



INDIA भारत

Please check against delivery

Statement

by

Hon'ble Mr. Balasaheb Vikhe Patil
Member of Parliament
and
Member of the Indian delegation

at the

61st Session of the First Committee of
the United Nations General Assembly

New York

October 06, 2006

Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations
235 East 43rd Street, New York, NY 10017 • Tel: (212) 490-9660 • Fax: (212) 490-9656
E-Mail: india@un.int • indiaun@prodigy.net

Madam Chairperson,

Please accept my delegation's warm felicitations on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly. We are most happy to see in this position an illustrious representative of Norway, a country that has distinguished itself in the advocacy of peace and disarmament. You have our full cooperation and support.

2. The United Nations can play a central role in making the international community's yearning for general and complete disarmament a reality. The First Committee, tasked to deal with disarmament and related international security questions, is the instrument for achieving this as it provides a universal forum for Member States to assess the current global security environment, identify threats to international peace and security and recommend concrete measures to combat them.

3. The threats we face today are global in their character and, therefore, need global solutions. No State possesses the capability to confront them by itself. The imperative of cooperation has never been more evident. However, collective security, which inspired the founders of the United Nations, remains only an idea, with security of States being largely predicated on national capabilities. This imperils and weakens the international security system.

4. It is thus the lack of a shared perspective that has stalled the Conference on Disarmament and prevented consensus on the disarmament and non-proliferation segment of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. The Conference on Disarmament has failed to reach agreement on its programme of work. Procedural fixes and debates have failed in bridging these differences. India remains committed, as always, to support initiatives that foster a consensus based on priorities and concerns of all states to break the deadlock in the Conference.

5. An important component of international security is energy security. As the global economy expands, spurred by high growth rates in emerging economies, the global demand for energy will dramatically increase. Given the imperatives of sustainable development and the risks from climate change, nuclear energy offers us an environment-friendly source for meeting the global demand. We believe there is an immense opportunity for international cooperation combining with indigenous

national efforts to ensure diversified energy mix for sustainable development.

6. Another looming danger is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and global terrorism. The growing possibility of terrorists gaining access to weapons of mass destruction has added a new and dangerous dimension to the threat of WMDs. The existence of networks of proliferators, aided and abetted by elements within state structures, has further aggravated this threat. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that: (i) States renew their commitment to fulfil their responsibility to fully abide by their non-proliferation and disarmament obligations, assumed voluntarily under various legal instruments; (ii) States take seriously requisite measures to deny non-State actors, including terrorists, access to weapons of mass destruction as well as related equipment, materials and technologies.

7. India's own impeccable record on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has been recognized and appreciated by the international community. Enactment of a comprehensive legislation by us on prevention of unlawful activities regarding WMDs by our Parliament in June 2005 strengthened the existing legal framework for this purpose. We have also updated our export control regulations and lists to reflect the best international practices on export controls. We shall continue to ensure that India will never be a source of proliferation.

8. It is, however, necessary that we do not lose sight of the goal of nuclear disarmament, which should remain the international community's highest priority. Progress towards nuclear disarmament has unfortunately stalled and the global disarmament machinery remains paralysed leading to disquiet among the international community. Non-proliferation and disarmament ought to be mutually reinforcing. This is a challenge for the UN General Assembly to take up.

9. The very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly, resolution 1(1) of 1946, sought the elimination, from national armaments, of atomic weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We can commemorate the glorious vision on its 60th anniversary by renewing our commitment to general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. Member States embraced this objective unanimously in 1978, at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In our view, another special session may provide the much-needed impetus to the consensus

achieved in 1978 and help to evolve forward-looking approaches, taking into account the concerns and priorities of all Member States.

Madam Chairperson,

10. The principles of restraint and responsibility are the sheet anchor of India's nuclear doctrine. While maintaining a credible minimum deterrent, there has been no dilution of India's commitment to nuclear disarmament, which remains a core objective of India's foreign policy. This is so because India believes that its security, as indeed of the entire world, would be enhanced in a nuclear-weapon free world. India's nuclear doctrine espousing no-first use per se and the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States, is itself a minimalist doctrine reflecting our civilisational abhorrence of violence and destruction.

11. India has thus continued to observe a voluntary moratorium on nuclear explosive tests. India is ready to join negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. On this basis, India had joined the consensus in the 1993 General Assembly Resolution on this subject.

12. It may be recalled that our late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had presented at the 1988 session of the General Assembly an Action Plan for nuclear disarmament within a specific timeframe. To reaffirm India's abiding commitment to the goal of global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament and to outline concrete steps, towards a nuclear-weapon free world, we hereby present a Working Paper, distributed with my statement, which seeks to:

- Reaffirm the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear weapon States to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons;
- Reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines;
- Reduce nuclear danger, including the risks of accidental nuclear war, by de-alerting of nuclear-weapons to prevent unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons;
- Negotiate a global agreement among nuclear weapon States on 'no-first-use' of nuclear-weapons;

- Negotiate a universal and legally-binding agreement on non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States;
- Negotiate a Convention on the complete prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;
- Negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their time-bound destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons.

13. The steps mentioned in the paper are not exhaustive nor do they exclude other measures for achieving the same goal. They are also not listed priority-wise nor have any implementation-specific sequencing. We hope that our Paper will spur dialogue among States on both the need and the means to nuclear disarmament.

14. Abiding by your appeal to keep statements short, we propose to utilize the thematic debate to outline our approaches on the issues related to biological weapons, small arms and light weapons and other conventional weapons. For now, we wish only to underline the importance that we attach to the success of the BTWC and CCW review conferences later this year.

15. Meanwhile, I hope the deliberations in the First Committee will meet our expectations and enhance international peace and security.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.

* * *