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Nobel Laureates in Rome, Kofi Annan at Princeton
University

They All Urge for Abolishing Nuclear Weapons

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The 7th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates took place in Rome from November 17 to 19 and was held, as were previous Summits, on the initiative of Mikhail Gorbachev and the Mayor of Rome, Walter Veltroni. At the end of this Summit, the Nobel Peace Laureates adopted and released the following "Rome declaration".

"We, Nobel Peace Laureates and Laureate Organizations, gathered in Rome, Italy, have for years been deeply disturbed by the lack of public attention and political will at the highest levels of state paid to the need to eliminate nuclear weapons. There are over 27,000 of these devices threatening civilization, with over 95% in the hands of Russia and the US. This danger threatens everyone and thus every person must work to eliminate this risk before it eliminates us.

"We oppose the proliferation of nuclear weapons to any state. We are faced each day with a new crisis in proliferation exemplified by concerns regarding North Korea and Iran. However, our focus must be on the weapons themselves for the only sustainable resolution to gain security is the universal elimination of the weapons.

"The failure to address the nuclear threat and to strengthen existing treaty obligations to work for nuclear weapons abolition shreds the fabric of cooperative security. A world with nuclear haves and have-nots is fragmented and unstable, a fact underscored by the current threats of proliferation. In such an environment cooperation fails. Thus, nations are unable to address effectively the real threats of poverty, environmental degradation and nuclear catastrophe.

"Nuclear weapons are more of a problem than any problem they seek to solve. In the hands of anyone, the weapons themselves remain an unacceptable, morally reprehensible, impractical and dangerous risk.

"The use of a nuclear weapon against a state without nuclear weapons is patently immoral. Use against a state with nuclear weapons is also suicidal.

"These weapons have no value against terrorists or criminals. Progress toward a safer future is not thwarted from a lack of practical, threat-reducing policy options. The problem is a lack of political will.

"As Nobel Peace Prize Laureates we commit to work collectively to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons, which we believe are unworthy of civilization.

"We have heard the impassioned warning from the Mayor of Hiroshima and survivors of the atomic bombs and join him and the over 1500 cities around

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the world, including Rome, in their call to all nations, including those with nuclear weapons arsenals - US, Russia, France, China, UK, Israel, India, and Pakistan - to immediately commence negotiations to obtain the universal, legally verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons. In past years we have set forth practical steps to bring us to such a better world, and we reiterate the need for such policies as a entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, de alerting of the hair trigger launch on warning arsenals of thousands of hazardous weapons deployed now by Russia and the US, obtain stricter IAEA controls over nuclear materials, and pledges never to use a nuclear weapon first. Such efforts will help to ensure that nuclear capabilities are denied to terrorists.

"We issue a serious warning that without such efforts the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (NPT) could corrode opening the way for dozens of states to become nuclear armed, a frightening prospect. The NPT is a bargain in which non-proliferation is obtained based on a promise by nuclear weapons states to negotiate nuclear weapons elimination and offer peaceful uses of nuclear technology. There is a fundamental dilemma which must end. Nuclear weapons states want to keep their weapons indefinitely and at the same time condemn others who would attempt to acquire them. Such flaunting of disarmament obligations is not sustainable.

"The current situation is more dangerous than during the Cold War. We are gravely concerned regarding several current developments such as NPT stakeholders enabling rather than constraining proliferation, modernization of nuclear weapons systems, the aspiration to weaponize space, thus making arms control and disarmament on earth all the more difficult, and the declared policy of terrorist organizations to obtain nuclear weapons.

"Given the critical nature of the situation, we pledge to challenge, persuade and inspire Heads of State to fulfil the moral and legal obligation they share with every citizen to free us from this threat. We declare our intention to participate fully in a world summit where leaders of culture, arts, sciences, business, and politics, will actively participate.

"As Nobel Peace Laureates, conscience requires us to raise our voices, inspire humankind, and to demand change in state policies. We call upon the citizens of the world to join us in this work.

The ceremony of the acknowledgement of Man of Peace 2006 took place before the opening of the Summit. It was awarded to Peter Gabriel.

The Summit was openend by Walter Veltroni, Lech Walesa and Mairead Corrigan Maguire. Those taking part in the Summit were: Frederik Willem De Klerk, Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Lech Walesa, Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, International Peace Bureau, United Nations Organization, United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, International Labour Organization, Mèdecins sans

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Frontières, American Friends Service Committee, Red Cross, International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Pugwash Conference.

Guests of honour

were: Mayor of Hiroshima and President of the World's Mayors for Peace Tadatoshi Akiba; Nobel Laureate for Medicine Rita Levi Montalcini, Man of Peace 2006 Peter Gabriel; Representative of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission Jayantha Dhanapala; President of the Foundation on Economic Trends and Greenhouse Crisis Foundation Jeremy Rifkin; Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Nobuaki Tanaka and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Jose Antonio Ocampo.

28 November 2006- *In Lecture at Princeton university, Secretary-General calls for progress on both nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation. Following is the text of his lecture:*

Let me begin by saying how delighted I am to have been invited to give this address by a School named after Woodrow Wilson, the great pioneer of multilateralism and advocate of world peace, who argued, among other things, for agreed international limits on deadly weapons.

Princeton is indissolubly linked with the memory of Albert Einstein and many other great scientists who played a role in making this country the first nuclear power. That makes it an especially appropriate setting for my address this evening, because my main theme is the danger of nuclear weapons, and the urgent need to confront that danger by preventing proliferation and promoting disarmament, both at once. I shall argue that these two objectives – disarmament and non-proliferation – are inextricably linked, and that to achieve progress on either front we must also advance on the other.

Almost everyone in today's world feels insecure, but not everyone feels insecure about the same thing. Different threats seem more urgent to people in different parts of the world.

Probably the largest number would give priority to economic and social threats, including poverty, environmental degradation and infectious disease.

Others might stress inter-State conflict; yet others internal conflict, including civil war. Many people - especially but not only in the developed world – would now put terrorism at the top of their list.

In truth, all these threats are interconnected, and all cut across national frontiers. We need common global strategies to deal with all of them – and indeed, Governments are coming together to work out and implement such strategies, in the UN and elsewhere. The one area where there is a total lack of any common strategy is the one that may well present the greatest danger of all: the area of nuclear weapons.

Why do I consider it the greatest danger? For three reasons:

First, nuclear weapons present a unique existential threat to all humanity.

Secondly, the nuclear non-proliferation regime now faces a major crisis of confidence. North Korea has withdrawn from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), while India, Israel, and Pakistan have never joined it. There are, at least, serious questions about the nature of Iran's nuclear programme. And this, in turn, raises questions about the

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legitimacy, and credibility, of the case-by-case approach to non-proliferation that the existing nuclear powers have adopted.

Thirdly, the rise of terrorism, with the danger that nuclear weapons might be acquired by terrorists, greatly increases the danger that they will be used.

Yet, despite the grave, all-encompassing nature of this threat, the Governments of the world are addressing it selectively, not comprehensively.

In one way, that's understandable. The very idea of global self-annihilation is unbearable to think about. But, that is no excuse. We must try to imagine the human and environmental consequences of a nuclear bomb exploding in one, or even in several, major world cities – or indeed of an all-out confrontation between two nuclear-armed States.

In focusing on nuclear weapons, I am not seeking to minimize the problem of chemical and biological ones, which are also weapons of mass destruction, and are banned under international treaties. Indeed, perhaps the most important, under-addressed threat relating to terrorism – one which acutely requires new thinking – is the threat of terrorists using a biological weapon.

But, nuclear weapons are the most dangerous. Even a single bomb can destroy an entire city, as we know from the terrible example of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and today, there are bombs many times as powerful as those. These weapons pose a unique threat to humanity as a whole.

Forty years ago, understanding that this danger must be avoided at all costs, nearly all States in the world came together and forged a grand bargain, embodied in the NPT.

In essence, that treaty was a contract between the recognized nuclear-weapon States at that time and the rest of the international community. The nuclear-weapon States undertook to negotiate in good faith on nuclear disarmament, to prevent proliferation, and to facilitate the peaceful use of nuclear energy, while separately declaring that they would refrain from threatening non-nuclear-weapon States with nuclear weapons. In return, the rest committed themselves not to acquire or manufacture nuclear weapons, and to place all their nuclear activities under the verification of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Thus, the treaty was designed both to prevent proliferation and to advance disarmament, while assuring the right of all States, under specified conditions, to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

From 1970 – when it entered into force – until quite recently, the NPT was widely seen as a cornerstone of global security. It had confounded the dire predictions of its critics. Nuclear weapons did not – and still have not – spread to dozens of States, as John F. Kennedy and others predicted in the 1960s. In fact, more States have given up their ambitions for nuclear weapons than have acquired them.

And yet, in recent years, the NPT has come under withering criticism – because the international community has been unable to agree how to apply it to specific crises in South Asia, the Korean peninsula and the Middle East; and because a few States parties to the treaty are allegedly pursuing their own nuclear-weapons capabilities.

Twice in 2005, Governments had a chance to strengthen the Treaty's foundations – first at the Review conference in May, then at the World Summit in September. Both times they failed – essentially because they couldn't agree whether non-proliferation or disarmament should come first.

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The advocates of "non-proliferation first" — mainly nuclear-weapon States and their supporters — believe the main danger arises not from nuclear weapons as such, but from the character of those who possess them, and therefore, from the spread of nuclear weapons to new States and to non-state actors (so called "horizontal proliferation"). The nuclear-weapon States say they have carried out significant disarmament since the end of the cold war, but that their responsibility for international peace and security requires them to maintain a nuclear deterrent.

"Disarmament first" advocates, on the other hand, say that the world is most imperilled by existing nuclear arsenals and their continual improvement (so called "vertical proliferation"). Many non-nuclear-weapon States accuse the nuclear-weapon States of retreating from commitments they made in 1995 (when the NPT was extended indefinitely) and reiterated as recently as the year 2000. For these countries, the NPT "grand bargain" has become a swindle. They note that the UN Security Council has often described the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as a threat to international peace and security, but has never declared that nuclear weapons in and of themselves are such a threat. They see no serious movement towards nuclear disarmament, and claim that the lack of such movement presages a permanent "apartheid" between nuclear "haves" and "have-nots".

Both sides in this debate feel that the existence of four additional States with nuclear weapons, outside the NPT, serves only to sharpen their argument.

The debate echoes a much older argument: are weapons a cause or a symptom of conflict? I believe both debates are sterile, counterproductive, and based on false dichotomies.

Arms build-ups can give rise to threats leading to conflict; and political conflicts can motivate the acquisition of arms. Efforts are needed both to reduce arms and to reduce conflict. Likewise, efforts are needed to achieve both disarmament and non-proliferation.

Yet, each side waits for the other to move. The result is that "mutually assured destruction" has been replaced by mutually assured paralysis. This sends a terrible signal of disunity and waning respect for the Treaty's authority. It creates a vacuum that can be exploited.

I said earlier this year that we are "sleepwalking towards disaster". In truth, it is worse than that — we are asleep at the controls of a fast-moving aircraft. Unless we wake up and take control, the outcome is all too predictable.

An aircraft, of course, can remain airborne only if both wings are in working order. We cannot choose between non-proliferation and disarmament. We must tackle both tasks with the urgency they demand.

Allow me to offer my thoughts to each side in turn.

To those who insist on disarmament first, I say this:

— Proliferation is not a threat only, or even mainly, to those who already have nuclear weapons. The more fingers there are on nuclear triggers, and the more those fingers belong to leaders of unstable States — or, even worse, non-State actors — the greater the threat to all humankind.

— Lack of progress on disarmament is no excuse for not addressing the dangers of proliferation. No State should imagine that, by pushing ahead with a nuclear-weapon programme, it can pose as a defender of the NPT; still less that it will persuade others to disarm.

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“ I know some influential States, which themselves have scrupulously respected the Treaty, feel strongly that the nuclear-weapon States have not lived up to their disarmament obligations. But, they must be careful not to let their resentment put them on the side of the proliferators. They should state clearly that acquiring prohibited weapons never serves the cause of their elimination. Proliferation only makes disarmament even harder to achieve.

“ I urge all States to give credit where it is due. Acknowledge disarmament whenever it does occur. Applaud the moves which nuclear-weapon States have made, whether unilaterally or through negotiation, to reduce nuclear arsenals or prevent their expansion. Recognize that the nuclear-weapon States have virtually stopped producing new fissile material for weapons, and are maintaining moratoria on nuclear tests.

“ Likewise, support even small steps to contain proliferation, such as efforts to improve export controls on goods needed to make weapons of mass destruction, as mandated by Security Council resolution 1540.

“ And please support the efforts of the Director-General of the IAEA and others to find ways of guaranteeing that all States have access to fuel and services for their civilian nuclear programmes without spreading sensitive technology. Countries must be able to meet their growing energy needs through such programmes, but we cannot afford a world where more and more countries develop the most sensitive phases of the nuclear fuel cycle themselves.

“ Finally, do not encourage, or allow, any State to make its compliance with initiatives to eliminate nuclear weapons, or halt their proliferation, conditional on concessions from other States on other issues. The preservation of human life on this planet is too important to be used as a hostage.

To those who insist on non-proliferation first, I say this:

“ True, there has been some progress on nuclear disarmament since the end of the cold war. Some States have removed many nuclear weapons from deployment, and eliminated whole classes of nuclear delivery systems. The US and Russia have agreed to limit the number of strategic nuclear weapons they deploy, and have removed non-strategic ones from ships and submarines; the US Congress refused to fund the so called "bunker-buster" bomb; most nuclear test sites have been closed; and there are national moratoria on nuclear tests, while three nuclear-weapon States “ France, Russia and the UK “ have ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

“ Yet, stockpiles remain alarmingly high: 27,000 nuclear weapons reportedly remain in service, of which about 12,000 are actively deployed.

“ Some States seem to believe they need fewer weapons, but smaller and more useable ones “ and even to have embraced the notion of using such weapons in conflict. All of the NPT nuclear-weapon States are modernizing their nuclear arsenals or their delivery systems. They should not imagine that this will be accepted as compatible with the NPT. Everyone will see it for what it is: a euphemism for nuclear re-armament.

“ Nor is it clear how these States propose to deal with the four nuclear-weapon-capable States outside the NPT. They warn against a nuclear domino effect, if this or that country is allowed to acquire a nuclear capability, but they do not seem to know how to prevent it, or how to respond to it once it has happened. Surely they should at least consider attempting a "reverse domino effect", in which systematic and sustained reductions in nuclear arsenals would devalue the currency of nuclear weapons, and encourage others to follow suit.

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Instead, by clinging to and modernizing their own arsenals, even when there is no obvious threat to their national security that nuclear weapons could deter, nuclear-weapon States encourage others – particularly those that do face real threats in their own region – to regard nuclear weapons as essential, both to their security and to their status. It would be much easier to confront proliferators, if the very existence of nuclear weapons were universally acknowledged as dangerous and ultimately illegitimate.

Similarly, States that wish to discourage others from undertaking nuclear or missile tests could argue their case much more convincingly if they themselves moved quickly to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force, halt their own missile testing, and negotiate a robust multilateral instrument regulating missiles. Such steps would do more than anything else to advance the cause of non-proliferation.

Important Powers such as Argentina, Brazil, Germany and Japan have shown, by refusing to develop them, that nuclear weapons are not essential to either security or status. South Africa destroyed its arsenal and joined the NPT. Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan gave up nuclear weapons from the former Soviet nuclear arsenal. And Libya has abandoned its nuclear and chemical weapons programmes. The nuclear weapon States have applauded all these examples. They should follow them.

Finally, Governments and civil society in many countries are increasingly questioning the relevance of the cold war doctrine of nuclear deterrence – the rationale used by all States that possess nuclear weapons – in an age of growing threats from non-State actors. Do we not need, instead, to develop agreed strategies for preventing proliferation?

For all these reasons, I call on all the States with nuclear weapons to develop concrete plans – with specific timetables – for implementing their disarmament commitments. And I urge them to make a joint declaration of intent to achieve the progressive elimination of all nuclear weapons, under strict and effective international control.

In short, my friends, the only way forward is to make progress on both fronts – non-proliferation and disarmament – at once. And we will not achieve this unless at the same time we deal effectively with the threat of terrorism, as well as the threats, both real and rhetorical, which drive particular States or regimes to seek security, however misguidedly, by developing or acquiring nuclear weapons.

It is a complex and daunting task, which calls for leadership, for the establishment of trust, for dialogue and negotiation. But first of all, we need a renewed debate, which must be inclusive, must respect the norms of international negotiations, and must reaffirm the multilateral approach – Woodrow Wilson's approach, firmly grounded in international institutions, treaties, rules, and norms of appropriate behaviour.

Let me conclude by appealing to young people everywhere, since there are – I am glad to see – so many of them here today.

My dear young friends, you are already admirably engaged in the struggle for global development, for human rights and to protect the environment. Please bring your energy and imagination to this debate. Help us to seize control of the rogue aircraft on which humanity has embarked, and bring it to a safe landing before it is too late.

[UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan](#)