

STATEMENT

by

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2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the  
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Mr President,

First of all I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of this Review Conference. I am confident that your ability will lead it to a successful conclusion and I can assure you of the Swedish Delegation's full cooperation.

Sweden's voice has already been heard in this debate, in the statements by the European Union and the New Agenda Coalition. Addressing this review conference, in a sense, three times should be seen as an indication of the importance that Sweden attaches to the conference and its subject matter.

Mr President,

The NPT Review Conference five years ago was a success. Consensus was achieved on a comprehensive final document delivering strong commitments on all aspects of the treaty. Since then, the Non-Proliferation Treaty has been faced with a number of challenges and the whole non-proliferation and disarmament regime has come under great stress. One country, The DPRK, has announced its withdrawal from the treaty and declared that it possesses nuclear weapons. A proliferation network with global reach has been uncovered. Concerns remain about Iran's nuclear programme. We have also become increasingly aware of the threats to our collective security posed by the risk that terrorists acquire weapons of mass destruction.

At the same time, only limited progress has been made towards nuclear disarmament. There are even worrying signs pointing in the opposite direction. One nuclear weapons state is modernizing its nuclear arsenal, another is planning research on new nuclear warheads, a third has announced its intention to develop new delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons. New uses, roles and rationalizations for nuclear weapons are being pondered.

Having said this, we do acknowledge that major reductions in the strategic and non-strategic nuclear arsenals have taken place since the end of the cold war. Three of the nuclear-weapon states have ratified the Comprehensive Test-ban Treaty and a moratorium on nuclear tests is upheld worldwide.

Mr President,

It is true that the NPT Review Conferences are always important events in our efforts to promote and enhance global security. I would argue, however, that the present challenges to the treaty makes the outcome of this conference particularly crucial. It is therefore of utmost importance that this review conference adopts a substantial final document. We must not weaken the treaty and the whole non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We must not weaken our collective security. We would all be losers.

As we all know, the NPT strikes a delicate balance between three pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The prospects for this review conference to become a success will depend, in a large measure, on our ability to make progress in all the three areas.

Mr President,

Without attempting to list all the important topics, I would like to highlight a few questions as we embark on our deliberations.

The task of this conference is to review the implementation and compliance of the three pillars of the NPT, including commitments made in the review process. These commitments include the so-called 13 steps towards nuclear disarmament, agreed at the Review Conference in the year 2000. But this conference should not limit itself only to review and safeguard what has already been agreed. It should also find ways on how to move forward. This should include a clear signal to the Conference of Disarmament that negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty should begin without further delay. The fact that an overwhelming majority of states parties support the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-ban Treaty should be duly reflected in the final document.

One of the agreed disarmament steps deals with non-strategic nuclear weapons, a category of weapons which have been widely neglected in disarmament negotiations. Non-strategic or tactical weapons are also central to non-proliferation concerns. Due to their relatively small size and the availability of delivery systems for such weapons, we have to assume that terrorists may try to obtain them. It is therefore with a sense of urgency that we call on all countries possessing such weapons to engage in negotiations on further reductions with the subsequent aim of their total elimination.

The United States and Russia keep their Cold War nuclear force postures practically intact. This means that many nuclear weapons are still on "hair trigger alert". We call on the two states as well as other Nuclear Weapon States to "de-alert", that is to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems. Through such measures, the risk of a nuclear war by mistake or accident would be significantly reduced. The example of the United Kingdom, which has taken all its nuclear weapons off high-alert, should be followed by the other Nuclear Weapon States. As a start, Nuclear Weapon States should increase transparency about present operational status and plans towards de-alerting.

Mr President,

Let me turn to non-proliferation proliferation and the vital role that the Treaty has assigned to the IAEA for its implementation. Tribute should be given to the Agency for the way it has fulfilled its task these past 35 years. However, we all know that in order to be efficient, verification must be provided with proper tools. Additional protocols give the IAEA the enhanced authority it needs to build trust that states comply with their non-proliferation commitments. In our view, this Conference should recognize that the Additional Protocol together with Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements, represent the verification standard under Article III of the Treaty.

An important achievement has been made by the international community in its efforts to curb nuclear proliferation, with the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1540. We should agree to work as hard as possible to implement this important resolution. As the A.Q. Khan network has shown, there is a worldwide need to strengthen exports control. By doing so, we strengthen our collective security.

Let me turn to regional issues of particular concern.

The establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East would significantly strengthen the collective security of that region. States in the region should be encouraged to engage in discussions on the creation of such a zone, as outlined by Security Council Resolution 687 and accompanied by a system of effective verification. Such discussions would help build trust and, thus, give a positive contribution to the Middle East Peace Process. Libya's abandonment of its program for developing nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction should be seen as a building block for such a zone and an example to be followed by others. Another would be if the international concerns, generated by the nuclear programme of Iran, could be dispelled through objective guarantees that it is only for peaceful purposes. A third would be all states in the region adhering to relevant international conventions – the NPT, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Convention of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The arguments for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction are as valid for South Asia and the Korean Peninsula as for the Middle East. India and Pakistan should build on the momentum of the recent warming of their bilateral relations. A good way forward would be a simultaneous signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Test-ban Treaty and an active engagement in negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. This would be a confidence building measure of vital importance. Pending a Cut-off Treaty, both countries should declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material. In parallel China ought to do the same.

It is our conviction that such virtuous circles can be created in the Middle East and in South Asia. We join others in calling on India, Israel and Pakistan to join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states.

Specifically, on Iran, Sweden welcomes and supports the negotiations between Iran and the three European countries, supported by the EU High Representative, through which Iran can build confidence and dispel the serious concerns surrounding its nuclear programme. Sweden calls on Iran to seize this opportunity and to provide the necessary objective guarantees, by foregoing all enrichment and reprocessing activities.

When the DPRK declared its intention to withdraw from the Treaty some two years ago, the international community did not react very decisively. The IAEA's reporting of the DPRK's non-compliance with its safeguards obligations to the UN Security Council was not followed up. We join others in urging the DPRK to return to the six-party talks and to act constructively within its framework. The DPRK should without delay, completely, verifiably and irrevocably give up the nuclear weapons option. We should, however, also draw another conclusion from the DPRK's announced withdrawal. It should be made more costly for any country to withdraw from the Treaty. In this the Security Council has a clear role.

When, in recent years, it became clear that parties to the treaty had violated their non-proliferation obligations and when the DPRK announced its withdrawal, States parties were unable to deal effectively with this. It would have been appropriate if the States parties had been able to meet at a General Conference to assess the situation. We strongly hope that we

will see a decision at this Conference to strengthen the institutional framework of the Treaty so that the review process will be better ensured. Such a framework should, in our view, include a standing bureau to be appointed at the beginning of every review process.

Mr President,

Sweden certainly supports Article IV of the treaty. We use nuclear energy ourselves – and would like to underline the importance of the words of the article: "peaceful purposes in conformity with Articles I and II". Moreover, for those of us using nuclear power, it is important to have access to fuel and to have the assurance of such an access, without necessarily having a national capacity for enrichment and reprocessing. Sweden does not. Nuclear technologies of enrichment and reprocessing are again subjects of an increased international attention, including within the IAEA. This is natural, since they are usable both for peaceful purposes and for the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. The expert group of the IAEA has recently put forward a number of interesting options on the subject, among those a recommendation also made by the UN High level Panel, that IAEA should act as a guarantor of nuclear fuel to civil nuclear users. It is our hope the Review Conference can agree on how the international community can move forward on this crucial issue.

Mr. President,

A number of very important recommendations have recently been put forward by the UN Secretary General and before that by the High-level panel appointed by him. This conference should in its deliberations take all these recommendations into consideration.

At the beginning of next year, the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, chaired by Hans Blix, will present its recommendations. We are looking forward to receiving them – being convinced that they will provide impetus to our efforts to achieve disarmament and prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We expect proposals not only on what to do, but also on how this can be achieved.

Mr President,

Education on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is essential for making officials, private sector representatives and the public aware of the dangers posed by nuclear weapons. We are pleased to work on this issue together with Japan and other like-minded countries. We especially encourage governments to provide opportunities for officials and parliamentarians to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Before concluding Mr. President, I would ask you all to reflect on what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki 60 years ago. All participants should bear this in mind when embarking on deliberations and negotiations. I appeal to all participants for hard work in an open atmosphere, with imagination and flexibility – all with a focus on achieving a balanced and successful outcome of the conference. By doing so you can help reducing the risk that nuclear weapons will ever be used again.

Thank you, Mr President.