

8 August 2009

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,  
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,  
at the 7th General Conference of the Mayors for Peace**

Honorable Mayor Taue,  
Honorable Mayors for Peace,  
Blessed Survivors,  
Distinguished guests,  
Brothers and Sisters all:

It is truly an honor for me to be with you this afternoon, and to participate in the 7TH General Conference of Mayors for Peace.

I want to thank Mayor Taue and Mayor Akibe, especially, for extending the invitation that brings me here today, and to congratulate them and all of their collaborators – nearly 3,000 cities and many millions of citizens around the world – for their tireless leadership in campaigning for a world free of nuclear weapons.

I believe, we have arrived at a propitious moment, recognized as such by heads of state and government across the world and in nearly every political camp who have declared that now is the time to commit to eliminating nuclear weapons once and for all.

I also believe that we have arrived at this moment of hope largely through the tireless and inspiring work of the Mayors for Peace and their many like-minded collaborators around the globe.

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to share my own reflections on where we have arrived in the arduous, but unavoidable quest to guarantee a world free of nuclear weapons.

To assess where we are, it is important to know where we have been. And so I think it is important to begin with a quick look at history.

The NPT: A “Grand Bargain” between Nuclear “Haves” and “Have-Nots”

In the mid-to-late 1960s, it was becoming clear that a new, comprehensive approach to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament was needed that would simultaneously curtail the accelerating nuclear arms race among the leading nuclear “haves” and the rapidly growing number of aspiring nuclear powers.

It was also recognized that if we were to have any hope of persuading more countries not to exercise the nuclear option, it would be necessary to address the issues most important to the nuclear “have-nots” – that they not be denied the benefits of access to nuclear energy and other peaceful applications of nuclear technology, and that nuclear-weapons states not derive any exclusive benefits from the permissions they were given to continue nuclear tests and development.

The solution was a proposed new “grand bargain” that took the form of a global Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or NPT. The NPT was first signed in London, Moscow, and Washington on July 1, 1968, and entered into force on March 5, 1970.

In essence, its terms were relatively simple and went as follows: the number of nuclear powers would be frozen at five; all other states party to the treaty would commit to dismantle or otherwise not pursue their own nuclear weapons development program.

Each nuclear-weapon state party to the treaty also agreed not to transfer, and the non-nuclear states agreed not to accept, nuclear weapons and their related materials, knowledge, and technologies. The non-nuclear states party agreed in addition to accept safeguards under the International Atomic Energy Agency “for the exclusive purpose of verification of the fulfillment of its obligations” under the Treaty.

Furthermore, in return for agreeing not to pursue nuclear weapons capabilities of their own, the non-nuclear states received commitments under the NPT not to be denied their “inalienable right” to “develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination.” Nuclear weapons states were enjoined to cooperate with other parties to the treaty in contributing “to the further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.” And the Treaty committed nuclear weapons states to agree that any “technological by-products” derived from the development of nuclear explosive devices should be made available for peaceful purposes to all parties.

Finally, Article VI of the NPT contained what seemed to be a ringing declaration that “Each of the Parties undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament (emphasis added), and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” (emphasis added)

### The “Obama Moment” is Important for the World

The grand bargain of the NPT has provided the central institutional framework for global cooperation on nuclear arms control and disarmament for nearly four decades now. During the last ten years, largely owing to political deadlock in the U.S. Senate, that framework has been nearly moribund, but the activism of civil society, and a growing unease among political elites around the globe, helped preserve and then revitalize public demands for “global zero,” or complete and final abolition of nuclear weapons.

This movement is so powerful and broad-based that the Democratic and Republican candidates in the 2008 U.S. national elections both declared that it would be their intention to make elimination of nuclear weapons the explicit policy of the U.S. government. On April 5 of this year, the winner of the

election, President Barak Obama, fulfilled that commitment by declaring in a speech delivered in Prague: “I state clearly and with conviction America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.”

That much-anticipated statement followed similar statements by leaders of several other nuclear powers, but coming from the new U.S. President it clearly helped to revive flagging institutions and processes. Within weeks, the long moribund UN Conference on Disarmament had achieved its first work plan in several years. U.S. and Russian negotiators had agreed on an ambitious bilateral nuclear-weapons reductions targets and an aggressive negotiating schedule that called for an agreement to be reached by the end of the year. Support for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty revived like desert flowers after an unexpected rain.

The government of Japan, I am pleased to note, made a welcome bid for leadership in this cause when Foreign Minister Hirofume Nakasone announced his “11 Benchmarks for Global Nuclear Disarmament” in an important speech on April 27th. I hope that it is not improper for me to express my personal wish that the Government of Japan continue to follow the direction indicated by Foreign Minister Nakasone, asserting Japan’s moral authority and leadership on this issue.

The rise of public demand, and now political support, for “global zero” is not the end of the story, but only, possibly, the beginning. But a door has opened and we all have a profound obligation to explore its possibilities and exploit the options it presents for achieving nuclear disarmament.

#### Problems of Credibility and Legitimacy Lead to Problems of Effectiveness

How shall we proceed? At the risk of sounding petulant, I must raise two important concerns about the path we are on:

The first relates to credibility: it is unclear to what extent the new commitment to global zero espoused not only by President Obama, but also by many of his colleagues in the nuclear club, represents something truly new. Merely committing to global zero is nothing new; that promise was a core element of the grand bargain of the NPT.

If experience is any guide, merely returning to the NPT-centered approach to nuclear disarmament, even with a strong emphasis on the importance of nuclear abolition as an “ultimate” end, will not lead states down the path to nuclear disarmament.

The second problem is one of legitimacy. The NPT is patently discriminatory. Not only did it legitimize a world divided between nuclear “haves” and “have-nots,” but it also established, or rather reconfirmed, the practice of allowing a small group of states to interpret and enforce the rules, without themselves being subject to those same rules. The safeguards and international inspection regimes of the NPT do not apply to the nuclear powers today in the same way that they apply to the non-nuclear powers; and the more onerous monitoring and inspection regimes proposed under the Model Additional Protocol apply primarily to the nuclear “have-nots”.

Any new approach to “global zero” based on the NPT must address these deficiencies of credibility and legitimacy, or risk being portrayed, accurately in my opinion, as old wine in new bottles.

What is to be done?

In order to address these fundamental questions of credibility and legitimacy, I want to propose four important lines of action that can help demonstrate convincingly that the world has indeed committed to complete and final elimination of nuclear weapons:

First, it is vitally important to set an early date for achieving disarmament, along with a clear, realistic timetable, and to work hard and be seen to work hard to achieve it. I strongly support the date proposed by the mayors for peace. The year 2020 will be the 75th anniversary of the terrible destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and also the 50th anniversary of the NPT. An American president once set an ambitious goal of placing a man on the moon within a decade, and this year we have celebrated the 40th anniversary of that human achievement. Eleven years is not too little to demonstrate real commitment and real progress, even if full achievement of the end goal may prove to be somewhat beyond our reach in just a decade.

Second, it is essential that we begin work on the large new problems that call for attention once we take seriously the goal of achieving complete elimination of nuclear weapons, not for a brief moment, but forever. In an important essay in this direction, researchers George Perkovich and James Acton have noted that the main questions associated with disarming below minimal thresholds to zero, and establishing an effective international regime in support of global abolition have never seriously even been asked by the foreign policy and nuclear weapons establishments. This work needs to begin at once, in a setting that guarantees transparency and inclusiveness for all interested parties, which should include all 192 Member States plus observers in the United Nations.

Third, all nuclear weapons “haves,” including those outside the NPT regime, should begin to build credibility and enhance the legitimacy of the international non-proliferation regime by placing their own enrichment and weapons programs under international monitoring and inspection regimes. This step is indispensable if we are going to manage nuclear rivalries and persuade countries like Iran that we are prepared to accept a peaceful nuclear energy program, but not a weapons program.

Finally, to achieve legitimacy and enhance effectiveness, the whole process needs to be brought into the United Nations system, where it truly belongs. It is possible, and highly desirable, to have private efforts, independent scientific inquiry, and other non-UN initiatives, but there should be a strong presumption that the findings of all such efforts should be made available to all nation-states through UN agencies, and the UN’s organizations should be strengthened to be able to engage as a peer with any governmental agency.

For Humanity and for Mother Earth

I am pleased to join with the Mayors for Peace in your extraordinary campaign to bring a profound sense of moral responsibility, hope, commitment, common sense, reason and the power of many hundreds of thousands of collaborators all over the world.

Together we can show that a better world really is possible.