

S T A T E M E N T

by First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Igor N. Shcherbak at informal consultations of the UN General Assembly on the Secretary-General's report "Mandating and delivering: analysis and recommendations to facilitate the review of mandates" (on maintenance of international peace and security and disarmament sections)

25 April 2006

Dear Co-Chairpersons,

At the first rounds of informal consultations to review mandates within the open debate we had the possibility to set out some fundamental points characterizing our approach to this work. We remain interested that the practical modalities and schedule of such review be agreed upon as soon as possible.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his contribution to the debate and stand ready to take his opinion into account during the forthcoming work. However, limiting this process to the consideration of the recommendations contained in his report only, in our view, is not in tune with the original decisions of Summit-2005.

We confirm that it would be appropriate to review mandates using direct intergovernmental negotiations on separate thematic blocks. Each of the main bodies of the United Nations should review its own decisions. Of course, assessing priority and effectiveness of the mandates is a prerogative of the Member States.

We share many of the specific ideas voiced during the GA informal consultations on April 7 about further extension and improvements of the list of mandates prepared by the Secretariat with a view to making this list more informative and easier to work with.

We would be interested in getting specific suggestions from the co-chairpersons in this regard.

At the previous round of informal consultations we have already made some preliminary comments regarding those issues of maintaining international peace and security which are on the agenda of the Security Council. We proposed to address them within the work of review of mandates in the Security Council.

Now, let me speak about the mandates under consideration by the General Assembly. We share the view that determining periodicity of the reports requested from the Secretary-General the Member States should proceed from the dynamics of the situation developing in this or that conflict zone. The recommendation to prepare a consolidated report, which would put together separate reports to the main bodies on the same issue, also deserves attention. At the same time such approach should be rather applicable to the thematic reports, for example on the status of women. The format of the reports on specific problems, for instance on Western Sahara mentioned by the Secretary-General, should reflect the special nature of work of the main bodies.

We share the Secretary-General's concern that the peacekeeping mandates are not always matched with necessary resources, first of all, contingents and relevant logistics. Of course, it is important that the coordination between the Security Council, the Secretariat, contingent-supplying countries and financial contributors continues to be improved. The determining factor here is political will of the Member States to provide relevant funds though.

Russia's fundamental position is that the substantive discussion of all the proposals made by the Secretary-General, concerning administrative and budgetary aspects of the UN work, including financing of special political missions and PKOs as well as thematic mandates in this area, should take place in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly taking into account the opinion of ACABQ. Therefore, the Russian delegation in the Fifth Committee would be ready to constructively consider specific proposals of the Secretary-General on the above mentioned issues provided that there

is a detailed substantiation of them in next substantive reports, which are to be submitted to the Fifth Committee through ACABQ.

We share the Secretary-General's concern about the insufficient progress in some areas of the UN disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. We cannot agree though that currently there is an "atmosphere of stalemate and inaction". The United Nations annually hosts dozens of very important events, some of them at the top level, to bring together the States' approaches to the key issues of international security and stability. In particular, through concerted efforts we managed to relaunch the work of the UN Commission on Disarmament after several years of interruption.

Optimization of the existing procedures for submitting documents and organizational measures to implement mandates contained in them is another story. Streamlining this process is long overdue, but possible steps in this direction should be well calculated so as to keep intact the balance established in recent years of interests of the states with regard to complex issues of disarmament and non-proliferation. In case of consensus we will not object to the proposal to consider some items of the UN GA First Committee agenda on a biennial or triennial basis.

At the same time we have a mixed assessment of the Secretary-General's proposals in this regard. In particular, we are convinced that the issue of international information security (items 114) retains its significance, and we do not think that it should be considered on a biennial or triennial basis. Its significance was reaffirmed in the course of the current UN General Assembly, at the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) and the World Telecommunications Development Conference. This subject matter will be further developed, given the start of international implementation of the WSIS decisions, where the United Nations is to play an important role.

Besides, we believe that the international information security is directly related to the use of information and communication technologies, which have developed in

an unprecedented way throughout the world. This subject-matter is, first of all, focused on search for practical mechanisms to reduce the recently emerged international threats related to possible use of the information and communication technologies for ill-willed military political, criminal and terrorist purposes.

In principle we agree with the report's provisions regarding the items on the agenda of notifications on nuclear tests (redundant since the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Peace Zone (item 115).

“The issue of missiles in all its aspects” (item 116) is of global nature. We believe that it would be appropriate to preserve the mandate of the respective panel of governmental experts preparing recommendations for the UN Secretary-General's report on this subject to be submitted to the General Assembly. As for the proposal to study this problem in smaller groups, we believe that it needs additional discussion. What needs to be clarified first is how such groups are going to be formed, what mandate they will have, what will be the degree of involvement of international organizations in them will be etc.

Our delegation cannot agree with the report's provisions concerning modifications in the work of Committee on Information and in the procedure for consideration of relevant reports.

The Russian Federation is prepared for a constructive work to review mandates, which should result in mutually accepted decisions of the mandates under consideration. We agree with the Secretary-General that this process may take some time. Artificial haste can be counterproductive here. At the same time we believe that this issue should not be politicized or lead to a mere confirmation of importance of some mandates. The review should result in a reorientation of financial and human resources of the United Nations towards higher priorities in its activities.

Thank you.