

## KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Statement by H.E. Mr Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Ambassador,  
Permanent Representative

Security Council

Briefing on "Threats to international peace and security"

New York, 22 August 2019

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Madam President,

First of all, I would like to thank Ms Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her introduction.

Madam President,

Belgium is particularly concerned by the current risks in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament. The end of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), the threats to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and uncertainties concerning the future of the New START Treaty and the North Korean issue are all causes for concern.

These recent developments reflect the increased polarisation within the international community, where trust and cooperation among States are falling sharply. This climate is challenging the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, making it even more difficult to achieve the progress that is essential now that the risk of proliferation is escalating.

As has already been said, the INF Treaty was a pillar of European and global security for more than 30 years. Thanks to this treaty, almost three thousand 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 (NPT).

Belgium therefore deeply regrets the termination of the INF Treaty. We regret that Russia has not responded to repeated international calls for it to resume the implementation of its treaty obligations. This is what led to the dissolution of the treaty.

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 stabilisation and confidence-building measures. A new arms race is in no one's interest.

Moreover, the unparalleled destructive power of nuclear weapons reminds us of the need not only to prevent 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 with a view to developing initiatives that can strengthen strategic stability and resolutely reduce their nuclear arsenals, including all types of weapons system. We also stress the importance of extending the New START Treaty beyond 2021, as its expiry would put an end to any limitation on the strategic nuclear forces of both countries.

Nor should we forget the responsibility of other nuclear States to contribute to arms control through their actions and their 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.

Madam President,

Finally, I would like to stress 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 the existence of a global order based on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Thank you.