**Time for All States to Accelerate Progress on Key 2010 Action Steps**

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We are one year away from the 2015 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, and the global nuclear disarmament and risk reduction enterprise is at yet another important crossroads. The situation requires that the states gathered here must seriously consider, explore, and pursue alternative options to reduce global nuclear dangers and jumpstart progress toward the fulfillment of the ambitious 2010 NPT Action Plan.

**The Current Landscape**

As efforts to resume Six-Party talks remain stalled, North Korea threatens to conduct its fourth nuclear test in violation of its NPT commitments and the global ban on nuclear tests.

Negotiations between the P5+1 states and Iran to resolve longstanding concerns about its nuclear program are at a critical phase. An effective, multiyear deal can only be achieved if each side is ready to compromise and pursue realistic solutions that meet the other side’s core requirements.

The ability of the 2010 NPT Review Conference to reach agreement on the so-called *Action Plan* was an important breakthrough. But the follow-through on the plan—particularly the 22 interrelated disarmament steps—has been disappointing, as progress on most of the items has slowed to a crawl.

Since 2011, the United States and Russia have failed to start talks to further reduce their still enormous nuclear stockpiles below the limits of the 2010 New START agreement. U.S. and Russian strategic stockpiles will still far exceed any plausible deterrence requirements. Many of their weapons remain on prompt launch status, a condition that President-elect Barack Obama called “a dangerous relic of the Cold War.”

Unfortunately, President Vladimir Putin rebuffed U.S. President Barack Obama’s June 2013 proposal to reduce U.S. and Russian strategic stockpiles by one-third below the ceilings set by New START.

Worse still, with Russia’s military intervention in Crimea, new negotiations on further nuclear disarmament beyond New START are unlikely any time soon.

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1 An expanded version of this statement is available online at www.armscontrol.org
Progress toward CTBT entry-into-force still awaits promised action from the United States and China on ratification, as well as the five other Annex 2 hold-out states.

Talks on the Fissile Material Control Treaty and other important disarmament agenda items have still not begun at the Conference on Disarmament.

Progress on tactical nuclear arms reductions and deployments also remains stalled.

In 2010, all of the NPT nuclear-weapon states committed to “diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons” and “[d]iscuss policies that could prevent the use of nuclear weapons.”

Unfortunately, none of them has undertaken demonstrable, concrete steps to do so.

In light of these realities, leaders at this conference must consider, explore, and pursue new ideas and options to reduce global nuclear dangers and meet the 2010 NPT Action Plan goals.

**Ways Forward**

We believe that more than one path can and should be pursued. The following are practical ideas for consideration by all states at this meeting:

**Use the Humanitarian Consequences Conferences As An Opportunity for Dialogue:**

The conferences on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons are a useful and important venue for understanding the risks of nuclear weapons and the means by which those risks can be eliminated.

The five NPT nuclear weapon states should actively participate in the meeting and support joint statements warning of the consequences of nuclear weapons use.

Before the 2015 NPT Review Conference, the nuclear weapon states should also be called upon to explain the effects of their nuclear weapons use doctrines and war plans, if they were to be carried out, and explain how the use of such weapons would be consistent with international human rights and humanitarian law.

**Accelerate New START Reductions:** As a 2012 report by the U.S. Secretary of State’s International Security Advisory Board suggests, with New START verification tools in place, further nuclear reductions need not wait for a formal follow-on treaty. The United States and Russia could accelerate the pace of reductions under New START to reach the agreed limits before the 2018 deadline. As long as as both sides continue to reduce force levels below the treaty limits, deeper reductions below New START are possible.

**Seek to Cap the Growth of the Arsenals of the Other Nuclear-Armed States:** Other countries must do more to fulfill their NPT Article VI obligations.
As a first step, other nuclear-armed states, beginning with China, France, and the U.K., should pledge not to increase the overall size of their growing nuclear weapons and missile stockpiles as long as U.S. and Russian reductions continue. Such an effort must eventually involve states outside the NPT, specifically India and Pakistan, which continue to expand their stocks of nuclear weapons material and their holdings of nuclear weapons.

Adjust Nuclear Readiness Posture of Some ICBMs: As a confidence-building measure, U.S. and Russian experts could commence technical discussions on verifiably reducing the alert status of an agreed portion of their respective stockpiles, beginning with a portion of their land-based intercontinental ballistic missile forces. In December 2008, President-elect Obama said he would “work with Russia to end such outdated Cold War policies in a mutual and verifiable way.”

Follow Through on Commitments to Ratify the CTBT: Despite statements of support for ratification from the United States and China, neither state has taken sufficient action to secure domestic support for ratification. The path to approval by the U.S. Senate is a tough climb but is achievable with a major push. So far, the White House has done too little to begin the ascent. Now is the time for President Obama to begin that effort.

Ratification by Israel, Egypt, and Iran would reduce nuclear weapons-related security concerns in the region. It would also help create the conditions necessary for the realization of a Middle East Zone free of Nuclear and other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

States not involved in the Iran nuclear talks, particularly the Non-Aligned Movement, need to do their part by calling on President Hassan Rouhani to ratify the treaty.

Conclusion

As Obama said last year, “[S]o long as nuclear weapons exist, we are not truly safe. Complacency is not in the character of great nations.” States and this conference must do more than simply repeat previous calls for action. States must be prepared to act and they must do so before next year’s NPT review conference.

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