



SERBIA

2010 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION
OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (NPT)

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STATEMENT

by

H.E. MR. VUK JEREMIĆ,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

New York, 4 May 2010

President Cabactulan,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to join you here in marking the 40th anniversary of the coming into force of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

I wish to underscore that even between 1992 and 2000, as my country suffered under a harsh sanctions regime—one that strongly affected average citizens while destroying our economy—we continued to respect all our obligations under the Treaty.

We support the full and consistent implementation of the commitments set forth in the NPT.

The first of its three core objectives is non-proliferation—the most immediate challenge we need to address. We believe the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty can serve as a key complementary document to the NPT. Serbia therefore warmly welcomes Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's initiative to host a ministerial meeting to bring it into force as soon as possible. We also believe talks should intensify for concluding a treaty on fissile materials in the near future.

At the same time, the NPT's lack of universality requires our concerted attention, as does the threat posed by non-state actors acquiring weapons-grade material. The NPT as originally envisioned does not adequately address this grave danger to international peace and stability.

We all have a duty to come together to develop more stringent accountability and transparency mechanisms to deal with this crucial issue. Modalities should be agreed upon to enhance the verification function of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Special care must be taken to ensure that its work is not subjected to undue politicization.

Mr. President,

The NPT's second core objective is disarmament.

We wholeheartedly welcome the recent signing of a New START treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States.

On the other hand, we are concerned at the slow pace of progress at the Geneva Disarmament Conference.

We also wish to stress that the United Nations is the only universally accepted multilateral forum in which our aspiration for a nuclear weapons-free world could become a reality in our lifetime.

The Treaty's third core objective is the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The Republic of Serbia has taken a number of concrete steps to enhance nuclear security in the Western Balkans, by focusing on safe, civilian applications of atomic technology in fields such as medicine.

To further demonstrate our commitment, we recently signed the Additional Protocols to the Safeguard Agreement of the IAEA.

In May 2009, our parliament adopted a Law on Ionizing Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety in order to completely harmonize our domestic legislation with the strictest international standards. The Law also established an independent National Nuclear Agency that will become fully operational in mid-2010, and will be responsible for regulatory controls and enforcement.

For a number of years, we have worked closely with the IAEA to implement a project to transfer 48 kg of irradiated, eighty-percent enriched uranium from Serbia to the Russian Federation for safe storage. This multi-year program called VIND, or Vinča Institute Nuclear Decommissioning, has been supported by Russia, the European Union, and the United States. As the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Department has stated, VIND is a model contemporary example of multilateral cooperation in three crucial fields of interest: one, spent fuel removal; two, low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste management; and three, large-scale facility decommissioning.

We would be prepared to share our know-how with countries that might be in a position to benefit from our VIND experience.

Mr. President,

One of the effects of global interdependence is the increasing awareness of countries to show heightened regard for each other's security interests. More and more statesmen are realizing that zero-sum approaches to the issues we have gathered here to discuss could adversely affect peace and stability across the world.

The consequences of a mushroom cloud will not stop at a state border. This has also been said, of course, of the recent volcano eruption in Iceland, the hurricane season in the Caribbean, or even the environmental degradation that is contributing to climate change across the world.

But there is one big difference, however. Natural disasters—irrespective of whether our actions play a role in their occurrence—are mostly beyond our ability to control.

The same cannot be said when it comes to nuclear weapons. On non-proliferation and disarmament, we human beings are the exclusive source of the problem, and of the potential solution.

Our safety—perhaps our very survival—is at stake, and no single country can do it alone. What is required is a universal global vision, the courage of leadership, and strategic foresight. What we need is action, for I believe there is no downside to eliminating the threat of nuclear annihilation.

This is not about making the right choice, but about making the *only* choice that will make us safe tomorrow in a way that we are not today.

Thank you very much for your attention.