



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

**Statement by Pakistan delegation at the Plenary Meeting of the
Conference on Disarmament
06 June 2023**

*(Panel Discussion on Transparency in Armaments, including transparency in
nuclear doctrines and arsenals)*

Madam President,

Thank you for convening the Plenary meeting today.

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

Madam President,

As we deliberate over the subject of transparency in armaments, it is useful to recall that this Conference first took up this subject systematically under Agenda Item 7 pursuant to the UNGA resolution in 1991.

This UNGA resolution (A/RES/46/36L) provided a broader context i.e. to address the question of excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms, including military holdings, and to elaborate universal and non-discriminatory practical means to increase openness and transparency.

We agree that increased openness and transparency in doctrines and armaments could enhance confidence, ease tensions, and strengthen regional and international peace and security.

Yet, the utility, applicability and impact of transparency measures are context specific. They do not necessarily lend themselves to their intended scheme in a linear fashion. They are dependent 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 in nature; they are not a substitute to concrete arms control and disarmament measures. Neither are they or should be pursued as end in themselves.

Madam President,

With these caveats, transparency and confidence-building measures could work incrementally and in small steps, potentially paving the way to more concrete agreements on restraint, avoidance of an arms race, and arms limitation.

Transparency and CBMs as well as building of trust between states can be a mutually reinforcing process. The ultimate goal of these measures is to not just to manage the drivers of tensions and conflict but to prevent and resolve conflicts.

These objectives, some of which are also listed in the “Guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters” adopted by the UNDC in 1992, must be kept in mind, while evaluating the efficacy of transparency measures.

Madam President,

As for transparency in nuclear doctrines and arsenals, we note the various forms and the diverse application by states of such measures.

A single, universally applicable framework for transparency in nuclear doctrines does not exist. Transparency in nuclear doctrines can only be effective to a certain extent and within specific contexts.

Transparency measures need to be balanced against the need to protect sensitive information that is of military and 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.

It is also imperative to recognize that an exclusive focus on transparency in nuclear doctrines is insufficient to foster the desired level of trust. In this context, I would like to outline the following considerations:

First, a discussion on nuclear doctrines that does not take into account the existing 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 launches of delivery systems will still contribute to crisis instability, even if it claims to adhere to 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, a state that develops capabilities for comprehensive pre-emptive counterforce strikes and accumulates significant amounts of fissile material under the guise of "strategic reserves" outside of IAEA safeguards will surely contribute to an arms race.

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 establish regional dominance, an exclusive focus on nuclear doctrines will not lead to deterrence stability. Hence, the international community must strongly challenge and discourage the notion that limited conventional conflict can occur below the nuclear threshold without any risk of escalation. Similarly, doctrines envisaging preemptory use of force or "surprise attacks" are highly destabilizing and must be renounced.

Madam President,

Considering the limitations of an exclusive focus on 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 in both nuclear and conventional domains.

Pakistan has consistently demonstrated utmost restraint and responsibility in the stewardship of its nuclear capability. We maintain this capability solely for the purpose of deterring all forms of aggression. Our capabilities are driven by our security needs.

Pakistan remains committed to the principle of Credible Minimum Deterrence. We have consistently sought deterrence 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, Madam President, the quest for transparency, though not an end in itself, necessitates a comprehensive approach.

Building of trust is a prerequisite to meaningful dialogue and engagement as well as a process of transparency and CBMs.

In turn, trust is fostered when states adhere faithfully to respect international law, eschew unilateral and illegal measures, thereby setting out a path to conflict resolution, peaceful settlement of disputes, meaningful dialogue on mutual security concerns, a clear understanding of threat perceptions, examining the nature of security doctrines in both the nuclear and conventional realms, risk reduction and advancement of peace and strategic stability, both regionally and globally.

I thank you.
