



# Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

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*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Ms. Wronecka . . . . .	(Poland)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium . . . . .	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
	China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Jun
	Côte d'Ivoire . . . . .	Mr. Adom
	Dominican Republic . . . . .	Mr. Trullols Yabra
	Equatorial Guinea . . . . .	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	France . . . . .	Mrs. Gueguen
	Germany . . . . .	Mr. Schulz
	Indonesia . . . . .	Mr. Syihab
	Kuwait . . . . .	Mr. Alotaibi
	Peru . . . . .	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Polyanskiy
	South Africa . . . . .	Mr. Matjila
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Cohen

## Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Threats to international peace and security**

**The President:** In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to participate in today's meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Ms. Nakamitsu.

**Ms. Nakamitsu:** I have been asked to brief the Security Council today on the issues of missiles. Missiles have constituted an acute concern for international peace, security and stability ever since the first V-2 rockets were fired indiscriminately at cities in England during the Second World War. Indeed, it was the movement of nuclear-capable missiles in the Caribbean that sparked the most serious crisis of the Cold War, almost 57 years ago.

Since that time, the acquisition, proliferation, deployment and use of missiles have continued to play destabilizing — even escalatory — roles in international relations, with concerning implications for crisis management, including between nuclear-armed States, and, in some instances, causing serious civilian harm. Today missiles add a dangerous and destabilizing element to regional flashpoints from North-East Asia to South Asia, the Middle East and Europe. They directly contribute to renewed strategic-arms competition and hamper the achievement of broader disarmament objectives.

For decades, the role of ballistic missiles as a means of delivering weapons of mass destruction has been a central concern for the nuclear-disarmament process. For example, the preamble to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons states that its purpose is

“to facilitate ... the elimination from national arsenals of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery”.

That is why they have been the focus of bilaterally agreed limitations and reductions of strategic arms for over four decades.

Yet today more than 20 countries possess ballistic missiles with capabilities that exceed the threshold for “nuclear-capable”, as defined in the guidelines of the Missile Technology Control Regime. And nuclear-armed States are actively pursuing novel missile and missile-defence capabilities, with unclear and potentially negative consequences for international peace and security.

We have also seen increased use of ballistic missiles in armed conflict over recent decades, most notably their indiscriminate use against cities during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. Following the subsequent discovery of the extent of Iraq's weapons-of-mass-destruction programme in the 1990s, the Security Council prohibited that country from producing, acquiring or stockpiling ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres. And resolution 1540 (2004) required all States to prevent the proliferation to non-State actors not only of weapons of mass destruction but also of their means of delivery.

Moreover, conventionally armed missiles today feature in the arsenals of many States and some non-State actors and have been used as area-bombardment weapons, often aimed at cities. Advances in technology are enabling conventional missiles to become more accurate at longer ranges, thereby facilitating their increased development, transfer and use. The development of weapons systems using missile technology that can manoeuvre at hypersonic speeds could further undermine security and spark a destabilizing arms race.

The launch of ballistic missiles into Saudi Arabia by Houthis in Yemen has been particularly troublesome. And concerns regarding ballistic missiles remain unresolved in connection with resolution 2231 (2015), which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Terrestrial-based and air-launched missiles have been used to destroy satellites in Earth orbit, including three times over the last decade, the most recent having occurred earlier this year.

The recent collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty removed one of the few constraints on the development and deployment of destabilizing and dangerous classes of missiles. As the Secretary-General rightly noted, that Treaty played an important role in reducing risk, building confidence and helping to bring the Cold War to an end.

The INF Treaty's ending should not be the catalyst for renewed and unconstrained competition in missile development, acquisition and proliferation. I echo the Secretary-General's call for all States to avoid destabilizing developments and deployments and to urgently seek agreement on a new common path for international arms control.

It is important to note that despite the various alarming developments I have mentioned, there remains no universal norm, treaty or agreement regulating missiles. Today only the Russian Federation and the United States are subject to legally binding restrictions on the number of certain missiles they may possess.

Measures such as the Missile Technology Control Regime and The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, while of clear value, are not sufficient to deal with every aspect of the threat that missiles and their proliferation pose to international peace and security.

The three United Nations panels of experts on missiles that met in the 2000s provided useful syntheses of the various security issues related to missiles, as they attempted to deal with the matter in a comprehensive manner. However, the First Committee has not adopted a resolution on the issue since 2008.

More and more countries, including those outside of existing multilateral arrangements, continue to acquire and develop their ballistic-missile capabilities. The Security Council has been seized in particular of activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is actively augmenting its missile capabilities, contrary to the Council's resolutions.

As the Secretary-General made clear in his agenda for disarmament, published last year, measures for arms control and disarmament, including in relation to missiles, played a crucial role in conflict prevention, risk mitigation, de-escalation and tension reduction at the height of the Cold War.

Preventing the spread and emergence of destabilizing weapons remains a vital unfinished task for the international community in our shared endeavour to preserve international peace, security and stability. Moving forward, there is an urgent need for new international approaches, potentially including legally binding multilateral approaches, consensus and agreement in dealing with the various problematic

aspects of missiles. The Council's increased attention to those challenges can give impetus to those efforts.

**The President:** I thank Ms. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Ms. Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her very informative and valuable briefing.

On 2 August, a very sad and important event took place — the United States withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which, in no small measure, played a key role in building both the regional and global security architecture. Talks on the Treaty were held during the Cold War in a context of complex international relations. Nevertheless, at that time the leaders of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States were able to reach an agreement. The INF Treaty was crucial for international détente. Along with other steps taken at that time, it greatly contributed to creating a climate of trust that led to global changes that the international community now deems essential. For the first time in decades, humankind had the opportunity to move away from confrontation and to address pressing development issues whose resolution would make life better for all.

For a time, the INF Treaty was conscientiously implemented by both Russia and the United States. However, with time, it became increasingly clear that the Treaty, like other disarmament and arms-control agreements, had become inconvenient for our American partners, who were convinced of their exceptionalism and became increasingly determined to impose their inequitable unilateral schemes of international relations on others. The first victim of Washington's ambitions, in 2003, was the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), which Russia had actively fought to maintain since the late 1990s. Immediately after that, the Americans announced plans to deploy ABM launchers in eastern Europe, allegedly to counter the Iranian threat. In response to our concerns, we were told that those facilities could never be used against Russia. However, when the first launcher was deployed in Romania, it became clear that it could easily be converted to launch Tomahawk missiles, which is not

allowed under the INF Treaty. We immediately drew attention to that. It is now absolutely clear that we were right. On 18 August, just two weeks after withdrawing from the INF Treaty, Washington carried out a test launch of a medium-range missile using an MK-41 launch system

Since August, there are no restrictions on the development and deployment of such systems. Thus, following the denunciation of the ABM Treaty, yet another pillar of the arms-control architecture was toppled — an architecture that enabled the drafting and signature of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), which will expire in February 2021 and is also at risk. Key figures in the current United States Administration have repeatedly, both publicly and privately, made it clear that they have no interest in maintaining the New START in its current form.

In parallel, almost from the very first day after their withdrawal from the INF Treaty, American officials began making threats and statements that leave no doubt that Washington had intended to do exactly this and had been consistently and deliberately violating the Treaty for a long time. Otherwise, how could the Secretary of Defense, Mark Esper, have announced, in early August, the possibility of deploying intermediate-range and shorter-range ground-launched missiles in just a few months? It would be impossible to produce such weapons in such a short period of time.

We did not convene this meeting to accuse our American colleagues of hypocrisy. Today it is obvious to any non-biased disarmament expert that what we have presented is incontrovertible fact. No matter how much Washington insists today on the old mantra that it was Russia's actions that undermined the INF Treaty, its most recent steps are eloquent evidence to the contrary. But that is no longer the issue. To be frank, today it is not our American partners that we are primarily addressing, because their views are clear. But we are very surprised by the stubborn position that is being adopted by our European colleagues, as their stubbornness would be much more helpful if applied in a different way.

The Council may recall that, as recently as last December, Russia proposed a General Assembly draft resolution supporting the INF Treaty. It contained no criticism of the United States but only urged support for diplomatic efforts to address challenges affecting the security and national interests of all States

Members of the United Nations, without exception. We unequivocally warned them then that the demise of the INF Treaty would not only undermine the implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons but would also lead to a new nuclear arms race. Many partners listened closely to us, but Washington's European allies did not. Here I have a question for them: are they happy today that in December they chose to press the red button? Do they not understand that their playing along with the Americans at every step is bringing back that bygone era when missiles could target European cities from various sides?

We will not be the first to do that. However, given that our American colleagues are clearly itching to and want to flex their muscles, the situation that I have just described may be at hand. Are they aware that, because of the geopolitical ambitions of the United States of America, we are all just one step away from an uncontrolled, unregulated arms race? For our part, unlike our American colleagues, we are deeply concerned at this state of affairs. In any case, according to President Trump, America is prepared for an arms race, as it is supposedly capable of surpassing any of its potential rivals in terms of finance and technology.

That rationale, inspired by the best American westerns, is backed up by the numbers: according to publicly available data, the United States military budget is about \$700 billion, while the budget of NATO amounts to \$1.4 trillion. These are just approximate figures. For reference, the military budget of Russia, which is allegedly a threat to us all, is about \$60 billion, that is, more than 20 times lower than that of NATO.

Obviously, following the risky undertakings by the United States of America, all these figures may increase; the United States President has already made that very point. We would note here that expenditures on the development of weapons prohibited by the INF Treaty had been included in the United States military budget long before the Treaty was sentenced to death. And, as always, Russia is to blame.

Just think about how much we could have done if the money that our Western colleagues have been allocating for military purposes had been spent to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and help less developed and developing countries. Moreover, our American partners continue to bargain on the budget of peacekeeping operations and to follow their established

practice of postponing until the very last moment their 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. What about other members? Are they going to deny that they 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 them for this?

Despite everything I have said, we continue to believe that, as concerns our Western partners, common sense and the instinct of self-preservation will eventually prevail. After all, the very existence of humankind is at stake. The only question is how much money and effort will have been wasted by then and how many opportunities for progress and cooperation we will have missed.

For our part, we have always been ready to engage in any serious dialogue aimed at ensuring strategic stability and security. If it were up to us only, we would never have come close to a line so dangerous as the one the world is approaching now.

However, we remain realistic. It is easier to dismantle than to build. 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 some problems, including those arising from the irresponsible actions taken by Washington, that must be resolved today.

**Mr. Cohen** (United States of America): I want to thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her briefing today.

We should be crystal-clear about why we are here today. The United States entered into the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, but more than a decade ago, the Russian Federation decided that it would break its Treaty obligations and pursue a missile system with a range expressly prohibited by the Treaty. Over the last several years, Russia developed, produced, flight-tested and now has fielded multiple battalions of its INF-non-compliant 9M729 missile system. In response, earlier this month and after six years of United States diplomacy to return Russia to compliance and preserve the Treaty, our Secretary of State affirmed the United States withdrawal from the INF Treaty.

As the Secretary said in his statement, the United States will not remain a party to a Treaty that is being deliberately violated by Russia. The other NATO allies also concluded that Russia had materially breached the INF Treaty. Let me repeat: Russia had materially breached the INF Treaty, and the NATO allies fully supported the United States withdrawal due to Russia's intransigence.

We are here today because the Russian Federation preferred a world in which the United States continued to fulfil its INF Treaty obligations while the Russian Federation did not. Indeed, the Russian Federation and China would still like a world where the United States exercises self-restraint while they continue their arms build-ups, unabated and unabashed.

Russia now threatens to reciprocate if the United States positions intermediate-range missiles in Europe, but Russia had already fielded such missiles in Europe while the INF Treaty was still in effect. What we and our NATO allies know is that Russia has produced and fielded multiple battalions of 9M729 ground-launched cruise missiles throughout Russia, in violation of the now-terminated INF Treaty, including in western Russia, with the ability to strike critical European targets. Likewise, China threatens to target United States allies that host any United States missiles, even though China has already deployed thousands of intermediate-range missiles with the purpose of holding the United States and our allies and partners at risk.

Now that the INF Treaty no longer exists due to the Russian Federation, the United States is taking the steps necessary to address the threat posed by the intermediate-range missile forces being deployed in ever-larger numbers by Russia and China, which the INF Treaty failed to hinder. Today there are no United States ground-launched intermediate-range missiles — zero. In contrast, Russia has developed and deployed multiple battalions of such missiles. China possesses approximately 2,000 missiles that would have been prohibited under the INF Treaty had China been a party to it.

Furthermore, United States flight tests to develop a ground-launched conventional capability are neither provocative nor destabilizing. They are a prudent response to ensure that the United States has the capabilities to defend our interests in the post-INF-Treaty world that Russia created and are the culmination of Treaty-compliant United States research

and development efforts dating back to December 2017. Those efforts were never a secret, and, again, they were not prohibited by the Treaty.

We have heard a narrative today that the United States had itself been in violation of the INF Treaty because of our recent flight test, which used the MK 41 launcher, which is also found in our Aegis Ashore missile defence system. This is categorically false. The Aegis Ashore system does not have an offensive ground-launched ballistic- or cruise-missile capability, although it utilizes some of the same structural components as the sea-based MK 41 vertical launch system installed on ships. The Aegis Ashore vertical launching system is not the same launcher as the sea-based MK 41 vertical launch system, and the Aegis Ashore system did not violate our INF Treaty obligations.

A more relevant discussion today about threats to international peace and security would focus on the fact that, while the United States works to reduce the number and salience of nuclear weapons, the Russian Federation and China did not follow the United States lead in this regard. To the contrary, they have moved in the opposite direction by developing and fielding new nuclear and missile capabilities over the last decade.

The Russian Federation is upgrading and diversifying its nuclear-weapons capabilities, and its total nuclear stockpile is likely to grow significantly over the next decade. That growth will be driven primarily by a projected increase in the Russian Federation's non-strategic nuclear weapons.

The INF Treaty-violating 9M729 missile system is only one in a series of ground-, sea- and air-based Russian systems being modernized and developed with greater accuracy, longer ranges and lower nuclear yields in order to enable Russian nuclear strategy and doctrine, including limited first use of nuclear weapons. We believe the Russian Federation has up to 2,000 non-strategic nuclear warheads of various types. In comparison, the United States currently has a single non-strategic nuclear weapon: the B61 gravity bomb.

The Russian Federation is also pursuing novel strategic nuclear weapons. Those include a nuclear-armed and powered underwater drone designed to destroy adversary coastal cities and ports in a radioactive tidal wave; a nuclear-armed and powered, ground-launched, intercontinental-range cruise missile; and a nuclear-armed, air-launched ballistic missile.

Perhaps a better use of the Council's time would be to ask the Russian Federation to address the threats it poses to international peace and security. How many 9M729 missiles has it produced, and where are they? What exactly happened on 8 August in Russia? What caused the explosion? What system was it? And what purpose does that system serve?

Meanwhile, China continues to rapidly increase the size of its nuclear stockpile through a rapid expansion and diversification of its nuclear arsenal. That includes new delivery systems as China works to establish a new nuclear triad. China is also examining how hypersonic systems, air-launched ballistic missiles and low-yield nuclear weapons fit into its expanding nuclear arsenal.

Those developments by the Russian Federation and China, coupled with their aggressive and coercive behaviours, are key drivers behind a deteriorating security environment. The United States will not and cannot ignore that reality. We will not stand idle. We will take the necessary steps to ensure our security and that of our allies and partners, and that includes testing and developing systems to respond to the challenges that we face, as well as being prepared to engage in what our President has described as a new era of arms control.

The United States remains open to effective and verifiable arms control. Contrary to our Russian colleagues' outrageous assertions, we have made clear our interest in serious arms control that includes the Russian Federation and China, and it goes beyond treaties focused on limited types of nuclear weapons or missile ranges. We think that would be a more effective approach to addressing threats to international peace and security.

**Mr. Hickey** (United Kingdom): I thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her briefing.

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed by the United States and the Soviet Union in 1987, eliminated an entire category of missiles, those capable of travelling 500 to 5,500 kilometres. It was one of the key achievements of the post-Cold War arms control in Europe and delivered greater security and stability, not just for Europe but for the entire world.

Over a long period, Russia violated the INF Treaty by secretly developing and deploying non-compliant missiles, specifically a mobile-launch missile system, the 9M729. Those missiles are hard to find, rapidly

deployable and can target European cities with conventional or nuclear warheads. Russia refused to acknowledge their existence until the United States identified the missile using its Russian designation. Russia's only subsequent attempt at openness was a stage-managed offer to demonstrate the missile's alleged compliance. That would have taken place under contrived conditions, and it would have been impossible to assess the range of the missile.

On 1 February, the United States announced its intention to suspend its obligations under the INF Treaty, thereby triggering a six-month withdrawal process, which concluded on 2 August with the lapse of the Treaty. Russia bears the sole responsibility for the Treaty's demise. The United Kingdom and NATO allies fully supported the United States decision to withdraw.

In the last five years, many diplomatic efforts have been made to persuade Russia to return to compliance. The United States raised this issue with Russia over 30 times, and NATO allies reached out unsuccessfully via the NATO-Russia Council. Russia, however, has remained defiant, focusing its narrative on denial of the facts and counter-accusations, the likes of which we have heard once again today.

On 2 August, when the INF Treaty lapsed, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated that

“[w]e will not mirror what Russia does, we do not want a new arms race, and we have no intention to deploy new land-based nuclear missiles in Europe”.

He explained that NATO will respond to Russia's aggressive actions, but

“everything we do will be balanced, coordinated and defensive”.

We support the United States explanation of the timeline for the development of its recently tested ground-launched cruise missile and do not believe that the United States was non-compliant with the INF Treaty at any time.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia has the responsibility to play a vital role in promoting international stability. However, this behaviour once again undermines Russia's claim that it is a responsible international partner upholding international peace and security. Russia's present actions

are in line with a pattern of aggression that represents a clear threat to international peace and security.

**Mrs. Gueguen** (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to thank the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her briefing.

Appeals are regularly made from this organ to preserve and strengthen the security system for which the Security Council is the guarantor. It is a common priority and objective, and arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation are its pillars. As the President of the French Republic recalled in this Chamber last September:

[o]ur responsibility ... is that we owe it to those who came before us and to those for whom we are responsible is to preserve and strengthen that regime at a time when it is being seriously tested.” (S/PV.8362, p. 3).

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty was a central element of that. France regrets that no solution could be reached to maintain it in force. The end of that Treaty increases the risks for instability in Europe and erodes the international arms control system. I would like to underscore that France's position is clear and consistent, and there is nothing surprising about it.

The viability and effectiveness of disarmament and non-proliferation instruments require that those agreements be fully respected and implemented. Russia bears responsibility for the termination of the Treaty, which it has continued to violate despite our calls for the consistent implementation of the INF Treaty. The development of a new intermediate-range missile system by Russia increases the threat to European security interests. We regret that it has again not shown any willingness to comply with its international obligations and has not taken any concrete steps in that direction.

In the current context, we wish to maintain a measured, balanced and responsible commitment to ensure the security of our populations and to preserve peace and regional and international stability. However, that imperative also requires restoring mutual trust and dialogue and giving us the means to do so.

The world cannot engage in a new arms race, the price of which we would all pay; that would be a dangerous step backwards, to the detriment of the

gains that underpin our security. Supporting and strengthening disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control processes is essential, taking into account the deterioration of our security environment.

We must redouble our efforts to preserve existing conventional and nuclear arms control instruments and rebuild a robust international framework. It must be based on real and verifiable instruments and the law to preserve and build on the achievements of recent decades and respond to the strategic challenges of tomorrow. France will continue to work towards strengthening it and encourages all other actors to follow suit.

**Mr. Adom** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes this holding of this briefing and thanks Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu for her very informative briefing.

As the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) enters its fiftieth year, the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation architecture, which was implemented following difficult negotiations and through bold compromises, is now threatened by the gradual retreat from the commitments made by certain signatory States. That multilateral framework, which was brought about by the realization of the possible disastrous consequences of nuclear weapons, allowed for providing humankind with security guarantees that have shielded it from nuclear danger to this day.

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, negotiated in the late 1980s, gave us reason to be optimistic. In a context in which the international community is struggling to ease tensions emanating from the Iranian and North Korean nuclear issues, the demise of the INF Treaty is now raising fears of a renewed arms race that could undermine the gains made in the area of nuclear non-proliferation. If we are not careful, the end of the INF Treaty risks becoming the first in a series of steps that will further complicate controlling ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction. The recent initiatives taken by the two signatories tend to demonstrate this last point.

Given that risk, the position of Côte d'Ivoire is in fully in line with that of the Secretary-General, who expressed his regret concerning the termination of the INF Treaty on 2 August. In the light of the current exacerbation of security threats, my country believes that any initiative that threatens the current arms control and disarmament frameworks could contribute

to undermining the gains made in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Côte d'Ivoire therefore urgently appeals to the Russian and American parties, as stakeholders and guarantors vis-à-vis the INF Treaty, to resume dialogue in order to save this shining example of cooperation between the two major nuclear Powers. My country, which moreover was one of the first signatories to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted in 2017, would like to take the opportunity afforded by this Council meeting to urge all States parties to bilateral and multilateral non-proliferation frameworks to step up efforts to safeguard the current gains through continued dialogue.

Côte d'Ivoire also calls on those countries that have yet to do so to accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in order to accelerate its entry into force, as we are convinced that safeguarding the international non-proliferation architecture is above all a matter of collective responsibility. Similarly, my delegation strongly hopes that the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which is set to expire in February 2021, will be extended.

The success of our joint action in the area of non-proliferation is inextricably linked to confidence-building measures among States parties to the relevant treaties. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire believes that it is incumbent upon the nuclear-weapon States to provide guarantees on the non-use of such weapons for non-nuclear-weapon States by adopting an international legally binding instrument. That is a necessary condition for dispelling the slightest doubt or suspicion motivating the reluctance of some States to join the international effort to ban weapons of mass destruction with resolve.

Human consciousness continues to bear the indelible marks caused by the use of nuclear weapons. Any further use of that type of weapon would reflect the moral bankruptcy of our civilization. Côte d'Ivoire considers that the maintenance of international peace and security is our collective responsibility, but States with nuclear capabilities have a crucial role to play in safeguarding the stability that was achieved at the end of the Second World War within the framework of multilateral and bilateral instruments for controlling weapons of mass destruction.

**Mr. Trullols Yabra** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the presidency of Poland for



convening this meeting. We also thank Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

First, we regret the formal termination, at the beginning of the month, of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty between Russia and the United States due to alleged violations of the Treaty by one of the parties. In that regard, we note with great concern the escalation of tensions caused by this situation.

We understand that the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture is facing a major threat, with the actual possibility of a resumption of the arms race that we thought had been relegated to the era of the Cold War. The Dominican Republic reiterates its firm commitment to the obligations outlined in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its three fundamental pillars — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In that regard, we believe that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty served as an excellent complement to the NPT, which led to significant progress in the elimination of conventional and nuclear missiles, as well as in reducing the great danger of a then perceived imminent nuclear confrontation.

We believe that humankind and the planet cannot be allowed to be exposed once again to the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental damage caused by the use, development and testing of those weapons. We therefore call on the parties to give careful thought to their decisions and refrain from aggressive rhetoric and destabilizing actions, as well as to consider returning to the dialogue table, with a view to restoring confidence-building measures via an agreement and its effective implementation, whereby the commitments agreed upon in such an agreement would be respected in a sustained manner.

In conclusion, we endorse the Secretary-General's call on the parties to extend New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and enter negotiations on new arms control measures.

**Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I thank Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing

Belgium is particularly concerned about the current risks in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament. The end of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, threats to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the uncertainties surrounding the future

of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the North Korean issue are all worrisome.

Those recent developments reflect the increased polarization within the international community, wherein trust and cooperation among States have taken a major step backwards. This environment is presenting a daunting challenge to the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and makes achieving the progress urgently required at a time of increasing risks of proliferation even more difficult.

As was stated earlier, the INF Treaty was a pillar of European and international security for more than 30 years. Thanks to the Treaty, nearly 3,000 missiles equipped with nuclear or conventional warheads were removed from European soil and destroyed in a verifiable manner. The Treaty therefore represented a tangible contribution to the fulfilment of the disarmament obligations of the United States and Russia under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Belgium therefore deeply deplores the dissolution of the INF Treaty. We regret the fact that Russia has not responded to repeated international calls for it to resume the implementation of its Treaty obligations. The dissolution of the Treaty was the result.

However, our debate cannot be limited to accusations and recriminations. It is important that Russia and the United States engage in active and constructive dialogue in order to agree on stabilization and confidence-building measures. A new arms race is in no one's interests. Furthermore, the unparalleled destructive power of nuclear weapons reminds us of the need not only to prevent any proliferation, but also to make progress in the area of disarmament. More specifically, Belgium calls on Russia and the United States to engage in productive dialogue in order to develop initiatives to strengthen strategic stability and take resolute steps to reduce their nuclear arsenals, including weapons systems of all kinds. We also stress the importance of extending New START beyond 2021. The Treaty's expiration would end any limitation on the strategic nuclear forces of both countries.

Let us also not forget the responsibility of other nuclear-weapon States to contribute to arms control through their actions and participation in international deliberations. The development of new capabilities and the expansion of arsenals take us away from the objectives agreed under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Lastly, I would like to underscore that the global non-proliferation regime is a crucial element of the multilateral system, based on international law. We all have a national interest in a global order based on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

**Mr. Matjila** (South Africa): We thank you, Madam President, for convening today's meeting on threats to international peace and security. My delegation also appreciates the briefing by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

South Africa's primary concern on matters of international peace and security is the threat posed to humankind by weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. It is our firm view that the only guarantee against the intended or accidental detonation of those weapons is their total elimination. It is equally of concern that some nuclear-weapons States still insist on the modernization of their nuclear arsenals and their means of delivery, in flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

It is indeed deeply troubling that a long-established arms control instrument such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has unravelled, placing not only the region of Europe but the whole world at risk of a nuclear war and catastrophe. We also wish to use this timely opportunity to urge both the United States of America and Russia to resume discussions on the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) before it expires in 2021. Such an undertaking by the two premier nuclear-weapon States would be an appropriate and fitting tribute to the NPT, whose fiftieth anniversary we mark in 2020. We will also celebrate in 2020 the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations — the parliament of the peoples of the world, which those two countries assisted in establishing.

As the international community will commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September this year, let it serve as a constant and painful reminder to the international community of its unfulfilled commitments and obligations to eliminate nuclear weapons, as envisaged in the very first resolution (resolution 1 (I)) adopted by the General Assembly in 1946 — 73 years ago.

As we approach the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations in 2020, it is our view that we should reflect deeply and reaffirm our commitment

to the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons. South Africa's support for the total elimination of nuclear weapons is informed by our own experience as the only country to date to have developed and then voluntarily eliminated its nuclear weapons for the sake of our children and generations to come.

South Africa joins the majority of Member States in voicing our deepest concern regarding the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, as aptly outlined in the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which opened for signature on 20 September 2017. We call upon the United Nations community to sign and ratify the Treaty at the earliest possible time so that the TPNW can enter into force as soon as possible. We need just two more signatures for the Treaty to come into force. South Africa reaffirms its view that the TPNW is a bold and positive step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons and strengthens the NPT.

The NPT remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. However, we are deeply concerned that the NPT continues to be subjected to significant tensions as a result of the non-implementation of the nuclear disarmament obligations under article VI of the Treaty and the related undertakings made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the NPT.

The current NPT review cycle, which will coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty, presents an opportunity to make urgent progress on nuclear disarmament. South Africa believes that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes that require continuous and irreversible progress on both fronts. The selective focus on non-proliferation measures and the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament undermines the NPT and weakens the non-proliferation regime. The total elimination of nuclear weapons and legally binding assurances that they will never be produced again is the only guarantee that those weapons will never be used as we saw in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

In conclusion, South Africa wishes to reiterate its commitment to multilateralism and the centrality of the United Nations in resolving today's challenges, including that of nuclear disarmament.

**Mr. Alotaibi** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank Ms. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

The State of Kuwait attaches great importance to everything that could promote security and stability throughout the world and establish international peace and security. Today's subject is a very important one and has a direct impact on international peace and security.

It is unfortunate to see such an extremely important historic treaty, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which was signed at a very critical time — at the peak of the Cold War between the United States of America and the Soviet Union — end in collapse. This is undoubtedly of great concern. Looking back, we can see that the Treaty had a very important positive impact. By committing to its provisions, the two parties were able to destroy and remove approximately 2,700 missile systems in 1991. The Treaty also helped to considerably reduce tensions at that time and to tangibly maintain international peace and stability, especially in Europe. The world was looking forward to the reduction in short-range and intermediate-range nuclear missiles. However, following certain recent events, that hope has begun to fade away, in particular in the light of the threats and challenges we are facing everywhere. Our world today cannot afford further chaos, instability and disruption of international security.

The collapse of the INF Treaty and the potential repercussions could undermine other arms limitation treaties and accelerate the collapse of the global system which aims to achieving non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. It could also undermine global security and knock down a basic pillar of arms limitation, especially since some have taken advantage of the opportunity to avoid compliance with international conventions and instruments on limiting nuclear weapons.

It is unfortunate that the doctrine of nuclear deterrence is still part of the security policies of all nuclear-weapon States. Frustration is growing because of the slow pace of nuclear disarmament and the resulting disappointment, while fears of tragic and catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons are increasing.

We stress that the only way to end the threat of nuclear weapons is to completely destroy them. The ongoing possession of these deadly weapons is itself a threat to international peace and security. Circumventing the responsibility to comply with conventions limiting this danger send the wrong message to other nuclear-weapon States that did not join the Treaty on the

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, such as Israel and other countries on the Council's agenda, namely, North Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In conclusion, we call on all parties to avoid escalation and embark upon an effective dialogue with a view to adopting confidence-building measures in order to reach a new joint agreement to limit the proliferation of short- and intermediate-range nuclear missiles, and perhaps to not cancel the Treaty under discussion but to strengthen it.

**Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We consider the convening of this meeting to be timely, as the Security Council has from the outset played a crucial role in efforts to reduce and control the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We thank Ms. Nakamitsu for her valuable briefing.

In the circumstances that bring us together today, Peru wishes to reaffirm its historic position in favour of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, as well as its absolute support for all measures and international instruments that contribute to the achievement of those goals. We reject any nuclear threat, as well as the production, manufacture and deployment of nuclear weapons. That is why we support a world free of these weapons, through the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and through nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as a complete ban on the testing and deployment of nuclear weapons in outer space, the ocean or on any other terrestrial site. In this context, Peru reiterates its appeal to nuclear-weapon States to adopt concrete measures to at least comply with their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The current situation is all the more worrisome given actions that appear to be aimed at the eventual dismantling of the architecture for nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and nuclear law. Peru deeply regrets that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty has been suspended, given its positive impact in fostering confidence-building, global security and an international order based on norms. We encourage the Russian Federation and the United States of America to resolve their differences through dialogue and reach agreements on the basis of the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency. In particular, we urge both States to extend the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and agree on new arms-control policies.

I would like to conclude by stressing that the nuclear Powers must set an example and prevent a new nuclear-arms race, which, it should be remembered, will have the sole merit of having the capacity to irreversibly destroy life on our planet. We are therefore convinced of the need to follow the diplomatic path as a means of safeguarding the international non-proliferation architecture, in the first instance, and, subsequently, resuming the progressive elimination of nuclear weapons. Avoiding unilateral actions or decisions that could lead to greater instability is critically important in that regard.

**Mr. Schulz** (Germany): First of all, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her comprehensive briefing.

Under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, almost 3,000 ground-based intermediate-range missiles were verifiably destroyed. The INF Treaty was an important pillar and a real cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security and a contribution to disarmament in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Germany has followed the recent demise of the INF Treaty with great concern. But let us be very clear: the Russian Federation bears the sole responsibility for the recent demise of the INF Treaty. It is the Russian Federation that developed and fielded a missile system — the 9M729 missile system — which violated the INF Treaty and causes significant risk to Euro-Atlantic security. This is extremely regrettable because, in our view, we cannot afford an erosion of the global disarmament architecture and need to redouble efforts to preserve and strengthen it.

The future of global arms control concerns us all and is a matter for the Security Council to discuss. The United States test of a conventional cruise missile by itself does not warrant the attention of the Council.

Russia's violation of the INF Treaty is part of a broader pattern of behaviour in which Russia violates, circumvents and avoids the implementation of a number of its agreements in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Russia's actions have contributed to a disturbing development, namely, the overall erosion of the arms-control architecture, the development of new capabilities and serious proliferation trends.

In spite of, and due, to these worrisome developments, Germany is more than ever convinced that the issues of non-proliferation, disarmament and

arms control need to be priority issues on the agenda of the international community as a whole and at large. Against this background, two things are needed, and Foreign Minister Heiko Maas made these points on the occasion of the Security Council meeting on the NPT held in this Chamber on 2 April (see S/PV.8500).

First, tangible steps must be taken to reduce the risk of inadvertent escalation. More transparency and dialogue on nuclear doctrines, force postures in military contexts, crisis-proof communication lines, declaratory restraint and reduced ambiguity can all significantly contribute to a more predictable and stable security environment.

Secondly, we need a road map that will get us back on track with disarmament by preserving and further developing existing arms-control arrangements. The contribution of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty to security and stability cannot be overestimated. In the current security environment, it is essential to maintain verified limitations of the biggest strategic arsenals and to extend and build on that landmark Treaty. Russia and the United States have a responsibility in that regard.

Before concluding, let me turn also to next year's fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the bedrock of nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation diplomacy. The achievements made under that Treaty in five decades are remarkable, but in 2020 we must build on those achievements and lay the groundwork for its future, which also requires a credible recommitment to nuclear disarmament.

**Mrs. Mele Colifa** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We extend our customary gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for the briefing she just delivered.

As a country that loves peace, dialogue and brotherhood among the nations and the peoples that make up this planet, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea cannot but express its concern about the course of events that have motivated us to hold this meeting here and now. We sense that we are moving dangerously, and not for the first time in our recent history, towards a new arms race.

Facilitated by this Organization, of which we are all Members, peaceful dispute resolution, dialogue and diplomacy — especially preventive diplomacy — are the mechanisms that have enabled three quarters of

a century of relative world peace. The events taking place in various parts of the world threaten to destroy that achievement.

The rapid scientific advances that humankind has achieved in the past century have turned out to be, as aptly described, a double-edged sword. On the one hand, technology facilitates the development, well-being and progress of many societies and people, but on the other hand, when knowledge is put at the service of the military and weapons industry, the same technology that enabled that progress threatens to wipe out our way of life.

We therefore regret that so much money continues to be invested in the arms industry, when those resources could be used to make progress in many other areas where poverty and inequality reign. It is precisely those factors — poverty and inequality — that are the root causes of most of the conflicts that lead countries to arm themselves more and more, with increasingly sophisticated weapons.

My country believes that the members of the Security Council, in particular the permanent members, bear a great responsibility, and their behaviour in the theatre of international relations must reflect that status. We are now well into the twenty-first century, and geopolitics cannot be seen as a zero-sum game based on who has more missiles, better missiles and missiles with greater range.

The recent collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty is a regrettable fact that makes the world a less safe place. Equatorial Guinea believes that the United States and the Russian Federation must trust and cooperate with one another, not for their safety alone but for that of the entire planet. Both countries, even if only as permanent members, must lead by example, making greater use of soft power in their diplomacy, especially in a context in which, unlike the Cold War, more actors have emerged with short-, medium- and intercontinental-range nuclear capabilities.

The international community and the allies of both countries must work to create the necessary conditions and establish confidence-building measures so that Washington and Moscow can renegotiate this Treaty and, taking advantage of the opportunity that this challenge represents, delve deeper into disarmament issues, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

**Mr. Syihab** (Indonesia): Allow me, first, to thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her briefing.

In maintaining international peace and security, the only choice must be to move forward on right path. Although the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty was bilateral in nature, its positive effect was felt by all States. The Treaty was an important part of the arms-control and disarmament infrastructure. It contributed, at least to some degree, to a reduced threat from nuclear and conventional weapons. We therefore regret the termination of the INF Treaty. It is a major step backwards in the maintenance of international peace and security. We share the concern of Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu that the collapse of the INF Treaty will remove one of the few constraints on the development of dangerous classes of missiles.

My delegation has no desire to use this very important meeting to determine only who is right and who is wrong. The stakes are too high. Therefore, allow me to make the following points.

First, Indonesia regrets the inability of the relevant parties to continue dialogue to uphold the INF Treaty. We are concerned that the Treaty's termination could lead to a new arms race. Given that some are already modernizing nuclear weapons and developing new armament technologies, the Treaty's absence will exacerbate the great strain weighing on the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, spurring instability.

Secondly, Indonesia calls upon all parties to exercise maximum restraint, because maintaining regional and global stability is our common priority. We must uphold the rules-based international system, with effective multilateralism and meaningful negotiation as key principles. Let me draw the attention of the relevant parties to some vital instruments aimed at maintaining peace and stability, particularly the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, which emphasizes confidence-building measures as the basis for relations between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and its partners. Major States that were parties to the INF Treaty are also parties to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. Therefore, the obligations under the latter still apply.

Thirdly, Indonesia stresses the imperative of preserving and advancing the general arms-control,

disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. As a party to both the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as one of the major proponents of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and as the coordinator of the working group on disarmament of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Indonesia continues to support every effort to limit, reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. We also reiterate our long-standing commitment to verifiable and effective treaty-based nuclear arms control and disarmament.

While hoping that the relevant parties will negotiate the creation of a new and even more effective instrument to replace the INF Treaty, we would welcome an early discussion of the future of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and other arms-control agreements.

Reaffirming Indonesia's commitment to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, or Bangkok Treaty, in ensuring the security and stability of the region, Indonesia calls upon all the relevant parties to sign the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty as soon as possible.

The existence of even one nuclear weapon, by design or accident, poses immense risks of catastrophe. Indeed, there are no right or wrong hands to possess such weapons. As Indonesia has emphasized repeatedly, total elimination is the only guarantee against this threat.

**Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation listened attentively to the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1987, is an important treaty on arms control and disarmament. With the objective of strengthening strategic stability, the Treaty effectively mitigated the arms race in intermediate-range missiles between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in Europe. It helped to enhance strategic mutual trust between the major Powers, eased international tensions and advanced nuclear disarmament.

As we enter a new century, safeguarding the effectiveness of the INF Treaty is of great practical significance, not only to the United States and the Russian Federation but also to international and regional peace and security. The two countries should have properly handled differences over Treaty compliance

through dialogue and consultation in order to diligently safeguard the Treaty's effectiveness.

However, the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the Treaty led to its demise, which will have a far-reaching negative impact on global strategic balance and stability, regional security in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region, as well as the international arms control regime. The international community should be clear-headed about the impact.

With regard to the INF Treaty, China has made clear its position on many occasions. It is unacceptable to use China as an excuse for withdrawing from the Treaty. China rejects the baseless accusations made by the representative of the United States.

The world is undergoing profound and unprecedented changes, as has never been seen in this century. Peace, development and win-win cooperation remain the irreversible trends of the times, with forces for peace predominating over elements of war. At the same time, destabilizing factors and uncertainties in international security are increasingly prominent. Multilateralism is the most effective means to address our common challenges.

All countries should resolutely safeguard the international order, with international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations at its core; embrace the new concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security; fully respect the legitimate and justified security concerns of all States; work hard towards a peaceful and stable international security environment; and promote the building of a shared future for humankind.

The Charter of the United Nations entrusts the Security Council with the important responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, and Council members should earnestly fulfil their responsibilities in that regard. All countries should refrain from taking any action that could undermine the security interests of other countries.

Prior to its formal withdrawal from the INF Treaty, the United States had already announced its plan to accelerate its development and deployment of intermediate-range missiles, and recently it conducted a test launch of a new type of land-based cruise missile. China strongly urges that country to adopt an attitude of utmost responsibility, exercise restraint and earnestly preserve the existing arms-control regime, in an effort

to safeguard the global strategic balance and stability, and international and regional peace and security. That is a shared message from the international community.

The United States withdrawal from the INF Treaty is another negative act in the pursuit of unilateralism and the shirking of international obligations by the United States. Its true intention is to render the Treaty no longer binding and seek a unilateral, absolute military advantage. China has always pursued a national defence policy that is defensive in nature. China's land-based intermediate-range missiles are all deployed within Chinese territory. They are for defence purposes only and pose no threat to any other country. China firmly opposes the United States attempts to deploy land-based intermediate-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region and hopes that the United States will exercise restraint and be rational in that regard.

The international arms-control and disarmament treaty system, as the cornerstone of global strategic balance and stability, is key to international peace and security. Nuclear disarmament, as one of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, constitutes an important part of global governance in the nuclear field. All countries should follow the principles of maintaining global strategic stability and undiminished security for all and advance the disarmament process step by step.

Countries possessing the largest nuclear arsenals should earnestly fulfil their special and primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament. We support the political and diplomatic efforts undertaken by Russia in that regard. We support and encourage Russia and the United States to maintain dialogue on strategic security and bilateral nuclear-disarmament issues; commit to the extension of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty; and continue to make substantive reductions in their nuclear arsenals in a verifiable, irreversible and legally binding manner, with a view to creating the necessary conditions for advancing multilateral nuclear-disarmament processes.

I would like to stress that any arms-control negotiations should take into full consideration overall national military strengths and respect the principle of undiminished security for all, which is a key principle of international arms control. China has repeatedly made clear our position on arms-control negotiations. At the current stage, China has no interest and will not

participate in the so-called China-United States-Russia trilateral arms-control negotiations.

China unwaveringly pursues a national defence policy that is defensive in nature. China's nuclear strategy for self-defence is completely transparent, and its nuclear policy is highly responsible. China's nuclear arsenal is extremely limited in scale and in no way poses a threat to international peace and security. For decades, China has actively participated in arms-control consultations and negotiations, under multilateral mechanisms and frameworks, including that of the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament.

China opposes an arms race and works to safeguard global strategic balance and stability. Moving forward, China will continue to firmly uphold multilateralism and actively participate in multilateral arms-control processes to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Poland.

Allow me to first thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, for her briefing.

Poland is committed to all efforts aimed at the preservation of effective arms-control and disarmament arrangements, which are fundamental to international security. However, to be effective, the commitments must be verifiable and observed by all sides in good faith.

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has been crucial in upholding European and global security for more than 30 years. Under the INF Treaty, almost 3,000 missiles have been removed and verifiably destroyed. We regret the failure of the long-lasting United States efforts to preserve the INF. The erosion of that significant element of the European security architecture constitutes yet another challenge for international security.

The Russian Federation bears sole responsibility for the demise of the Treaty. NATO allies have raised concerns over Russia's compliance with the Treaty for several years, including within the NATO-Russia Council.

In December 2018, NATO allies affirmed that Russia had developed and deployed the SSC-8 missile system, also known as the 9M729, which constitutes

a violation of the Treaty. We regret that Russia has shown no willingness and taken no steps to ensure the implementation of the INF Treaty in an effective, verifiable and transparent manner.

In a post-INF-Treaty world, we have to take steps to guarantee our security. However, NATO does not intend to install new land-based nuclear missiles in Europe, while Russia decided to field its SSC-8 missiles across from European regions. Those rockets are hard to detect and can carry conventional or nuclear warheads and therefore significantly enhance the risk of nuclear conflict.

Poland, like other allies, supported the United States' decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty. It was a logical and understandable reaction to Russia's actions.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We had not intended to go into technical details, but because our American colleagues and their partners brought up specific issues, I am compelled to take the floor once again. I will be brief.

Since the 9M729 missile was mentioned, I would like to give an explanation. Over many years of discussions, the United States has steadfastly refused to communicate with us not only about the tests that have been carried out, which, as we understand, gave rise to questions in Washington, but also about any identifying information concerning that device.

Last year, after it finally became clear what Washington was so concerned about, we offered to the United States side the opportunity to take a look, behind closed doors, at the 9M729 missile they were interested in, so that it could obtain exhaustive information about it and thus be assured that that weapon did not violate the Treaty. That response was once again met with a refusal.

We then made another attempt. As an unprecedented transparency measure that goes far beyond the requirements of the Treaty, we publicly displayed the missile in the presence of foreign delegations, but United States representatives did not participate in

the event and recommended that their NATO partners follow suit, which, of course, they did. We therefore fail to understand my American colleague's arguments. We offered to provide the Americans with all the information they needed to save the Treaty. And now that they have already caused the Treaty to collapse, the American side is making attempts to demand that information.

With regard to the new Russian weapons systems that were mentioned earlier, my American colleague must know that they all share a common feature, namely, the ability to overcome missile-defence systems. It is precisely because of the withdrawal of the United States of America from the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, to which I referred earlier in my statement, and the deployment of such systems near our borders that we were forced to develop this type of device.

That is another problem that Washington has artificially created, which, as I already said, we have been trying unsuccessfully to prevent for a long time. I should like to stress, so that no one has any illusions, that the NATO countries are involved in this situation.

In conclusion, I would like to say that, unfortunately, today's meeting has proved to be so predictable that it verges on the boring. As we expected, despite the facts and common sense, the United States and its client countries parroting along with it were shifting the blame from the guilty to the innocent, blaming Russia for all mortal sins. 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 accepted as proof, such behaviour is considered normal. The fact is that we live in the real world, not a virtual one. And as long as there are countries and experts who continue to question all these seamless but empty Western tales, our world still has a chance.

I would like to believe that our initiative with China will increase the number of those who are not afraid to call things by their real names or to demand actions and practical steps from those who violate agreements of importance to the whole world and flout the norms of international law to serve their own interests.

*The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.*