

# Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs

1995 Nobel Peace Prize

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## Statement by Pugwash presented at the NGO session of the III NPT Prepcom

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**Ambassador Sergio Duarte, President of Pugwash**

I speak on behalf of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. We believe it is important to recall at the outset here a blunt warning issued by the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva: “Key components of the international arms control architecture are collapsing. States are seeking security not in the proven collective value of diplomacy and dialogue, but in developing and accumulating new weapons. We simply cannot afford to return to the unrestrained nuclear competition of the darkest days of the cold war.”

This is a matter of the utmost importance for the whole international community. There seems to be a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the framework of bilateral and multilateral agreements painstakingly negotiated and adopted during and after the Cold War. The deterioration of the existing architecture of international arrangements in the field of nuclear arms control represents a growing threat to disarmament efforts and strategic stability, as well as to the credibility and permanence of important multilateral treaties, including the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) itself. The NPT is a vital element in the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. All its Parties have a duty to refrain from actions that might endanger it directly or indirectly.

The announcement by the United States of its withdrawal from the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), followed by a similar announcement by Russia, has increased pressure on the strategic relationship between the two nations. In the view of many experts and international commentators, the range of possible solutions to mutual allegations of violations to the INF has not been fully explored by either side. We urge the two main nuclear States to exert maximum effort in order to prevent Europe from once again becoming a theatre of missile deployments and threats.

In the wider realm of arms control agreements, another important bilateral agreement, the 2002 Antiballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), was terminated by unilateral decision, and Russia’s participation in the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe was suspended in 2007. The United States has also suspended its compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), negotiated between Iran and the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany. This

move only increases the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, and serves to underline the necessity of moving forward the proposal for a nuclear or WMD free zone in the region.

Overall, this negative trend of arms control raises serious concerns that the only remaining bilateral arms control treaty – the 2010 New START – may not be extended beyond its formal expiration date in 2021. We urge the governments of the United States and Russia to implement the five-year extension as permitted by its Article XIV and ultimately return to the negotiating table for a sustained arms control dialogue.

More generally, there remain problems of nuclear risk. The situation between India and Pakistan has recently worsened again, and efforts to produce an agreement with the DPRK have not yet succeeded. Nuclear weapon States and their allies are urged to reverse the trend toward unconstrained arms racing and to work toward the reduction of nuclear threats, in order that a more comprehensive approach to pursuing strategic stability in this multivalent nuclear world can be sought.

This panorama is of course further complicated by the development of complex technologies for use in war, such as hypersonic carriers, robotics, and artificial intelligence, as well as deployments in space.

Greater effort is needed to reassert that arms control is not simply about legally binding constraints, but is an instrument that allows States to pursue their national interests in consonance with the common interest of achieving a more secure environment. The objective of arms control and disarmament negotiations is to harmonize conflicting views and security interests, taking into account strategic realities. Equally, the will and desire of civil society must also be viewed as an expression of common interest and, in this respect, the growing number of states signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons should be welcomed.

In the past, many of the existing international agreements in the field of arms control, including the NPT, were concluded and adopted in times of crisis and in spite of adverse circumstances, in some cases precisely because of them. Political obstacles, were raised, identified and resolved during the negotiations themselves. Preparatory work contributes to a better understanding of existing realities and security concerns but cannot replace long delayed multilateral negotiations on the cessation of the arms race and nuclear disarmament, in the fulfillment of the aspirations expressed in Article VI of the NPT.