Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity of addressing this Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This presentation sets out the political context for the presentations that follow. As representatives of non-governmental organizations from many countries and several continents, our diverse perspectives on the problems and opportunities for the global non-proliferation regime in the coming years will, we believe, be a constructive and illuminating contribution to your own deliberations.

Mr. Chairman, we are deeply concerned about the prospects for the future not just of the NPT, but of the entire regime of which this Treaty forms the bedrock. The successful conclusion of the 2000 Review Conference led some to believe that there was reason for optimism, that a path had been mapped out towards full, if slow implementation of the Treaty. Without a dramatic shift in current policies, that view might well be shown to be wrong. The final document of the 2000 Review Conference may be little more than a papering over of a crack in the dam. That crack is now widening to the point where the dam is breaking, and the resulting flood could sweep away forty years of hard diplomatic work. The likely consequence is that nuclear disaster will grow ever closer.

While we use, and feel deeply that it is necessary to use, the language of crisis we understand that in the comfortable surroundings of this UN conference room it is difficult to connect with the nuclear dangers that face us. This is a significant problem, as the daily reality that thousands of nuclear weapons remain a hair-trigger’s length from global catastrophe is so immense that instinctively we refuse to confront it. You do not have the luxury of denying the reality of the threat, burying it under layers of diplomatic language. The failure to address the continued high political value given to nuclear weapons possession and the stimulus that provides to proliferation is perilous to us all in the long run. Is it responsible to remain silent knowing full well the extent of the dangers we face?

The intrinsic instability of the global system that we have wrought since 1945 puts us all at risk of death in the pursuit of security. Future generations will surely marvel that we allowed it to continue for this long. Every nation is insecure in the face of the nuclear threat, and yet many persist in the belief that MAD makes us safer. Can any one of us explain to our children why we place the world in such jeopardy?

The light sanctions meted out against India and Pakistan following their nuclear tests, and the complete lack of governmental reaction to their programs of weaponization and development of nuclear doctrines have permitted proliferation in South Asia. The use by those two countries of
reckless nuclear threats simply underscores the risks we all run as a result of the failure to deal seriously with the nuclearization of the sub-continent.

The decision of the US Senate to refuse to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) dealt another severe blow to the NPT, since the CTBT was part of the agreed price for indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. We recognize the global moratorium on tests, but the CTBT deserves rigorous support, ratification and implementation.

In the Middle East, the refusal to confront the issue of Israeli nuclear weapons head on has harmed the non-proliferation regime, of which the NPT is the cornerstone. While Israel remains outside the Treaty, and is given tacit support for its nuclear arsenal, the danger remains that other countries in the region will seek to acquire nuclear weapons as a counterbalance to the Israeli threat, and inevitably in time one will succeed.

Western Europe, for the first time ever, faces no external or internal military threats, and yet NATO clings, without coherent justification, to the security blanket of the US nuclear umbrella. Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Greece and Turkey claim non-nuclear status while receiving nuclear weapons, and training in their use from the United States under NATO nuclear sharing policies. Such hypocrisy damages the NPT, and stimulates nations, and worse, sub-state actors, to ask why, if these countries that face no threats continue to cling to these weapons, must we foreswear them?

The recent declaration by UK Defence Minister Hoon that the UK is prepared to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states armed with chemical or biological weapons is both apes US policy and mocks UK negative security assurances to NPT members.

All Nuclear Weapon States continue to modernize their nuclear arsenals, pushing ever further into the future the day when they implement Article VI of the Treaty.

Those responsible for these policies must be brought to account in this forum. However, these challenges can be overcome if the States parties to the NPT, and those who remain outside the Treaty bring to the forefront the common goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons from global arsenals, however far off they believe that goal to be. This shared vision is the basis of 40 years of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament treaties and efforts that have made our world a much safer place. Nuclear weapons have been reduced, the number of nuclear weapon states contained. The ultimate global catastrophe of the nuclear holocaust has for now been averted.

The current threat to the NPT does not come principally from countries such as North Korea and Iraq, which despite being States Parties to the Treaty have sought to acquire nuclear weapons. To be sure, their actions weaken the Treaty and and they provide an excuse for Nuclear Weapon States to continue their own weapons programs. They bear a heavy responsibility for these actions, and must answer for them to world opinion and in this forum. But their role on the global stage is limited, and skillful diplomacy mixed with appropriate sanction or other UN authorized action sanction is surely enough to bring countries such as this into full compliance.
The Treaty and the wider regime face a far greater threat. It is becoming clear that the shared vision of disarmament is not universally shared. Because of this, past progress and the future of the Treaty are at risk. In the renewed commitments made only two years ago, the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) promised an “unequivocal undertaking” to eliminate their nuclear arsenals, as part of 13 steps to disarmament. These steps are a pathway to a more secure world, in the shadow of September 11 they are needed more than ever. From this starting point, the nuclear weapons states were to take additional steps, ranging from diminishing the military role of nuclear weapons to reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons, in order to decrease the possibility of nuclear weapons use and to begin the irreversible elimination of nuclear arsenals. This is not being done.

Today’s clear and present danger to the future of the NPT and the wider regime comes from the United States, the single Superpower. A country so powerful has special leadership responsibilities on the global stage to lead by example, and to provide for stability and security. Instead, the United States is engaged in a hazardous military buildup. This dangerous course with a new strategic doctrine that expands from the threat of use of thousands of modern, accurate nuclear weapons to missile defenses, more useable special purpose nuclear weapons, and a variety of new high-tech conventional weapons with global reach. It would be grave indeed if the United States departed from the vision that led it to drive through the creation of the NPT. Without modification, current US policies will destroy the basis of global trust in the NPT, and in arms control that is essential to their success. The most egregious examples include,

- the negative security assurances given to non-nuclear nations by the United States are now flawed. US doctrine, followed by NATO, allows for pre-emptive attacks on non-nuclear weapons states suspected of the possession of chemical or biological weapons, a clear breach of the NSAs. This policy, once hidden, is now trumpeted by an administration eager to use nuclear terror to fight a global war on terror.
- Putting into practice plans to withdraw weapons from service, and then stockpile them for easy re-entry into the arsenal at any future date, make future disarmament treaties unrealizable. They have already rendered the START process unviable.
- Plans for a new generation of nuclear weapons, scheduled initially to be in service until the 100th anniversary of the NPT in 2070 undermine faith in the US commitment to Article VI.
- Plans to prepare for a resumption of nuclear testing, while simultaneously developing a new generation of nuclear weapons intended for use on the battlefields of the future will kill the CTBT once and for all.

Mr Chairman, there is little limit to the current US administration’s assault on the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the wider regime. We, however, refuse to accept the view of those who deny meaning to, and even the existence of international law, or any country that feels it can act without restraint.

We, as NGOS, have a duty to put forward a more positive alternative to global problems. The current spiral of violence is advanced as the reason why disarmament must be abandoned, and yet more sophisticated weapons pursued. But it is precisely this climate of increasingly unrestrained violence that makes the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction more urgent
than ever. From the perspective of the overwhelming mass of humanity, the central purpose of arms control and disarmament is not to preserve the military advantages of any particular government. Rather it must reduce the devastation that any aggressive power can inflict, to prevent the deaths of thousands or even millions of innocent human beings.

We strive for disarmament not as an end in itself, but to enhance true human security. The process of arms control and disarmament, negotiation, confidence building and verification in itself helps to improve international cooperation so necessary to deal with global crises such as looming environmental catastrophe, the moral unacceptability of gross income disparities or dehumanizing gender inequality. We sit today in the seat of the United Nations, whose founding figures understood this need for global cooperation. They had witnessed two world wars in two generations, and saw that real security comes not from missiles and warheads but around the conference table and through the long, unglamorous task of building trust.

Mr Chairman, you have many serious issues before in the coming days. You face a difficult challenge as you begin the path to the 2005 Review Conference. You hold a unique trust in attempting to hold the line for the rule of law, and against an attempt to replace the delicate web of disarmament and non-proliferation agreements with unilateral, nuclear-based military security policies. Your major challenge, and one which all states parties must face head on, is the threat to the NPT from those who clearly show in their deeds that they do not believe in the basis of the deal – disarmament promised in return for nuclear restraint by others. How this challenge is to be met is difficult to say, but the global community must confront this challenge at this PrepCom. Thank you for attention.

**CONVENOR:** Martin Butcher, Physicians for Social Responsibility and Margaret Malkonian, Hague Appeal for Peace; and Andrew Lichternam, Western States Legal Foundation