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February 23, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, DC 20050

Re: Presidential Guidance for Nuclear Forces

Dear President Obama:

I am inspired, along with many Americans, by your presentation in Prague lifting up the need for and commitment to achieve progress for a nuclear weapons free world, the success of START, the Security Council session you chaired, the Nuclear Security Summits, and the 2010 Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference commitment: *"All States should make special efforts to establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons."*

We are further uplifted by the language of the Nuclear Posture Review which, in relevant part, commits the United States *"to initiate a comprehensive national research and development program to support continued progress toward a world free of nuclear weapons,"* including, but not limited to, *"expanded work on verification technologies."*

In the important debates regarding nuclear guidance policy I urge you not to overlook a very powerful argument for moving more rapidly to downgrade the role and number of nuclear weapons and re craft current policy to be more supportive of disarmament initiatives.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and nuclear weapons are essentially incompatible, although there are instances in which a nuclear weapon could be used such that it did not violate IHL restrictions. IHL principles regarding the requirement to discriminate between combatants and civilians, prohibitions against causing unnecessary suffering, injuring innocent third party states, causing irreversible environmental damage and other rules are violated by nearly every conceivable use of a nuclear weapon. Moreover, if a use is illegal, a threat to use in that manner is similarly a violation of IHL. These are neither subtle nor irrelevant arguments and they should not be treated as adverse to the President's leadership as set forth in Prague and executed in numerous threat reducing, non proliferation strengthening policies.

This Administration did not create the dilemma of the threats to security posed by the existence of nuclear weapons nor the policies and deployments that are contrary to IHL. Thus, one could hardly expect a magical overnight resolution of the discrepancy between what is and what ought to be. However, what this discordance should do is heighten the urgency of moving in a tangible and unambiguous way toward the preliminary steps needed to negotiate a framework of instruments or a convention leading to the ban of the weapons. This process will be long and complex but it will from the outset make clear that the world will be far better off without the weapons and the US intends to lead in moving us to that safer haven.

I link this email to two articles for your use in advancing our most basic civilized values in the nuclear policy debates and I hope you find them of value:

<http://bos.sagepub.com/content/67/6/53.full?ijkey=tsg777leHjd7Q&keytype=ref&siteid=spbos>

<http://www.gsainstitute.org/gsi/docs/IHL5.pdf>

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Granoff". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonathan Granoff
President