



**Open-ended Working Group taking forward
multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations¹****Geneva 2016**

Item 5 of the agenda

Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations**Respond to the critical moment****Submitted by the Global Security Institute**

1. Nuclear weapons disarmament commitments and aspirations which, date back to the first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, have not been fulfilled. We are presently on the precipice of a new arms race.
2. We must respond realistically to this critical moment. We must raise the issue of needed progress on nuclear disarmament up the political ladder to the highest level.
3. Enormous amounts of money are being allocated presently by all states with nuclear weapons to either modernize or expand their arsenals or do both. They are making the resumption of testing more likely, the use of the weapons more legitimate, their spread more likely, their political value greater, and in the meantime, diminishing global security, the rule of law, and hope. Disarmament has not been institutionalized; the threat of annihilation is being advanced.
4. We did not expect this catastrophe. It must not be ignored. At the 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) all but three of the world's nations (India, Israel, and Pakistan) supported "an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals..." because "the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons."
5. We are witnessing a growing distance between aspirations for a nuclear weapons free world, a more secure world, manifest in sober commitments made in good faith by many of the world's best diplomats, and the actual policies arising in the states with nuclear weapons.

¹ Established pursuant to resolution 70/33 of the General Assembly of the United Nations.



6. Diplomatic rhetoric not backed by action leads to cynicism and hypocrisy. Distrust follows and cooperation is reduced. This is a dangerous cycle in dealing with the deadliest of human inventions.
7. Part of the reason for this conundrum is that there are distinctly different dynamics being pursued in the policies of the states with nuclear weapons.
8. First, of course is non-proliferation and disarmament. Diplomats have demonstrated exceptional skills in finding common interests and articulating policies that would make the world so much safer. Some are set forth in excellent road maps for progress in the 13 Steps of the NPT Review of 2000 and the expanded commitments of 2010. They embody both strengthened non-proliferation and progress in fulfilling the commitment to nuclear disarmament found in Article VI of the NPT.
9. The second dynamic is expressed as the necessity of strategic stability. The United States of America, for example, has not changed from the position clearly stated in President Reagan's initiated Commission on Strategic Forces: "Stability should be the primary objective of both modernization of our strategic forces and arms control proposals." Or, President H.W. Bush's 1991 letter regarding the START treaty that was sent to the Senate of the United States of America: "The fundamental promise of START is that despite significant differences, the US and Soviet Union have a common interest in. ...ensuring strategic stability." These principles have continued in numerous similar statements from all nuclear weapons states.
10. Stability is surely a value. But allowing the illusion that there can be sustainable security based on the inherent risks of keeping nuclear weapons at the ready for use in order to ensure they are not used is morally questionable and unreasonably dangerous.
11. Strategic stability rests on the confidence that robust reliable arsenals ensure that no party can believe it advantageous to instigate a nuclear exchange since retaliation from its adversary will inflict unacceptable harm. This obviously precarious posture is the basis presently for much nuclear policy. This posture overlooks inevitable computer and human errors as well as human irrationality and the possibility of misunderstanding during crisis. It was developed to address a simpler world during the Cold War with far less actors than today.
12. The world is increasingly complicated, multivariate, with unpredictable nations and cultures, and dramatically asymmetric force postures and numerous new crisis-producing situations. A rational person must question what exactly does strategic stability mean in the complex world of today? Can a sustainable security ever be achieved along with the readiness to annihilate massive numbers of people and inflict unimaginable suffering?
13. The third dynamic being pursued is simple and predictable. Military planners are always looking for the capacity to dominate potential adversaries and thus pursue with passion policies and weaponry that will provide advantages. In fact one can find USA military documents calling for "full spectrum dominance." But this is really not odd for any military. It is in the DNA of military thinking to obtain dominance. What is odd is that there is so little discussion about the unavoidable difficulty in obtaining substantial forward movement in disarmament while pursuing policies and deployments aimed at achieving advantage and ultimately dominance and at the same time ensuring strategic stability. This is a mind boggling juggling act in which the legal, moral, and practical value of security enhancing cooperative endeavours is marginalized and military deployments advanced.
14. These contradictory currents guiding policies in nuclear weapon states impede needed substantial progress in fulfilling disarmament commitments, whether through a convention, a ban, or a framework of instruments. Advocacy for nuclear disarmament will gain needed traction when clarity is obtained and political will expressed that achieving

nuclear disarmament, to which they are already legally required, is more important than attempting to maintain the status quo based on strategic stability and its contradictory pursuit of military advantage.

15. Non-nuclear-weapons States at the highest level must push for that clarity and those states with nuclear weapons must come to grips with their systemic failures in ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

16. The logic inherent in the status quo is driving the world over a waterfall and it can be changed and must be changed rapidly at the highest levels of political discourse. Such a change happened in Reykjavik at the Summit in 1986 between Presidents Gorbachev and Reagan. They stated jointly that they were “guided by their solemn conviction that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought. “ They almost obtained the security of a nuclear weapons free world. They failed to fulfill that aspiration because President Gorbachev perceived the so called Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars), which included weapons in space, as proposed, as endangering stability and obtaining military advantage while President Reagan only thought of it as defensive. Yet, much good came of the meeting and many nuclear weapons, beginning there and then, have been eliminated.

17. Their meeting was stimulated by the Six Nation Initiative where President Raul Alfonsin of Argentina, Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi of India, President Miguel de la Madrid of Mexico, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Prime Ministers Olof Palme and Ingvar Carlsson of Sweden, and Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu of Greece pushed the United States of America and the Soviet Union to make progress on nuclear disarmament.

18. It is now a different world and the threat that they addressed is greater. However, as it did then, pressure from nations without nuclear weapons can make a difference

19. This Open-ended Working Group can issue a call, a plea, a demand to the leaders of the States claiming that nuclear weapons make themselves and the world safer that it is time for them to meet at the highest levels, at Summits, and immediately stop the new arms race and set out together to bring the world to the security of a nuclear weapons free world.

20. There was a “nuclear freeze” movement decades ago and we truly never expected that we would be again calling for a freeze after the end of the Cold War. Freezing a new arms race can only be achieved by a renewed and sincere commitment to disarmament and it is clear that this can only be achieved at the highest political level.

21. The Open-ended Working Group, or a group of like minded States within it at the highest level, and all of us, especially civil society organizations, should be demanding that the leaders of the states with nuclear weapons immediately plan on meeting(s) to discuss how to obtain rapid progress and institutionalize nuclear disarmament.

22. We leave open the discussion of the numerous forums and venues in which such deliberations could occur. The hurdle to achieving progress is not technical, legal, moral, military, or diplomatic. It is a failure of political will.

23. The picture of a panda bear on a disappearing ice float galvanized public opinion, which has helped generate political will to address climate change. The picture of the screaming child running from the napalm attack in Vietnam awakened millions to the horror and folly of that war. We have pictures of Hiroshima, which apparently are not enough. We cannot wait for a situation in which we have pictures of the use of nuclear weapons sufficient to shock and awaken the public. With nuclear weapons there may be no public to view those pictures. We must act now.