Ambassadors, Madam Chair, Colleagues,

Opening the doors of the First Committee to an exchange with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on nuclear issues is an historic moment for First Committee fans. We are committed individuals and members of organizations in New York and across the globe who follow what happens in this room every year, ensuring NGOs all over the world know of your work, can contribute to it, and can participate in the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions that result. We believe that the First Committee matters, and that many more people would be actively involved if they knew what you do and do not do here, and how to be more engaged.

We hope that this newly opened door signals the start of a new era of qualitatively improved interactions between governments and NGOs on matters of disarmament and international security.

First, we will offer some comments on the First Committee and on the nature of NGO-government relations: why we need each other and why we need a constructive relationship. Then, we’ll discuss nuclear issues and the future of the NPT, and we’ll offer some practical recommendations that reflect the potential of NGO contributions.

While global attention is turning to the Security Council and specialized agencies on the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation crises and questions of the day, the single universal multilateral forum for international security issues is right here. The First Committee is a unique and important gauge of the international community’s opinions on security and disarmament issues. It is a busy time for foreign and defense ministries because it is important to get the language on these sensitive issues just right. But if GA resolutions are to have meaning beyond the meeting rooms and corridors of the United Nations, then you must have public interest and engagement, and for that you need NGOs. We are your ambassadors to civil society.

The First Committee has the potential to highlight options for cooperative multilateral approaches and mechanisms rather than coercion or force escalation in preserving international security. The First Committee can play a crucial role by showing that these cooperative approaches and mechanisms are more effective than coercion and threat. The First Committee should however go beyond simple consideration of ideas. It should adopt

---

1 Presented by Merav Datan, Greenpeace International. This statement reflects input from various non-governmental organizations including Reaching Critical Will / Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Greenpeace, Arms Control Association, Lawyers’ Committee on Nuclear Policy, Middle Powers Initiative, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, Western States Legal Foundations, and the NGO Committee on Disarmament. The presenter is solely responsible for the final product.
practical resolutions that commit States to action and that mean something, that do something, and that civil society can amplify and help implement.

You could also consider making efforts in your own capitals and media to publicize what you do here and the positions you take here. You could hold consultations with NGOs at home before the First Committee about positions you plan to take, ensuring an ongoing exchange of information and ideas. Some governments already do this. All governments could do just a little bit more. In this respect we fully support the recommendations from the United Nations Study on Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education that parliamentarians and NGOs should be included on government delegations to key disarmament meetings such as the UN General Assembly, NPT Review Conferences and Prep Coms and CTBT meetings, and we commend those countries that already make this part of their practice.

International security issues are often divided into so-called ‘hard security’ dealing with military matters and ‘soft security’ dealing with root causes and human factors, and addressed usually as development. The international community is coming to realize that these are not mutually exclusive arenas but, on the contrary, greatly affect one another. For example, as the WMD Commission has recognized, “armament policies and the use of armed force have often been influenced by misguided ideas about masculinity and strength. An understanding of and emancipation from this traditional perspective might help to remove some of the hurdles on the road to disarmament and nonproliferation.” (p. 160)

Understanding the ways in which gender and socially constructed ideas about masculinity and femininity affect political decisions will not only help to remove obstacles to disarmament as the WMD Commission notes above, it will also help to package disarmament as feasible, desirable and politically palatable. By recognizing the social context in which policies are developed, and acknowledging that disarmament and cooperative security are being coded as feminine and thereby devalued, we can deconstruct misguided notions about masculinity and strength, and create a more attractive alternative for all human beings.

Strengthening Nonproliferation and Disarmament Norms and Ensuring Compliance

International law is our starting point, holding all countries to the same legal standards and judging them by these standards.

As the WMD Commission report recommends: “Disarmament and non-proliferation are best pursued through a cooperative rule-based international order, applied and enforced through effective multilateral institutions.” Towards this end, states should “[a]ccept the principle that nuclear weapons should be outlawed, as are biological and chemical weapons, and explore the political, legal, technical and procedural options for achieving this within a reasonable time.” (pp. 18 - 19)
In 1996 the International Court of Justice concluded that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be illegal and that there is an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Ten years later such negotiations have not even begun let alone concluded. The NWS have used their veto power in the Security Council and the consensus practice in the Conference on Disarmament and the NPT Review Conferences to prevent these negotiations from occurring.

An international legal instrument of the highest authority, the UN Charter, contains a very clear obligation that would greatly advance non-proliferation and disarmament, but the political will of the P5, the NWS, is lacking. The Charter’s Article 26 assigns the Security Council responsibility for formulating plans “for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments.” The Charter is explicit that the purpose of these plans is in order “to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.”

The First Committee’s mandate and work practices have evolved in the context of the Security Council’s and in particular the P5’s neglect of their UN Charter obligations under Article 26. This non-compliance with the UN Charter has been a disservice to the General Assembly and the international community. There was expectation that the Security Council would produce a plan to save human and economic resources from being diverted into creating more sophisticated and gruesome tools of slaughter. Instead, the Security Council permanent members have participated in arms races and weapons profiteering.

The Future of the NPT

The future of the NPT and the broader nuclear nonproliferation enterprise is uncertain. There is work to be done in terms of compliance with both disarmament and non-proliferation, and in building confidence on all sides.

Nuclear disarmament

Since the 1996 completion of negotiations on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, there has been very little progress on nuclear disarmament. The picture is so dismal that a reasonable conclusion is that all states possessing nuclear weapons are in breach of their disarmament obligation as stated by the International Court of Justice, and the NPT declared nuclear weapon states (NWS) are in breach of their Article VI obligations.

De-alerting

The United States and Russia maintain thousands of nuclear warheads on high-level alert. These weapons could be launched within 15 minutes with no hope of recall. The continuation of this Cold War-era posture is unjustified, particularly at a time when Russia and the United States claim that they are no longer enemies, but friends. This state only serves to perpetuate the possibility of accidental, miscalculated, or unauthorized launch.
Other states should also refrain from copying such dangerous and short-sighted quick-launch postures. In regions of tension, such as South Asia, crisis management would be significantly jeopardized by systems primed for rapid use.

**Negative Security Assurances**

Nuclear-weapon states should reaffirm and codify past assurances that nuclear weapons will not be employed against states without such arms. Past negative security assurances of 1978 and 1995 have been eroded by France’s President Chirac’s recent statement and the US administration’s 2002 adoption of National Security Presidential Directive 17 that specifically stated nuclear weapons are an option for responding to a chemical or biological weapons attack. Nuclear weapons are not a legitimate or proportionate response to either terrorism or the use of chemical and biological weapons.

**Reducing the Role of Nuclear Weapons in Security Policies**

Nuclear weapons possessors should adopt no-first-use policies as a first step to marginalizing nuclear weapons in their security policies. At this time, China and India are the only two states that have renounced the first use of their nuclear arms. Increases in the role for nuclear weapons in security policies, and changes that would lower the threshold for use of nuclear weapons must cease. As recommended by the WMD Commission, nuclear weapon states should begin planning for security without nuclear weapons.

**No New Capabilities**

All states with nuclear weapons should cease qualitative improvements to their weapons capabilities. Specifically, the manufacture of new types of nuclear warheads and the modification or upgrade of existing nuclear warheads to imbue them with different performance capabilities for new missions should be prohibited.

**Further Verifiable Irreversible Transparent Strategic Weapons Reductions**

US and Russian officials should begin serious talks soon on either extending the START Treaty and/or developing verification measures for SORT. These talks should be conducted with the understanding that they are leading to further reductions, which are leading to zero. It is in both countries’ interests to preserve, and increase if possible, the existing level of openness that they share when it comes to their strategic forces. Losing such transparency could condemn the two former foes to return to the days of mistrust and miscalculation, as well as revive a strategic arms competition. The strategic verification regime must be perpetuated to prevent both nuclear complexes from slipping back behind shrouds of secrecy.

**Tackling Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe**

Today, NATO continues to deploy up to 480 nuclear gravity bombs on the territories of six European countries (Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, and the United Kingdom). Russia’s tactical nuclear weapons are estimated to total around 3,000, but this figure could be larger. Neither of these Cold War-era leftover arsenals serves any purpose today. Yet, the dangers they pose are very real, particularly in the case of Russia where great uncertainty exists about the location, quantity, and security of these arms. It
is in the world’s interest to help Russia secure and eliminate these weapons, which are probably most attractive to and vulnerable to terrorist theft. But Russia refuses to engage on this issue, citing the continued deployment of US tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. Hence, NATO’s 26 members, particularly the six hosting US arms, should be the focus of an intensive campaign to end the alliance’s deployment of nuclear weapons.

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

Contrary to the spirit of the NPT 1995 Principles and Objectives and the letter of the 2000 Practical Steps, the CTBT has yet to enter into force. In order to so, it must be signed and ratified by 44 listed countries that have commercial or research nuclear reactors. Ten of the 44 states have yet to ratify the treaty. Of the 10, three nuclear-armed states, the United States, China, and Israel, have signed but not ratified the treaty; India, Pakistan, and the DPRK, have not taken the first step of signing it.ii

The recent DPRK test reinforced the importance of the need to have the CTBT brought into force to make the international norm against testing legally binding. The CTBT will restrain a potential arms race, limiting proliferation. If the CTBT were already in force, we would have had an independent verification from the International Monitoring System about the nature of the DPRK test, and we would have had on-the-ground inspection.

Conference on Disarmament (CD)

Civil society expects the CD to agree (by consensus) on its Programme of Work in 2007. The makings of a compromise agreement are here, and the CD could adopt a Programme of Work if a couple member states moved to the middle just a little bit. We saw the 2006 CD hold substantive discussions for the entire year on all issues, and the sky did not fall. No one’s core national security interests were compromised. Rather, the discussions built confidence and proved the CD can work on these issues to members’ benefit. Member states need to work to find the right balance among the issues, but not at the expense of not dealing with ANY of them.iii

Non-Proliferation

In June 2006 a group of Nobel Peace Laureates issued a statement on nuclear weapons, which said:iv

If we are to have stability we must have justice. This means the same rules apply to all. Where this principle is violated disaster is risked. In this regard we point to the failure of the nuclear weapons states to fulfill their bargain contained in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to negotiate the universal elimination of nuclear weapons. To pursue a nuclear-weapons-free Korean Peninsula or Middle East or South Asia, without credible commitment to universal nuclear disarmament is akin to a parent trying to persuade his teenagers not to smoke while puffing on a cigar.

Regarding the ongoing debate over the relationship between non-proliferation and disarmament, your two non-governmental speakers today on nuclear issues were chosen
to represent our community’s consensus that action on both non-proliferation and disarmament are vital if either is to succeed. Without both, we have neither.

Proliferation is the result of states deciding to do as the NWS do, rather than as they say. Moreover, the frequent calls for universalization of the NPT and the criticisms of those outside the NPT or claiming to have withdrawn, indicate that a universal non-proliferation norm does in fact exist.

Practical non-proliferation measures proposed by a well-known group of political leaders and thinkers include the following:

• Agree to establish more effective controls on the uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing technologies that can be used to produce materials for nuclear weapons.
• Expand the ability of the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect and monitor compliance with nonproliferation rules through the universal application and full compliance with full-scope safeguards and the Additional Protocol, which should be a core condition of peaceful nuclear cooperation.
• Conduct vigorous diplomacy to halt uranium-enrichment and other sensitive nuclear fuel cycle activities in Iran and dismantle North Korea’s nuclear weapons capacity, as well as diplomacy designed to address the underlying regional security problems in Northeast Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East, which would facilitate the normalization of relations between key states and progress on nonproliferation and disarmament efforts in those regions.
• Secure all nuclear-weapons usable material to the highest standards to prevent access by terrorists or other states by expanding programs to secure and eliminate these materials, halting the use of highly enriched uranium in civilian reactors, and strengthening national and international export controls and material security measures as required by UN Resolution 1540.
• Clarify that no state may withdraw from the treaty and escape responsibility for prior violations of the treaty or retain access to controlled materials and equipment acquired for “peaceful” purposes.

**Immediate Challenges**

Perhaps the most immediate nonproliferation task facing the international community at the moment is the need to resume talks and to make tangible progress toward the verifiable dismantlement of the DPRK’s nuclear capabilities, and the successful conclusion of an agreement with Iran that achieves full transparency of its nuclear activities and intentions. Failure on either front could lead neighboring countries to rethink their nuclear options and/or lead to a military confrontation.

**DPRK**
The international community and the Security Council were right in condemning the DPRK’s October 9 nuclear test explosion. The test represents one of the greatest
nonproliferation policy failures in the history of the nuclear age because it was a preventable outcome. It is past time to adjust course in order to minimize the damage. A ‘business as usual’ reiteration of previous calls for the DPRK to return to the six-party talks and tighter sanctions on the already isolated regime will not be likely to persuade leaders in Pyongyang to reverse their present and dangerous course. In fact, it is more likely that additional sanctions alone will harden the DPRK’s position.

To break the current action-reaction cycle, senior US officials should be prepared to meet in a bilateral setting with North Korean officials to resolve issues of concern so long as the DPRK also agrees to return to the six-party talks and refrains from further nuclear or missile tests. At the same time, negotiations cannot succeed if the DPRK maintains its threat to conduct additional tests.

It is also important to clarify the benefits of cooperation and compliance. The United States, China, Russia, Japan, and South Korea should quickly develop a coordinated and detailed proposal outlining which actions they would be prepared to take with respect to implementation of the September 2005 Joint Statement if the DPRK agrees to verifiably freeze plutonium production.

*Iran*

All parties to the dispute over Iran’s nuclear program must exhibit increased flexibility if a negotiated solution is to be attainable. In accordance with the call of the IAEA Director-General, Iran should drop its linkage between the efforts of the international community to end its uranium enrichment program and its suspended implementation of transparency measures intended to allow the IAEA to conclude its investigation into its past nuclear activities. Iran should commit to the re-implementation of the Additional Protocol without preconditions, above and beyond its legal requirements as called for by the IAEA Board, as a confidence-building measure and as a necessary first step toward restoring confidence in its intentions.

The Security Council should use all suitable means to play a constructive role in resolving this dispute by considering its options under Chapter VI of UN Charter on “Pacific Settlement of Disputes”. It is unlikely that sanctions, in any form presently envisioned, will succeed in achieving the desired change in Iranian policy. The crude tools of escalation, isolation, and the threat or use of force have an unmistakeably dismal and tragic track record in solving proliferation crises. In addition, signs of progress toward a WMD free zone in the Middle East could help persuade Iranian leaders that their security would be better served without an active, indigenous uranium enrichment program that invites suspicion.

**Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZs)**

It is not surprising that calls for NWFZs are often heard in relation to particularly tense regions, including South Asia and the Middle East, where nuclear weapons or other WMD directly form part of the tension. In the Middle East, the annual calls for a NWFZ in this forum are echoed elsewhere, including a Security Council resolution and the NPT
review process, where the call has been expanded to a zone free of WMD. The achievement of this goal would make the Middle East the first such negotiated zone, and the political and symbolic value would be all the more striking in light of current realities. Today the Middle East is the region that has the greatest number of non-members to WMD related treaties, and the trend towards proliferation is in the headlines daily.

The deadlocked positions regarding a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East are as well known as they are entrenched. But they do not preclude possible interim confidence building measures, measures that might help lay the groundwork for eventual realization of UNGA resolutions, NPT commitments, and security aspects of the regional peace process. Consider, for example, the WMD Commission’s Recommendation 12:

> All states should support continued efforts to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East as a part of the overall peace process. Steps can be taken even now. As a confidence-building measure, all states in the region, including Iran and Israel, should for a prolonged period of time commit themselves to a verified arrangement not to have any enrichment, reprocessing or other sensitive fuel-cycle activities on their territories.

> Such a commitment should be coupled with reliable assurances about fuel-cycle services required for peaceful nuclear activities. Egypt, Iran and Israel should join the other states in the Middle East in ratifying the CTBT.

The February 4 IAEA Board of Governors resolution also points out that the resolution of the Iranian nuclear crisis could contribute to the realization of a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) free zone in the Middle East.

**Vertical Proliferation**

One of the main challenges to nuclear disarmament is vertical proliferation within the nuclear weapon states; in fact they are direct opposites. We call on all the existing nuclear weapon states to refrain from vertical proliferation, and in particular not to violate their NPT undertaking to eliminate their nuclear arsenals by developing the next generation of nuclear weapons under the guise of replacement or new missions. Nuclear weapons are unable to provide defense or deterrence against current threats, including terrorism, and have no place in the arsenals of civilized countries.

As the WMD Commission notes, “[a]n endless competition to produce improved weapons fosters new suspicions over military intentions and capabilities. In such a climate, what one state might claim is a prudent safety improvement, another state might view in a more sinister light. Great controversies have arisen in recent years over demands in the United States to develop mini-nukes and bunker busters—initiatives that would be likely to lower the threshold for using nuclear weapons.” (p. 38)

All the nuclear weapon states are modernizing their nuclear arsenals. The “war on terror” has been used to provide new political, doctrinal and operational pretexts for the
possession and enhancement of nuclear weapons, and the development of new weapons systems.

Programmes to develop reliable replacement warheads, earth penetrating warheads and mini-nukes are at various stages in the US. US budgets for nuclear-weapon work have soared to roughly US$ 6,400 million in the current fiscal year from their low of about US$ 3,200 million in fiscal year 1995 (for warheads, research and development only, not including delivery and command and control systems). The reality is that a nuclear weapons industry resurgence is occurring in the United States. Millions are being spent at the Nevada nuclear-test site to ensure it is ready to resume nuclear testing within 18 months of any political decision being taken. In order to maintain expertise, non-nuclear or subcritical tests are being conducted, which simulate all parts of a nuclear weapon except the explosion itself.

In early 2006, Russian President Putin boasted of a new hypersonic missile for delivering nuclear and other weapons that is capable of changing flight path.

Laboratory-based expansions of French nuclear weapon design, development and production capacities have been under way for a number of years. For example, over US$ 3,000 million are being spent on a new high-energy laser facility. This year, France is expected to start testing a new missile (the M-51) for its submarine-launched nuclear warheads, which will have an increased range, and it is also working on improving the capabilities of its air-launched nuclear delivery vehicle along with a more “robust” warhead.

Decisions about modernizing the Trident system are under discussion in the UK. The UK government has announced its intent to spend just over £1,000 million over the next three years on refurbishing key facilities at its nuclear-weapon complex. This includes new facilities for assembling and disassembling nuclear weapons and the handling of high explosives and weapon-grade uranium, as well as a new high-energy laser facility. Plans to recruit over 1,000 new staff over the next three years has also been announced, as has the extension of the nuclear-weapon cooperation agreement with the United States for another ten years.

Alternatively, here is an opportunity for the UK to take the lead in strengthening the NPT by announcing that they will not build a nuclear follow-on to Trident.

**Conclusion**

As NGO speakers on nuclear issues at the United Nations, we represent none of the governments of our nationalities but we are products of all. We have arrived at this time and place as a result of experiences and lessons learned within our own nations, in contact with other nations, and out of concern for our nations and for all nations.

---

RCW created a table quantifying the time spent on, participation in, and expertise contributed to each of the CD issues in 2006. It can be found in the August 22 CD report at www.reachingcriticalwill.org
