
Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and sixteenth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 28 March 2017, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Youssoupha Ndiaye.....(Senegal)



The President (*spoke in French*): I call to order the 1416th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Ladies and gentlemen, Ambassadors, please accept the apology of Ambassador Coly Seck, Permanent Representative of Senegal in Geneva. His Excellency is unfortunately unable to join us this morning as he is presenting his credentials in Bern. In his absence, I once again have the honour of chairing our meeting.

As we stated at the plenary meeting of 21 March, Senegal is committed to continuing to make progress and remains open to any suggestions which may help to create the momentum needed to move forward with the work of the Conference.

I wish to inform you that the Russian Federation and China will make a joint presentation on matters related to ballistic missile defences. Experts from those countries' respective capitals are joining us today specifically to deliver the presentation. After today's exchanges and before the meeting rises, I will give the floor to the representative of Myanmar, who will inform us of the progress of the consultations of the working group on the way ahead established by the decision contained in document CD/2090.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Poznikhir (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, developments in the field of missile defence are a key factor in international security; they directly impact upon the arms race, nuclear disarmament and strategic stability. There is an inextricable link between strategic offensive weapons and strategic defensive weapons.

In 1972, the Soviet Union and the United States, understanding the destabilizing role of missile defence systems, signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. This instrument sought to ensure military and strategic parity between the two leading nuclear Powers in terms of nuclear deterrence capability. For 30 years, the Treaty served as a cornerstone of strategic stability and the foundation for all subsequent agreements on the limitation and reduction of strategic offensive weapons.

In 2002, the United States, citing what it termed as Iranian and North Korean missile threats, withdrew from the Treaty and embarked on a massive deployment of mobile and stationary missile defence systems that were previously restricted under that instrument.

Today, the United States has components of its missile defence system deployed in the continental United States, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. Sea-based missile interceptors are positioned off the Russian and Chinese coasts. According to the United States Administration, the system is already now capable of meeting current operational objectives; however, the decision has been taken to further develop its capabilities.

This deployment of a global missile defence system is undermining the international security framework. In increasing its missile defence capabilities, the United States is attempting to obtain a strategic advantage by weakening Russian and Chinese deterrence. This could have serious consequences in terms of security.

Firstly, such a global missile defence system lowers the nuclear threshold, as the United States will feel that it can act with impunity by using — without advance notification — strategic offensive weapons under its missile defence umbrella.

Secondly, the United States missile defence system upsets the current balance of deterrent forces, thus jeopardizing the implementation of the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms of 2010 and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987.

Thirdly, the missile defence system is a threat to the security of international space activities and an obstacle to agreement on the non-placement of weapons in outer space.

Fourthly, having such a system encourages the development of missile capabilities around the world and thus opens the way for a new arms race.

Permit me as a military expert to explain the rationale behind these assertions.

The fixed radar stations of the United States nuclear missile warning system cover all the possible trajectories for a Russian ballistic missile heading towards the United States.

At the bottom left of this slide, the red line shows the boundary of the area monitored by United States radar stations. That area includes practically the whole of Russian territory. These stations are able to track the path of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) warheads and to provide targeting information to radar stations at missile defence installations. With data being provided by sea-based mobile radar stations located off the coast of Alaska as well as stations in Romania and Poland, and processed by missile defence information-technology systems, the efficiency and accuracy of identifying and tracking Russian ICBMs rises significantly and, consequently, so does the possibility of their interception.

Improvements are expected in United States missile defence system information capabilities as the country pursues a ballistic missile detection and tracking system that uses low-orbit satellites. The system's defence capabilities will reach new levels with the transmission of data directly from the satellites to interceptor missiles. The intelligence and reconnaissance capabilities of the United States missile defence system are already able to detect the launch and track the trajectory of Russian ballistic missiles, as well as provide target location information to the system for the interception of re-entry vehicles.

Let us now take a look at the weaponry of the United States missile defence system. It currently includes about 30 ground-based interceptors (GBIs), 130 Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) interceptors and 150 Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missiles which are deployed in the United States, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. As well, a number of anti-missile missiles are deployed on ships of United States allies.

According to our estimates, the number of anti-missile missiles will exceed 1,000 by 2022 and will eventually exceed the number of warheads deployed on Russian ICBMs. Such a high level of missile defence firepower poses a serious threat to Russian deterrence, especially when we take into account that work is constantly under way to modernize components of the missile defence system.

Modernization of the SM-3 interceptors will allow them to intercept ballistic missiles faster, from greater ranges and at higher altitudes. According to Russian experts, version IIA of this interceptor, which is expected to be ready for deployment in 2018, will be capable of intercepting strategic ballistic missiles not only in the midcourse and terminal phases of the flight trajectory, but also during the boost phase. This introduces a whole new kind of danger. It means that the missile defence rockets will be able to strike Russian and Chinese ballistic missiles before re-entry vehicles separate.

The research institutes of the Russian Ministry of Defence have carried out computer simulations of Russian and Chinese ballistic missiles being intercepted by the United States missile defence system. The results of the simulations are shown on the next slide. I would like to point out that we considered scenarios involving the launch of ballistic missiles to the north. This was done solely for research purposes and was intended to give an idea of the capabilities of a global missile defence system.

The first scenario shows an ICBM launched from the European part of Russia and intercepted by a ship-based missile defence unit in the Baltic Sea. The blue semicircle represents the missile engagement zone of such a unit patrolling in the Baltic Sea and equipped with SM-3 version IIA interceptor missiles. The Russian missile would follow a ballistic trajectory, represented on the slide by the yellow line. The red line shows the part of the trajectory where the missile can be intercepted by an SM-3. A few seconds after the missile's launch, the space warning system detects a nuclear missile attack and identifies the type of missile, the launch location and the launch azimuth. As preliminary target acquisition information is received, the missile defence vessel's on-board radar automatically focuses on the ballistic target. In this scenario, the Russian ICBM is successfully intercepted in the initial flight stage.

Slide 9 presents a second scenario, in which a submarine-launched missile is intercepted by a ship-based missile defence unit in the Norwegian Sea. The situation is that of a missile defence vessel with an SM-3 interceptor patrolling in the Norwegian Sea and a Russian submarine is deployed in the Barents Sea. The submarine's launch of a ballistic missile is detected by the space-based system, which transmits information to the ship's on-board radar to locate and then track the missile. As you can see, the timeline is such that the

missile defence system is able to fire on and intercept the ballistic missile launched from the Russian submarine.

The simulations show that, because of the high speed of interceptor missiles, in both scenarios it is possible for the targets to be intercepted during the initial stage of flight.

The next scenario simulates a situation in which the missile launch site is located in central Russia and the interceptor missiles are launched from the continental United States. You can see on the screen the simultaneous launch of several Russian ballistic missiles. From the moment of detection until their descent or interception, the Russian missiles are tracked by the missile defence system's space-based component, which transmits trajectory information that is used by the system's land-based and sea-based components. As the missile enters the range of the nuclear missile attack warning system, the targets are tracked by radar stations in Greenland, Great Britain and Alaska; those data are fed into high-precision sea-based missile defence units located in the Pacific Ocean. The intelligence is compiled to generate target acquisition information for ground-based interceptor (GBI) missiles deployed in Alaska and on the west coast of the United States. One missile is intercepted by anti-missile missiles launched from Alaska. The other two fall into the engagement zone of GBI missiles deployed in California. In this scenario, the Russian missile warheads whose trajectories do not cross the engagement zone of the regional defence segments may be intercepted by missile defence systems based in the United States.

Russian experts also assessed the capability of the United States missile defence system to take down ballistic missiles launched by China. The scenario on this slide shows GBI missiles from Alaska and the west coast of the United States intercepting ballistic missiles launched from China. You can see the launch of Chinese ballistic missiles on the screen. Data from space-based sensors and from sea-based and land-based radar stations are correlated to launch and guide the interceptor missiles. As you can see, the Chinese ballistic missile launched towards the north-east is successfully intercepted by the GBI missile of the United States.

On the next slide, the green area shows the engagement zone of a third GBI missile defence site, which Washington has stated that it plans to establish in the north-eastern United States. With this zone, the overall capabilities of the missile defence system will make it possible to intercept any Russian or Chinese ballistic missile heading towards the United States.

The strike capacity of the missile defence system poses an equally serious threat to the security of Russia and China. United States Navy cruisers and destroyers equipped with interceptor missiles also carry Tomahawk long-range cruise missiles having ranges of up to 2,500 km.

I would like to emphasize that every *Ticonderoga*-class cruiser has 128 Mk-41 launchers and *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyers have 96 launchers of this type. These are universal launchers: they can be used for SM-3 interceptor missiles as well as for long-range Tomahawk cruise missiles. United States missile defence vessels could potentially carry more than 1,000 Tomahawk cruise missiles.

Patrols by missile defence ships in the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea are a threat to the European part of Russia because there is uncertainty about what kind of weapons — interceptor missiles or cruise missiles — are loaded in the launchers at any given time.

The missile defence bases in Romania and Poland use similar universal launchers which, like those on ships, can launch interceptor missiles or cruise missiles. The claim that land-based Mk-41 launchers are unable to launch cruise missiles is unconvincing. Interceptor missiles deployed at European missile defence bases can be secretly and quickly replaced with Tomahawk cruise missiles. Should this happen, the entire European part of Russia would be within range of cruise missiles.

I would like to point out that using a land-based version of ship-based launchers to deploy Tomahawk cruise missiles would be a direct violation of the obligations under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

We have time and again brought to the attention of our partners from the United States our concerns about the violation of international obligations by their country. They have yet to respond.

In addition, it is necessary to note the threats that the United States missile defence system poses to space activities. In February 2008, the Pentagon demonstrated the capability of its missile defence firepower to engage space objects when a United States satellite orbiting at an altitude of about 250 km was destroyed by an early version of the SM-3 interceptor missile that had been fired from a United States destroyer. The satellite destruction capabilities of the planned SM-3, version IIA, with its increased flight speed, and of the GBI missile defence system are significantly greater. Practically any low-orbit object within the missile engagement zone face could be destroyed. As missile defence ships can sail anywhere in the world, the space activities of all States, including Russia and China, are under threat.

Russian representatives at various levels have frequently drawn the attention of the United States to the danger posed by its global missile defence system for the world's strategic balance of forces. But the message has not come across, and obvious facts are being ignored. The United States claims that the system is not directed against Russia and China, but — as you can see — the computer simulations tell a different story.

In sum, the following conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the actions of the United States and its allies in the field of missile defence systems and from the simulations:

First, the United States is deploying a tactical system intended to destroy Russian and Chinese ballistic missiles and thereby upset the balance of deterrent forces under the guise of countering missile threats from North Korea and Iran.

Second, the United States missile defence system already has the ability to intercept Russian and Chinese ballistic missiles and is a threat to the strategic nuclear forces of Russia and China. Its capabilities will only grow in the future.

Third, the presence of United States missile defence bases in Europe and on missile defence ships in waters near Russian territory is creating a strong, covert strike potential for a sudden nuclear missile attack against Russia.

Fourth, deployment of the United States missile defence system will disrupt the current parity in strategic weapons and is a destabilizing factor that substantially narrows the possibilities for dialogue on the question of nuclear disarmament.

Fifth, increased capabilities for the United States missile defence system will fuel the arms race, in particular with regard to strategic weapons, and will force other States to take military and technical action in response.

Sixth, the global missile defence system of the United States is a threat to the free use of outer space by all States.

In conclusion, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that, following the withdrawal of the United States from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, Russian representatives on numerous occasions explained the harmful consequences that would result from undermining strategic stability through the establishment and deployment of a global missile defence system. At the same time, efforts were made to seek out ways of solving the problems related to the deployment of the United States missile defence system. We proposed various possibilities for resolving the issues that emerged. Specifically, we proposed carrying out a joint threats analysis so as to define what kind of missile defence system would be appropriate and would not set the stage for a new arms race in strategic weapons. In a framework of cooperation, we also proposed jointly developing a missile defence system architecture in Europe that would be able to ensure defence against strikes by non-strategic missiles. However, all the Russian initiatives were rejected.

Russia has therefore been obliged to take appropriate measures to prevent the undermining of the current balance of strategic forces and to minimize the possible damage to State security resulting from the further development of the United States missile defence system. The world will not become a safer place because of this. We therefore call for a

constructive dialogue on missile defences — on an equal footing — in order to seek out solutions that take into consideration the interests of all the parties concerned.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his excellent statement. I hope that the Conference has taken ample note of the points raised. Speakers will have an opportunity shortly to address the matters discussed. I now give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. Zhang Jian (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, a profound readjustment is now taking place in the international strategic order. The international security environment is complex and changing and, in the field of global governance, myriad new challenges have emerged that require all States to urgently engage in negotiations and find solutions. Among these, the question of missile defence is one of the most important issues, having as it does a particularly profound and lasting impact on the global strategic balance and stability, peace and security, arms control and the disarmament process. The development of a global missile defence system that undermines the strategic balance and stability is bound to worsen the international security environment; and the members of the international community overwhelmingly disapprove of it. The United Nations General Assembly has on numerous occasions adopted resolutions on missile defence systems, calling for the States in question to halt such programmes.

In the first place, the constant expansion of missile defence systems undermines global strategic stability. While such systems are inherently defensive in nature, for countries that already possess large arsenals of strategic offensive weapons and that pursue a pre-emptive strategy, missile defences become a supporting shield for pre-emptive strikes. Insisting on expanding a global missile defence system in order to strengthen an offensive strategic advantage is, in fact, a way to seek absolute unilateral military superiority. It will exacerbate the tendency among a number of States to take risks by resolving international matters through the use of military force as they see fit. The history of international arms control and disarmament processes over past decades has shown that mechanisms such as the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty have guaranteed global stability and security and laid the foundation for the limitation and reduction of offensive weapons. As strategic offensive weapons are reduced, the effect of missile defence systems in the strategic balance increases substantially. The question of whether it will be possible to move ahead with the reduction of strategic offensive weapons depends to a great extent on whether the development of missile defence systems can be effectively limited. The development of those systems must be proportionate to the actual threat they address and must not exceed a country's own security needs. Ignoring the shared international context, disregarding the legitimate rights and interests of other States and unilaterally strengthening the deployment of a global missile defence system will have a serious impact on the political and security aspirations of countries pursuing international nuclear disarmament; such actions will block the nuclear disarmament process, leading to confrontation and, ultimately, to an arms race. Over time they will undermine global and regional strategic stability, eventually making it impossible for anyone to achieve absolute security.

Secondly, global missile defence systems seriously undermine security in outer space. Missile defence systems are capable not just of intercepting ballistic missiles; they can also be used against targets in space. In 2008, the United States Navy ship *Lake Erie* destroyed a satellite using an SM-3 missile from a distance of some 250 kilometres, fully demonstrating the capability of missiles to intercept satellites. The deployment of a global missile defence system in fact poses a serious threat to the space-based assets of all the countries of the world. In the absence of international rules preventing the weaponization of outer space, certain States are stubbornly developing anti-missile technologies and deploying missile defence systems. If no restrictions are put in place, anti-missile weapons may well be deployed in outer space. Should that happen, the risk of outright weaponization of outer space will be made much worse, and we would see an arms race in outer space. That would run completely counter to the international community's stated desire for the peaceful use of outer space and its efforts to safeguard security there, and all the efforts made in the past to those ends may come to naught. China and the Russian Federation have on numerous occasions proposed negotiating a treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer

space objects. We have consistently advocated for the rational development and use of outer space resources, the protection of the environment in outer space and the maintenance of outer space as a clean and unpolluted resource.

Thirdly, the United States missile defence system in the Asia-Pacific region seriously jeopardizes the rights and interests of China and the Russian Federation. The United States and the Republic of Korea have time and again emphasized that the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system is intended as a deterrent to counter the threat of nuclear missile launches from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to protect the security of the Republic of Korea, stating that it is not directed against any third countries. In reality, though, the Korean Peninsula is only 840 kilometres long from north to south, so missile ranges need not exceed 1,000 kilometres. The THAAD system's radar, however, is effective over a range exceeding 2,000 kilometres and the system is able to intercept ballistic missiles from a range of 3,500 kilometres, vastly exceeding the defence needs of the Republic of Korea. The United States, the Republic of Korea and other countries have now deployed over 100 PAC-3 missile launchers and more than 10 Aegis combat system vessels in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus, deployment of the THAAD system is apparently a deceptive manoeuvre with a hidden agenda; its actual aim is to extend the United States global missile defence system, move ahead with the building of an Asia-Pacific missile defence wall to isolate China, strengthen surveillance of the strategic depth of China and the Russian Far East, and diminish the strategic capabilities of China and the Russian Federation. This is fully in keeping with the Third Offset Strategy of the United States, which is intended to contain China and the Russian Federation and to severely undermine their strategic interests. China and the Russian Federation both oppose the development of a global missile defence system. The heads of State of the two countries have issued a joint statement on the strengthening of global strategic stability and oppose the development by the United States of a global missile defence system while ignoring the concerns of the regional States, the deployment off the coast of Europe of the Aegis combat system and the deployment in the Asia-Pacific region of the THAAD system. We will move ahead with further actions to defend the security, rights and interests of China and the Russian Federation and the regional strategic balance.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of China for his statement. Both of the presentations delivered to the Conference were very informative and full of imagery, and both expounded a number of arguments. I now give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Gill.

Mr. Gill (India): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. It is a pleasure to see Senegal, a fellow member of the Group of 21, in the Chair. Allow me also to acknowledge with appreciation the efforts of the Romanian and Russian presidencies to steer the Conference in the direction of substantive work. We also appreciate the continuing efforts of the Chair of the working group on the way ahead, the Ambassador of Myanmar.

India remains committed to the ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter and to multilateralism. This is truly the age of interdependence. Enduring solutions to our common problems of peace and security can only be found through the pursuit of genuine multilateralism. The world is no longer the playground of a few. It is and will be truly multipolar — globally and in all regions of the world. Global forums of governance, too, would have to evolve and reflect this plurality; otherwise, their effectiveness and legitimacy would suffer. The language of privilege and entitlement has no place in today's world and, indeed, human progress will wash around the remaining pockets of privilege and entitlement, leaving them stranded just as it has done in the past. Those who wish to take on the mantle of leading must demonstrate that they truly and selflessly seek the common good, follow what they preach and respect for others what they ask for themselves.

The Conference on Disarmament, Mr. President, brings us together in sovereign equality and in full responsibility to craft legally binding instruments for the promotion of international peace and security. Our agenda is comprehensive. Equally, it is flexible to accommodate contemporary challenges, such as those related to ballistic missile defence and anti-satellite weapons mentioned by previous speakers. Even a casual look at the international security scenario reveals a host of such challenges. Terrorism continues to

flourish and terrorist violence encouraged or condoned. Narratives of victimhood and otherness perpetuate such violence. Deadly weapons and technologies continue to be trafficked causing death and mayhem on all continents. The norm against the use of chemical weapons, so assiduously cultivated over nearly a century, has been flouted in recent years. Biological weapons and toxins — a scourge we seemed to have left behind in the twentieth century — could make a comeback with new technologies. The threat of non-State actors accessing weapons of mass destruction is real and present. Information and communication technologies, admirable in their developmental impact, are now being forged into weapons of disruption and conflict. The advent of autonomy in weapon systems poses new challenges for State control and responsibility, and there are new threats to security and order in the maritime domain.

While these so-called non-traditional security concerns grow, traditional threats have not disappeared. In fact, nuclear proliferation continues and new scenarios are being conjured for the use of nuclear weapons in a chilling throwback to the worst clichés of the cold war. Fissile material production for nuclear weapons is being expanded at a rate not seen since the cold war. A false narrative of double standards and discrimination is used to cloak these designs, which predate any post-hoc causality heard in this chamber. Meanwhile, the goal posts on the only instrument capable of bringing such production to an end in a non-discriminatory and internationally and effectively verifiable manner are sought to be constantly moved and linkages attempted with issues that have nothing to do with this forum.

Mr. President, I wish to be clear. The real danger to international security comes from extremely narrow views of security, lowering of the threshold for use of nuclear weapons at a time when an impressive number of States want to move in the other direction, and from State patronage of non-State actors whose nihilism knows no international boundary or humanitarian taboo. We live in a world full of asymmetries. Imagine if all States with asymmetry concerns started to address these concerns with such dangerous tools. Strategic trust would be impossible to sustain in such a situation and progress on disarmament and international security would grind to a halt. These challenges would look less stark if the world was moving as a whole towards the complete and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. India supports the call made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 21 in this chamber earlier this month, and I quote: “As the highest priority, the Conference should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time.”

The Conference is the right place for pursuing nuclear disarmament in all its essential elements. It has the mandate, the membership and the rules for embarking on the path to nuclear disarmament. Accordingly, India is not participating in the work of the conference on the prohibition of nuclear weapons that has started this week in New York. This decision has not been easy for India. We appreciate the sincere effort behind the initiative and remain willing to work with the sponsors to reduce the role and military utility of nuclear weapons, to prohibit their use under any circumstances and to eliminate them globally.

Mr. President, nuclear disarmament requires a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework. It will have to rest on three pillars: a universal prohibition, complete elimination and international verification. India is ready to begin work on these essential elements through the establishment of a subsidiary body of the Conference with an agreed mandate as part of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Before I conclude, Mr. President, I want to thank the previous speakers for their presentations and request if the slides that were used can be shared so that our experts can study them seriously. The presentations underline that it is very important to identify all factors which impact on strategic trust and confidence, and conversely all those factors and all those steps that could improve strategic trust and mutual confidence. India has called for

a meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of India for his excellent statement and for his kind words regarding my country, Senegal. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of that role. I pledge the cooperation of my delegation as you go about undertaking your duties as President.

Mr. President, what was just presented in this forum was, for the most part, pure science fiction — and, frankly, not very good science fiction. Russia and, to a certain extent, China have made it appear that the United States is capable of threatening their strategic nuclear forces. That is just patently false. They are using these charges as a way to justify the rapid modernization of their strategic forces. I think it is important, Mr. President, that I spend a little time going through a number of these charges. I apologize in advance to my colleagues in this chamber, however, I do think that I need to address a number of things that were said here.

First, let me begin by giving just a little bit of history about the United States withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, because I think it is important for countries in this room to have a better understanding, at least from the United States perspective, of what took place. Article XV, paragraph 2, of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty gave each party the right to withdraw from the Treaty if it decided that extraordinary events related to the subject matter of the Treaty had jeopardized its supreme interests. Between the time the Treaty entered into force in 1972 and the United States announcement of its intention to withdraw from the Treaty on 13 December 2001, a number of State and non-State entities had acquired or were and are currently actively seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, a number of States are developing ballistic missiles, including long-range ballistic missiles, as a means of delivering weapons of mass destruction.

It was clear then, and remains clear today, that some of these entities are prepared to employ these weapons against the United States. These developments posed and continue to pose a direct threat to the territory and security of the United States and jeopardize its national security interests. As a result, the United States concluded that it must develop, test and deploy anti-ballistic missile systems for the defence of its national territory, of its forces outside the United States and of its friends and allies. Therefore, pursuant to article XV, paragraph 2, of the Treaty, the United States decided to exercise its right to withdraw from the Treaty. In accordance with the terms of the Treaty, the United States withdrawal, as I think many of you know, became effective on 13 June 2002.

It is important to recognize several points about the reality of current United States ballistic missile policy and efforts. First, and importantly, United States ballistic missile defence is defensive in nature. The United States has been open and transparent on why our missile defence programmes will not threaten the strategic security of Russia or China. We have repeatedly said that our missile defences are not directed at Russia and China, and will not undermine the strategic deterrence capabilities of Russia and China. The threat to the populations, territory and forces of the United States and its friends and allies posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles continues to increase, and missile defence forms part of a broader response to counter it. United States ballistic missile defence, along with the ballistic missile defence of friends and allies, enhances regional stability by countering the coercive power of ballistic missiles.

Let me just stress a couple of points about some of the Russian charges here about ballistic missile defence under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). As I have said before in this chamber, Russia at the highest levels continues to claim that our missile defence systems undermine strategic stability. Both the United States and NATO have been very clear that the system that NATO is building in Europe is not designed for or capable of undermining the strategic deterrent capabilities of Russia.

The United States and NATO missile defences are directed against ballistic missile threats from outside the Euro-Atlantic area. NATO and the United States have explained this to Russia many, many times over the years. We have explained this to the Russians in the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations. It is also important to note that over the past 20 years the United States and NATO have put forth numerous proposals for missile defence cooperation between the United States and Russia as well as NATO and Russia, including the establishment of two NATO-Russian missile defence centres for monitoring ballistic missile launches and to enhance cooperation on missile defence operations.

However, as I think many of you in this chamber know, it was Russia, in 2013, that unilaterally terminated this cooperative dialogue with NATO. Then the illegal actions of Russia in Ukraine in 2014 led to the suspension of our dialogue — bilateral dialogue — on missile defence cooperation. Russia argues that it made good-faith proposals on missile defence. In reality, these were just demands for what were termed “legally binding guarantees” that Russia knew the United States would not be able to accept. The approach of Russia would have placed strict limitations on our missile defences and undermined our ability to protect ourselves, our deployed forces and our allies and friends against evolving and growing ballistic missile threats.

Let me just go into a little bit more detail with regard to some of the charges made, Mr. President. We have heard today — we often hear this refrain from certain quarters, particularly Russia and China — that missile defences are destabilizing. With an emphasis on transparency and confidence-building, we have explained that nothing that we are doing with respect to our missile defence plans will undercut international security. It would not be in our interest to do so. It would be prohibitively expensive and, from a technical perspective, it would be extremely difficult.

The cold war mindset about ballistic missile defences is no longer valid. Limited ballistic missile defence capabilities are not capable, as I have said, of threatening the strategic nuclear forces of Russia and are not a threat to strategic stability. Ballistic missiles during the cold war were the tools that the United States and the Soviet Union used to maintain strategic balance between our two countries. Today, ballistic missiles are proliferating around the world and are seen as a common battlefield weapon. That is why today’s limited missile defences are essential to ensuring regional strategic stability. That is the one and only reason that the United States is pursuing regional missile defence capabilities.

Further, missile defences create uncertainty about the outcome of attacks, thereby increasing the cost to countries and groups attempting to overcome defences. By reducing a country’s confidence in the effectiveness of missile attacks, we enhance deterrence and regional stability. Missile defences and missile defence cooperation also provide reassurance — reassurance helps reduce a country’s vulnerability to ballistic missile attacks — as well as reassurance regarding the United States commitment to their defence.

The last part is particularly important since it demonstrates that the United States will stand by our alliance commitments, even in the face of growth in the military potential of regional adversaries. Many of our regional defence deployments, as I have said in this chamber on more than one occasion, like the Patriot system and the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, are inherently designed for theatre use. They are not capable of defending against intercontinental ballistic missiles launched at the United States. The THAAD system, however, is capable of defending against the medium-range and intermediate-range ballistic missiles that North Korea is deploying. Yet despite our repeated attempts to convey these demonstrable facts, the Russian Federation continues to maintain that our global deployment of these systems is designed somehow to encircle Russia.

As I made clear almost two years ago in this chamber, understanding the universal truth of physics, we have also taken care to demonstrate how the systems we are deploying are located in places that are ideal for addressing regional threats. Based on the irrefutable laws of science, these systems cannot do the things the Russian Government says they can, hence my comments about science fiction.

You may have seen in the past, and even here today, the Russian trajectory maps that show how, for example, the Standard Missile-3 Block IIA interceptor could be used against Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles. The problem with this argument is that it assumes that the instant — the very second — of a Russian intercontinental ballistic missile launch, we would also launch our interceptor. The argument also assumes that we would have perfect knowledge of where that Russian intercontinental ballistic missile is going and where it is going to be located several minutes from launch in order to strike the re-entry vehicles. Previous flight tests clearly show we cannot begin to consider launching an interceptor until well after a ballistic missile has finished its boost phase, the warheads have separated and we have had time to develop a firing solution. We need considerable time to gather knowledge about where the missile is going before we can launch our interceptor. As a result, the physics frankly just do not add up. There is no way a United States Standard Missile-3 Block IIA interceptor can chase down Russian re-entry vehicles.

Beyond our theatre capabilities, and I promise not to take up much more time, Mr. President, beyond our theatre capabilities, our ground-based interceptors deployed in Alaska and California do not pose a threat to Russian strategic nuclear forces either. Our ground-based interceptors are designed to deal with rudimentary systems deployed in limited numbers and with simple countermeasures. Technologically, ground-based interceptors cannot counter the sophisticated intercontinental ballistic missile capabilities and countermeasures of Russia and those of China.

Let me just close on this last point, Mr. President. I have taken up a lot of time here, but let me just note that we are not concerned about the impact on strategic stability of the deployment by Russia of 68 interceptors at the Moscow anti-ballistic missile system: 68 deployed interceptors is 24 more than the United States even has plans to deploy. Further, Russia is always very open about declaring that the Moscow anti-ballistic missile system is specifically designed against the United States; and just like the United States, Russia is modernizing its radars and interceptors as part of their system. However, that has not raised concerns in the United States about strategic stability.

Let me just close by saying that it is unfortunate that our Russian and Chinese colleagues chose to put forth the science fiction-based presentation because it conjures myths and creates misinformation about the United States missile defence systems — and, of course, it does not address some of the threats posed by the modernization of Russian and Chinese strategic forces to the United States and its allies. Let me stop there, Mr. President. Thank you very much and, again, congratulations on assuming the presidency.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the United States for his statement and for his warm remarks on behalf of Senegal. We are almost at the end of the list of speakers prepared by the secretariat, and will now hear the statement by the Republic of Korea. Any members who wish to speak should raise their nameplates. The representative of the Republic of Korea now has the floor.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, first of all my delegation wishes to congratulate Senegal on its assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We assure you of our full cooperation during your tenure.

I would like to touch upon some things that were mentioned about the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in the Republic of Korea today. We have repeated many times that the THAAD system is solely defensive in nature to face the serious and direct threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. And we all know pretty well how serious that threat is.

I stress once again that the THAAD system is, in its purpose, objective, operation and technical capability, confined to deterrence and defence of the Republic of Korea from the threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. International experts and media renowned for their objectivity, expertise and accuracy corroborate this fact.

As such, if and when the threat from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is no longer there, we will not need the THAAD system. Until then, however, the Republic of Korea, like China or anyone else, has the right and duty to take all necessary measures to

protect its national security and the safety of its people from a clear and imminent threat. Such rights and duties are irrefutable.

Since someone mentioned a Chinese saying, I would like to draw upon a saying by one of the founders of Chinese philosophy. Mencius (Mengzi) identified four fundamental traits of any human being to be human. First is pity for those who are in trouble. Second is aversion to what is not right or what is shameful. Third is the capability to tell right from wrong. And fourth is modesty, humbleness and moderation. We firmly believe that intended or unintended hatred-based action based, again, on intended or unintended false accusations is not one of the things said by Mencius.

Let me finish by saying that what they are saying is fiction, and it is not even science fiction because it is not based on science at all.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea. The representative of the United States of America has requested the floor once more. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I did want to make a few points about another issue, which has to do with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States strongly condemns the 21 March ballistic missile launch conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as well as its 19 March ballistic missile engine test. The launch and engine test are in grave violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. As we have said many times in this chamber, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea needs to halt its provocative acts and rhetoric, comply with its international obligations and recommit to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The international community will hold North Korea accountable.

Let me just add, Mr. President, that some countries that are represented in this room are taking part in a negotiation in New York on a so-called nuclear weapons ban treaty, which in reality will not make the world a safer place and will not contribute to further nuclear disarmament. It is my wish and hope that they would pay attention to the clear and present threat posed by the missile and nuclear programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. If these countries were truly serious about dealing with the most serious nuclear threat facing the international community, they would be focused on the threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the United States of America. I now offer the floor again to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I am sorry for taking the floor again. I would like to briefly state our strong condemnation of the constant and chronic violation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of Security Council resolutions as that threatens international peace and security. The Security Council resolutions, among other things, clearly state that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should immediately suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile programmes.

We strongly condemn that and we urge the international community to do everything within their means to stop once and for all the provocations by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea. I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Ominato (Japan): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in your endeavours for a successful presidency.

Mr. President, my delegation would like to refer to the ballistic missile launch conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 21 March as well as the ballistic missile engine test on 19 March. They are in clear violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, including most recently resolution 2321 (2016).

Japan strongly condemns the launch and engine test and urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions and other international commitments without taking further provocative actions.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Japan. I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Ms. D'Ambrosio (Italy): Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on the assumption of your mandate and assure you of the full support and cooperation of Italy.

I would like to join other delegations in reiterating the strong condemnation by Italy of the most recent ballistic missile launch conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 21 March as well as the ballistic missile engine test on 19 March. We reiterate that these repeated ballistic missile tests as well as the development of a nuclear arsenal constitute a threat to international peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has once again openly violated existing United Nations Security Council resolutions. Italy stands ready to contribute to a firm and cohesive response of the international community. In our current capacity as Chair of the Security Council 1718 Committee, we will support efforts worldwide to properly enforce the set of restrictive measures adopted by the Security Council.

Once again, we urgently call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, to return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards as well as to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Italy. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Wood (Australia): Mr. President, allow me to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency. I assure you of the cooperation of the Australian delegation.

Mr. President, Australia condemns the continuing reckless and destabilizing behaviour by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the most recent failed missile test on 21 March. The ongoing pursuit of its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes is a clear breach of United Nations Security Council resolutions and represents an ongoing threat to regional and global peace and stability.

There is a pressing need to improve the welfare of the impoverished people of North Korea rather than divert resources to develop nuclear weapons and missiles.

Australia calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease its provocative behaviour, abandon its nuclear and missile programmes and engage constructively with the international community.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Australia for her kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Biontino (Germany): Mr. President, first of all let me congratulate you on the assumption of this high office and assure you of our full cooperation.

With its repeated tests of ballistic missile engines during the past 10 days, North Korea has once again sent the wrong signal to the international community. We can only condemn these engine tests and the previous missile tests. We stress again that the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions clearly prohibit the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from further developing its nuclear and ballistic missile programme. Therefore, we call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea again to comply with existing international law and stop any further provocations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Germany. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Davison (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that Canada has taken the floor during your presidency, I would like to assure you of our delegation's support.

(*spoke in English*)

Mr. President, Canada condemns the recent missile test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We continue to urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply fully with its international obligations, cease its pattern of illegal and destabilizing actions, and immediately and verifiably abandon its ballistic missile programme.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Canada. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Ms. Claringbould (Netherlands): Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, the Netherlands would like to congratulate you on the assumption of that office. We assure you, of course, of our full cooperation.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands strongly condemns the recent missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and also the recent engine test. The launch on 21 March was already the second one in March and the third in the span of a month. These launches and the nuclear tests performed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea severely threaten peace and stability in the region and should be ceased immediately.

The Netherlands calls upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately halt its ongoing provocation and re-engage in meaningful dialogue with the international community. To ensure this, the international community has a duty to fully implement the United Nations Security Council sanctions, for it is only through persistent joint efforts by all that these will be effective. To this effect, we will continue to work with and through the United Nations and the European Union to make sure that the international community takes united and effective action.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Netherlands. I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Nord (Sweden): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, let me express our full support for your work.

Sweden strongly condemns the test recently carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on their ballistic missile programme — a programme which is in violation of legal commitments decided through United Nations Security Council resolutions.

We call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abide by these resolutions and engage in a dialogue to reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula in order to strengthen peace and stability in that region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Sweden. I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Herráiz España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that we are taking the floor under your presidency, we would like to wish you the very best in carrying out your mandate and we pledge our full cooperation.

My delegation joins those that have firmly condemned the launch of a ballistic missile by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 21 March and the tests carried out on 19 March. These activities, which are in flagrant and absolute breach of the obligations established by the United Nations Security Council, pose a threat to international peace and security, which is why my delegation is calling on that country to engage in a sincere dialogue with the international community with a view to abandoning its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Spain. If any other delegations wish to speak, please make yourselves known. I recognize the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ju Yong-chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, at the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, let me congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in your endeavours to undertake your duties.

Before I respond to the unacceptable allegations made by some delegations, including the United States, Japan and some Western countries, I cannot but express my delegation's strong disappointment and frustration that this chamber is turning into a highly politicized platform where some countries point fingers and blame a member of the United Nations out of their own political motivation. My delegation strongly rejects the unacceptable justification by the United States and South Korea that the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system is to prevent missile threats from the North. The THAAD system is clearly directed to neutralize strategic forces of neighbouring countries and secure United States military supremacy in the region. The United States cannot evade its responsibility for the escalated tension caused by its military build-up and military exercises, and the United States should not use the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as an excuse for its provocative action.

Mr. President, since some countries, including Russia and China, expressed their concern over United States military build-up that poses a direct threat to them, my delegation takes this opportunity to draw the attention of the international community to the current joint military exercises being staged in South Korea, which is another threat and cause of regional tension.

It is a just and self-defensive right of a sovereign State to keep on high alert and strengthen its defence capabilities in grave situations where its nation and security are under threat by large-scale military exercises at its doorstep. The ongoing military drills by the United States and other foreign forces, at a time when we are talking about disarmament and security, involve more than 300,000 troops and the United States nuclear carrier *Carl Vinson* and B-1 bombers and other nuclear strategic assets. These exercises are aimed at launching a pre-emptive strike on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Special mention should be made of the fact that notorious United States special operation units, like the Navy Sea, Air and Land (SEAL) teams and Delta Force are also taking part in these exercises for the purpose of removing the leadership and launching a pre-emptive attack on nuclear and rocket bases in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States officials openly say that all options are on the table, including military action. There is no guarantee that the ongoing military provocations with such belligerent rhetoric would not lead to an all-out war. The aggressive nature and danger of the United States-South Korea joint military exercises along with the THAAD system deployment have even aroused deep concern among some neighbouring countries, but no country in this chamber has voiced its concern at this serious provocative action.

Mr. President, last week the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations sent a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General as regards the fact that the situation on the Korean Peninsula has reached the brink of war due to the largest-ever joint military drills being staged by the United States and South Korea. The letter referred to the demand by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March urging the United Nations Security Council to hold an emergency meeting on the issue of the United States-South Korea joint military exercises. As the United States-South Korea joint military exercises are an obvious sign of threat to peace and security in the region, the Security Council should give attention to these dangerous provocations if it is to fulfil its mission to contribute to the preservation of global peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I now give the floor again to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Poznikhir (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): From the moment the United States announced its decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Russian Federation has consistently and clearly set out its position that such a measure

was a mistake. We have on numerous occasions spoken of the negative consequences for international security of the deployment of missile defence systems. We have not just expressed our positions but have consistently explained the reasons underpinning them, both in bilateral settings with the United States and in various international forums.

I personally participated in many meetings with United States representatives in 2010, 2011 and 2012. If I am not mistaken, the United States delegation was led by the Deputy Secretary of Defense. At those meetings, we presented our calculations to our colleagues using simulations and clear technical data; we were never presented with any data refuting our calculations. So, today, when the United States Ambassador asserted that the slides shown and the calculations are science fiction, I believe that was out of a desire to use catchy words to distract this distinguished forum from our presentation.

I repeat: our calculations are based on the technical characteristics of intercontinental ballistic missiles and the characteristics of the United States missile defence systems that we have at our disposal. What is more, they take into account the possibility of missile defence systems making integrated use of data from space-based sensors and sea- and land-based radar stations. They take into account data on the deployment of anti-missile missiles and the possibilities resulting from deployment of missile defence vessels in various areas of the world's oceans. Thus, when I hear that the laws of physics are not taken into consideration here, I would like to reassure you that all these calculations have indeed been done taking the laws of physics into account.

I would like to make a few additional comments about the United States Ambassador's statement. We are told that this system does not target Russia and that it is designed to address some regional problems. If that is true, then the system is disproportionate to the existing threats: thousands of anti-missile missiles against a few Iranian and North Korean missiles with limited capabilities is beyond excessive.

When the United States Ambassador says that the deployment of a missile defence system does not have an impact on strategic stability, we simply cannot agree. The New START Treaty of 2010 clearly set out, in its preamble, the interconnected and increasingly important relationship between strategic offensive arms and strategic defensive arms. The Treaty established limits that the United States and Russia must observe by 5 February 2018. It is beyond question that both we and the United States are observing these agreements. So, when a balance in strategic offensive weapons is reached, and then the United States develops its defensive weapons capabilities, this destroys the balance of strategic forces, as the United States will gain a significant advantage.

I will not dwell any longer on these points, which are perhaps controversial. I would however like to inform all members that on 26 April the Sixth Moscow Conference on International Security will be held, and this problem will be given special attention. We are prepared to engage in a dialogue with experts and we invite all interested parties to discuss this question at the Sixth Conference.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation. I now give the floor again to the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I apologize for taking the floor again, but I need to respond to the comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation. First and foremost, and I will be very brief, the reference to Russian data — I think that is exactly how I would characterize it: Russian data. I do not think I need to say more.

With regard to our anti-ballistic missile systems not being proportional, let me just say simply that I fundamentally disagree.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the United States of America. Does any other country wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

As I mentioned in my introductory remarks, we will end today's exchange with a brief presentation by the Permanent Mission of Myanmar, in its capacity as Chair of the working group on the way ahead. I now give the floor to Ambassador Shein, Deputy Permanent Representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Shein (Myanmar): Mr. President, first of all I would like to express my congratulations to you — and, through you, to your Permanent Representative as well as the delegation of Senegal — upon your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. My Permanent Representative, Ambassador Htin Lynn, is unable to participate in this meeting due to his trip to Bern to present his credentials, together with your Permanent Representative.

I am very impressed by the way the delegations of the Russian Federation and China contributed to our discussion. At the same time, the interventions by India as well as by the United States also have strong rationale and beauty in their concepts. While listening, I had the line from a poem in my mind, which is: “Men may come or men may go, I shall go on forever.” We do believe in the Conference on Disarmament. Of course there is armament as well as disarmament, but we have to make concrete resolutions to disarm and eliminate these weapons from our planet. That is why I wholeheartedly supported my Permanent Representative to take on the responsibility of the Chair of the working group on the way ahead. It is not an easy job for us as a small delegation; for example, last week we had very important meetings to attend at the International Labour Organization and the Human Rights Council where two resolutions were adopted related to Myanmar. But that is not a barrier to be overcome. I think the working group on the way ahead is trying its best to listen to the views of member States. Last week, my Permanent Representative stated that altogether he had met with 26 member States and listened to their views on the way ahead to produce a concrete programme of work. Yesterday I met with the 2017 session’s six Presidents and the regional coordinators and informed them that, before the end of the first part of the Conference on 31 March, the Chair of the working group would like to meet with the regional coordinators, as well as the Group of 21, the group of Western European and other States and the Eastern European group on 31 March at 10 a.m., 11 a.m. and noon. I hope that that message has been given to the groups. We are hoping to receive views from the regional groups on how they could contribute towards the preparation of the programme of work in the future. For the time being, we will conduct consultations on a bilateral as well as a regional and multilateral basis. We will submit our report as soon as possible.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Shein for his statement and the work that Myanmar has done since assuming the chair of the working group.

Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen, as you know, the first part of this session of the Conference on Disarmament comes to a close at the end of this week. We will resume our work in the week beginning 15 May 2017. Until then, the Senegalese delegation remains at your disposal for any bilateral consultations with a view to making a contribution to the work of the Conference.

Allow me also to inform you that the Permanent Representative of Myanmar, Mr. Htin Lynn, will hold consultations with all regional groups this Friday, 31 March, here in this room as of 10 a.m. All States are invited to take part in these consultations. The secretariat will send a reminder to all delegations.

I will now give the floor to the secretariat to make an announcement.

Mr. Kalbusch (Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, just to clarify, the Council Chamber is reserved as of 10 a.m. on Friday for consultations. Should the regional groups wish to meet with the Ambassador of Myanmar in another room, the secretariat will try to facilitate that.

(*spoke in English*)

I repeat in English. The Council Chamber is reserved as of 10 a.m. on Friday for consultations by Myanmar with the regional groups. Should the regional groups wish to meet with the Ambassador in another room, the secretariat will try to facilitate that.

The President (*spoke in French*): This concludes our business for today as well as the first part of the 2017 session of the Conference on Disarmament. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 16 May 2017, at 10 a.m. in this chamber. This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.