South China Sea issue in his intervention just now. I do not know what the South China Sea issue has to do with nuclear disarmament, nuclear arms control and the work of the Conference. However, since he mentioned the South China Sea, I would like to share with you what the State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Wang Yi, said in statement made in Bangkok last week in response to the relevant accusations by the United States. The Minister said that China, as a staunch defender of regional peace and stability, has always pursued a defensive national defence policy. Under international law, it is the legitimate right of a sovereign State to deploy means of defence within its own territory. A large country outside the region has incessantly accused China of militarizing the South China Sea. However, it is precisely that country that maintains hundreds of military bases around the world and has deployed hundreds of thousands of troops outside its own territory. Why, and on what basis, would a country that is militarizing the world accuse others of militarization? It is thus not China that should be labelled as a source of militarization.

Regarding the defence strategy, nuclear policy and outer space policy of China and its position and advocacy in respect of global strategic balance and stability, I have already spoken to the Conference on these subjects on numerous occasions and it would be superfluous for me to repeat them here. In my previous statements before the Conference, I have stressed that the views and positions of China are in no way directed against any particular country, but against the cold war mentality, unilateralism and thought processes, policies and practices that disregard international morality, strategic stability and existing international mechanisms. The international community has its own opinion about the justice of such mentalities, policies and practices.

As members of the Conference, we should of course set out in no uncertain terms our stances and positions on such major issues as international peace and security, strategic balance and stability, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, which relate to the core security interests of all countries, but that clearly does not mean fomenting confrontation in the Conference. The Conference is not a place for bickering and fighting; it, like other international mechanisms in the United Nations framework, is a forum for negotiation, consultation and cooperation. All parties, on the basis of seeking common ground while respecting differences, increasing understanding and strengthening

cooperation, and with mutual respect for one another's security concerns, must commit themselves to handling differences through dialogue among equals and consultation and should explore paths to resolve international problems. That is what multilateralism is all about.

As it has in the past, in line with this spirit, China will maintain a positive and constructive attitude and work with the members of the Conference to revitalize this forum so that we can work creatively and join forces to meet global challenges. China is also ready to continue to work actively within the framework of the five nuclear powers to promote mutual trust and communication and seek common ground while respecting differences, to cooperate in solidarity in order to properly work to defend global strategic stability, promote international peace and security and to duly carry out our responsibilities. Thank you.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of China. Are there any other delegations that wish to take the floor at this moment? I see none, so I will suspend the meeting and move the meeting to an informal setting for the consultation of the draft decision on possible elements for the programme of work.

*The meeting was suspended 11.10 a.m. and resumed at 12.15 p.m.*

**The President:** We are now in formal setting. I give the floor to the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Lee Jang-keun** (Republic of Korea): Thank you, Mr. President. In this formal session, I would like to offer a brief reply to a statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea just this morning regarding the situation on the Korean Peninsula. I would like to emphasize the importance of alleviating tension and establishing permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula, and in this regard I would like to highlight that my Government is fully committed to this goal. In this vein, my Government expects an early resumption of the dialogue between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the implementation of all inter-Korean as well as United States – Democratic People's Republic of Korea agreements made so far.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his statement. I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Ju Yong-chol** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Thank you, Mr. President, it is just to respond briefly to the remarks made by the representative of South Korea. If South Korea really wanted to improve inter-Korean relations and achieve peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula, it should come back to the original intention it had at the time when we had summits last year and fulfil its responsibility through the implementation of North-South agreements in deed and not by word. I would like to emphasize that military exercises, by their hostile nature, are not compatible with dialogue and improvement of bilateral relations. This will only reverse the current path and worsen the situation. Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement. I see no further requests for the floor at this moment, so I would like once again to thank you very much for your thoughts and comments and very useful suggestions. With regard not only to our draft decision but also to the very good working paper distributed by the delegation of the Netherlands, I really appreciate your contributions and, of course, I will inform you of what I intend to do in the coming days. With your suggestions and proposals from today's discussion, we feel that we can produce some deliverables for the Conference on Disarmament.

The next plenary meeting, which will take place on Thursday, 8 August, at 10 a.m., has a substantive focus on the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters. The members of the panel on that occasion will be Ambassador Omar Zniber of Morocco, Ambassador Robbert Jan Gabriëse of the Netherlands, Ambassador Yann Hwang of France and Mr. Wilfred Wan of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

With that, the meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.*