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# Reviewing the Non-Proliferation Treaty: the case for collective security

Statement to the Conference on Disarmament

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Mr President,

In 1946, the first resolution ever adopted by the United Nations General Assembly stressed the necessity of eliminating 'weapons adaptable to mass destruction'. Now, sixty years later, the issue is still topical. So it is a particular honour and a pleasure for me to address the Conference on Disarmament once again this year.

Today, I wish to focus on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT. The upcoming Review Conference is in my opinion one of the major challenges for diplomacy in 2005. If we leave the situation unchanged, the Treaty will be in serious trouble. To quote one of the key passages in the Report by the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel: "We are approaching a point at which the erosion of the non-proliferation regime could become irreversible and result in a cascade of proliferation."

Actually, the state of affairs surrounding this Treaty is a textbook illustration of what the same report calls "the need for a new security consensus". I see it as a crucial paradox we have to come to grips with: on the one hand, more than ever, a globalised world poses security challenges that affect all of us. On the other hand, there is a widening gap between different countries' perspectives on which global security challenges are most urgent, and which ones are less important. This gap is clearly visible in the debate on the NPT.

Fortunately, we can still find common ground. All of us acknowledge that the NPT has been of crucial importance in preventing countries from acquiring nuclear weapons. It has also proven to be a robust framework for delaying proliferation, which exceeded all expectations. Without it, the number of nuclear-weapons-capable states would probably have been far greater. The key to the success of the Treaty is the balance it strikes between three concepts: non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and access to peaceful nuclear technology. But this carefully crafted balance is also its greatest weakness. If the views of its signatories on the stability of this framework diverge any further, the entire structure itself could become unstable. Let me stress that there are no winners in such a scenario.

Mr President,

Ten years ago, when the members of the NPT agreed to extend the Treaty indefinitely, important promises were reconfirmed in the "Principles and Objectives" document. Five years later, at the 2000 Review Conference, agreement was reached on a substantive Final Document, but by that time it had already taken considerable effort to paper over the cracks that were appearing.

In the past five years we have seen those cracks widening. The countries that acceded to the Treaty voluntarily gave up the nuclear option in the understanding that the nuclear weapon states would pursue the elimination of their nuclear arsenals in good faith. Nuclear disarmament must continue, so that we do not create a world where only nuclear weapons can provide national security.

At the same time, there is still too much indifference about growing clandestine nuclear activity and blatant non-compliance by some parties to the Treaty. In fact, over the past ten years more than two hundred incidents involving illicit trafficking in nuclear materials have been documented. Therefore, if in the long run we want to maintain global political support for the NPT bargain, and discourage countries that might want to acquire nuclear weapons from doing so, both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states will have to keep their end of that bargain. The debate about the relative priorities of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament is a fruitless one, since the three elements of the Treaty – disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful use – are inseparably linked. One cannot be pursued without the others. I will now turn briefly to each of these three elements.

[Nuclear Disarmament]

Mr President,

Last year I opened my statement in the CD with a discussion of non-proliferation. This year, for the sake of balance, I will begin with nuclear disarmament.

For the Netherlands, the benchmark for progress towards nuclear disarmament is the Thirteen Steps approach we agreed in 2000. While some of those steps have been overtaken by events, like those relating to START and the A.B.M. Treaty, many of the Thirteen Steps have lost none of their relevance. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty remains of utmost importance, pending which existing moratoria on testing of nuclear weapons should be maintained and nuclear weapon states should refrain from the development of new types of nuclear weapons. I should also mention the need for a further reduction of tactical nuclear weapons as an integral part of nuclear disarmament, and the need for a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, or FMCT. For the past five years, we have essentially come to a standstill in these important areas,

which threatens to undermine the norms laid down in the Treaty and by its Review Conferences.

Another element addressed by the Thirteen Steps is the need for transparency and accountability, which for my government has always been a priority. Although the nuclear weapon states have provided a good deal of information, I think the world expects them to be even more open about their nuclear capabilities, wherever their national security allows. We urge the nuclear weapon states to report regularly on their aggregate number of warheads, delivery systems and stocks of fissile materials. Transparency provides the basis for measuring progress in nuclear disarmament and for building confidence that will enable the NPT to remain the guardian of non-proliferation and peaceful uses.

Finally, one of the Thirteen Steps refers directly to the Conference on Disarmament and its programme of work. Earlier this year, when the Netherlands held the presidency of this Conference, we made every possible effort to resolve the remaining disagreements about this programme. You, Mr president, have continued these efforts in a very effective way. Your statement on the CD's programme of work last week made clear that there is a window of opportunity, if key delegations are willing to go the extra mile. We may be closer to final agreement than we have been in many years. I would encourage you all to make this happen before the NPT Review Conference.

It is clear that the Thirteen Steps will have to be updated. That will be a major challenge for the Review Conference – to say the least – given that the consensus on some of those steps has eroded, and that they cannot simply be replaced with something different.

[Non-Proliferation]

Mr President,

The second part of the bargain that created the NPT is non-proliferation

I would like to recall the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which is an expression of the EU's commitment to the multilateral system and the rule of law. The Union recognises that to uphold the law strict enforcement is needed. The EU will continue to set demanding conditions in its relations with third countries with

respect to non-proliferation, while at the same time fostering inclusiveness and remaining receptive to countries' security concerns.

The implementation of the Additional Protocol will build greater confidence about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in a state. The NPT Review Conference should affirm that the Model Additional Protocol, together with a comprehensive safeguards system, now represents the verification standard.

Another way to improve our non-proliferation efforts is by better controlling the nuclear fuel cycle. I share the concerns expressed by the Director-General of the IAEA, Dr ElBaradei. That is why we fully support the activities of the IAEA Working Group on Multinational Approaches, which has produced its results in time for the Review Conference. The Conference should follow up by setting out a course of action to ensure that nuclear fuel cycles will be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Compliance with all the provisions of the NPT is crucial. In that regard, one of the matters of most serious concern should be, and I quote the High-level Panel once again, that some countries "will acquire all the materials and expertise needed for weapons programmes with the option of withdrawing from the Treaty at the point when they are ready to proceed with weaponisation". In this respect, I call upon those countries that are currently a source of great worry to live up to their obligations under the NPT.

[Peaceful Uses]

Mr President,

The third component of the bargain that underpins the NPT is the transfer of nuclear knowledge, equipment and materials for peaceful uses. We have long recognised it as one of the fundamental provisions of the Treaty. What has now become clear is that it is no longer possible to view this issue in isolation from non-proliferation. Compliance with the non-proliferation and verification requirements of the Treaty should be regarded as a precondition for cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear technology. What is more, states that want a stable, open and transparent international security environment in which peaceful nuclear cooperation can take place should be required to adhere to the Additional Protocol, and to abstain from cooperation with states that are in non-compliance with their IAEA safeguard agreements.

[Preparation for the Review Conference]

Mr President,

In preparing for the Review Conference, the Netherlands has worked closely with Belgium and Norway to further develop building blocks for a Final Document. The latest version of this paper was presented to the third session of the PrepCom in May last year. These efforts are aimed at exploring the middle ground between the nuclear weapon states and the non-nuclear weapon states. We would warmly welcome any parties that want to participate in this bridge-building exercise, and we hope the President of the Review Conference and his Bureau can reap the benefits of this approach.

[Universalisation]

Mr President,

Before concluding, I would like to make a few specific remarks about the three states that have chosen to remain outside the NPT. These states maintain that their security situation does not allow them to forego the option of possessing nuclear weapons. I would like to call on India, Pakistan and Israel to reanalyse their positions and to reconsider the case for joining the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states. In the meantime, I hope that these states also realise that they are indirect beneficiaries of the NPT, and that they too can help to promote the success of that Treaty.

The most productive step, in my view, would be for them to start negotiations and discussions without further delay in the Conference on Disarmament on a number of issues related to nuclear disarmament – first and foremost on an FMCT, without preconditions.

This would set the stage for a positive and constructive NPT Review Conference in May.

And it would deliver on the main conclusion of the High-level Panel's Report: that without mutual recognition of threats, there can be no collective security.

Thank you.