



Global Alliance of Leaders for Nuclear Security and Nuclear-Weapon-Free World (GAL)

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Chapeau

Open Letter of the GAL Strategic Planning Group on the Need for Meaningful Nuclear Confidence-Building Measures

Chapter II. International peace and security

The world is in danger.

A new arms race is underway and plans for accelerating it are being prepared. The mechanism of threat exaggeration and overreaction, which fed the previous rounds of the nuclear arms race, has again been set in motion.

A clear recognition that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought is giving way to the rhetoric of nuclear war-fighting – such as “using all available means” and “defeating the adversary”.

New technologies could further destabilize the situation. Hypersonic missiles reduce response times. Improvements in accuracy could heighten fears of a disabling pre-emptive attack. Rapid development and implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into established military structures rightly raises disturbing questions.

In an international system that has been profoundly destabilized, the very existence of nuclear weapons, with their cataclysmic destructive power, is a risk factor of considerable importance. The threat of nuclear war is real and growing.

Therefore, our efforts should now focus on the task of fundamental importance: preventing nuclear war and reducing the risks associated with nuclear weapons.

Amid the prevailing gloom, we must remember that previous efforts to curtail nuclear weapons have resulted in cutting nuclear arsenals from a peak of 70,000 to a total of about 12,500 weapons today. Now is the time for nuclear-armed countries, particularly the United States and Russia, which hold 95 percent of the world’s nuclear arsenals, to act to reassure the world that a nuclear war will never be fought.

A number of steps could be taken – unilaterally, bilaterally, or collectively – to increase transparency, improve communications, build confidence and reduce nuclear risks. The United States and Russia must lead the way by resuming strategic stability talks to discuss the following measures, among others:

- moving towards a policy of **No First Use of nuclear weapons** through steps such as de-alerting nuclear weapons and renouncing “launch-on-warning”. Decisions that could lead to the death of millions of people must not be made within minutes;
- resuming **full operation of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers** and devising additional transparency and security-building measures that could be extended to other nuclear-weapons states;
- discussing nuclear doctrines with a view to **diminishing the role of nuclear weapons** in their national security policies;
- **discussing new threats to strategic stability**, including those associated with the rapid development of artificial intelligence, to ensure that there is always positive human control over the use of nuclear weapons;
- pledging to **avoid inflammatory war-fighting rhetoric** concerning possible use of nuclear weapons.

All nuclear weapon states should reaffirm their commitment to their nonproliferation and disarmament obligations pursuant to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

All nuclear weapon states should demonstrate support for Nuclear Weapons Free Zones by signing and ratifying Protocols that give legally binding assurances that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against NWFZ member States.

These and other steps to reduce the danger of nuclear conflict could pave the way to re-energizing the nuclear disarmament process, including in particular the resumption of U.S.-Russian negotiations on a follow-up agreement to the New START Treaty, with the ultimate goal, as required by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Members of the Global Alliance of Leaders for Nuclear Security and Nuclear-Weapon-Free World pledge to use their influence with their governments and internationally to promote this agenda, which is urgently needed at a time when the danger of nuclear conflict is higher than at any time since the end of the cold war.

Most sincerely,
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and **Members of the GAL Strategic Planning Group as follows:**

Jonathan Granoff, President of Global Security Institute (GSI)

Pavel Palazhchenko, international relations expert, Head of Press Office at the Gorbachev Foundation

Alyn Ware, Founder and Global Coordinator of the network Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)

Angela Kane, Vice President of the International Institute for Peace (IIP), former UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

Marc Finaud, Associate Fellow, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)

Lassina Zerbo, former Honorary Executive Secretary of the CTBTO, Laureate of the Nazarbayev Prize for Nuclear Weapon Free World and Global Security (2019)

Christine Muttonen, former President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Co-President of the Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)

Urban Rusnak, Ambassador of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, former Secretary General of the Energy Charter

Les Simms, Founder and Executive Director, International Forum for Understanding (IFOUND)