



**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN
Geneva**

**Statement by Mr. Husham Ahmed, Counsellor at the Plenary Meeting of
the Conference on Disarmament**

30 May 2024

*(Panel Discussion on Promoting transparency, including on nuclear doctrines and
arsenals under Agenda Item 7)*

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening the Plenary meeting today.

We would also like to thank the panelists for their presentations.

Mr. President,

Transparency in doctrines and armaments has the potential to enhance confidence, ease tensions, and strengthen regional and international peace and security.

Yet, the utility, applicability and impact of transparency measures are context specific depending on the political and security dynamics in a given region and sub-region, as is illustrated by developments in various parts of Asia and Europe today.

Also, it is equally important to acknowledge that transparency measures are at best complementary and not a substitute to concrete arms control, restraint and disarmament measures. Nor should they be pursued as an end in themselves.

Transparency and confidence-building measures can work incrementally and in small steps, potentially paving the way to more concrete agreements on restraint, avoidance of an arms race, and arms limitation. The ultimate goal of these measures is not only to manage the drivers of tensions and conflicts but also to prevent and resolve them.

Mr. President,

When it comes to nuclear doctrines and arsenals, we note there is no single, universally applicable framework for transparency, as also noted by Mr. Baklitsky today in his remarks.

Transparency measures need to be balanced against the need to protect sensitive information that is of national security concern. Furthermore, deliberate ambiguity at times can be strategically important for the credibility of deterrence for smaller states that do not possess vast arsenals of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery.

Following considerations are also essential to foster the desired level of trust:

First, a discussion on nuclear doctrines that does not take into account the actual postures does little to assuage concerns of states. For instance, a state that maintains a high level of readiness for its arsenal and has a history of accidental or inadvertent launches of its delivery systems will still contribute to crisis instability, even if it professes a No First Use doctrine.

Second, policy declarations and doctrines are mere expressions of intent, which in turn are not verifiable. It is an established fact that states plan their defence and security on the basis of actual capabilities and force configurations of their adversaries. For example, actions of a state that pursues capabilities for comprehensive pre-emptive counterforce strikes and accumulates significant amounts of so-called “strategic reserves” of fissile material outside of IAEA safeguards will be considered destabilizing.

Third, nuclear doctrines and arsenals cannot be detached from the larger issue of conventional capabilities, particularly in regions like South Asia with significant asymmetries. If a state adopts an offensive conventional doctrine in its relentless pursuit of limited warfare in a nuclearized environment to pursue regional dominance, an exclusive focus on nuclear doctrines will not lead to deterrence stability. Hence, the international community must strongly challenge the pursuit of normalization of a limited conventional conflict below the nuclear threshold, which would always carry risks of escalation.

Mr. President,

Considering these limitations of an exclusive focus on transparency in nuclear doctrines, a more comprehensive approach is required to pursue

mitigation of strategic risks. This approach should encompass discussions on:

- a) Security concerns and threat perceptions – covering both traditional and non-traditional dimensions, including the new and emerging areas that can impact strategic stability.
- b) The nature of security doctrines and postures in both nuclear and conventional domains.

Mr. President,

Pakistan has consistently demonstrated utmost restraint and responsibility in the stewardship of its nuclear capability.

Pakistan remains committed to the principle of Credible Minimum Deterrence. We have consistently sought stability in our region and have made concrete proposals to this end including several nuclear and conventional Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and establishment of a Strategic Restraint Regime in South Asia.

Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to restraint, risk reduction, and the avoidance of an arms race. Additionally, we continue to lend our support to the international arms control and disarmament initiatives that uphold the principles of equal and undiminished security.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the quest for transparency, though not an end in itself, necessitates a comprehensive approach. Building trust is essential for meaningful dialogue and engagement, which in turn fosters transparency and CBMs. Trust is built when states faithfully respect international law, eschew unilateral and illegal measures, and commit to conflict resolution and peaceful settlement of disputes.

I thank you.
