

Nuclear Weapons Free World - Opinion Pieces

Statements

Sweden: Attached for your reference is "Swedish Declaration on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons" by Ingvar Carlsson, Dr. Hans Blix, Dr. Karin Soder and Amb. Rolf Ekeus.

Swedish Declaration on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

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Nuclear weapons kill immediately and kill over time. They cause devastation and environmental disaster. Twenty-five years ago a UN scientific commission warned that even a limited use of existing nuclear weapons could result in a nuclear winter over large areas over the Earth. Recent findings conclude that such temporary climate change could cause the death of many millions of people. Massive use of existing nuclear arsenals would destroy all life on Earth, a global suicide.

The legality of nuclear weapons has been addressed by the International Court of Justice in 1996, which held that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law. The matter of launching a nuclear attack is thus a question of law and morality and a threat to the survival of mankind. Consequently the same is true also for threat of using nuclear weapons.

This has not prevented the nuclear weapons States – parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and four other States in possession of nuclear weapons – India Pakistan, Israel and North Korea – from claiming a right to make use of their nuclear weapons.

Although many political leaders and experts on security both within and outside these States admit that no political purpose could justify the use of nuclear weapons with all the consequences that such action would have, it appears that all nuclear weapons possessors insist that they need to maintain their nuclear weapons capability to be able to threaten another State with retaliation in the case of an attack from that State.

To the bilateral function of deterrence – a mutual assured destruction – there must be added the notion of extended deterrence, which implies assurances by the United States to its allies world-wide that a nuclear attack on any one of them would result in a nuclear retaliation against the attacker. Thus in the global security equation a set of States under a nuclear umbrella must be identified in addition to the States possessing nuclear weapons.

Another extension of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence flows from the calculated doctrinal ambiguity about what State possessing nuclear weapons consider attacks meriting retaliation by nuclear weapons. Britain, France, Russia and the United States have explicitly granted

themselves the option to the use of nuclear weapons to respond to attacks using chemical or biological weapons.

The concept of deterrence embraced by the nuclear weapon States has the unhappy implication that it does not only encourage continued possession by the established nuclear weapons powers but also breeds proliferation by additional states and discourages steps towards weapons reductions – ultimately elimination.

The reasons for the possession of and reliance on the deterrence of nuclear weapons was challenged in a path-breaking essay published in 2007 in the Wall Street Journal by four senior American statesmen – former US Secretaries of State George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, former US Secretary of Defense, William Perry and former Senator Sam Nunn. They declared that the end of the Cold War had made the doctrine of deterrence obsolete between the two major nuclear weapons States, the United States and Russia. They recognized that although the deterrence could remain relevant for many states to threats from other states even in such situations reliance on nuclear weapons was increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective.

With all that in mind we conclude with the four American Statesmen that only the elimination of nuclear weapons could provide an adequate guarantee against their use.

In the essay in 2007 and in two following complementing articles in the Wall Street Journal, one in January 2008 and the other in January 2010, Shultz, Kissinger, Perry and Nunn developed a broad strategy to achieve a World Free of Nuclear Weapons. To that end they proposed a number of concrete steps both to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons technology and to reduce existing nuclear arsenals. Their fundamental idea is that without the Vision of elimination, the necessary actions will not be seen as fair and without these actions the Vision will not be seen as attainable.

We fully endorse the Vision of a World Free of Nuclear Weapons as presented by the four American Statesmen. At the same time we encourage and support concrete and practical steps towards achieving that aim. The steps we recommend are similar to the thirteen steps outlined in the 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference final document, resulting from the successful work of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) in negotiations with the Nuclear Weapon States. The thirteen steps have later been adjusted and elaborated upon by the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Commission in its report 2006. The NAC States (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden) are once more well placed to play an important role in the upcoming NPT Review Conference in May this year. Their engagement is essential to mobilize the large majority of the Parties to the NPT, the members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), to exercise their world-wide influence in matters of non-proliferation significance.

The most important immediate task in the diplomatic field should be to create conditions for a constructive outcome of the NPT Review Conference in May this year. Here the United States has to take the lead. In his important speech in Prague last year President Obama endorsed the Vision of a World Free of Nuclear Weapons. In this context a first step should be to reduce the more than 21 000 nuclear warheads still held in Russia and the United States two decades after the end of the cold war. Progress in their negotiations on an agreement to succeed the now expired 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) Treaty is important to bring their deployed strategic nuclear forces to lower numbers as well as to preserve a fully

functional verification regime for monitoring their respective forces. However this marks only a beginning step. Russia and the USA should now be encouraged to verifiably eliminate the nuclear warheads withdrawn from deployment.

The two sides should also seriously engage in negotiations on limiting and ultimately eliminating non-strategic nuclear weapons, starting with transferring them from deployed status and putting them in centralized, highly protected storage. To diminish mutual suspicions and the risk of accidental use the two governments should be encouraged to change the posture of deployed nuclear weapons to increase warning time and to take the weapons off alert posture.

The three other legally recognized nuclear weapon States -the UK, France and China – should be engaged in discussions on reductions. The matter of verification of nuclear weapons reduction and elimination should be tackled early, addressing both technology and questions of how to deal with weapons material in secure and safe manners.

As regards multilateral treaty arrangements, the immediate and most urgent task is to bring the landmark Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force. Of the nuclear weapons states France, United Kingdom and Russia have already ratified the agreement. Now it is the turn of the US Senate to give advice and consent to the CTBT. In the article in the Wall Street Journal in January 2010 the four Statesmen have presented a number of proposals to facilitate ratification of the Treaty by the Senate. It is likely that once the US ratifies, China and several other States will follow.

The establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East was called for already in the Resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference as an integral element of the decision to indefinitely extend the duration of the NPT. Such a zone would provide an indispensable framework for simultaneously addressing concerns about possible nuclear ambitions in the greater Middle East as well as the suspected nuclear arsenal possessed by a regional State not party to the NPT.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva which showed its capacity when negotiating the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), should now get down to speedily negotiate a treaty on the verifiable halting of the production of fissile material for weapons and address the issue of existing stocks of such material in a manner which should be fair and equitable to all States. In the interim, as a step toward promoting transparency and irreversibility, all of the nuclear weapons States should undertake to declare and verifiably eliminate their excess military fissile material holdings.

An important element of non-proliferation is the control of the enrichment process and of the activities of separation of plutonium from spent reactor fuel. In this context the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must have a role to play with its established safeguard system. That system can and should be strengthened through the ratification by all States of the Additional Protocol, which provides the IAEA inspectors with more effective tools for monitoring compliance with safeguards agreements.

Proposals for the development toward a multilateralized fuel cycle are needed. Tangible progress in the field of nuclear disarmament would help to make such a treaty more equitable

to non-nuclear weapon states joining. To be viable and acceptable it would also need to be universal and subject all states to the same verification.

In multilateral nuclear disarmament regulated in international legal instruments, verification is of essence. The strengthening of the IAEA safeguards will be crucial but it is far from enough. One could consider setting up an international expert committee tasked to identify the problem in all its aspects. In addition to the methods agreed upon in the bilateral US/Russian negotiations and the experiences of inspections in Iraq the experts could make use of the results of the joint British/Norwegian work on nuclear verification. The forum, for detailed negotiations could be the CD in Geneva. The Security Council should systematically be kept informed about the progress in the CD, given that the Council in its resolution in September 2009 on President Obama's initiative, made clear that nuclear disarmament and proliferation are elements of international peace and security and thus the responsibility of the Council and of the United Nations.

The risk of nuclear confrontation in Europe should be diminished and eliminated by the intensification of the consultations and negotiations on a broader dialogue on security in Europe.

The Canberra Commission stated in 1996 that as long as nuclear weapons exist they sooner or later will be used. It would not be wise to allow passivity test the validity of that statement. Science has provided humanity for the first time in its existence with a capability to self-destruction. The question now is if we have the collective will and wisdom to step out from the shadow of annihilation and transform the Vision of a World Free of Nuclear Weapons into reality.

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