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2005 Review Conference
of the Parties to the Treaty on the
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
First Session of the Preparatory Committee
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STATEMENT

by Mr. Christian Faessler, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the
Conference on Disarmament

(General debate)

New York, 9 April 2002
Mr. Chairman,

May I first say, on behalf of the Swiss delegation, how pleased we are to see you chairing this First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2002 Review Conference to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The long experience and the substantial engagement of your country – and of yourself personally – in the field of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament will undoubtedly be important assets for the success of our work, which remains more important than ever given the uncertain outlook of the present situation. I would also like to take this opportunity to assure you of the full support and co-operation of my delegation in the fulfilment of your functions.

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two issues crucial to international security. As long as there is disparity in the world nuclear order, and until all danger of further proliferation – horizontal or vertical – has been removed, the international community must spare no effort to achieve these objectives.

For this purpose, the NPT remains the main tool. The decisions taken at the Review Conferences in 1995 and in 2000 provide us the foundation for strengthening the role of this instrument.

Mr. Chairman,

In accordance with the final document of the last review conference, the purpose of our session is, among others, to “consider developments affecting the operation and purpose of the Treaty.”

Among these developments, we note in particular a new issue brought to mind, that of nuclear non-proliferation as result of international terrorism, including the use of radiological and nuclear materials for terrorist purposes. In the view of my country, there is no doubt that the best means to guard against the risks of nuclear non-proliferation are negotiations and the adoption of multilateral legally binding and
universal instruments rather than political engagements and unilateral measures. However, this does not exclude, if necessary, new approaches and arrangements which are more flexible and focused.

Since the end of the last Review Conference there has been positive as well as negative developments. I would like to begin by noting a number of positive developments:

1. *Efforts towards nuclear disarmament and arms control* have continued, albeit at a modest pace. The United States and the Russian Federation have made certain reductions, particularly in the framework of the strategic arms reduction treaty, START I. We are pleased that a new agreement on additional and substantial reductions between these two countries seems to be close to realisation.

2. At the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) over sixty countries have already signed the *Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreements*. Thus, the ability of the Agency to get a better picture of non-declared nuclear activities has been reinforced. Moreover, due to the events of September 11, discussions have started at the Agency on the prevention of nuclear terrorism.

3. In the *fight against terrorism*, we note in particular the international efforts to strengthen the multilateral Convention on the protection of nuclear material as well as other initiatives aiming at preventing unauthorised persons and groups from having access to such materials.

However, this picture is overshadowed by some *far less welcome* developments in terms of international stability and security:

1. The objective of complete *disarmament*, stipulated in Article VI, remains a very remote objective. There are still considerable stocks of military nuclear material, the existence of which is difficult to justify today in terms of national security.

2. The military significance of nuclear weapons remains unchanged. Nuclear deterrence continues to be part of defence doctrine, and new arguments for maintaining and even the eventual use of nuclear arsenals have been put forward.
3. The system of existing traditional nuclear arms control and disarmament treaties is under question. Some of these treaties could fail to enter into force because of the lack of ratification, another one has been denounced.

4. The efforts of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament in the area of nuclear disarmament remain bogged down. The Conference has still not been able to reach agreement on a programme of work yet and thus begin negotiations on a convention banning the production of fissile material and on nuclear disarmament, which was part of the action programme recommended by the 1995 NPT Conference. My country welcomes the efforts of the current president, the Ambassador Reimaa of Finland, to identify constructive solutions.

5. The problem of the NPT's lack of universality persists. This problem is particularly acute in South-East Asia and in the Middle East, where regional instability carries the risk of nuclear proliferation.

6. Doubts also persist as to whether Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are fully in compliance with the Treaty. In the past, these two States have not fully complied with the obligations undertaken in accordance with their safeguards agreements with the IAEA.

Mr. Chairman,

This assessment leads us to the following conclusions:

1. We find an imbalance between the lack of progress made in realising the objective of Article VI and the implementation of other aspects of the Treaty, in particular Articles II and III. For this reason, Switzerland continues to defend the point of view that the decision to extend the Treaty taken in 1995 must not mean an indefinite extension of the status quo, particularly as regards the prerogatives of the nuclear-weapon States. The question remains more than ever of how to re-establish a balance between the implementation of the non-proliferation provisions of the treaty as a whole, and of the specific obligations of the nuclear weapon states in the field of arms control and disarmament.

2. This imbalance also jeopardizes the two compromises which have made it possible to conclude, and later to extend, the NPT. The fact is that the NPT is based on a
reciprocal commitment: a renunciation of nuclear weapons, on the part of the vast majority of States, which nevertheless retain the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in return for a commitment, on the part of States in possession of nuclear weapons, to pursue negotiations with a view to nuclear disarmament.

In 1995, a second compromise was added to this initial reciprocal commitment: the extension of the NPT for an unspecified period in return for the adoption of the "Principles and Objectives", the establishment of a strengthened review process, and a resolution on the Middle East. These 1995 decisions are part of a package which can not be undone.

Mr. Chairman,

Our session should allow open and concrete discussions on all the questions related to the implementation of the Treaty and of the documents and decisions adopted at the Review Conferences. By doing that, it should, in the view of the Swiss delegation, already take into consideration the recommendations to be adopted at the last session of the Preparatory Committee.

The starting point of our work should be a reaffirmation of the basic compromises I have just referred to, i.e. link between nuclear proliferation and the specific obligations of the nuclear weapons States in the field of nuclear disarmament. It should also reaffirm the link between the extension of the Treaty and the implementation of the documents of 1995. Finally, we should examine in particular the ways and means the 13 concrete steps contained in the final document of 2000 could be supplemented and deepened.

With respect to procedural questions, the Swiss delegation is flexible as to the organisation of our work, taking into account the importance of using the time and the resources at our disposal in the most efficient and rational way. My country has complete confidence in the ability of our Chairman to prepare a factual summary report which will provide a solid base for our future work and hence advance our common cause.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.