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TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
AT THE 2010 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION
OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
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Introduction

1 The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the only near universal regime on the three pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy (PUNE). But the NPT was conceived in a different era and is now under severe strain, with its relevance being questioned. India and Pakistan have acquired nuclear weapons. Israel is widely believed to possess them. The DPRK withdrew from the NPT and has tested nuclear devices. There is a widespread concern that Iran is also bent on acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. There is a sense that the NPT now suffers a confidence deficit and is facing serious challenges in all three pillars. Let me deal with each in turn.

First Pillar: Disarmament

2 On disarmament, the political will to bring about a full realisation of Article VI of the NPT remains weak, and there are differences between the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS). Some NWS consider the possession of nuclear weapons essential to maintaining their self-image of their place in the world and not just a military necessity. This is not surprising because the definition of Nuclear Weapon States in the NPT freezes a moment of history that has clearly long passed. Little wonder then that some NWS are more reluctant than others to contemplate changes to their nuclear arsenals or the NPT regime that are overdue. Still, it cannot be denied that the world is a dangerous place and the dangers are inherent in the very structure and

dynamics of a system of sovereign states. But we need to find ways to convince all states that nuclear weapons reduce rather than increase their security, and do not enhance their prestige. The NWS must take the lead because in the post- Cold War world, the structural division between NWS and Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS), and the compact between them that is at the core of the NPT, will not be tolerated indefinitely without at least some progress on Article VI. And if the core is delegitimized, the entire system will lose its credibility.

3 The recent conclusion of the follow-on treaty to START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) between the US and Russia was a significant and positive step forward after a long period of inaction. This is to be encouraged and applauded. To maintain the momentum, there is a need for all NWS to seriously address other critical issues such as reducing the role of nuclear weapons in strategic defence doctrines, the no-first use policy and negative security assurances to NNWS, and for all NWS to continue to significantly reduce nuclear weapons in a transparent and verifiable manner. All NWS, and not just the two major powers, should commit to reducing their nuclear arsenals, end qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and testing. In this regard, we urge all NWS and Annex 2 countries that have not yet ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to do so quickly, and we applaud Indonesia's decision to initiate the process of CTBT ratification. A way must also be found to involve non-NPT states with nuclear weapons capabilities - India, Pakistan and Israel, as well as the DPRK that has left the NPT - in such discussions.

4 Complete nuclear disarmament remains a very long term aspiration. We will not see it realised in any of our lifetimes. As long as some countries have nuclear weapons and others do not, we will continue to have a sense of imbalance and insecurity that will hinder the vision of a nuclear free world. The overall size of the global nuclear arsenal remains large. There are still around 20,000 nuclear warheads in the world. Many of them are still on trigger alert. Still, even small steps add up. They help build confidence.

Nuclear Weapon Free Zones

5 In that spirit, we support the development of nuclear weapon free zones as set out by Article VII of the NPT. But we must recognise that unless and until the basic structures and dynamics of international relations change in a fundamental way, all states will give security the foremost priority in their policies. It is the prime value without which other values cannot be realised. Therefore, a pragmatic, and not a purist or ideological, approach to nuclear weapon free zones should be encouraged. Such an approach gives parties to the zone, and parties with interests in such zones, the confidence that their vital security interests will not be compromised. This is the approach we have taken in Southeast Asia. Specific provisions in the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone or SEANWFZ Treaty give States Parties the discretion over transits of foreign ships and aircraft.

6 Since the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, no progress has occurred. We observe a strong desire on the part of the Arab Group to work with all relevant parties to establish concrete steps towards achieving a Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (MENWFZ). We support them. But this effort cannot ignore the broader political and geopolitical context of the region and must be undertaken in tandem with the creation of conditions that make a MENWFZ a realistic objective that will be regarded as being in the security interests of all states in the region. This includes a just and sustainable two state solution to the Palestine question and recognition of Israel by all states in the region. Needless to say, questioning the right of any state in the region to exist sets back rather than advances the goal of a MENWFZ.

Second Pillar: Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (PUNE)

7 There has been renewed interest in many regions in the development of nuclear power to meet energy needs. Many countries, including Singapore, are exploring nuclear energy as a low carbon alternative to fossil fuels. This is the right of all countries under Article IV of the NPT. But we must recognize that this renewed global interest in nuclear energy is not without risks because it will inevitably hasten the spread of nuclear technology, including capabilities and knowledge that could be used for nuclear weapons programmes, such as uranium enrichment and plutonium

reprocessing. There are no rights without responsibilities. It is therefore imperative that all countries that insist on their rights under Article IV spare no effort to reassure the international community, by deeds as well as words, that their intentions are peaceful and not directed at weapons development.

Third Pillar: Non-Proliferation

8 In the face of risks associated with proliferation, the international community urgently needs to find means to strengthen nuclear safety and security in a way that does not impede but enables and facilitates states which abide by their international obligations to reap the benefits from PUNE. Both NWS and NNWS should adopt higher standards of safety and security to ensure that nuclear materials and facilities remain safe and secure. Given the important role that the IAEA has been playing in setting international norms and standards on nuclear safety and security issues, the IAEA's mandate and capacity in this area should be strengthened. Regional arrangements can play a useful role in supporting and supplementing the IAEA. The ASEAN countries have started a conversation on an ASEAN nuclear safety regime.

9 A more robust universal global export control regime should be established to guard against the illicit trafficking of nuclear materials and nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, while not hampering legitimate trade. Otherwise proliferators will just seek out the weakest spots, as is already happening. While not denying NNWS their right to acquire civilian nuclear technology, the establishment of a multilateral fuel assurance mechanism could help prevent the spread of sensitive nuclear know-how, yet at the same time provide countries interested in pursuing nuclear energy and technology the means to do so. We must also find a mechanism to encourage countries with nuclear weapon capabilities that are outside the NPT - India, Pakistan and Israel - to abide by the same international rules and safeguards. The DPRK, which had withdrawn from the NPT, must also be incentivized to rejoin the global non-proliferation regime.

10 All countries wanting to develop PUNE should also clearly recognise that with the right to develop PUNE comes the responsibility to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. These countries should provide stringent

reassurances that they will not develop nuclear weapons or aid others to do so. All states that have not signed a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol with the IAEA should do so. A member of the NPT, Iran - with whom we enjoy good bilateral relations – has been suspected by the IAEA of pursuing a nuclear weapons programme. We do not know whether the allegations are true or false. But it is undeniable that Iran suffers from a serious international confidence deficit, and we strongly believe that it is in Iran's own interest to do all it can to restore confidence, in particular by cooperating unreservedly with the IAEA.

Conclusion

11 The NPT was conceived in a different time to meet different challenges. Both NWS and NNWS must recognise the changed contemporary realities and take bold and clear steps to ensure that the NPT does not become inconsequential. Besides rhetorically reaffirming our commitment to the NPT, we need to agree on concrete, time-bound and verifiable implementation and action in order to prevent the NPT slipping into irrelevance. If this Review Conference ends in the same way as previous Review Conferences, my delegation fears that the decline of the NPT regime may become irreversible. All is not yet lost, but we do not have the luxury of infinite time to save the NPT regime.

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