

NGO RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE 2002 NON-PROLIFERATION
TREATY PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

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Mr. Chairperson, Delegates, and Colleagues,

You have heard presentations from a range of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individuals, reflecting just a portion of the expertise, experience, and insights of the non-governmental sector. Although our specific priorities and range of knowledge vary greatly, we all share a sense of urgency and deep concern regarding the current state of non-proliferation and disarmament.

This presentation will offer concrete recommendations not covered in earlier presentations, aimed at strengthening the NPT regime. We offer these as food for thought and action, with the explicit qualification that not all NGOs share all of the views expressed in these recommendations. In fact, we would venture to suggest that our ability to overcome very deep differences of opinion in order to further our collective commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament might serve as a model for governments.

1) Negative Security Assurances should be made legally binding

Negative security assurances – that is, pledges by nuclear weapon states not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states – have featured prominently in the NPT review process and helped to secure the support of non-nuclear weapon states for the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. It is surprising and disturbing, therefore, that officials in the United States and the United Kingdom have recently cast doubt on the validity of their own negative security assurances by making statements that seem to undermine these assurances.

Officials in the US and UK have indicated that they would not rule out the use of nuclear weapons against states that use or threaten to use biological or chemical weapons. As a matter of nuclear planning, this suggests that the US and UK are preparing for use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. At the same time, these officials have insisted that they have not changed their policies regarding negative security assurances. Such ambiguity around policies of nuclear weapons use is profoundly unsettling and sends the message that even militarily powerful states need nuclear weapons for their security. Beyond that, it is an insult to all non-nuclear weapon states.

The way to resolve this ambiguity and secure the confidence of non-nuclear weapon states is by making negative security assurances legally binding. The way to deal with chemical and biological weapons is through joint Security Council commitment and action, building on Security Council Resolution 984 of 1995, which affirmed the nuclear weapon states' negative security assurances.

2) The Security Council should address nuclear disarmament

As we know all too well, the permanent members of the Security Council are also the NPT-recognised nuclear weapon states. This fact would seem to block the possibility of effective Security Council action toward nuclear disarmament. But in this context we would like to remind NPT member states of the Security Council's obligation under the United Nations Charter to develop a system for the regulation of armaments. Article 26 of the Charter states:

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 Security Council shall be responsible for formulating, with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee referred to in Article 47, plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations for the **establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments.** (Emphasis added.)

The status and responsibility inherent in being a permanent member of the Security Council should work in favor of, not against, nuclear disarmament. China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US already enjoy political influence and prestige as a function of their Security Council membership. We call on them to put this political power to work by implementing their obligation under Article 26 and applying it to nuclear weapons. The Council is 57 years behind on a crucial element of its job description.

3) Establish a permanent secretariat for the NPT

The NPT could be supported by a permanent secretariat based at the United Nations. At present there is no centralised mechanism where ongoing compliance with Treaty commitments can be monitored, grievances lodged, inquiries regarding compliance made, and guidance sought. As a result, progress on meeting the goals of the NPT is slowed, formal negotiations at the Review Conferences and PrepComs are delayed by disagreements over compliance issues, and efficiency in the important work of advancing the non-proliferation and disarmament commitments embodied in the NPT is hindered.

NPT states parties should consider the creation of a permanent secretariat that could serve as a repository of information and as a focal point to receive, review, verify for accuracy, and properly direct complaints about non-compliance and other difficulties States parties may have with the NPT process. This function could at once increase the profile of legitimate concerns, ensuring that serious complaints reach all members of the NPT, and reduce the frequency of unfounded complaints or inquiries, often floated through the media, that may actually disrupt the process.

Those complaints that are well founded deserve a more structured, systematic and even-handed treatment than they currently receive. The alternative is debating non-compliance issues without formally addressing the serious ramifications thereof, a process that diminishes the effectiveness of the non-proliferation regime.

An NPT secretariat must derive its mandate from the entire NPT body, as does the Executive Council in the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In addition to its repository and focal point roles, such a body could also be able to develop informed recommendations for the full NPT body and the Security Council, thereby enhancing and expediting the implementation process. Not having something like a secretariat means that the drive from the 2000 Review Conference has been lost a little.

The costs of implementing this proposal are minimal compared to the gains in efficiency. Possible objections based on monetary arguments would ring hollow if there is a fair debate on the added efficiencies of having such a body. The costs of offices, computers and staff are minimal compared to military expenditures and that must continually be our context of debate and decision-making.

4) Implement “Global Zero Alert” of nuclear weapons.

At a time when there is talk of “usable” nuclear weapons it is imperative to remember that nuclear missiles on hair-trigger alert – poised to be launched in minutes – are the front line of usability. At the 2000 Review Conference, governments signed to the NPT agreed “concrete measures” were needed to “reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems.” But the U.S. and Russia, despite being strategic partners, still keep thousands of weapons in a quick “launch-on-warning” mode. We are still one false alarm away from accidental nuclear war. And current nuclear reductions discussed by the U.S. and Russia will do little to change this dangerous situation.

What needs to be done to move us back from the brink of nuclear war? By most accounts, the U.S and Russia are the only two nuclear powers who keep missiles primed for immediate launch. Presidents Bush and Putin should follow through on their declarations of friendship by ordering their respective militaries to abandon launch-on-warning policy – to take their nuclear weapons off line – to extend decision making time for both Presidents. This will create a critical margin of safety and set a standard for every nuclear nation: No nuclear weapons should be on high alert.

“Global Zero Alert” is a standard the world can live with. How can we get to “Global Zero Alert”? Each nuclear weapon states should publicly pledge not to put its missiles on high alert and should urge the other nuclear weapon states, especially the U.S. and Russia, to join. Non-nuclear states should send a message to Presidents Bush and Putin to exercise authority and to tell their respective militaries that they no longer need the capacity to launch nuclear weapons quickly. It’s past time to end this Cold War nuclear posture of constant threat. Taking nuclear weapons off high alert by removing warheads from missiles and placing them in secure, verified storage would also build momentum for other “steps” agreed to at the 2000 Review Conference.

Among these are “increased transparency by the nuclear weapon states with regard to the nuclear weapons capabilities” and “a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies to minimise the risk that these weapons ever be used to facilitate the process of nuclear disarmament.”

It’s time for the former Cold War enemies to take their fingers off the nuclear trigger and end this Nuclear High Noon showdown. Maybe then they can get serious about doing away with these weapons of mass destruction and show the world real moral leadership.

5) Explore concepts of security without nuclear weapons.

Why are nuclear weapons still with us? What alternative security concepts could persuade the Nuclear Weapons States to depart from their reliance on nuclear weapons? These questions are the subject of fourteen reports from Peace Research Institutes world-wide who met recently in Moscow at the invitation of IPPNW Sweden. The main conclusions are available in a report being distributed at this meeting. (See also <www.slmk.org>.)

The report concluded that although the Cold War is over, the nuclear weapon states still cling to their nuclear weapons, and that this addiction must be overcome. Alternative security programmes introduced in this report can facilitate such a process. In this regard the report recommends the following:

- The establishment of new defence doctrines that do not rely on nuclear weapons for deterrence or for actual warfighting.
- New co-operative and comprehensive security measures that focus primarily on the security of human beings rather than on the security of states.
- The creation of arrangements and policies that promote trust and confidence rather than fear, transparency rather than secrecy, and security “together with” rather than security “against.”
- The consideration of unilateral disarmament. Any nuclear weapon state, given the political impetus, can disarm its nuclear arsenal unilaterally. The argument demanding “balanced nuclear weapons disarmament” must be challenged.

6) Use the goal of a nuclear weapons convention to further nuclear disarmament now.

Despite the current hostile political environment regarding treaties and verification-based regimes, it is important to maintain the knowledge, expertise, and training relevant to disarmament, and to continue to develop these as well. It is also important to continue to develop and voice arguments in support of co-operative, verifiable, and irreversible approaches to security, with a view to the goal of complete nuclear disarmament despite current obstacles.

A model nuclear weapons convention was released in April 1997 as a tool to encourage debate on the political, legal, and technical requirements for complete nuclear disarmament. This debate has been followed through the Nuclear Weapons Convention Monitor, the latest issue of which contains a summary of the discussion that took place in January of this year during a Track II roundtable in Ottawa on the legal and technical aspects of complete nuclear disarmament. We

encourage governments to explore the ideas presented there as a way to think past the current situation, which is characterised by acute failure of imagination.

In this context we would like to recall the working paper submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at the 2000 Review Conference on nuclear verification. We hope at this PrepCom there will be further discussion of the verification requirements for the elimination of nuclear weapons. This should not await negotiation of a treaty.

7) Improve gender balance to further nuclear disarmament

The gender of power and decision-making, when contrasted to the gender of poverty and the experience of violence is evidence of an unhealthy, undemocratic and unnecessarily exclusionary world. The exclusion of women from policy discourse and decision-making is almost total. The gender imbalance in this room, and the division of decision-making labour in the weaponised security environment on the intergovernmental and national levels speak volumes. Numerous consensus documents, as well as Security Council Resolution 1325, binding on all states, urge all member states to increase the representation of women in all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions. We suggest it is time for bodies like the NPT to comply.

In the NGO community, women's organisations have focused a great deal of energy on macro-security questions, especially on weapons of mass destruction since they were invented. The women's peace movement has looked at the hardware of war to see what role they play in the culture and psychology of fighting; in the economics of business, buyer as well as seller; they have examined the sexual symbolism and significance of weapons as well as the part they play as a mechanism for the distribution of power and favours by elites. Women's organisations following the NPT submit that the ability of military security to achieve its stated aims is routinely over-estimated, while the complexity of its costs is overlooked. They also submit that the absence of women in the security sector helps to explain the lack of human security in today's war-ravaged, weaponized, insecure world that is polluted with dangerous weapons, ideologies and institutions, created mainly by men with a handful of women.

8) Consider collective sanctions by non-nuclear weapon states.

Together, the non-nuclear weapons states are a super power. NGOs believe that to some extent the power of NNWS solidarity has been untested beyond words on paper. As NGOs we are not required to be diplomatic, that is one of our strengths and luxuries, so if we offend when we say it is clear that a handful of nuclear weapon states have compromised the sovereignty of a great many non-nuclear weapon states, please forgive us. Threats of economic or political consequences would inevitably come from the nuclear weapon states were the non-nuclear weapon states to unite in a concrete action that would increase pressure for compliance with Article 6. Still we continue to hope for a world in which democracy, the will of the majority of people and states, can prevail. The fact that so many governments self-censor due to fear of political reprisals or are inhibited due to economic dependence, in this fora and others, is a sorry comment on the state of the world, and also on democracy and sovereignty. We salute the

courage of some states who stand up and say no, despite the potential risks. We wish more of you would simultaneously demonstrate such courage, and believe that if all non-nuclear weapon states imposed an informal sanctions regime against nuclear weapon states, or perhaps a focused campaign of simply refusing to cooperate on trade, transport or visa issuance, whatever the action, the unity would provide safety and could generate that rare substance, political will.

In conclusion:

These are preventive measures. These are real counter-proliferation and non-proliferation steps. These are not just good suggestions for arms control and disarmament. These are rudimentary minimum requirements for the NPT to be an effective credible tool to make us all safer. **Safety, security, minimum requirements, efficiency, co-ordination, rule of law, co-operation, deterring violations, and strengthening controls** – these are the terms through which we can pursue true security.

We are grateful for the opportunity to address NPT States Parties, and we have tried to convey our sense of urgency and our commitment to true security and disarmament. We admit that it is a challenge for us to fit the range of NGO analyses and recommendations into three hours, and in the process we have chosen to subsume our own individual priorities and for most of us even our identities, for the sake of the greater common purpose – the elimination of nuclear weapons. We have agreed to present a range of ideas even though not all of us necessarily support all of these ideas, because our collective priority is to convey the need to think in new ways, take new risks, and break new ground in order to promote nuclear disarmament and genuine security.

We recognise that most of you support this goal, but we often find it difficult to persuade our own colleagues and constituencies that your governments are in fact doing everything in their power to further nuclear disarmament. We promise you that if we see new energy and new initiatives on the governmental side, our colleagues and constituencies – and non-governmental organisations and individuals everywhere – will respond with resounding support and renewed enthusiasm. We thank you for your attention and we wish you success during this meeting.

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