



Sergey A. Ryabkov
Deputy Minister
Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Lecture within the PIR Center and MGIMO University Joint Module “WMD
Nonproliferation and International Security”**

December 4, 2013

Today's world with all its rapid processes is passing through a transitional stage of development. Countries become more interdependent, their economies and cultures are intermixing. The entire system of international relations goes through a historically unprecedented transformation. Polycentric geopolitical landscape has become more clear-cut. Geography of global development potential has been expanding, it is accompanied by the emergence of new centers of economic growth and political influence.

The world financial and economic crisis has demonstrated ineffectiveness of the existing global governance system that fails to reflect modern political, economic and financial realities. Global development potential is shifting rapidly to the East. All these processes reduce the leading role of the main western countries in the new global balance of powers, interests and network cooperation.

Apart from financial and economic instability, there still exist the threats of regional and local conflicts, WMD proliferation, terrorism, trans-border crime, food shortage, climate change. A unifying agenda is being imposed by life itself. Global challenges and threats can be effectively addressed solely thorough joint efforts of all states.

Priorities in international relations have changed. We need to abandon ideological and other superstitions and instincts, as well as intellectual inertia of the past. Rational policy, state pragmatism and creative approaches to conflict resolution are in demand. The way how international affairs are handled is also undergoing major changes. Bloc and hierarchical structures are being substituted with multilateral and network diplomacy, which implies various and probably cross-cutting forms of interaction between states to meet common challenges. The objective concurrence of national interests free from any ideology serves here as a regulating source.

Some Western states seek to harness current changes and take advantage of them. There are attempts to strengthen positions by relying more heavily on the use of force in international relations. Downplaying of such essential principles, as refraining from the threat or use of force, peaceful resolution of disputes, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, non-interference in their internal affairs, poses a threat for the world order, in particular, within the context of profound upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa. These are the key principles of the UN Charter, which places the main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security on the Security Council. A special threat is posed by the excessive sanctions pressure, a free interpretation of the "responsibility to protect" concept with an emphasis on its military component, promoting of the UN SC resolutions containing ambiguous provisions open to broad interpretation.

Russia continues to stand up for the rule of international law, the necessity to plan each and every action on the international scene and then undertake it while strictly observing its norms and principles, for the democratization of international relations and formation of a democratic world order on this basis. Various military actions are possible only in compliance with the UN Charter. Internal conflicts and crises, which can have an impact on international security, must be resolved only by peaceful means through an inclusive political dialogue. Measures taken by the international community must be aimed at promoting national reconciliation while displaying respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, as well as observing the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs. We must not allow violations of the international law to be portrayed as its "creative development".

SYRIA. Further prolongation of the military conflict in Syria may provoke disintegration of the country and turn its territory into the source of extremism, terrorism and regional instability.

We are strongly convinced that imposing decisions by foreign interference, ultimatums and pressure may lead to instability, disruption and anarchy. In order to assure positive and stable result it is necessary to take into account the interests of all religious and ethnic groups of the population. It may be achieved only through dialogue between government and opposition.

Current process of chemical demilitarization of the SAR is carried out in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 2118, which was adopted unanimously. It includes launch of a political process on the basis of the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 by convening an international conference on Syria.

We consider that we should rigorously follow the procedure elaborated in the US-Russian Framework Agreement of 14 September 2013 in Geneva that provided the basis for future decision of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) supported by Resolution 2118. These decisions are already being implemented, in particular under the control of the joint UN/OPCW Mission. On October 6, 2013 the destruction of the production and mixing equipment for chemical warfare agents began as well as filling equipment for their delivery systems.

We should note that during all these weeks as soon as Syria joined the Convention for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (CPCW) on 14 September 2013 and implemented its obligations in the framework of the CPCW in the regime of temporary implementation Damascus began to fully cooperate with the OPCW as well as with the UN. The progress is evident. We expect that it continues. Syria became the official 190th OPCW member on 14 October.

We are seriously concerned about current strong tendency of strengthening the position of Islamists among those who fight against the Syrian government. It is reported that radical islamists are being supported by the Saudis, the others by the Qataris and there are associated with Al-Qaida and affiliated groups like Dzabhat-an-Nusra. We observe different situation: armed men come together on the basis of extremist ideology that is contrary to traditional Islam affirms intolerance to foreign opinion and way of life. They impose by force their views and rules. All these groups even those that are not directly connected with Al-Qaida act in its interests, i.e. they want to create in Syria one more platform for extremism and international terrorism. Incredible as it may seem, such activities are well financed by the Gulf countries and get indirectly their political patronage.

NONPROLIFERATION. Russia considers strengthening of the nuclear nonproliferation regime as one of the most important tasks which has an absolute foreign policy priority. Therefore, we attach particular importance to attaining the highest possible effectiveness of the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of the abovementioned regime.

We are convinced that consistent and balanced implementation and strengthening of the regime objectively correspond to the interests of all countries. We expect that through constructive cooperation between all states we will be able to achieve such results that will be conducive to the consolidation of international efforts aimed at intensive implementation of the NPT potential with a view to preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons and ensuring disarmament and peaceful nuclear cooperation.

The current international developments demonstrate that the task of comprehensive strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime has never been more urgent. We strongly believe that today's challenges in the field of nuclear non-proliferation can and should be handled within the framework of the NPT and based upon the inviolability of its provisions, as well as in strict compliance with norms of international law and with due respect to the legitimate interests of all States in terms of security and development.

Iran

Exactly this understanding has become the backbone of a historical agreement reached in Geneva on November, 24. This milestone signifies a break in the ten-year deadlock surrounding one of the world's most urgent crises. It is based on the concept which was proposed by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin and formalised in the Russian Foreign Policy Concept, whereby we all agree to acknowledge the right of Iran to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including naturally its right to

enrich, while understanding that the world’s concerns over all outstanding issues regarding Iran’s nuclear programme will be closed and that the programme itself will be under strict and stringent control of the IAEA.

It was agreed that the first step towards this goal will last for six months. Iran will freeze its nuclear program for this period, and will not install new centrifuges or undertake any steps concerning the construction of a heavy water moderated reactor in Arak. Thus, the entire scope of Iran’s nuclear program, which is currently under full and comprehensive IAEA control, will remain the same for the next six months. This agreement is expected to build confidence and allow our partners from the United States and the European Union to ease the pressure of sanctions which were introduced against Iran through the adoption of illegitimate unilateral decisions outside of the UN Security Council framework.

The Russian side stated many times and at different levels that the policy of sanctions completely exhausted its potential after the UN Security Council Resolution 1929 was adopted in 2010. We consider all additional restrictions taken unilaterally by the US, the EU and others beyond the scope of the UN Security Council resolutions to be of illegitimate nature. They are in no way designed to strengthen international non-proliferation regimes.

All this represents a matter of great concern for us. What is the purpose of such unilateral sanctions? They do not only undermine the efficiency and constructiveness of the current negotiations but also seriously harm the national economy of Iran, covering multiple areas beyond nuclear activities and affecting oil and banking sector, trade, maritime shipping and other key spheres of economic activity. So, we have strong impression that the above-mentioned unilateral measures are aimed at destabilizing domestic situation in Iran, provoking public unrest with their ultimate goal being change of regime in Iran. This approach is totally unacceptable for Russia. We do not see any alternative to diplomatic resolution of Iranian nuclear problem.

Customary international law provides for one state to introduce unilateral sanctions against another state only as a responsive measure to hostile actions or aggression. In our opinion, this case is absolutely inapplicable to Iran. And it is completely inappropriate and irrelevant to refer in this context to the unilateral sanctions introduced by Russia against Georgia. This decision was taken following the armed attacks at Russian peacemakers by Georgian armed forces back in 2008.

WMDFZ. The success achieved in Geneva will have a positive influence upon security issues both internationally and regionally and contribute to the process of establishing in the Middle East of a zone, free of nuclear weapons and other WMD as

well as of their means of delivery (WMDFZ), which is also remains one of the most urgent and acute issues.

We regret that despite the existing decisions, the Conference on the establishment of such a zone was never convened in 2012. We strongly believe that the co-sponsors of the Conference did not have the authority to postpone it. Russia has never given its consent to postponing the dates. We also disagreed that no collective decision concerning this matter had been taken by the co-sponsors. In this regard we would have admitted the possibility of postponing the Conference, but only with the explicit consent of all states of the Middle East and an announcement of new concrete dates.

In the current situation we pursue active efforts with the view of convening a Conference on the Middle East WMDFZ at an early date. To this end two preparatory meetings attended by all states of the Middle East were held in Glion, Switzerland in late October and November. Key purpose of the meetings was to agree upon the procedural modalities and the agenda of the Conference.

NWFZ. Generally, the establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones (NWFZ) is an important instrument in enhancing regional and international security as well as strengthening the nuclear nonproliferation regime. The geographical expansion of such zones plays a major role in addressing the issue of providing legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states.

In 2011 Russia ratified Protocols I and II to the African Nuclear-Weapon- Free Zone Treaty. We support the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia and are ready to finalize its legal status with our P5 partners and the countries of the region.

Russia has completed all internal procedures necessary to accede to the Protocol to the Treaty of Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). We consider it ready to be signed by nuclear-weapon states.

IAEA SAFEGUARDS. It is essential for us to promote the establishment of the architecture of international cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy which would reduce the risks of world-wide proliferation of sensitive technologies with scrupulous respect for the rights of the States that duly comply with their nonproliferation obligations to satisfy their legitimate energy needs with the use of nuclear energy. And it is not only about States fulfilling their non-proliferation obligations, but also about nuclear materials not falling into the hands of malicious non-State actors, primarily terrorists.

That is why Russia supports the promotion of the effectiveness of IAEA safeguards, but only in such a way that these safeguards be applied in an absolutely unbiased and objective manner. We fully support the universalization of the Additional

Protocol to the IAEA Safeguards Agreement while recognizing that the accession to the Additional Protocol is absolutely voluntary.

1540 UN SC COMMITTEE. We support the work in the 1540 UNSC Committee and within the framework of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT). We attach great importance to the universalization of international legal mechanisms in the sphere of nuclear security and countering nuclear terrorism, namely the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its Amendment. We call upon all parties concerned to accelerate the process of the ratification of this Amendment.

PEACEFUL USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY. Russia has consistently supported the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy worldwide. That is, of course, on the basis of compliance with the NPT commitments on the non-diversion of nuclear materials to military purposes. We believe that this could be made possible *inter alia* through the establishment of a modern and proliferation-resistant architecture of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy based on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle.

The Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear accident demonstrated the necessity to strengthen international legal framework in order to ensure the safety of nuclear facilities at stages of their construction and operation. To this end the Russian Federation has put forward a number of initiatives on the improvement of relevant international legal norms. We are convinced that early adoption of our proposals will help to avoid or minimize the negative consequences of nuclear accidents in the future.

We are pleased to note certain signs showing that nuclear renaissance has recommenced after the Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear accident. Further study of the lessons learned after the accident should be pursued in an emotionless manner thus opening the way to a wide international discussion on the future of peaceful nuclear energy.

The High-level Conference "Nuclear Energy in the 21st century" was held last June in Saint-Petersburg under the auspices of the IAEA and became one of the key international events of 2013 and gave a new impetus to the development of the global safety of nuclear energy.

NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY. In our view, it is important to work towards creating the conditions for further steps in nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, with all States possessing nuclear weapons joining this process. It is worth mentioning that Article VI of the Treaty implies that not only nuclear-

weapons States, but all other States join the process leading to universal and complete disarmament. Somehow that fact is often overlooked and the discussion focuses exclusively on nuclear disarmament. Such interpretation of Article VI does not reflect its real meaning.

In spring 2013 the fourth P5 Conference chaired by the Russian Federation took place in Geneva. The P5 countries reviewed the progress achieved in the implementation of the commitments adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Participants conducted a detailed discussion of all the three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, peaceful uses of nuclear energy and disarmament. The next P5 Conference will take place in Beijing in April 2014.

STRATEGIC STABILITY. The Russian side believes that strategic stability and equal security for all is a key to create the environment for a long-term sustainable development of our country. In our relations with international community we base on the principles of stability and predictability maintained in strategic offensive arms. Russia will contribute to the involvement of other states, primarily with nuclear weapons inventories and interested in working together to ensure common security, in maintaining strategic stability.

Strategic deterrence is a critical element of Russia’s national security. It includes the development and systematic implementation of a set of related political, diplomatic, military, economic, information and other measures to prevent or reduce the threat of detrimental acts of aggressor nation (coalition of states).

Strategic deterrence is ensured through the use of State economic potential, including resource support of national security forces, and promotion of education of Russian people in the spirit of respect for military and patriotic values, development of military infrastructure and management of national military establishments. Therefore, it is not limited by purely military, let alone nuclear aspects, but provides for a more comprehensive vision of the ways of ensuring national security.

The Russian side notes that nuclear-weapon states regard nuclear deterrence as a principal condition for preserving strategic stability. It is acknowledged, in particular, by the existing U.S. national security policy documents as well as by the practical steps our U.S. partners take with a view to improving their nuclear missile system. In order to ensure strategic stability and equitable multilateral international cooperation, Russia makes necessary efforts to maintain parity with the U.S. in strategic offensive weapons in the context of deployment of a global missile defense system and implementation of the concept of a prompt global strike with a possible use of strategic non-nuclear delivery vehicles.

We believe that in the foreseeable future nuclear weapons will remain a major factor in the prevention of nuclear armed conflicts and conventional armed conflicts that, under certain circumstances, could develop into nuclear ones. According to its current military doctrine, the Russian Federation reserves right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction against the Russian Federation and its allies, as well as in case of aggression against the Russian Federation utilizing conventional weapons in situations when the very existence of the state is endangered. In this case it is the President of the Russian Federation who makes a decision on the use of nuclear weapons.

RUSSIA-US STRATEGIC DIALOGUE. The Russian side regards the maintenance and strengthening of strategic stability between Russia and the USA as a necessary foundation for building between our countries long-term strategic partnership relations in meeting common challenges on the basis of equality, mutual trust, openness and predictability. We are interested in the continuation of intensive bilateral dialogue on the whole range of questions related to the strengthening of international security and strategic stability. We assume that by now we have developed a rephisticated network of channels through which we can engage in an efficient exchange of opinions on such issues of present-day relevance as missile defense, implementation of the New START Treaty, cybersecurity, prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space, etc. We intend to further use these time-tested channels in an active way and to their maximum potential.

Russia's concept of the use of nuclear weapons is based on the approaches to ensuring national security approved by its political leadership. It takes into account a complex of factors and conditions that include the Russia-U.S. relations. At the same time, these relations, though very important, are not the only factor that we take into consideration when elaborating this concept.

Russia's current priority in nuclear disarmament is well known. This is a full-scale implementation of the New START Treaty. On the whole, we are satisfied with the job being done in this regard. At the same time, we are witnessing the emergence of issues that represent certain challenges for the Bilateral Consultative Commission on the Treaty. We hope that this refers to a routine adjustment of the Treaty mechanisms. However, we would like to reiterate that under a Federal Law on ratification of the New START Treaty, it is the President of the Russian Federation who makes a decision on negotiations on further nuclear arms reduction and limitation with due account for progress in the implementation of this Treaty, its principles and provisions, as well as the status of

strategic weapons of the United States and the third states, and in package with other tasks of ensuring the Russian Federation's national security.

FUTURE REDUCTIONS IN NUCLEAR ARMS. We are confident that further steps aimed at nuclear arms reduction must be considered with due account for the whole complex of factors influencing strategic stability. They include plans by the United States to deploy its global missile defense system, implementation of the "Global Prompt Strike" strategy, lack of progress in the ratification of the CTBT by the United States and other States from the so called list of 44 states (conditions of entry into force of the Treaty), the danger of the weaponization of outer space, and quantitative and qualitative imbalances in conventional arms, etc.

The current Russia's National Security Strategy indicates that the military security of Russia is endangered by the policy of several leading foreign countries, which aims at establishing an overwhelming military supremacy, primarily in the strategic nuclear forces, by developing precision, information and other high-tech weapons, non-nuclear strategic arms, setting up unilaterally a global missile defense system and by leaving open the questions of preventing the weaponization of outer space. All these factors can lead to a new arms race and to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles.

MISSILE DEFENSE. We cannot but agree with the US statement that the absence of a deployed effective missile defense system has ensured strategic stability in the last several decades. Today the implementation of the US plans in this area has changed the situation, which requires an appropriate response from Russia. The President of the Russian Federation in its statement of 23 November 2011 gave a broad assessment of the missile defense situation.

It is impossible to continue the dialogue on the further arms reduction (both nuclear and non-nuclear) until the missile defense issue is settled and the risks for Russia which are posed by the global missile defense system, deployed by the United States, are eliminated. Moreover, not only the European segment of the US global missile defense system matters, but also its other elements. The sharing of information on the implementation of US plans to build the missile defense capacity cannot be an alternative to the guarantees that it is not directed against the Russian strategic nuclear forces, or abandonment of its unrestricted deployment plan.

We drew attention to the fact that the US side plans to continue negotiations on nuclear arms reduction in a bilateral format, actually departing from the understanding, reflected in the New START Treaty, of the need for the rest of the nuclear-weapons

countries to join the efforts made by Russia and the USA. We cannot agree with such formulation of the issue. We assume that any further steps in the field of reduction and limitation of nuclear arms must be multilateral. This will allow to implement them in such a manner that would strengthen international stability, peace, equal and indivisible security as well as ensure the verifiability and irreversibility of the measures taken.

Q&A SESSION

QUESTION: Thank you very much for your lecture. I have one question. It is widely accepted, acknowledged, that nuclear weapons are weapons, owned by poor countries which have no opportunity to acquire enough sufficient conventional weapons. So how is the nonproliferation approach of the Russian Federation, how is it combined with the issues of conventional weapons and with the issue of socio-economic development of other countries?

RYABKOV: Thank you. Every circumstance and every situation especially in the area of national security and international relations cannot be regarded as a photograph of something that we have now before our eyes. Historical record is an indispensable part of anything that is taking place internationally. If we look at the times of the late 1940s, early 1950s, of the last century, the development of nuclear weapons was at the very forefront of research and development. It was the very top of science and the very top of military research, without any question. And it took decades for countries that were not regarded as pioneers in this respect to catch up and achieve at least rudimentary initial results in this area.

Your question relates more to the broader theme of the roles of military technologies in international affairs – whether the top-notch conventional technologies can ever replace nuclear weapons as an ultimate deterrence factor is a very debatable thing. I personally do not think that at any foreseeable moment in the future there would be a sufficient replacement for that political role of nuclear weapons. Having said that, I would in no way question our commitment to the full implementation of article VI of the NPT but as it was mentioned in this paper, this should happen in the context of universal disarmament. Now would it be thinkable to achieve this goal any time soon, I doubt, but there is no reason to dismantle any noble goals.

In more practical terms I would say what is more probable, what would happen, is a gradual diminishing of the levels of nuclear weapons. We are already, in our relationship with the US, at the levels comparable with those that we, Moscow and Washington, had in the 1960s, which is a tremendous, tremendous progress from the

numbers which countries were even proud of at the very peak of the Cold War. But as we come down in numbers we see more and more that other factors that impact and influence strategic stability should be taken into consideration. And not just in the form of keeping something in mind but more in practical terms as something that should be, you know, calculated into practical negotiations. And this is one of the problems: how to do it? A more compact and more efficient military that does not soak huge chunks of national military budgets is of course in everyone's interest. So in this respect everything that can be done in the area of diplomacy, everything that can be achieved through political efforts in the area of nonproliferation and disarmament has a very direct and positive effect for social and economic development of any country.

So there are many interlinks and many logical interconnections between what you have described as challenges in your question. But there are no easy answers to those. Inertias are very, very, obvious and you know the way that military people and politicians think is also something that does not change that rapidly, this reality cannot be change overnight. So, all in all, my answer to your question is: it is a gradual process but it will inevitably come to a moment where the role of nuclear weapons would diminish. But I cannot predict when, in which time frame, we could be ready to say: now the goal is complete – nuclear disarmament by all states that possess this weapon right now.

QUESTION: Thank you for this lecture. You have been talking about a political transition in Syria as a solution to the conflict. And my question is what the Syrian government's opinion about this transition is? Have you ever had the chance to discuss this with them?

RYABKOV: Thank you. The Syrian government, if we are talking just on its position on this case, is ready so send its delegation with full authority to the Geneva II Conference. The Syrian government understands that this effort is an open-ended effort, that there is no guarantee that things will remain as we know them in terms of who will be in charge in Damascus. What they are not prepared to declare right away is that in the end of this process there will be no president Assad anymore. They are ready to say that an agreement should be developed that both puts in place a transitional body and establishes a procedure for a possible popular vote. And this is it. We have not heard anything similar on the part of opposition groups, even from those who have publicly declared that they are ready to attend the Geneva II Conference.

VLADIMIR ORLOV: I do not want the students to not ask their questions, but to get a full picture I will also ask a couple of questions, which might be very specific,

probably more from the journalist’s perspective rather than from the one of a researcher. The first question is about Syria, when particularly in August and also earlier this year in spring, the Syrian government was accused of the use of chemical weapons by Americans and by others. It never was proven, as far as I understand it, that it was the Syrian government. You solved the issue radically just inviting Damascus to sign the Chemical weapons convention. Good, that’s a radical and good solution. Still do you expect that there might be provocations in the process of chemical weapon destruction in Syria? And if so, you mentioned UN Security Council Resolution 1540, which speaks also about non-state actors in proliferation, included chemical weapons proliferation and related weapons of mass destruction. Why so far is there almost no discussion not only on one sidedness of blaming everything on Assad but on just using the Security Council resolution 1540 related to those terrorists, the so-called opposition in Syria, if they use or try to use, homemade or whatever, chemical weapons? This is the first question.

Now the second question is of course about your Iranian saga in Geneva recently. What was – well of course every negotiation and every document is not just done overnight – still there may be some surprises compared to the prepared position. What was your, if I may ask, most pleasant surprise in November when you came in Geneva and spent a few sleepless nights there and achieved an agreement with others as well as with Iranians? And also what was your most unpleasant surprise as you came through the negotiations? Thank you.

RYABKOV: Thank you Vladimir. I’ll start with UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and how it relates to non-state actors. This resolution, right now, is being regarded, at least in the realm of practical diplomacy, as a tool to enhance national export control regimes. This is the goal and the task which the daily activities with the so-called committee 1540 in New York are mostly focused on. We have been very fortunate insofar not to experience anything that can be equaled to straightforward WMD terrorism – we hope it will not be the case in the future as well that we would face such a terrible development anywhere in the world. But we should be able to do our utmost to preempt something like this. And politically there is a vast commonality of views on what needs to be done there.

The more down to earth aspect of it is of course whether or not terrorists of all sorts which are operating in growing numbers in Syria – whether they have any access to any, not least, I would not call them full fledged chemical weapons because it would require a technology that can only be mastered by governments, to poisonous, chemically and homegrown so to say means and ways to apply those. And here we have compelling evidence that this is something that happened at least in some cases in Syria. We had a

long argument on the tragedy of August 21st – I am not going to replay this argument here in this audience but hard evidence of cases where chemical agents were used by combatants against governmental troops and against civilians was collected. And we have submitted this evidence to the UN people including to Ake Sellström who led the fact-finding mission. And by the way he’s still not finished on his final report on what happened in Syria in the summer, we hope in part because he’s looking with interest into this evidence and in the final portion we expect him to give reference to these things.

This is just to say that the picture is by far more complex and difficult than many believe in Syria, and Resolution 1540 has a very direct relevance to this situation. Like Resolution 2118, that speaks not only about the governmental responsibility, but the other side’s responsibility as well. We do think that the risk of provocations is there and the crucial moment will come when the stockpile of chemicals will be removed from the Syrian territory and what will happen when these trucks with containers will go from places where this stuff is stored to the port for further transportation. If the Syrian government is efficient enough to ensure robust security perimeters around these convoys I think we can and may avoid major complications. But you never know what will happen elsewhere in Syria so and the situation is very sensitive and the weeks to come till the end of the year and then early January are crucial in this respect. We are working on this for several hours daily in contact with our US colleagues, in contact with our OCW colleagues in The Hague, of course with the Syrians and so on and so forth and we will continue this work.

Iran... the most pleasant surprise was when both the US delegation and the Iranian delegation confirmed that their capitals approved the draft document because we were not sure whether it would take that relatively short period for the both capitals to clear the green light. We interpreted it as a sign of the respective political leaderships being heavily involved into the core of the discussions, into the, you know, body of the texts so that there was no additional time needed for briefings and explanations to the political leaders, that something like this has been prepared. And the most unpleasant surprise happened not at the recent round, the very last round, but when the French delegation introduced what we believed could be killing amendments to the whole agreement but it in fact was the reason why no agreement was achieved November 9th and it lasted until November 24th.

QUESTION: I thank you for enlightening us about updated views on important issues. My questions might be more to my personal interests, and related to my work experience. During 2006-2007, we in Turkey saw that materials coming from Iraq were highly irradiated. At that time our steel producers wanted to import scrap metal from Iraq,

which was obtained from the places, factories hit during the war. And today also, sometimes in newspapers we see that Iraq in the different areas is very contaminated. So will there be a protective measures against the use of that kind of nuclear, maybe warheads weapons, maybe conventional weapons, but nuclear especially, in the international area?

RYABKOV: There are several aspects to what you have described. There are cases now and then, where factories that are using metal scraps of all sorts detect contaminated material of different origins; I've heard that something like this happened with material that was imported from Iraq. I do not believe that the Iraqis were doing this on purpose. I think it's, you know, the effect of both negligence at an early stage of their indigenous nuclear program and inability to deal with the results of this program because of wars, because of trouble, because of turmoil because of everything which happened since mid 1980s until now. We do have a number of arrangements internationally that provide a legal base for how to deal with this nuclear contaminated stuff, to avoid it being used in the chain of fabrication of something that may well end up used as parts of construction and one of the ways to do it more effectively is to enhance border and custom controls, to equip border and customs controls with the tools, with the instruments that detect radiation so that no radiologically contaminated material can go through. This is something that happens in many countries, including in the countries in the immediate neighborhood of Russia. I'm sure that Turkey possesses a very effective system, in this area as well, and I know that our American colleagues pay great deal of attention to this aspect and provide major assistance to many countries in this area. Another aspect of your question, if I understood you rightly, related to possible radiological contamination of soil.

QUESTION: Actually, to my personal belief, the source of the contamination was not Iraq but other countries that used these kind of weapons in this war which will have this radioactive effects on Iraqi soil.

RYABKOV: I'm not aware of any use of radiological weapons, or even of the existence of radiological weapons in the arsenals of any modern army. I know that to some extent the depleted uranium was used in some of the munitions used by the US, but it's a very different thing. It's toxic in terms of chemical interactions with the organic structures of the body but it's not radiological threatening. Contrary to this, it's within this normal rate of radiology. For example, in mountains, there is no big leap in between

what we have in this depleted uranium and the natural rate. It is toxic chemically, but toxicity is a different thing.

QUESTION: I have one more question concerning the Syrian issue. Has it been decided which groups will represent the Syrian opposition in Geneva, and who are they, and how representative are they?

RYABKOV: Thank you. No final agreement was reached with those groups. I will put it this way, there are some very who are firmly committed to participation, including National Council, including so-called National Front for Resistance and Renewal, including some groups that operate outside of Syria, but a big question is whether National Coalition, which is the most recognized umbrella organization, whether they would finally decide, or some elements of which may opt not to participate there. I think our US colleagues and the EU colleagues to a lesser extent are focusing exactly on this for the time being, to ensure that the representation of the opposition would be sufficiently broad and would cover most of the ground. To put it this way, there are also some fighters, groups of combatants, that are completely, out of this process and terrorists of different sorts and different associations with whom no one has any contact and those by all means will stay apart. But we would hope that political momentum in this conference really takes place and moves forward and does not fail, it would be sufficient to develop a transitional body with powers that would unite most of the forces, you know, most of the population in Syria, to commonly defend the country against this type of extremists and terrorists. That’s the concept under which everyone operates right now.