



Permanent Mission
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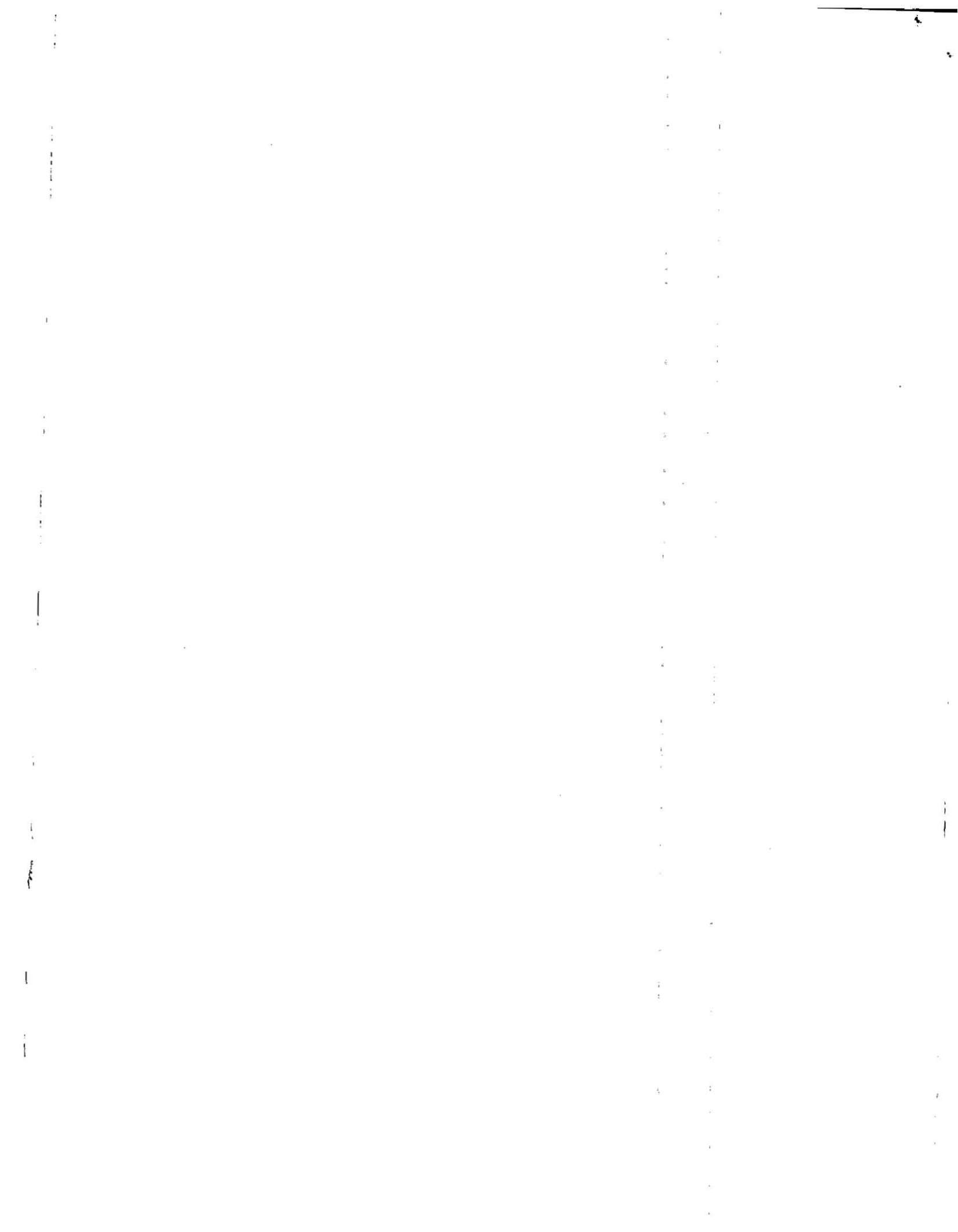
H.E. Ambassador Mr. Rolf Nickel
Federal Government Commissioner for Arms
Control and Disarmament
German Foreign Office

on the occasion of

The High-Level Meeting of the General
Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament

September 26, 2013

(Check against delivery)



Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Please allow me to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting with the support of the Secretary-General and the Non-Aligned Movement for its initiative.

I would like to align myself with the Statements of the EU and the NPDI.

Nuclear disarmament and arms control is a priority for the German government. Today's high-level exchange of views is a most timely opportunity to discuss the road towards Global Zero. The objective remains clear. Approaches to reach this goal may vary.

Even though the number of nuclear weapons has decreased considerably since the height of the Cold War, the challenges remain momentous. There are still approximately 17,000 nuclear weapons in existence.

There is a real danger that weapons of mass destruction – not only nuclear, but also chemical or biological weapons – might fall into the hands of terrorists. The consequences would be disastrous.

Mr. Chairman,

At the moment, we are greatly concerned by the outrageous chemical weapon attacks in Syria. Their use against innocent civilians has caused immense human suffering.

Similarly, the use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. We therefore need specific steps towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Conference for Disarmament in Geneva has been gridlocked for 16 years. If it is to remain the privileged forum for disarmament negotiations, it must start productive work soon.

We need further irreversible and verifiable reductions of nuclear arsenals. States with the largest arsenals have special responsibilities in this regard. We therefore strongly welcome and support President Obama's proposal to negotiate further deep cuts with the Russian Federation.

It is in everybody's interest that this opportunity not be missed. It is also of crucial importance that sub-strategic nuclear weapons be included in the next disarmament round. Pending further steps in nuclear disarmament, the role of nuclear weapons in nuclear doctrines should be reduced.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin. Only by advancing on both fronts will we succeed in keeping the Non-Proliferation Treaty from eroding.

The challenges we are facing are substantial, but they are not insurmountable. With political will and determination, we can move ahead on the road towards Global Zero.

Germany stands ready to make its contribution. Thank you.