



PERMANENT MISSION OF SRI LANKA

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STATEMENT TO THE PLENARY MEETING

BY

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TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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(Check against delivery)

Madam President,

It is indeed a great honour for me to welcome you and to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

As representative of a country which has traditionally upheld equality between men and women, I am particularly pleased to see you presiding over this Conference.

Madam President,

Permit me to extend my delegation's sincere good wishes to Mr. Vladimir F. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference and his Deputy Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail for their continuing contributions to the work of the CD. Let me also express my delegation's appreciation of, and thanks to, your distinguished predecessors, Ambassador Vattani and Ambassador Nasserri for their stewardship of the CD during its critical months. My delegation's special thanks are due to Ambassador Miguel Marin-Bosch, Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann and his 'Tigers' led by Dr. Peter Marshall, and Ambassador Dembinski for their collective labour of love that brought forth a text of a draft CTBT.

And let me congratulate Ambassador Dembinski, Ambassador Lars Norberg and Ambassador Jaap Ramaker who have 'inherited' from their distinguished predecessors, the CTBT treaty making process, as Chairmen of the NPT Ad Hoc Committee and its two vital working groups. Let me welcome to Geneva and into our fold new colleagues - Ambassador U. Aye of Myanmar, Ambassador Bendjelloun - Touimi of the Kingdom of Morocco and Ambassador Sha Zukang of the People's Republic of China and wish them every success. In so doing, let me not forget, but remember with gratitude their distinguished predecessors; Ambassador Tin Kyaw Hlaing, Ambassador El Ghali Benhima and Ambassador Hou Zhitong and, Madam President, your own distinguished predecessor Ambassador Yoshitomo Tanaka, for their outstanding contributions to the Conference on Disarmament and wish them every success in their new assignments.

Madam President,

It is my intention to limit my statement to two broad but interrelated subjects, namely, **nuclear disarmament** and **security assurances**. Of late, the CD has heard statements exhorting the importance of establishing an AHC on nuclear disarmament. Although this subject has been on our agenda for many years, the CD has not been able

to deal with it for a variety of reasons. On the other hand, the Conference had dealt with the subject of Negative Security Assurances (NSA) within the confines of an Ad Hoc committee for a considerable period of time. Regrettably, the state which the CD is presently in, prevents it from dealing with either of these important subjects. However, that predicament should not detract us from discussing these two important subjects.

I am fully aware of the positions taken by various delegations in regard to nuclear disarmament. While some have taken the position that the agenda of the CD is replete with matters relating to nuclear issues, others have expressed the view that conventional weapons are more insidious than nuclear weapons, citing the number of wars fought since the World War II using conventional weapons, and the death toll of such wars. Some others go to the extent of comparing landmines with nuclear weapons with the intention of establishing that in real life the former is more dangerous than the latter. Despite these attempts to conceal the true nature of nuclear weapons, all of us are painfully aware, once unleashed, what the nuclear weapons are capable of doing to this planet and to its inhabitants. No threat of such extinction is posed by any one of the conventional weapons. More importantly, the international community has been able to outlaw other weapons of mass destruction such as the bacteriological and chemical weapons. The only weapon of mass destruction which still threatens mankind is the nuclear weapon.

Madam President, the year 1995 is depicted by many as an important milestone in our march towards international peace, security and disarmament. For some it signifies the 50th anniversary of the end of the World War II. For others, it signifies the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. For some others, it is important for an entirely different reason, namely, it is the 50th anniversary of the first use of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For the victors, the atomic bomb was a convenient instrument that brought the World War II to a speedy end. For the vanquished, however, it was a weapon of mass destruction unprecedented in the history of mankind. For all of us, who recall this horrendous happening 50 years later, it is an inhumane act that should never have been allowed to happen or be repeated.

History apart, the importance of 1995, particularly to those who deal with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, cannot be overemphasized. The historic Review and Extension Conference of the NPT which will determine the future of the treaty will be held in New York in a few weeks time. Negotiation of a CTBT, which is another pillar of nuclear disarmament, has entered a crucial phase this year. The positive outcome of these two events is quite sufficient to make the year 1995 a memorable one

for the entire international community. The work we do, and the decisions we take this year will undoubtedly have an indelible and far reaching impact on the history of mankind.

Madam President, the transformation the world has undergone since the height of the cold war is undeniably considerable. The NPT was negotiated when the super-power rivalry and the suspicion between the East and the West were at their peak. The confrontation between these two blocs very nearly dragged the entire world into an uncertain fate. The situation that existed at that time led to the increasing reliance on and the growth of, nuclear weapon stockpiles which eventually threatened our very existence. The conclusion of INF, START I and START II treaties contributed immensely to change this bleak situation and reverse the nuclear arms race. This situation underwent further changes in the early nineties to the extent that confrontation between the two rival blocs has been replaced by an unparalleled cooperation. It was as if an unseen hand was guiding the humankind away from a certain catastrophe to a new future which is full of hope. As we enter the 21st Century, we should discard the extant relics of confrontation. The last remaining weapon of mass-destruction in the hands of a few countries should not threaten the future generations who will be the inheritors of the earth. As we move on to the 21st Century, we must muster courage to discard old doctrines to suit the changing security environment and the international relations.

Madam President, to understand and appreciate the subject that we are discussing, it is necessary for us to briefly survey the topography of the world in so far as it relates to international security. At the time when the NPT was negotiated, there were five declared nuclear-weapon States. Despite our good intentions, the nuclear juggernaut kept on moving steadily growing in size and ferocity and vertical proliferation continued unabatedly. Meanwhile the horizontal proliferation, too, went on unchecked. Horizontal proliferation is very likely to continue as long as the declared nuclear-weapon-States continue to proffer the doctrine of deterrence and hold on to their unique status. So long as this situation is continued, the non-declared, nuclear weapon capable States are likely to continue with their programmes, while other interested States, too, may begin to realize that their national interests and security could be safeguarded only when they, too, possess the nuclear weapon capability. For most of these States, crossing the threshold means taking the political decision.

Madam President, members of the CD have a pretty good idea of the nuclear doctrines followed by the Western and the Soviet blocs during the height of the cold war. The NATO, which consists of three of the five declared nuclear-weapon-States,

was never supportive of a non-first use principle. Ironically, even now when the security climate in the world has undergone profound changes, these countries continue to cling on to the same old doctrines. Then, it was to deter a massive conventional attack by the Soviet Union on Western Europe. Now, it is entirely for a different purpose, and we shall come to that issue later.

12 Madam President, times have changed, so has the thinking of the Russian Federation. The former Soviet Union had earlier subscribed to the principle of non-first use. Regrettably, the Russian Federation now maintains that it is not bound by the undertaking given by the former Soviet Union. Moscow, now subscribes to the policy of the NATO in regard to the non-first use. This leaves only one nuclear-weapon-State, namely, China, which still supports the principle of non-first-use. China goes a step further and maintains that it will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon-States, particularly those who are States parties to the NPT. Although this offer of unilateral guarantees is a refreshing change from the prevailing situation, it provides little or no re-assurance to us, for the other nuclear-weapon-States do not subscribe to the Chinese position.

13 Madam President, majority of us expected significant changes in the doctrines of the nuclear-weapons-States, when the cold war eventually began to recede. For example, we thought that something positive would emerge when the USA decided to conduct a nuclear posture review in October, 1993. The outcome of that review, which was released in September 1994, was that the USA should continue its nuclear doctrine without a change. This time, however, not to meet a potential threat from its traditional enemy. The decision was that, the USA should be ready to use nuclear weapons as a last resort in certain circumstances. If the remaining huge arsenal of nuclear weapons is not intended to deter the traditional enemies who are no longer adversaries, the question that invariably arises is against whom these nuclear weapons are meant to be used. In this context of crucial importance, another issue that surfaces is the plan to develop 'micro' and 'mini' nukes with yields as low as 10 - 100 tons with the reported intention of targeting the third world countries or for battle-ground use in regional wars. In view of the fact that of the 175 States Parties to the NPT, 170 belong to the 'have nots' club, the new development certainly does not inspire confidence in those countries.

14 Madam President, on the subject of elimination of nuclear weapons we are heartened to note that two leading nuclear weapon States, namely the USA and the Russian Federation had some time ago expressed favourable views on the issue. However, the views expressed by the two presidents have not been followed up.

Consequently, no firm policy statements have emanated from these two nuclear weapon States that they indeed are serious in seeing the world devoid of nuclear weapons. My delegation would, therefore, welcome a firm policy statement from these two nuclear weapon States in regard to this crucial subject.

Instead of firm commitment on the part of NWS, what we have witnessed is the continuation of old practices and doctrines. Meanwhile, work on the development of exotic nuclear weapons continues. It seems to us that the position of the nuclear powers is that, nuclear weapons are good for us, but bad for others. Nuclear weapons are essential for our national security but others should not dare acquire them for that or any other purpose. The world which is already polarized into nuclear 'haves' and 'have nots' is divided once again into responsible States that could own and possess nuclear weapons, and others that cannot be trusted with such weapons.

Madam President, it is against this background we have to look at the important question of **security assurances**. This certainly is not a new subject. For example, when the NPT was on the drafting board, a set of rights and obligations was envisaged for the NWS and NNWS. While the latter acknowledged the right of the former to possess nuclear weapons, they were also required to accept certain responsibilities such as those contained in Art. IV & VI of the treaty. While the NNWS acquiesced in the situation which allowed the Permanent Five to possess nuclear weapons, there was a stipulation that the former will be provided with access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Besides this quid pro quo, the Permanent Five were required to give positive security assurances which we find in SC Res. 255/1968. However, the weakness inherent in that resolution, particularly in its operative paragraph 2, compelled the NNWS to demand firm negative security assurances. In the recent past, NNWS have made it clear that nothing less than a multilaterally negotiated, legally binding international instrument based on a common formula would eventually satisfy their security concerns.

Thus, we now find ourselves in a predicament which has no parallel. One hundred and seventy NNWS have become parties to the NPT on the understanding that they, along with the five NWS, are on a journey that will culminate with nuclear disarmament and eventual elimination of this last category of weapon of mass destruction from the arsenals of the NWS. Twenty-five years later, however, we realize that one side has done precious little to keep its side of treaty obligations. Yet we are told by the NWS that the treaty must be extended unconditionally and indefinitely. Legal arguments are put forward to convince the States parties that indefinite extension is the only viable option available. Meanwhile, attempts are being made to decide first on the extension issue, and after that, engage in the exercise of reviewing the treaty. To make

matters worse, some NWS are trying to get the treaty extended by a simple majority, which is legally feasible, but morally questionable. While all these developments are taking place, nothing worth mentioning has been said by the NWS of their obligations particularly in keeping with those in Art. IV & VI of the treaty.

Madam President, both NWS and NNWS are fully aware of the importance of the NPT. They share the view that the longevity of the treaty is essential for international peace and security. Therefore, the logical thing to do is to extend the treaty in keeping with the wish of the States parties to the treaty. While this being the case, the lack of interest on the part of NWS on other aspects of the treaty, makes the NNWS believe that the former is only keen on extending the treaty without fulfilling their obligations. Hence, the reference to Art. VI of the treaty by them.

Madam President, we agree that security assurances are not an integral part of the NPT. However, one must agree that there is an interrelationship between the treaty and security assurances. That was how the SC Res. 255/1968 came into existence. If 1968 was a good year to grant security assurances, 1995 becomes an equally important year to provide additional security assurances beyond what is contained in SC Res. 255/1968.

In this chamber, we often hear the positions of some NWS on the issue of security assurances. These positions in simple language would amount to saying: "we have given you security assurances. They are contained in SC Res. 255/1968. This being the case, why do the NNWS need any further assurances?" If the positive assurances given 25 years ago did go far enough to meet our concerns, then there is no reason for the NNWS to repeatedly renew their demand. This is why Sri Lanka, along with a host of other Non-aligned countries, insisted that the CD should continue its work on negative security assurances. It must be made clear that the security assurances given by some NWS to Ukraine and to those who are parties to the Tlatelolco Treaty have not gone unnoticed. The NWS should, and must, not be selective in granting security assurances.

Besides China's consistent and principled position on the non-first use and NSA which reassures us all, we are also heartened by the positive attitude taken by the Russian Federation, contained in their statement of 23rd February concerning both positive and negative security assurances. Willingness of the Russian Federation to improve on the SC Res. 255/1968 and to undertake drawing up of an international convention on NSA is indeed laudable. In this crucial year, we naturally look forward to similar commitments by other NWS.

Although the CD is placed in an unique position to realize our objective, the results we have so far achieved in this regard leave much to be desired. The most we have achieved in the CD remains confined to pious reiterations of the scope and nature of the assurances given in 1968. Apart from these oft repeated positions, the CD was unable to make any appreciable progress on NSA in 1994. The current impasse in the CD is such that, despite the fact we have almost completed the first part of the 1995 Session, we have not even been able to re-establish the AHC on NSA this year. Our attitude towards security assurances should undergo a fundamental change, may I say, a complete change of heart. We should take immediate steps to re-establish the AHC on NSA and commence our work without any further delay.

It is in this context, Madam President, we attach importance to the Working Paper CD/1277 submitted by some members of the Group of 21 including my own, last year on NSA. That document detailed the view of the Non-aligned countries that form the bulk of States parties to the NPT. Those countries have urged the CD to negotiate, as a matter of priority, an international convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances and to undertake negotiations for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. Consequently, the authors of CD/1277 clearly stated that the only completely effective security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons lie in the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, it recognized the fact that the very existence of nuclear weapons is in itself a threat to international security and a factor that encouraged proliferation. Those NWS that support 'counter proliferation' measures ought to bear this in their minds.

Madam President, annexed to CD/1277 was a draft 'Protocol on Security Assurances'. In this regard, I wish to say that we are not inextricably committed to a protocol that should be attached to the treaty. It could take any form so long as it addresses our basic concerns, substantively and definitively. Such an international instrument may take sometime to be completed. While that is under consideration, certainly the Security Council could seriously address the question of expanding the scope of its Res. 255/1968, as has been suggested by the delegation of the Russian Federation. In this regard, my delegation was pleased to hear the statement made by Ambassador Ledogar this morning in which he detailed the work his delegation proposes to undertake in respect of negative and positive security assurances. It is the hope of my delegation that such work would produce results that will take care of the concerns of the NNWS. Let us all face these challenges fairly and squarely in the coming months.

Thank you Madam President.