

Statement by Chargé d'Affaires of the Russian Federation Dmitry Polyanskiy at the UN Security Council briefing on the agenda item

22 August 2019

Ms President,

We thank Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Ms Izumi Nakamitsu for a very informative and useful briefing. Dear colleagues, a most saddening and significant event occurred on the 2nd of August when the United States withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (the INF Treaty) which to a great extent played a key role in building both regional and global security architecture. The talks on the Treaty were held during the Cold War in the context of a complex situation in the international relations. However, back then the leaders of the USSR and the US managed to reach an agreement. The INF Treaty was essential for the international détente. Along with other measures that were taken at the time, it greatly contributed to the creation of a climate of trust which led to the world changes that the international community now considers to be of high importance. For the first time in decades mankind was given the opportunity to abstain from confrontation and deal with development issues, resolution of which would improve the life of all of us.

Both Russia and the US carefully performed their Treaty obligations for a while. But then it became clear that the INF Treaty, as well as other agreements on disarmament and arms control, turned out to be inconvenient for our American partners who believed in their exceptionalism and who were becoming even more determined to impose inequitable unilateral schemes of international relations on others. In 2003 the ABM Treaty, which Russia had been actively trying to keep effective since the late 90s, became the first "victim" of these ambitions of Washington. Immediately after that the US authorities announced their plans to deploy ABM launchers in Eastern Europe allegedly to counter the Iranian threat. In response to our concerns they told us that those launchers could never be used against Russia. However, when the first launcher was deployed in Romania, it became obvious that they could be easily converted into launchers for Tomahawk missiles, which is against the INF Treaty. We noticed it at once. Now it is clear that we were right; on the 18th of August, only two weeks after the withdrawal from the Treaty, Washington tested its medium-range missile using an Mk 41 launcher.

Since this August limitations on development and deployment of such systems no longer exist. Thus, denunciation of the ABM Treaty destroyed another pillar of the arms control architecture that helped draft and sign the Treaty on reduction of offensive arms back in the day. By the way, it expires in February 2021 and is also at risk as the key players of the US Administration have repeatedly said both publicly and in private that they are not interested in preserving the START Treaty in its current form.

At the same time, almost from the first day since the withdrawal from the INF Treaty we started hearing threats and statements from the US officials. They left no doubt that was exactly what Washington had been trying to do and that it had been persistently and deliberately violating the INF Treaty for a long time. Otherwise, how

would they be able to announce (as was done by the US Defense Secretary Mark Esper in the first days of August) the possibility of deploying intermediate-range and shorter-range ground-launched missiles in a few months? It is impossible to create such weapons in such a short time.

Ms President,

We didn't convene this meeting to accuse our American colleagues of slyness. Today any more or less unbiased expert in disarmament knows that those are hard facts. You can repeat your old mantra that it was Russia's actions that led to the end of the INF Treaty all you want, but the latest moves of Washington eloquently suggest otherwise. But that is not the issue anymore. To be honest, today we do not mostly appeal to our American partners, as their view is clear. What surprises us is the position of our European colleagues that they maintain with stubbornness that would be of much more help during other discussions.

Let me remind you, as recently as last December, Russia proposed a General Assembly draft resolution in support for the INF Treaty. It did not contain any criticism of the U.S., but only urged to support diplomatic efforts to address the challenges, that affect the security and national interests of all UN member states without any exception. We unequivocally warned then that the demise of the INF Treaty would not only undermine the implementation of Article VI of the NPT, but would also lead to a new nuclear arms race. Many partners listened carefully to us then, but Washington's European allies did not. I've got a question for you: are you happy today that in December you chose to press the "red button"? Don't you understand that your "playing along" with the Americans, step by step, brings back the bygone era when missiles could be targeted at European cities from different sides?

We're not going to be the first to do that. However, given that our American colleagues are clearly itching and want to "flex their muscles", the situation I've just described may be at hand. Are you aware that because of the geopolitical ambitions of the USA we are all just one step away from an uncontrolled and unregulated arms race? As for us, we are deeply concerned with this situation, unlike our American colleagues. In any case, according to President Trump, America is ready for an arms race, as it is supposedly capable to surpass any of its potential rivals in terms of finance and technology.

This logic, inspired by the best American westerns, is backed by figures: according to public data the U.S. military budget is about \$700 billion. The NATO budget amounts to \$1,4 trillion. These are just approximate figures. For reference: the military budget of Russia that allegedly threatens all, is about \$60 billion, i.e. more than 20 times lower than that of NATO.

Now, after the risky undertakings of the USA, all these figures, obviously, may increase - the U.S. president has already raised that very point. By the way, the expenditures on the development of the weapons prohibited by the INF treaty, had been included in the U.S. military budget long before this treaty was sentenced to death. And, as always, Russia is to blame.

Ms President,

Just think about how much we could do, if the money that our Western colleagues have been allocating for military purposes would be spent for achieving sustainable development goals and helping less developed and developing countries. Moreover our American partners continue to bargain on the budget of peacekeeping operations, and follow the established practice to postpone until the very last moment their paying contributions to the United Nations budget, the total amount of which is less than \$10 billion this year. All that seems not just petty but also disrespectful to all the members of our world organization. We are not afraid to say it to their

faces. And what is about you? Are you going to deny that you are partly responsible for what is happening, echoing Washington and pointing to a perceived threat from Russia and from China as well? Will future generations forgive you for this?

Despite everything I have said, we still believe that common sense and the instinct of self-preservation will eventually dominate in our Western partners. After all, the very existence of humankind is at stake. The only question is how much money and effort will have been wasted until then, and how many opportunities for progress and cooperation we will miss.

For our part, we have always been ready for any serious dialogue aimed at ensuring strategic stability and security. And if it were just up to us, we would never have come to such a dangerous line that the world is approaching now.

However, we're still realistic. It's easier to pull things apart than to build up. As history has shown, it can take years, if not decades, to launch a more or less sustainable and effective new format for discussing issues of strategic stability and arms control. However, there are problems, including those arising from irresponsible actions of Washington, that must be resolved today.

Thank you.

After a statement by the representative of the United States:

With regard to the 9M729 missile, over many years of discussion the United States has persistently refused to inform us not only of those test events that as we understand have raised questions in Washington, but also to provide any information that would allow us to identify this product in general.

Last year, after it finally became clear what Washington was so concerned about, we offered the U.S. side to look at the 9M729 missile they are interested in "behind closed doors" and get all the exhaustive information about it, in order to make sure that these weapons do not violate the treaty. In response, we also received a refusal

Then we made another attempt. As an unprecedented transparency measure that goes far beyond the requirements of the Treaty, we openly demonstrated the missile in the presence of foreign delegations, but U.S. representatives did not participate in the event and recommended their NATO partners to withdraw their participation as well, which, of course, they did.

In this regard, we do not understand the arguments of our American colleague - we offered to provide you with all the information you had been interested in to save the INF Treaty. And now, when you have already brought the Treaty to the collapse, you are trying to require this information.

Let me focus a minute on the new Russian weapons systems that were also mentioned here earlier. My American colleague cannot help but know that they all have the same distinctive feature: they are aimed at overcoming missile defense systems. We were forced to develop this type of product precisely because of the withdrawal of the United States of America from the ABM Treaty, to which I referred in my statement, and also because of the deployment of such systems near our borders. This is another problem artificially created by Washington, which, as I said, we have been unsuccessfully trying to prevent for a long time. And it is NATO countries that are involved in this situation - I would like to stress it out so that no one has delusions in this regard.

Ms President,

In conclusion, I would like to say that today's meeting, unfortunately, has proved to be so predictable that it is even boring. As we expected, the United States and countries "grunting along" with them confuse the innocent with the guilty blaming Russia for all mortal sins, despite the facts and common sense. There is nothing new or surprising about that. In the parallel reality created by our Western partners, where no evidence is required and allegations in the spirit of "highly likely" are enough to prove something, such behavior is considered normal. The fact is that we live not in a virtual world, but in the real one, and our world still has a chance while there are countries and experts questioning all these seamless, but empty Western tales.

I would like to believe that our initiative with China will increase the number of those who will not be afraid to call things by their real names and to demand actions and practical steps from those who violate agreements important for the whole world and do not take into consideration the norms of international law to please their ambitions.

Thank you.