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A Moment to Seize

prepared for the 10th Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates
Berlin, Germany

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Granoff
President

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A Moment to Seize

1. We have found ways of utilizing the gifts of science, technology and complex social organization to transform the natural world. From the sub-atomic realms and the basic building blocks of life all the way to the vast firmaments above us we have invented ways and means to harm and destroy ourselves. We also have the capacity to utilize these gifts wisely to expand the well-being of the entire planet. Our moments to choose are diminishing; our choices today will be consequential for generations to come.

2. How we use nuclear technology may be the litmus test of our collective success or demise. The military uses by states of this technology are becoming increasingly hazardous each day. Moreover, these military uses legitimize the horrific prospect of non-state actors using this technology to fulfill destructive purposes. It is necessary to use the tools of law and morality to reign in the powers we have achieved through science and technology to express our hopes, fears and aspirations.

3. From the Security Council of the United Nations and the leaders of nations to the intellectual elites across the globe, we have recently heard the resonance of the conscience of humanity to pursue, as President Obama has so eloquently stated in his historic April 2009 Prague speech, the “security of a nuclear weapons-free world.”

4. The steps to get there should diminish the security of no nation, enhance the rule of law, advance cooperative security, reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security policies, strengthen the bar against use, and diminish threats. Each step, in itself, must reinforce the goal of elimination and simultaneously make us safer.

5. Thus, the steps such as bringing the test ban into force, negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty, enhancing IAEA safeguards with additional protocols, and making cuts under the START process irreversible, deeper, and confidently verified, are to be pursued with vigor. But, these important efforts, all consistent with the Resolution 1887 of September 24, 2009 of the Security Council and duties under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), are only a portion of the architecture of a nuclear weapons-free world. The most important pillar in this infrastructure is the clarity and cohesion of our collective political will to end using nuclear weapons as a currency of power and begin understanding them for what they really are -- extremely dangerous devices created under exigent circumstances in a long gone historical period that serve no good purpose today. Their elimination, as Secretary-General Ban stated, will be a “public good of the highest order.”

6. The dangers inherent in the actual deployments are not fully appreciated by the public. We live in collective denial of the possibility of computer or human error bringing about the unthinkable. There already have been too many computer errors that nearly led to tragedy; there have even been lost weapons from the inventories of the most organized and responsible nuclear weapons states. It is unrealistic to rely in perpetuity on business as usual to prevent the use of a nuclear weapon by accident or design. Moreover, the ideas and doctrines upon which these expensive deployments depend also serve as impediments to a more secure world.

7. Here are some examples. Extended deterrence increases the likelihood of the use of nuclear weapons, reinforces their perceived value, challenges the disarmament commitments under the NPT, fragments the world into groups in and out of the normative standards of the NPT and the premises of the UN system, requires the capacity to quickly reverse cuts in the arsenals and reinvigorate the institutions that create and produce nuclear weapons, and even, in the instance of Europe, deploy nuclear weapons on the soil of countries which have declared themselves to be nuclear weapons-free. Counterforce requires sufficient numbers of weapons to preclude bringing all nuclear weapons states into substantial disarmament negotiations in the near future. These doctrines were designed to increase stability during the Cold War. The willingness to use nuclear weapons first requires giving them moral legitimacy. These ideas not only make disarmament progress difficult, they also give the veneer of moral propriety to the weapons. Ideas matter, doctrines must change.

8. We have before us several routes:

- One is to continue to extol the abstract virtue of a nuclear weapons-free world and only pursue the incremental arms control steps that have already begun to their completion and then see what's next.

- A better choice would be to promptly make clear that the only value a nuclear weapon has is to prevent it ever being used, that less is better and none is best. This posture of existential deterrence of course can only be an interim step. It must include a no first use pledge embodied in a formal Security Council resolution, but even this is a dangerous doctrine and cannot be a finalized norm. If powerful states still require nuclear weapons to deter their use against them why would a weak state in a dangerous neighborhood not invoke the same rationale to develop the weapon?

- The best route is to embody in law the norm against any use that has prevailed since Nagasaki. That could be done in a convention that renders use unacceptable but carefully builds the confidence in verification, monitoring, dismantlement, and all the other threat-reducing steps, into a cooperative law governed process. Secretary-General Ban put this route as his first principle in his five point agenda and circulated a model treaty to advance this route.

9. The argument against a convention is that it is premature and that the political and security environment is not ripe yet. If so, then we must evaluate policies and doctrines in light of what will make the environment appropriate for a convention, much as we have done with chemical and biological weapons. In fact, even if one only accepts the interim step of minimalizing deterrence as part of the process of zero then we must still have standards and criteria for evaluating policies based on the compass point of elimination.

10. There are several policies which must be formally and promptly rejected. These include the weaponization of space, modernization and expansion of arsenals, doctrines that perpetuate the reliance on nuclear weapons to do more than merely prevent their use, large economic allocations and the capacity to test and improve nuclear weapons at a subcritical level, and their characterization as essential to any country's peace and security. We must all make clear

to the world that nuclear weapons themselves are more of a problem than any they seek to solve. There are several salient policies which would certainly help the process, such as: strengthen the monitoring and verification system of controlling materials; de-alert the arsenals; bring sub-strategic weapons into negotiations; establish a legal prohibition against the weaponization space; adhere to protocols of nuclear weapons-free zone agreements; destroy non-deployed weapons rapidly; addressing regional security challenges with greater levels of cooperation amongst the P5; increase transparency by the nuclear weapons states; come down to very low numbers promptly; safeguard materials recovered from weapons; reduce delivery systems; and solve the fuel cycle challenge in an equitable fashion; and others, to name a few.

11. To take these necessary steps, the contagious pursuit of dominance must be cured by the healthy recognition that we live together in one fragile ecosystem and thus must cooperate. As the benefits of the proper uses of technology, science and social organization spread to every region, the pursuit of dominance, regional overreach and hegemony will give way to the establishment of cooperation, democracy, the rule of law, pursuit of our collective environmental and economic stability and a natural diminution of excessive militarization.

12. Equity brings stability. Inequity brings instability. As the global south comes into its own economically, will those with nuclear weapons, which also have the most power, help establish an equitable security system that seeks to truly protect all, to do so based on the rule of law, and to truly believe in the principles of collective security behind the United Nations system designed to prevent the scourge of war? Its design needs updating for today's world. It must come to reflect the realities of a developing south. Does this mean changes in the Security Council? Of course. We must make sure the UN succeeds; it is an essential institution and we must make every effort possible to support and strengthen it.

13. Even with the strongest of disarmament inclinations, Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev were unable to make the quantity and quality of progress on the elimination of nuclear weapons that they both sincerely wanted because trust in the capacity of a cooperative model, an equitable model, a collective model of security did not then exist. Progress was made no doubt and since then very little in addition has been accomplished. The INF Treaty and the START process are certainly worthy of our respect, but so much was missed. They could not overcome the hurdle of the prospect of the destabilizing factors of the sword and shield of missile defense and the prospect of US unilateral space weaponization. But behind these policy problems was fear that the Cold War could reinvigorate hostilities and mistrust; hedging thus made sense to military planners. Today, behind some military planning is the mistaken belief that a dominance model is still of value. It is not. It is time to address honestly the dangers of over-militarization, its destabilizing effects and the lost opportunity costs. It is wrong to spend over USD\$1.3 trillion a year globally in this pursuit, and it is clearly irrational for the United States to believe that its excessive military expenditures are a reasonable way of pursuing global cooperative and collective security. We can and must do better. The high technology weaponry in huge amounts only stimulates fear and causes others to respond. The world economy has integrated. The climate requires we all work together. Policies that rest on one dominating all are simply no longer reasonable.

14. In a post-Cold War world where we simply must build bridges of cooperation to protect the oceans, the climate and the economy, what place does the wall of nuclear weapons have? What place does the pursuit of dominance have? We are living in one room whether we like it or not. There is no choice but to come together in new ways. Nuclear weapons do not only divide us now but they actually pose a wall to a sustainable future. It is time to tear it down.

The Global Security Institute (GSI) works by coordinating strategic programs: the Middle Powers Initiative (MPI), the Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), the Bipartisan Security Group (BSG) and Disarmament and Peace Education (DPE). Through MPI, seven international non-governmental organizations are able to work primarily with “middle power” governments to encourage and educate the nuclear weapons states to take immediate practical steps that reduce nuclear dangers, and commence negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons. PNND is a global network of over 700 parliamentarians from more than 75 countries working to prevent nuclear proliferation and achieve nuclear disarmament. BSG consists of Republican and Democratic experts with experience in diplomacy, law, intelligence and military affairs. BSG is directed and chaired on Capitol Hill by veteran diplomats Ambassador Robert T. Grey, Jr. and Ambassador Thomas Graham, Jr. Through the DPE program, we encourage new leadership and promote new thinking on nuclear weapons elimination with prominent leaders in other fields, including Nobel Peace Laureates, religious leaders, military experts, students, scientists and environmentalists.

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**TEAR DOWN
THIS WALL**

