EXPLANATION OF VOTE BEFORE THE VOTE BY MR. D.B. VENKATESH VARMA, DIRECTOR, MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, NEW DELHI, ON RESOLUTION ENTITLED "CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES IN THE REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL CONTEXTS" ON NOVEMBER 4, 2003

Mr. Chairman,

The Indian delegation has sought the floor to express its position why it will cast a negative vote on the draft resolution "Confidence building measures in the regional and sub-regional contexts" as contained in document L 18 Rev. 1.

This draft resolution has gone through some revision. In informal consultations we had conveyed our multiple concerns. Though the sponsor of the resolution has gone through the motions of taking on board suggestions made by delegations, including ours, the core objective of the resolution remains unchanged i.e. using CBMs as a vehicle for introducing vague notions of 'regions of tension' and 'military balance'; and for dragging the UN Secretary General into an ambiguous role under questionable motivations.

It is indeed a pity that very important subject of CBMs, which enjoys broad support including that of India, is being brought to the First Committee under dubious conditions of this resolution. There is a distortion of the meaning and accepted use of CBMs as commonly agreed in consensus documents of the UN Disarmament Commission. In fact, the resolution is silent on the invaluable contributions made by UN Disarmament Commission. It betrays a lack of understanding of all the systematic labour and sincerity of the real practitioners of CBMs that have made a difference.

CBMs need sustained dialogue and application in order to be useful and productive. CBMs comprise a gradual process to create a positive atmosphere in difficult conditions. Engaging into CBMs presupposes the good faith of the parties concerned for increasing space for peace, which is inconceivable when dialogue and CBMs are treated as a cloak to cover the intent to change the status quo. Similarly, CBMs cannot be a subterfuge to get a whole host of non-parties to a dispute involved in the process.

The draft resolution suffers from these drawbacks and effects only a travesty of CBMs. The draft tries to fuse selective quotes from the UN Charter with concepts and notions that have no bearing upon any consensus document.

An entirely artificial construct of "regions of tension" is advanced in Operative Paragraph 7 to assign a role to the Secretary General beyond what is prescribed in the Charter or by established practice. Moreover, involving non-parties in a dispute may be a recipe for wrecking rather than building confidence in particular situations. OP 7 would create a bad precedent in our deliberations, exacerbate contentious issues, and knock the bottom out of the CBMs option being implemented in practice.

By prescribing 'military balance' between states in the 'regions of tension', the draft resolution imposes unrealistic demands on diverse states of different sizes and security requirements. Such 'balance' is intended to justify quest for the sterile concept of parity, derived from the cold war. In fact, the total absence of any reference to threats posed by international terrorism or by terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction typifies the anachronistic approach of this resolution.

This resolution is unacceptable to India, both in its objectives and content. We will, therefore, cast a negative vote to reject its premise as well as its outcome, and the use of its content, piecemeal or as a whole, in regard to other areas of interest to the First Committee.

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