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Statement to the 2017 NPT Preparatory Committee of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty
May 3 2017
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Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr Chair,

Thanks for giving me the floor. I'd like to start my statement by offering congratulations to Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast and the Dutch team- you have been working tirelessly to reach out to many delegations and consult broadly in advance of this meeting. I know it has been challenging, and I wish you the best of luck in this meeting and in your role throughout this Review Cycle.

My remarks are based on a longer paper, which can be found on the www.NoNukes.nl website,

As all States are urged to cooperate in the attainment of the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to undertake effective measures in the direction of nuclear disarmament, here are some other things (building from previously agreed actions and steps) that should be considered:

States should declare they do not support the use of nuclear weapons at any time, under any circumstances, or policies that anticipate the use of nuclear weapons.

That could happen by:

1. **Making explicit declarations that they reject the use of nuclear weapons** on their behalf. This is particularly important for those that are part of alliances.
2. **Joining the negotiations for a nuclear weapon ban treaty, in good faith**, and facilitating the conclusion of those negotiations to prohibit the use or any type of possession, development, deployment, stockpiling, and assisting with nuclear weapons.

While the majority of the world recognizes that nuclear weapons should never be used again, under any circumstances, the minority is increasing the possibility of use. This is the right forum to challenge the activities of the nuclear armed states (and some of their allies) that are fundamentally contradicting efforts to create and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

The most recent NATO agreed outcome- the Warsaw Summit communiqué calls into question whether or not the Non- nuclear-weapon States members of NATO are still committed to the NPT goal of an early cessation to the arms race, or how they understand the effective measures that were considered of prime importance in the 2010 Review Conference agreement. In Warsaw, NATO Heads of State and Government said:

*NATO's nuclear deterrence posture also relies, in part, on United States' nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe and on capabilities and infrastructure provided by Allies concerned. These Allies will ensure that all components of NATO's nuclear deterrent remain safe, secure, and effective. That requires sustained leadership focus and institutional excellence for the nuclear deterrence mission and planning guidance aligned with 21st century requirements. The Alliance will ensure the broadest possible participation of Allies concerned in their agreed nuclear burden-sharing arrangements.*¹

This demonstrates an elevation of the role of nuclear weapons across the Alliance. It also provides political cover for the US plan to produce a new type of nuclear weapon (the B61-12)- a weapon design with new capabilities- that could lower the threshold for use.

These policies and practices, including the direct technical upgrades supporting nuclear weapon modernisation taking place in some allied countries also contradict the unequivocal undertaking agreed by NPT parties, as well as the democratic demands of citizens and parliaments in those countries to put a halt to this new nuclear arms racing and act for nuclear disarmament.

Suggesting that a country (or an alliance) will remain armed with nuclear weapons as long as nuclear weapons exist is equivocating. **All states have a responsibility to assert their commitment to the unequivocal undertaking**, as well as stop assisting in the preparation for nuclear war, and start assisting with preparations for nuclear disarmament.

For decades a number of States have remained on the fence in relation to disarmament. They have supported practical approaches and steps towards a world without nuclear weapons and yet have also simultaneously participated in the perpetuation of nuclear weapon reliant policies and practices. The upcoming nuclear weapons prohibition treaty may not immediately eliminate nuclear weapons, but it will eliminate the fence these States sit upon by forcing the question: do you support the retention or elimination of nuclear weapons?

¹ 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit Communiqué, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016, paragraph 53. Found at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm?selectedLocale=en