

Постоянное
представительство
Российской Федерации
при Организации
Объединённых Наций



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Federation
to the United Nations

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PRESS RELEASE

September 21, 2006

Unofficial translation
As prepared for delivery

ADDRESS

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THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
AT THE SIXTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(New-York, September 21, 2006)

Traditionally, the General Assembly session offers an opportunity to make a review of the current situation in the world, identify major international issues, and the role the United Nations could play in resolving them. I believe we have every reason to conclude that there is prevailing trend of growing awareness of the need to strengthen collective foundations in the international politics and of the fact that there is no alternative to tackling the existing problems through multilateral diplomacy.

This trend is an unbiased one, for it reflects realities of an emerging multipolar architecture of international relations.

This trend is tenable because an answer to global challenges and treats can only be found collectively.

Finally, this trend is a manifestation of historical continuity, because we are revisiting the same objective as the founding fathers of the United Nations were keen to pursue by enshrining the principles of developing a system of collective security in this Organization's Charter. It is

precisely this approach based on a solid foundation of the international law that can ensure a sustainable world development within the context of globalization. And it requires a strengthened central role for this Universal Organization in every area of international life.

We are, of course, to continue adapting the United Nations mechanisms and methods to the new environment. A lot has been done as a follow-up to the 2005 World Summit decisions. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council have been established. The reform process has also encompassed management. It is important that all our further work is based upon the fundamental principle of the universality of the United Nations. The patterns that, contrary to the UN Charter, exclude individual states or groups of states from meaningful participation in the Organization's activities or introduce a single system of values into the work of its Secretariat are unsustainable. Let us not forget that the United Nations belongs to us all. The administrative reform should not also lead to the bureaucracy taking over its management, thus sacrificing the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations.

A trend towards collective action has also strengthened beyond the UN structures. The Russian G8 presidency saw enhanced practice of interaction between this Forum and other leading countries of the world and international organizations. In the last twelve months our Dialogue Partners have actively contributed to the St.Petersburg Summit documents on every main agenda item, including global energy security, developing education and controlling infectious diseases. A new and genuinely collaborative type of interaction between the G8 and Africa is now emerging in this era of globalization, as the needs of this Continent find their reflection in the mainstream of the world development rather than being viewed as issues divorced from overall trends. Decisions reached in St.Petersburg are not a G8 monopoly. All states are invited to participate in their implementation.

Regional organizations and their cooperation and coordination with the United Nations in maintaining world peace and security have strengthened. These issues were discussed at the special Ministerial Meeting of the Security Council yesterday. Once again, we are dealing here with an important dimension of the collective action by the international community.

The Commonwealth of Independent States has made a significant contribution to such interaction. To address common problems, specific actions have been taken within the Commonwealth area, primarily within the Eurasian Economic Community and the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

More substantive and purposeful efforts were made within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization that has launched and realized an initiative for establishing a Partnership Network for Multilateral Associations in the Asia-Pacific Region. The development patterns in this region would largely determine the future outlook of our planet. Multilateral institutions in Latin

America have become stronger. Development of the African Union is gaining momentum as well.

Heads of States of the Non-Aligned Movement member-countries, at their recent Summit in Havana pronounced in favor of a collective search – within the context of the central role of the United Nations – for agreed solutions to problems confronting the world community.

Europe, of course, does not stay aloof from a common trend towards collective examination and resolution of common problems. Here we also see a growing awareness of the fact that security and prosperity are indivisible. We expect NATO to transform itself from a defense alliance into something more contemporary that would meet principles of transparency and collective response based upon a universal legal foundation. We have been closely watching with interest the emerging mechanisms of the European Union foreign policy and security. Russia stands ready to cooperate with the multilateral structures in the Euro-Atlantic and other regions of the world. And we already have effective common mechanisms with many of them.

Collective efforts are also needed to further develop the international law, primarily within the context of countering new threats. The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy recently adopted by consensus is an important contribution in terms of strengthening the legal basis for the anti-terrorist coalition and ensuring a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism. It is not only about countering all manifestations and ideology of terrorism, it is also about removing problems that serve as its nutrient medium. Next in the pipeline is agreement on a Comprehensive Anti-terrorism Convention.

It is necessary to secure the achievements by practical deeds. In the course of Russia's presidency in the G8 the International "Moscow-1 – Paris-2" Conference was held where additional measures were approved aimed at mobilizing global community to counter the terrorism-related drug threat originating from Afghanistan. Another international forum to be held in Moscow next November will focus on developing modalities for government-to-business partnership in countering terrorism.

What is called for to-day – more proactive measures to prevent lethal weapons falling into the hands of non-state entities, and consistent implementation of Resolution 1540 and other counterterrorism resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. The Russian-American Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism approved by President Vladimir V. Putin and President George W. Bush in St.Petersburg last July should become an important instrument of preventing a linkage between WMD and terrorism. This initiative invites other interested states to act collectively.

An ever growing demand for unique peacekeeping capabilities of the United Nations also calls for a collective effort. Not all of these capabilities have been utilized to the full. Utilizing

the capabilities of the UN Military Staff Committee, as well as that of regional organizations on the basis of the prevailing provisions of the United Nations Charter would be helpful.

It is encouraging to see a more active role in peacemaking operations in Africa being played by the Africans themselves spearheaded by the African Union and supported by the United Nations. In a number of crisis situations conditions are gradually emerging for a transition to post-conflict reconstruction. It is our hope that the Declaration on Cooperation and Future Action in Stabilization and Reconstruction adopted at the St.Petersburg G8 Summit will help us complement the efforts of the United Nations and regional organizations at this critically important period of transition to peace building.

Comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict remains a central task for the world community. Many prevailing threats have intertwined in this region and the key to resolving those is found mostly there. In this connection I should like to mention in the first instance such a really global challenge as the need to prevent a schism of civilizations. We welcome the emerging prospects for a national consent in the Palestinian territories, as well as for the resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli talks. It is important to persistently encourage the sides to go their part of the road with a clear understanding the any progress towards objectives set out by the world community would inevitably be gradual and that any attempt to act by the motto "all-or-nothing" would be counterproductive and would again plunge the region into confrontation.

The recent war in Lebanon demonstrated the utter fragility of the situation in the Middle East and the acute need for a comprehensive approach to settlement along all tracks. This presupposes involvement of all countries and parties, without participation of which it would prove impossible to reach any reliable negotiated solutions. It is clear that the road to a comprehensive peace will not be an easy one, but now is the time. The initiative of the League of Arab States to convene an international conference should help find some optimal parameters for organizing this work. The Quartet of international mediators should also make a key contribution to the process, as agreed at the Ministerial Quartet Meeting on September 20.

A breakthrough in the Middle East settlement could provide a positive momentum that is so wanting in the region and facilitate resolving other burning problems in the region and in the neighboring countries. It is particularly true regarding efforts aimed at stabilizing the situation in Iraq where attempts to bridle wanton violence fraught with chaos thus far proved unsuccessful. Dozens of people, mainly civilians, continue to die in Iraq every day. Five officials of the Russian Embassy in Baghdad have also fallen victim to this barbarous massacre. Settlement in Iraq is only possible through concerted effort, which implies involvement in the political process of all major Iraqi interests and implementation of the country's Government plans aimed at

reaching a true national accord given a concerted support from the international community, including all Iraqi neighbors.

The growing significance of the factor of force in the world affairs that we are, unfortunately, witnessing, undermines the non-proliferation regimes. A feeling of predictability and stability in the area of security is becoming ever more acute. Against this background, an objectively growing interest of many states in nuclear energy may —as a result of the trend for global proliferation of sensitive technologies – give rise to concern. Apart from the current purposeful steps in search of negotiated solutions to individual problems, such as Iranian nuclear program, and the Korean Peninsula problem, there is a need for urgent international effort of the entire international community geared towards a systematic strengthening non-proliferation regimes on a generally acceptable basis, while ensuring that the benefits of peaceful atomic energy a legitimately accessible to all states. President Vladimir V. Putin's initiative to establish Multilateral Centers for Nuclear Fuel Cycle Services, similar ideas of the IAEA executives, and proposals by the U.S. President George W. Bush running in the same vein have found support among the G8 leaders. We are confident that integration of such approaches and their practical implementation in cooperation with all countries, who have an interest in modern, safe nuclear energy, would allow it to resolve non-proliferation issues in a non-confrontational manner.

Like in other areas, the obsession with sanctions applied without calculating their consequences might bring unpredictable results. It is absolutely necessary to eliminate the loopholes in the non-proliferation regimes; but this should be done through clear and non-discriminatory approaches without creating grounds for suspicions regarding existence of some hidden agenda.

Stagnation in the international disarmament process does not help resolve non-proliferation problems. Here again, we need concerted action, for it is a matter of collective security.

In the area of strategic arms, the U.S.-Russian agreements play an enormously important role. Their significance goes far beyond the framework of bilateral relations given that virtually all members of the international community benefit from the strategic stability. We are supportive of a consistent development of the U.S.-Russian bilateral disarmament process. Closely related with this development are ABM related issues, in particular within the context of the existing plans of the United States. Here one needs complete transparency and analysis of consequences for the strategic stability.

The situation around the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe continues to cause grave concern. The old Treaty based on the realities of the confrontation between military blocks has lost its relevance, while NATO is blocking entry into force the Agreement on its Adaptation.

At the same time, reconfiguration of the military architecture on the European continent is under way around an expanding military alliance. Such a virtual arms control becomes meaningless as it turns into a one-way street.

It is necessary to revitalize also multilateral disarmament avenues. This agenda should include entry into force of CTBT, non-deployment of weapons in space, conclusion of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty and ensuring information security. Nuclear weapon-free zones play an important role. We welcome the creation of such a zone in Central Asia.

The overall task is to reinvigorate the efforts of the international community in the area of disarmament and arms control within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament and relevant UN bodies.

The 2005 World Summit unanimously reaffirmed that peace, security and development are inseparable. With this in mind, we are prepared to engage in collective discussions and support further joint pragmatic steps with a view to improving the efficiency of the activities of the entire UN system in the social and economic areas. Realizing its responsibility as one of the fastest growing economies of the world, the Russian Federation pays ever growing attention to development assistance.

Thus far, Russia has written off or has undertaken to write off \$11.3 billion of the African countries' debt, including \$2.2 billion within the HIPC Debt Initiative. New steps are planned in this area. Russia ranks third in absolute figures of debt relief, and first in terms of the debt relief/GDP ratio. We also increased our contribution to other mechanisms of the international development assistance, including through UN institutions, and foundations and Bretton Woods Institutions.

Today, I cannot but express my sincere appreciation and praise to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. For many years now in the most difficult times for the world politics he has exercised his duties with dignity. Largely due to the efforts of Kofi Annan and his ability to take the lead while remaining a realist despite severe challenges we managed to make progress in strengthening the United Nations.

Today the United Nations is as relevant as never before. We do not have to create it anew. In the course of reforming the United Nations in accordance with the dictates of the time it is incumbent upon us all to reaffirm by action our commitment to the World Organization that draws its strength from our trust in it and in its unique legitimacy. Without relying on the United Nations and its Charter it will prove impossible to ensure a more reliable and democratic system of collective security that would answer the dictates of our time.