2009 III Preparatory Committee
of the States Parties to the Treaty
on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Andrzej Towpik

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland
to the United Nations

New York, May 6th, 2009
Mr. Chairman,

Please accept my congratulations on your appointment as the Chair of this third session of the Preparatory Committee. I wish to assure you, Mr. Chairman, of the Polish Delegation's full support and cooperation in the discharge of your important mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

Poland fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the distinguished representative of the Czech Republic, on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to emphasize only some aspects which are of particular importance to Poland in our estimation.

Mr. Chairman,

For Poland the Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the cornerstone of international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are fully committed to its objectives and its three pillars: nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It is our common responsibility to contribute to the success of the present NPT review cycle and to make sure not to repeat next year the 2005 scenario.

The past two years resulted in a growing number of initiatives, sponsored by the US, Asian, Australian and European prominent politicians representing different political options. To mention a few: the Hoover Initiative, Evans-Kawaguchi Commission, Luxemburg Forum, Global Zero Initiative as well as the Oslo Conference: *Towards the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons*. The global revival of the debate on the
NPT objectives is a promising fact. We cannot fail to use the opportunity to re-establish a sense of common purpose, which can help to turn the non-proliferation regime back on track.

Mr. Chairman,

Poland, a country whose territory in the past was likely to become a theatre of military operations with the use of nuclear weapons, is vitally interested in the global debate on nuclear disarmament. We add our voice to this important discussion. I wish to draw your attention to the report from the conference of the Warsaw Reflection Group on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The “Arms Control Revisited: Non-proliferation and Denuclearization” conference took place in Warsaw on 20-21 November 2008. It was organized jointly by the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) and the Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). 40 diplomats, scholars and politicians from 15 countries as well as from the United Nations attended the meeting. Intellectual leadership and chairmanship of the Warsaw’s meeting was provided by professor Adam Daniel Rotfeld, Chairman of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to the UN Secretary General. The Conference with its broad capacity of topics joined the mainstream of ongoing discussions about the need to strengthen the non-proliferation system and fulfill all disarmament commitments. The debate touched upon the very foundations of the new international security environment trying to determine its elements, identify new threats and finally find-out what measures and tools are needed to prevent proliferation and to revive the process of nuclear denuclearization. The English version of the report from the Warsaw Conference is available on the PISM website (http://www.pism.pl/zalaczniki/WGR_1.pdf). Copies of the report will be also distributed during this NPT PrepCom.

The findings of the international Warsaw Reflection Group were backed-up by former Polish presidents Mr. Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Mr. Lech Wałęsa and the first post-communist prime minister Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki. In their appeal, which
is attached to this statement, they stress that achieving the vision of a world free from nuclear weapons will require among others respect for human rights, as well as establishment, on a global scale, of democracy and the rule of law.

Mr. Chairman,

The history of nuclear disarmament efforts teaches us that among various initiatives often succeed those that are courageous and therefore groundbreaking. Although at the Reykjavik summit, October 1986, the leaders did not reach agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons, they have changed the thinking about nuclear weapons for the years to come. They paved the way to the signing of the treaty on banning intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) and to The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). Since the end of Cold War the world has changed, however, we have failed to understand the nature of these changes and react properly. In order to make progress we must start again from elaborating a common vision and consider ways leading to its implementation. In the nuclear disarmament field, the safest way of achieving our objectives, is by a step-by-step approach, which today means: let’s us finalize this what is feasible. Therefore Poland is of the opinion that a priority on our to-do-list is the earliest possible entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). We fully echo the call of the other EU member states in that regard. Equally important but more challenging is the commencement, without preconditions, of negotiations of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT).

We welcome the joint U.S.-Russian statement on nuclear arms, which emphasizes the readiness of both countries to assume a leadership role in global disarmament process. The new post-START agreement with a robust verification mechanism could contribute to creating a positive climate before the upcoming NPT Review Conference 2010 by proving a progress in fulfillment of the art VI commitments. We hope that these
steps, if made, will ignite the incremental process, which could enable us to pursue more ambitious goals.

Mr. Chairman,

Notwithstanding the fact of extreme importance of disarmament issues Poland shares the view that a continued symmetry and balanced approach to both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation should be maintained. Without a new momentum in the field of nuclear disarmament it will be difficult to curb proliferation and vice-versa. Today this is more important than ever before. Disarmament and non-proliferation efforts are mutually reinforcing. That is why in our quest for strengthening the non-proliferation system as a whole and fulfilling the NPT commitments we cannot act on our own or in separate groups of countries. We call on all states, which share the enthusiasm connected with the revival of global debate on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, to join the ongoing discussions and enrich them with their experience.

Mr. Chairman,

Poland is firmly convinced that in view of the upcoming Review Conference all states will show that they are capable of making these few steps, both in the field of disarmament as well as non-proliferation, which will bring us closer to the positive outcome of the current review process. During this Preparatory Committee we need to focus on elaborating a positive and realistic agenda for the 2010 Conference.

The delegation of Poland stands ready to support you, Mr. Chairman, in your efforts to achieve such a goal.

Thank you for your attention.
The Unthinkable Becomes Thinkable:  
Towards Elimination of Nuclear Weapons  
By Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Lech Wałęsa

The meeting of US and Russian presidents has prompted us to speak out about the global abolition of nuclear arms. The urgency can hardly be exaggerated: nuclear weapons may come into the possession of states that might use them as well as stateless terrorists—creating new threats of unimaginable proportion.

A noble dream just several years ago, the elimination of nuclear arms is no longer the idea of populists and pacifists; it is now a call of professionals—politicians known for their sense of realism and academics for their sense of responsibility.

An inspiration to discuss a world free from nuclear peril came from a statement by four US statesmen, two Democrats and two Republicans. In ‘A World Free of Nuclear Weapons’ (Wall Street Journal, January 4, 2007), former US secretaries of state George Schultz and Henry Kissinger, former defence secretary William Perry, and former chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee Sam Nunn proposed several measures in pursuit of this goal. A year later, in another article expanding their initiative, they used this metaphor: “[T]he goal of a world free of nuclear weapons is like the top of a very tall mountain. From the vantage point of our troubled world today, we can’t even see the top of the mountain, and it is tempting and easy to say we can’t get there from here. But the risks from continuing to go down the mountain or standing pat are too real to ignore. We must chart a course to higher ground where the mountaintop becomes more visible” (WSJ, Jan. 15, 2008).

These words provoked an avalanche of support from leading figures on the British political scene, from Italian politicians from the left, centre and right, and eminent figures on the German political scene, whether Social Democrats, Christian Democrats or Liberals.

In January 2009, 130 world politicians and scientists gathered in Paris to sign the Global Zero Declaration. Elsewhere, the governments of Australia and Japan established an International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament. Leading research centres in all corners of the globe are
working on reports to provide arguments for a political decision on the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

We are now adding our voice from Poland, a country tested by the atrocities of World War II, and familiar with the nuclear threats of the Cold War period. A country heavily affected by the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl.

This growing concern mirrors the perception of new threats and risks. The invention of nuclear weapons—which served the goal of deterrence during the Cold War, with the world divided into two opposing blocks—answered the needs and risks of the time. Security rested on a balance of fear, as reflected in the concept of mutual assured destruction. In that bipolar world, nuclear weapons were held by only five global powers, permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Today the global picture is different. Sparked by the Solidarity movement in Poland, the erosion of communist systems in Central and Eastern Europe led to our region's new “Springtime of the Peoples”. With the Warsaw Pact dissolved and the Soviet Union disintegrated, the bipolar world and its East-West divide vanished. And the hope for a better future came to our hearts.

An order based on the dangerous doctrine of mutual deterrence, was not, however, replaced with a system founded on cooperation and interdependence. Destabilization and chaos followed, accompanied by a sense of uncertainty and unpredictability. Nuclear weapons are now also held by three states in conflict: India, Pakistan and Israel. Given the development of the nuclear programmes in North Korea and Iran, both these countries may also become nuclear-weapon states, and there is a real danger that this group may further expand to include states where governments will not always be guided by rational considerations. There is also the risk that nuclear weapons may fall into the hands of non-state actors, such as extremists from terrorist groupings.

We share the view that an effective non-proliferation regime will not be possible unless the major nuclear powers, especially the USA and Russia, take urgent steps towards nuclear disarmament. Together, they hold nearly 25,000 nuclear warheads—96% of the global nuclear arsenal.

It gives us hope that US President Obama recognizes these dangers. We note with satisfaction that the new US administration has not turned a deaf ear to voices from statesmen and scientists. The goal of a nuclear-free world was
incorporated in the US administration’s arms control and disarmament agenda. We appreciate the proposals from the UK, France and Germany. Russia has also signaled recently in Geneva its readiness to embark upon nuclear disarmament.

Opponents of nuclear disarmament used to argue that this goal was unattainable in the absence of an effective system of control and verification. But today appropriate means of control are available to the international community. Of key importance are the nuclear safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The world must have guarantees that civilian nuclear reactors will not be used for military purposes – a condition for non-nuclear-weapon states’ unrestricted access to nuclear technologies as proposed recently Prime-Minister Brown in his initiative on A global nuclear bargain for our times. This is specially urgent at the present time, with the search for new energy sources and a “renaissance” of nuclear power.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference calls for an urgent formulation of priorities. The Preparatory Committee will meet in New York this May, and this is where the required decisions should be made. The main expectations are for a reduction of nuclear armaments, a cutback in the number of launch-ready warheads (de-alerting), negotiations on a Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty, ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, and other means of strengthening practical implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, especially its universal adoption.

The time has come for a fundamental change in the proceedings of the Geneva-based Disarmament Conference. It has for years failed to meet the international community’s expectations.

We share the expectation expressed by the academics, politicians and experts of the international Warsaw Reflection Group, convened under auspices of the Polish Institute of International Affairs in co-operation with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) that consideration should be given to the zero option as a basis for a future multilateral nuclear disarmament agreement. The Group’s report, *Arms Control Revisited: Non-proliferation and Denuclearization*, elaborated under chairmanship of Adam D.Rotfeld of Poland and drafted by British scholar Ian Anthony of SIPRI was based on contributions made by security analysts from nuclear powers and Poland as well as from countries previously in possession of nuclear weapons (South Africa) and countries where they had been stored: post-Soviet
armouries were located in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The fact that these new states were denuclearized as part of the Safe and Secure Disarmament programme provides a valuable lesson.

Today we have to set the process of gradual nuclear disarmament in motion. It will not produce results overnight but would give us a sense of direction, a chance to strengthen non-proliferation mechanisms, and an opportunity to establish a global, cooperative non-nuclear security system.

The deadliest threat to global security comes from a qualitatively new wave of nuclear proliferation. The heaviest responsibility is shouldered by the powers that hold the largest arsenals. We trust that the presidents of the USA and Russia, and leaders of all other nuclear powers will show statesmanlike wisdom and courage, and that they will begin the process of freeing the world from the nuclear menace. For a new international security order, abolishing nuclear weapons is as important as respect for human rights and the rights of minorities and establishing in the world a governance based on rule of law and democracy.

Aleksander Kwaśniewski was Polish president between 1995 and 2005; Tadeusz Mazowiecki was prime minister in the first non-communist government of Poland (1989-1990); Lech Wałęsa, leader of the Solidarity movement and Nobel Peace Prize laureate (1983), was Polish president between 1990 and 1995.