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At the Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty

Doctrines of Death

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Publication date: Friday 1 May 2015

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At the Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty which opened on 27 April at the UN in New York, most of the governmental delegations are demanding that the nuclear-armed states should at last honour Article VI of the Treaty and proceed to the elimination of all their nuclear weapons. The exasperation they are showing about this matter is a recurrent pattern.

But at the same time, not a few of them are also invoking article IV of the Treaty and insisting on the "inalienable right" of all states to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

France's position is to reject the first demand, but to heartily agree with the second. France considers that "in the domain of peaceful use of energy, every review conference is a time to salute progress. After Fukushima, the responsible use of nuclear power-generation proceeds through the strengthening of security and of reponse capacity in the event of an accident, that is certain. But it proceeds also through the formation of civilian nuclear elites." And the French ambassador drew attention to the fact that some weeks ago France launched an appeal for "a strengthening of the international offer of training, particularly for countries acquiring nuclear energy capacity." France will of course be the first to respond to requests for training, and also to requests for the nuclear power-plants which would necessitate the training of such personnel.

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Describing Nuclear Doctrines as 'Doctrines of Death', Speaker in Treaty Review Conference Says Detonation Makes 'Losers' of All

30 April 2015

Considering that there were enough nuclear weapons to put an end to the whole planet in minutes without anyone or anything able to help, nuclear doctrines were therefore "doctrines of death" in which "all were losers," the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference heard today during its fourth day of deliberations.

Noting that nuclear Powers would invest billions modernizing their arsenals in the coming years, the representative of Venezuela said that was "a depressing picture". Nine countries still possessed more than 16,000 nuclear weapons, and there were 1,800 warheads on maximum alert ready to be launched in minutes.

Seventy years had passed since the detonations on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he said. Today, the majority of those weapons were much more powerful as many as 1,000 times greater than those dropped on Japan, which had reached temperatures of 4,000°C and vaporized everything in their path, including women, children, trees and buildings. The bombings had even changed the cellular make-up of the inhabitants, who, even now, were more vulnerable to certain cancers.

The Treaty, he stressed, was based on the security needs of all States parties, not just the nuclear-weapon States, and there could be no progress when the nuclear Powers did not observe their commitments.

Doctrines of Death

"Despite all the public demands for disarmament," said the representative of the Maldives, "we as leaders fail". Global peace and security could only be achieved through collaboration and diligent action. Collectively, all countries, big and small, must stand together, side by side, and choose to close this "dark chapter of human history".

Qatar's representative said the five nuclear-weapon States must engage sincerely in consultations followed by concrete decisions to disarm their nuclear arsenals. Those must be coupled with concrete strategies for implementation in accordance with a binding timetable.

"We have a plan, now all we need is the political will," said Nicaragua's representative. Indeed, said Lithuania's representative, the international community had agreed on several multilateral building blocks for achieving a world without nuclear weapons, and the mutually reinforcing pillars of the NPT should be promoted in a balanced manner to enhance the Treaty's credibility, integrity and enduring importance.

All States must resolutely and urgently work to ensure that those weapons were never again used and were not proliferated, said Australia's representative, speaking on behalf of the Humanitarian Consequences Group.

At the same time, he acknowledged, eliminating nuclear weapons was only possible through substantive and constructive engagement with those States which possessed them.

The representative of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of the P-5 States Parties to the NPT, said that group was "ever cognizant" of the severe consequences that would accompany the use of nuclear weapons, and reaffirmed its resolve to prevent such an occurrence from happening. As NPT nuclear-weapon States, he said the group reaffirmed the shared goal of nuclear disarmament and did not target any state with nuclear weapons. Noting the importance of reducing the role of those weapons in national security strategies, he reaffirmed the P-5's readiness to immediately negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Also speaking were representatives of Kuwait, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Morocco, Peru, Zimbabwe, Portugal, Australia (Vienna Group of 10), Niger, Montenegro, Thailand, Ghana, Nepal, Brunei Darussalam, Oman, Guatemala, Kenya, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zambia, Malawi and Yemen.

Also speaking were representatives of Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, League of Arab States, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The representative of Iran spoke in exercise of the right of reply.

The Conference will meet again at 3 p.m. on Friday, 1 May, to continue its work.

Source: UN information for media. Not an official record.

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NPT Review Conference,
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