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**A Nuclear Weapons Free Future:
A New Basis of Hope**

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After sixty years of the threat of nuclear Armeggedon hanging over our heads and now the emergence of the Second Nuclear Age, is there any reason to hope that the curse of nuclear weapons can be lifted from humanity? Are the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council so fixated on nuclear weapons for their own security that they will continue to ignore the legitimate call of many other States for an end to the nuclear madness? Will civil society finally awaken to the realization that it is living on the knife's edge of doom and force political leaders to take meaningful action towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons?

These questions come into focus as we consider the forthcoming Seventh Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The NPT was supposed to lead to a nuclear-weapons-free world. Instead, there are 34,145 nuclear weapons still in existence. This number is an improvement over the 65,000 nuclear weapons in existence at the height of the Cold War. But is the world supposed to be satisfied that the current number allows the world to be blown apart, say, 100 times rather than 200? The destructive power of the world's nuclear arsenal is beyond comprehension.

It is not only the sheer quantitative power of nuclear weapons that is a source of danger; it is also that the nuclear weapons States have embedded nuclear weapons in their military doctrines and are holding them for war-fighting purposes. This shift in strategy from nuclear deterrence to war-fighting is what characterizes the Second Nuclear Age.

The NPT Review Conference faces a stark reality: the nuclear weapons States are claiming that the NPT priorities should be directed to stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons and that the problem of their own compliance with Article VI, which calls for good faith negotiations toward the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, is non-existent. The leading non-nuclear weapons States claim the exact opposite: the proliferation of nuclear weapons cannot be stopped while the nuclear weapons States arrogate unto themselves the possession of nuclear weapons and refuse to conclude comprehensive negotiations toward elimination as directed by the International Court of Justice.

The present crisis is the worst in the 35-year history of the NPT. While the NPT meetings have never been free of conflict, the battles of the past were frequently patched over by an application of good will and a minimum show of trust. Now the good will and trust are

gone largely because the nuclear weapon States have tried to change the rules of the game. At least before, there was a recognition that the NPT was obtained through a bargain, with the nuclear weapon States agreeing to negotiate the elimination of their nuclear weapons in return for the non-nuclear States shunning the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Adherence to that bargain enabled the indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995 and the achievement of an "unequivocal undertaking" in 2000 toward elimination through a programme of 13 Practical Steps. Now the U.S. is rejecting the commitments of 2000 and premising its aggressive diplomacy on the assertion that the problem of the NPT lies not in the nuclear weapons States' own actions but in the lack of compliance by States such as North Korea and Iran. The United Kingdom, France and Russia are abetting the U.S. in the new tactics of shifting attention away from Article VI commitments and towards break-out States. The nuclear weapons States are widely criticized around the world for this double standard. For example, Brazil warned:

"One cannot worship at the altar of nuclear weapons and raise heresy charges against those who want to join the sect."

The whole international community, nuclear and non-nuclear alike, is concerned about proliferation, but the new attempt by the nuclear weapons States to gloss over the discriminatory aspects of the NPT, which are now becoming permanent, has caused the patience of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement to snap. They see a two-class world of nuclear haves and have-nots becoming a permanent feature of the global landscape. In such chaos, the NPT is eroding and the prospect of multiple nuclear weapons States, a fear that caused nations to produce the NPT in the first place, is looming once more. The U.N. Secretary-General's high-level U.N. panel put the issue bluntly: "We are approaching a point at which the erosion of the non-proliferation regime could become irreversible and result in a cascade of proliferation."

The U.S. particularly is in the forefront of the current struggle. Its participation in the consensus of 2000 was made under the Clinton administration. When President George W. Bush was elected, the U.S. position regressed: the U.S. abandoned the ABM Treaty and turned its back on the CTBT, two of the 13 Steps of 2000. During 2001, the U.S. administration conducted a Nuclear Posture Review, which made clear that its nuclear weapons stockpile remains a cornerstone of U.S. national security policy. The Review establishes expansive plans to revitalize U.S. nuclear forces, and all the elements that support them, within a New Triad of capabilities that combine nuclear and conventional offensive strikes with missile defences and nuclear weapons infrastructure. The Review assumes that nuclear weapons will be part of U.S. military forces for at least the next fifty years.

The U.S. is the only country that deploys nuclear weapons outside its own territory. Approximately 480 U.S. tactical (i.e., non-strategic) nuclear weapons are located at eight air force bases in five ostensibly non-nuclear countries in continental Europe: Belgium, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and Turkey; also, the U.S. maintains more than 100 nuclear weapons at its Lakenheath base in Suffolk, U.K. Hans Kristensen, author of a Natural Resources Defense Council report on this subject, asks the key question: "Why

are they still there more than a decade after the Cold War ended? Neither the U.S. nor NATO has been able to articulate a credible mission for the weapons." Many States hold that this ongoing deployment - which seems to have escaped public scrutiny -- violates Articles I and II of the NPT and perpetuates a terrible precedent for other nuclear powers to deploy nuclear weapons outside their territory and to share them with non-nuclear States.

Recently, the U.S. Congress balked at funding the research for a new "bunker-buster" nuclear weapon. But that action has not interfered with administration plans to retain a total stockpile of active and reserve nuclear weapons and weapons components several times larger than the publicly-stated goal of 1,700 to 2,200 "operationally deployed weapons."

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter is very critical of the actions of the U.S. Administration. "The United States claims to be upholding Article VI," he said recently, "but yet asserts a security strategy of testing and developing new weapons - Star Wars and the earth-penetrating 'bunker-buster' - and has threatened first-use, even against non-nuclear States, in case of 'surprising military developments' and 'unexpected contingencies.'" He has proposed a series of "corrective actions" the U.S. and other nuclear weapons States need to take: a) applying principles of transparency, verification and irreversibility to the Moscow Treaty and pledging to dismantle de-commissioned weapons; b) making a "no-first-use" pledge; c) de-emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons in NATO and ending their deployment in Western Europe; d) taking U.S. and Russian weapons off hair-trigger alert; e) ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; f) negotiating a fissile materials treaty; g) ending the ballistic missile defence program; h) paying greater attention to "perhaps the world's greatest proliferation threat" of Russia's unsecured stockpiles.

Among the nuclear powers, the U.S. position stands out, but it is by no means alone in its determination to hold onto nuclear weapons. On November 17, 2004, President Vladimir Putin of Russia confirmed that his country is "carrying out research and missile tests of state-of-the-art nuclear missile systems" and that Russia would "continue to build up firmly and insistently our armed forces, including the nuclear component." Only last week Russia's Defence Minister, Sergei Ivanov, announced that Moscow will soon have a unique new generation of nuclear weapons "not possessed by any country in the world."

The U.K. has recently finished a modernization program, and has adapted its Trident missile force for tactical nuclear missions against potential proliferators. In 2001, President Jacques Chirac of France said his nation's security "is now and will be guaranteed above all by our nuclear deterrent;" France's status as a nuclear weapons state is guaranteed until at least 2040. While maintaining a declaratory no-first-use policy, China is modernizing its nuclear arsenal.

For its part, NATO, an expanding Western military alliance of 26 nations with a combined population of 880 million people, one-sixth of world population, adheres to its strategic policies that nuclear weapons are "essential." Despite efforts by Canada and

Germany, NATO has refused to change its nuclear doctrine in which the "supreme guarantee of the security of the allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance." Yet NATO also claims to be committed to the "unequivocal undertaking" and 13 Practical Steps of 2000. It is evident that NATO is mired in policy incoherence. The very NATO countries providing a home to U.S. nuclear weapons voted at the U.N. in 2004 in favour of a resolution calling for further steps to reduce, non-strategic nuclear arsenals. Why don't they practice what they preach?

While the five permanent members of the Security Council try to justify, with the most specious arguments, their retention of nuclear weapons, is it any wonder that other States - India, Pakistan, Israel - have boosted their power by joining the "nuclear club?" Or that others - North Korea, Iran - want in?

The spectre of nuclear terrorism is now raised by the speed of proliferation. Mohamed elBaradei, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, has pointed out:

"In recent years, three phenomena - the emergence of a nuclear black market, the determined efforts by additional countries to acquire the technology to produce the fissile material useable in nuclear weapons, and the clearly expressed desire of terrorists to acquire weapons of mass destruction - have radically altered the security landscape."

Addressing the capacity of terrorists to obtain highly enriched uranium and improvise an explosive device with power equal to the Hiroshima bomb, the eminent physicist Dr. Frank von Hippel told a meeting at the U.N.: "Nothing could be simpler." If the 9/11 terrorists had used a nuclear bomb at Ground Zero, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers would have met the fate of those in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. The IAEA reports at least 40 countries have the capability to produce nuclear weapons, and criticizes the inadequacy of export control systems of nuclear materials which are unable to prevent the existence of an extensive illicit market for the supply of nuclear items. The disappearance, by theft or otherwise, of nuclear materials from Russia, is well established.

The threat of nuclear terrorism is on the mind of every official I know. ElBaradei says the margin of security today is "thin and worrisome." U.S. security officials testified last week that "it may only be a matter of time before Al-Qaida or other groups attempt to use chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons." Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts goes further: "If Al Qaeda can obtain or assemble a nuclear weapon, they will certainly use it - on New York or Washington, or any other major American city. The greatest danger we face in the days and weeks and months ahead is a nuclear 9/11, and we hope and pray that it is not already too late to prevent."

The international community has at least awakened to new dangers. Thus, the U.N. Security Council in 2004 adopted Resolution 1540 requiring all States to take measures to prevent non-State actors from acquiring or developing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and to prevent the spread of these weapons. The Proliferation Security Initiative of the U.S. seeks to interdict on the high seas the transfer of sensitive nuclear materials.

And the G8 countries have allocated \$20 billion over ten years to eliminate some stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction in Russia.

These steps are by no means sufficient to ward off looming catastrophes. The fact remains that the proliferation of nuclear weapons cannot be stopped as long as the most powerful nations in the world maintain that nuclear weapons are essential for their own security.

Of course, North Korea and Iran and any other such state must be stopped from acquiring nuclear weapons, and inspection and verification processes of the IAEA must be stepped up with more funding and personnel. But attempting to stop proliferation as a sort of one-dimensional activity will never work unless meaningful disarmament steps are combined with it.

Such steps have been spelled out by the New Agenda Coalition, (NAC) a group of States (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden) which came into existence to press the nuclear weapons States to fulfil their disarmament obligations. The NAC has been gathering political momentum, and its most recent resolution at the U.N. was supported by eight NATO States, including Germany and Canada. That resolution, calling on the nuclear powers to cease activities leading to "a new nuclear arms race," identifies priorities for action: universal adherence to the NPT and the early entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty; reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons and non-development of new types of nuclear weapons; negotiation of an effectively verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty; establishment of a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament at the Conference on Disarmament; and compliance with principles of irreversibility and transparency and verification capability.

Even though this resolution was mild compared to the regular demands of the Non-Aligned Movement for a time-bound Nuclear Weapons Convention that would ban all possession of nuclear weapons, the three Western NATO nuclear States, the U.S., the U.K. and France, voted against it. China voted for the resolution and Russia abstained.

We come now to the NPT 2005 Review Conference. The future of nuclear weapons on the planet is riding on gathering of 188 States Parties to the Treaty.

On January 26-28, 2005, the Middle Powers Initiative held a Strategy Consultation at the Carter Center, Atlanta where the issue was clearly put: to avert a complete breakdown in the non-proliferation regime, the whole international community must hold firm to the obligations and commitments to non-proliferation and disarmament assumed by the parties to the NPT at its commencement and reinforced and elaborated at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. Progress on both the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation sides of the Treaty must be made at the same time.

Following the Atlanta Consultation, MPI has made these recommendations:

1. A successful outcome of the Review Conference depends on its ability to address equally every aspect of the Treaty. The strengthening of the commitments contained in the NPT regarding nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament should be done in a balanced way.
2. The Review Conference must refer to the substance of the consensus decisions from the 1995 and 2000 Conferences, including the 13 Practical Steps adopted in 2000 and the Resolution on the Middle East adopted in 1995.
3. The United States and Russia should build upon their progress in the Moscow Treaty by applying the principles of transparency, irreversibility, and verification to reductions under the Treaty, and by negotiating further deep, verified, and irreversible cuts in their total arsenals, encompassing both warheads and delivery systems.
4. Russia and the United States should engage in a wider process of control of their non-strategic weapons, through formalization and verification of the 1991-1992 initiatives, transparency steps, security measures, U.S. withdrawal of its bombs deployed on the territories of NATO countries, and commencement of negotiations regarding further reduction/elimination of non-strategic weapons.
5. Nuclear weapon States should implement their commitment to decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems ("de-alerting") by planning and executing a program to stand down their nuclear forces, culminating in a global stand-down by the 2010 Review Conference.
6. Nuclear weapon States should further implement their commitment to diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in their security policies by not researching or developing modified or new nuclear weapons and by beginning negotiations on a legally-binding instrument on the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States party to the NPT.
7. States should begin and rapidly conclude negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons in accordance with the 1995 statement of the Special Coordinator and the mandate contained therein, with the understanding that negotiations can and should address a range of issues, including dealing with existing military materials. As soon as possible a technical advisory panel should be created to assist with issues regarding verification of the treaty. In addition, States should work to develop a global inventory of weapons-useable fissile materials and warheads, and the nuclear weapon States should accelerate placing their "excess" military fissile materials under international verification. States should seriously consider proposals to ban production of all weapons-usable fissile materials, and to establish multilateral controls on uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing technology and a moratorium on supply and acquisition in the meantime.

8. Adherence to the Additional Protocol on Safeguards should become a universal standard for compliance with non-proliferation obligations and treatment as a member in good standing of the NPT with access to nuclear fuel.

9. Prior to or at the Review Conference, a firm agreement should be reached on a program of work in the Conference on Disarmament that includes a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament. Achieving such an agreement in advance would greatly enhance the prospects for a cooperative outcome to the conference. Should it not prove possible to overcome the deadlock on a program of work, alternative venues should be pursued.

10. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty should be brought into force at an early date. In the meantime, States should continue to observe the moratorium on nuclear testing, fund the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization, and support completion of the International Monitoring System.

11. States should use the opportunity provided by the NPT review process to build upon the 13 Practical Steps to undertake deeper consideration of the legal, political and technical requirements for the elimination of nuclear weapons, in order to identify steps that could be taken unilaterally, bilaterally, and multilaterally that would lead to complete nuclear disarmament. The United Kingdom's initiative on verification, the New Agenda Coalition's proposals on security assurances and the strengthening and expanding of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones are positive examples in this regard. Such consideration should include the investigation of means to enhance security without relying on nuclear weapons.

The Middle Power Initiative's recommendations are wholly in accord with the New Agenda Coalition's latest resolution. That resolution, to repeat, earned the support of eight NATO States. Thus a bridge has already been constructed between the NAC and NATO. This bridge is shoring up what might be called the "moderate middle" in the nuclear weapons debate.

The debate is indeed polarized: on one side are the recalcitrant nuclear weapons States; on the other is the Non-Aligned Movement, calling for immediate implementation of a time-bound program for the elimination of nuclear weapons. I would like to make it clear that MPI stands for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible moment. But in the political reality of our times, the goal is not immediately achievable. Hence, we must take realistic steps toward that goal. Adherents of the middle range of the debate want to move in this direction. As the centre strengthens with more countries joining it, the potential grows for a strong impact on the nuclear weapons States. The Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2005 will be saved if the "moderate middle" successfully impress on the nuclear weapons States that they must now begin to implement the steps toward nuclear disarmament already agreed to in 2000.

In short, the only way to stop the erosion of the NPT is for a new burst of energy to be shown by the middle-power States - the New Agenda, non-nuclear NATO, the European

Union and a few other like-minded States - to shore up the centre positions in the nuclear weapons debate. The "moderate middle" must stop being cowed by the all-powerful nuclear weapons States; they must speak up forcefully in the name of humanity.

The voice of the public matters a great deal in whether governments will bestir themselves. It was the voice of the public that obtained the partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987, and the Test Ban Treaty of 1996. A new awakening of the public is precisely the strategy of Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba of Hiroshima in his emergency campaign for Mayors for Peace. More than 100 Mayors from the Mayors for Peace Campaign, which has drawn together the top executives from 640 cities around the world, are expected to attend the opening days of the NPT Review Conference and lobby for action. They will be joined by the representatives of 2,000 peace organizations from dozens of countries. Parliamentarians from the Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament will be on hand to press their governments to move forward.

Mayor Akiba has already launched his "Vision 2020" campaign, by which he means that negotiations on the elimination of nuclear weapons should be concluded by 2010 and fully implemented by 2020. This could become an unstoppable campaign if the city administrations, parliamentarians and public around the world persist in this demand.

The activity leading up to the 2005 NPT Review Conference shows me that hope for a nuclear weapons-free world is certainly alive. It is being acted on in new and compelling ways. A new force of enlightened governments and a visionary civil society is starting to move.