Statement by
Ambassador Zamir Akram
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to the United Nations
Geneva

in the First Committee on
thematic debate on nuclear weapons

on

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Thematic debate on nuclear weapons

Mr. Chairman,

At its First Special Session on Disarmament, the General Assembly recognized that nuclear weapons posed an existential threat to humanity. It agreed that disarmament and arms limitation, especially in the field of nuclear weapons, were essential for the prevention of the danger of nuclear war and the strengthening of international peace and security. The best defence against the possible use of weapons of mass destruction lies in the total elimination of such weapons. However, we witnessed the progressive erosion of this consensus and disavowal of the objectives of SSOD-I by major nuclear weapon states.

2. From a realistic perspective, General and complete nuclear disarmament will require first and foremost sincere practical efforts for creating a conducive environment for peace and security by resolving the underlying causes of the nuclear and conventional arms race at the regional and global levels.

3. A peaceful and stable international order can only be based upon the principle of equal security for all states. No state can attain its security through the insecurity of others.

4. The experience of South Asia provides a prime example of the threat to regional and global peace and security arising from regional disputes and power asymmetries pushing the region towards nuclearization. Pakistan has been forced to respond to ensure its security in this environment based on minimum creditable nuclear deterrence. Nevertheless, we remain committed to pursuing our stated proposals aimed at ensuring regional stability and resolution of outstanding disputes.

5. At the global level, the recent expression of commitment to the objective of nuclear disarmament by the largest possessors of nuclear weapons, is an encouraging development. However, the realization of the objective of nuclear disarmament requires concrete actions. Words need to be translated into deeds. The empty rhetoric of the past will no longer suffice.

6. We hope that at long last, the renewed emphasis on nuclear disarmament reflects a genuine desire of the major powers to work towards this objective and their conviction that the time is ripe for meaningful action in this regard.

7. At the same time, the major nuclear powers need to demonstrate that their commitment to nuclear disarmament must not lag behind non-proliferation and arms control measures nor the need to prevent new areas of an arms race such as in outer space. The major nuclear powers also need to address the security concerns of non-nuclear weapon states by assuring those states that nuclear weapons will not be used against them. The reality is that despite the fact that such measures are cost-free for the nuclear weapon states, they have so far refrained from undertaking any commitments in this regard.
Mr. Chairman,

8. Multilateralism and multilaterally negotiated, universally accepted and non-discriminatory agreements provide the best way forward for achieving the objective of disarmament and non-proliferation. By enabling the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, to initiate substantive negotiations on all the four core issues on its agenda, member states can demonstrate their political will, commitment and sincerity to the cause of nuclear disarmament. If there is indeed a genuine will to achieve nuclear disarmament, then it surprising to be told at the CD that, with the exception of one issue, the time is still not ripe for negotiations on the other core issues: nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and prevention of an arms race in outer space.

9. General and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, is the raison d’etre of the CD. It should, therefore, be the central theme of the CD’s work.

10. The objective of disarmament and not just non-proliferation, should also be the defining factor for negotiations on a Fissile Material Treaty (FMT). To make the proposed FMT a genuine nuclear disarmament measure, it must address the question of production of fissile material – past, present and future – in its entirety at both regional and global levels.

11. A cut-off in future production of fissile material alone will simply freeze and formalize the existing asymmetries in its stock-piles. It would neither further the cause of nuclear disarmament nor the objective of international and regional stability. For the major nuclear powers, with large existing stockpiles of fissile materials, support for such a treaty would be cost free.

Mr. Chairman,

12. The positive international climate in favour of nuclear disarmament should not be allowed to mask certain unfortunate realities. It must be acknowledged that thegravest threat to the integrity and credibility of the non-proliferation regime is the existence of double standards and discriminatory approaches followed by states that are most eloquent in the promotion of the NPT. This double standard has been compounded further by their recent actions in complete reversal of their own so-called non-proliferation norms. This has undermined the non-proliferation regime and turned the NPT into a farce. For Pakistan, these double standards have created a dangerous environment by undermining strategic stability in South Asia.

13. It is, indeed, ironic that in such a discriminatory and dangerous environment, Pakistan is being advised to join the NPT and eschew its nuclear deterrent capability, as has been proposed by some delegations in this Committee.

14. These ideologues of non-proliferation seldom raise their voices against the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons on hair trigger alert possessed by their allies. Moreover, while offering prescriptions for other states, in disregard for their security compulsions, these high-priests of non-proliferation, are neither themselves prepared to give up their nuclear security umbrellas nor prohibit the stationing of nuclear weapons on their territories.
15. States with a history of willful complicity in nuclear tests explosions seem hardly qualified to pontificate on non-proliferation. Also those states that arrogate for themselves the right to define their approach towards arms control and disarmament issues based on their national security assessments, conveniently disregard the same right of other states. In truth, Treaties on banning certain types of weapons, test bans or moratoria on fissile material production have only been negotiated and agreed by certain states once these weapon systems have lost their relevance for these countries or when their national reviews lead to certainty regarding the sufficiency and reliability of existing arsenals for future defence needs.

Mr. Chairman,

16. Apart from these double standards and duplicity, the restricted nature of certain export control arrangements is an impediment to the global implementation of non-proliferation standards. While expecting the universal application of the non-proliferation standards adopted by them, the members of the exclusive export control arrangements are not willing to open up these arrangements for other states to benefit by sharing of best practices and experiences. In fact, they would like to protect their commercial interests through restricted no-under-cutting arrangements. The objective of nonproliferation will be better served by the adoption of multilaterally negotiated export control standards and a cooperative approach based on non-discriminatory and inclusive partnerships.

Thank You