

Statement by

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and
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to the United Nations

On the Occasion of the
High Level Workshop organized by the
Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan and the East West Institute on
“From Here to 2015: Prioritizing the NPT Action Plan”

1 September 2011
Conference Room C, NLB
3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

H.E. Mr. Sergio Duarte, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs,

H.E. Ms. Byrganym Aitimova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations

H.E. Ms. Marcie Ries, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, State Department,

Mr. Kosherbayev, Deputy Governor of the Semipalatinsk region

Ms. Annika Thunborg, Spokesperson of the CTBTO,

Mr. Jonathan Granoff, President, Global Security Institute

Dr. Greg Austin, Vice-President for Programs and Rapid Response, East West Institute,

Excellencies, distinguished guests.

At the outset I wish to express my most sincere appreciation to the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan and the East West Institute for organizing today's event.

I recall in this same event last year I was asked to discuss with you my three priorities for the NPT Action Plan. I stated that first was the proposed *nuclear weapons convention*, second the actions that have to be undertaken by the Nuclear Weapon States or NWS, namely *Actions 3, 5, and 21* of the Final Outcome Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and third is the need to make progress on the *1995 Middle East Resolution*. These remain priority issues.

For those of you present last year, you will recall that I also made the point that before we can achieve the ultimate goal of the NPT, which is nuclear disarmament, other issues within the NPT must be dealt with and this includes the *reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in defense doctrines*.

Nuclear weapons still have a role in the defense doctrines of certain countries. These States need to reduce their reliance on nuclear arms for the concept of deterrence no longer applies to the present global security situation. The 2010 NPT Review Conference called on the NWS to "further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies." The concept of two scorpions in a bottle, threatened with mutual death should one strike causing the other to strike back, thus killing both, is no way for States to co-exist. The US and USSR, thankfully avoided the mutual assured destruction that for a time, seemed preordained. The world was

fortunate that the Cold War remained exactly that. It makes no sense though that after avoiding a nuclear holocaust the world still has over 20,000 nuclear warheads and the NWS still have a preeminent declared purpose for such weapons in its defense policies or doctrines.

Some defense thinkers continue to believe in the notion that nuclear weapons are needed in order to deter a nuclear attack from a nuclear power. A predominant view holds such notion to be untrue in the 21st century since countries are not likely to launch a first strike, in fact some have a no first use policy, thereby negating the need to have any deterrent capability. Most likely if a nuclear attack will occur it will be carried out, not by a nation State, but by a Non-State Actor, in which case the concept of deterrence does not work because deterrence rests on the idea that a country will be able to retaliate and launch nuclear weapons against the attacking State. Non-State actors have no return address. Furthermore the idea that any State assisting non-State actors in a nuclear attack can also be threatened with a counter strike is not credible since fanatical non-State actors would not be deterred by such threats and would still carry out their plans regardless. The only way to ensure the non-use of nuclear weapons is through their complete elimination.

Another obstacle is the reliance of some US allies on the nuclear umbrella. Some are of the view that there is more premium for such protection now in NATO, with new members coming from Eastern Europe. In Asia as well as with the developments in DPRK and a surging China, the US' Asian allies may not want to leave the "shelter" provided by the umbrella.

There maybe a doctrinal change if the defense establishments in countries begin to rely more on conventional means for defense and deterring attack. As maybe recalled, the Eisenhower Administration relied so heavily on nuclear weapons because it was more cost effective to have a nuclear deterrent as opposed to building-up conventional forces in Europe to match the then Soviet Union which had an overwhelming advantage in conventional weaponry. Now the situation seems reversed with Russia likely to use nuclear weapons to prevent or deter an overwhelming conventional attack.

But verily, a doctrinal change will only come when a country feels secure enough that it no longer relies on the ultimate weapon for defense.

For there to be a change in thinking, there must be:

1. Continued improvement in the relations of the US and Russia, by implementing New START and finding a compromise deal on missile defense. This could then encourage NATO allies to no longer rely on the US nuclear umbrella.
2. Improvement in the relations between Russia and her neighbors now part of NATO.

3. Progress in resolving the DPRK issue that should include the reactivation of the Six Party Talks.
4. Progress towards the dissolution of tensions between US and China vis-à-vis the Taiwan issue and the conflicting claims between US allies and China in the West Philippine Sea.
5. Reduction of tensions between India and Pakistan.
6. Real progress towards durable peace in the Middle East region. The so called Arab Spring though may change the situation enough to allow for some progress.

In a related vein, I still feel that in spite of Arab Spring and the changes that it will or has already brought, the 2012 Middle East Conference must be held as planned. It is unfortunate that a Facilitator has yet to be selected and for that a matter a venue, in spite of a suitable country already offering to host and bear much of the expense. To my mind it is essential that this conference is held next year and **all** States in the region must participate and participate in a constructive manner. It may not result in an agreement on a WMD Free Zone outright, but it could be the first step to one.

Going back to the nuclear weapons convention, I feel that it is the best way to achieve our professed goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The question is do the States that possess nuclear weapons share this view? Unfortunately the answer is not yet, but given time I feel that they will come around and see the merits of negotiating such a convention. Some argue that the next logical step is an FMCT, this maybe so, but what happens to the past stocks of fissile materials that have been produced? More importantly what happens to the more than 20,000 nuclear weapons still in existence? Even with an FMCT or an FMT these weapons will remain. Therefore the best means to eliminate nuclear weapons is through a convention that declares them, their use, and even their possession as illegal. Furthermore the nuclear weapons convention should also establish a definitive timeframe for their elimination.

I really wanted to deal more on the subject of the Nuclear Weapons Convention and the idea of rendering nuclear weapons illegal. But maybe I can only stress here that the crux in the so-called “principle of undiminished and increased security for all” as the bedrock for concrete action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the abiding support and the acceptance by all of a rules-based international system.

The history of nations bears out that when brute force and arms win out in a battle for supremacy, everyone loses. On too many occasions and for far too long, humankind has experienced pain, loss and suffering at the hands of nations that believed their might gave them the right to act as they saw fit with those they had disputes.

The past should be behind us.

Before the bar of a rules-based international system that is abidingly supported and accepted by all, every nation, weak or strong, big or small, is equal, and the behavior of nations that glorify the unlawful exercise of savage strength is totally unacceptable.

At the same time, we should pay attention to concrete and readily implementable set of actions. One action that can be undertaken right now by the NWS is Action 21 on reporting. I do not see this as a major difficulty for them. I hope that they will be ready to report in time for the 2015 Review Conference. This will give other States an idea on where we stand and therefore accurate timelines can be set up for the eventual elimination of these weapons. Furthermore, reporting by the NWS is a confidence building measure and it will highlight the progress that they have been making.

In closing, I wish to point out that from here to 2015, there is still time to undertake specific actions under the 2010 NPT Action Plan. States have shown a willingness to take bold action such as the US and Russia with New START, others must follow and continue to make nuclear disarmament a priority in their respective agenda, but a lot more needs to be done. I just would like to point out that it is not just the NWS that must act but the NNWS as well. All NNWS must also live up to their obligations as stipulated in the Action Plan especially on the non-proliferation front.

The Preparatory Committee meeting next year is crucial and I have every confidence in the incoming Chair, Amb. Peter Woolcott of Australia. I have no doubt that the defined sides remain far apart as was the case in May 2010, but we must all try and seek the elusive middle ground, and hopefully we can continue to find agreement and show the world that we know how to conduct give-and-take negotiations thereby contributing to the promotion of international peace and security for all.

Thank you.