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**Nuclear Weapons Free Zones:
The Power of Success to Be Ignored No Longer**

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**Presented at
Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties
that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia
(CNFWZIII)
United Nations Headquarters, New York, April 24, 2015**

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New York City

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Friends:

It is an honor to address this body which represents the majority of the world's nations. By becoming members of nuclear weapons free zones you have brought into action a truth which must become universally recognized soon: **Nuclear weapons themselves are more of a problem than any problem they seek to address.**

There is presently no other political body on earth with as much legitimacy in advancing a nuclear weapons free world as the 115 nations in nuclear weapons free zones. The world needs you to leverage and coordinate your capacities. You represent reasoned self-interest in action and a power of success to be ignored no longer.

Imagine the impact if every Head of State and Government represented here used their moral legitimacy to change history.

This could start by stating emphatically at the General Debates of the United Nations: **“We benefit from being one of 115 nations in nuclear weapons free zones and we are proud of it. It is time the entire world became a nuclear weapons free zone. It is time to commence negotiations to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons.”**

The world should recognize the leadership of the Heads of State and Government of the parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco who have declared their region a “Zone of Peace.” At the Third Summit in Costa Rica in January of 2015 the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) these leaders reaffirmed their commitment “to advance towards negotiations of a universal legally binding instrument prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.”

They further stressed “that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, a crime against humanity, and at the same time a violation of International Law, including International

Humanitarian Law.” Crimes against humanity confer universal jurisdiction for purposes of prosecution and that is appropriate in addressing nuclear weapons, for no other human invention can inflict such broad and horrible global destruction.

The recent conferences on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons in Norway, Mexico, and Austria have made clear the morally unacceptable suffering that nuclear weapons inflict. It is commendable that the world’s religious leaders are responding, for the global law needed to reign in this technology of destruction must have a firm moral foundation. Moreover a strong moral force is needed to overcome the inertia of the institutions that do not want to give up the perceived power the weapons confer, no matter how irrational, illegal or immoral the weapons are.

We should not ignore the importance of calls for abolition from distinguished organizations such as the Nobel Peace Laureate Summits, the World Council of Churches, the World Evangelical Alliance, the World Academy of Art and Science, and many others as well as the most significant interfaith organizations such as the United Religions Initiative, Religions for Peace, and the Parliament of the World’s Religions, nor leaders such as the Dalai Lama, and most recently Pope Francis whose insights are expressed in the Holy See’s *Nuclear Weapons: Time for Abolition*. Let me quote from this powerful statement: **“Now is the time to affirm not only the immorality of the use of nuclear weapons, but the immorality of their possession, thereby clearing the road to nuclear abolition.”**

Nations always invoke moral propriety when they prosecute wars. Yet, when we work to build the quiet edifices of peace built with tools such as compromise, diplomacy, law, shared goals and identified interests, our common humanity, values, and cooperation, we are accused of being idealists, a way of saying “unrealistic.”

Spare us the realism that extols the virtue of relying on the threat to use nuclear weapons as a sustainable course to pursue international peace and security believing that the weapons will never be used by mistake, miscalculation, madness, or design. Spare us the realism that rests humanity’s future on the illusion of human and mechanical infallibility.

Let us vigorously heed CELAC’s insight: **“(t)he only effective guarantee against the use or the threat to use nuclear weapons is their complete elimination and prohibition.”**

By every avenue available, whether through diplomacy, moral or legal advocacy, awakening public opinion, the power of parliaments, religious institutions, or civil society, we must all make the currency of disarmament more valuable than the political currency of nuclear weapons brandishing.

Upgrading advocacy to the highest levels of state has now become a necessity. Powerful interventions are now imperative. By any rational analysis the nuclear nonproliferation disarmament regime is presently in a logjam and a crisis of insufficient disarmament productivity. One could even make the argument that the most basic foundation of legal civilized order, the keeping of promises, *pacta sunt servanda*, is at risk.

When the Cold War was in crisis, in the 1980's, the Six Nation Initiative helped break a deadly spiral driven by the Soviet Union and the United States. Heads of State of Greece, India, Sweden, Tanzania, Mexico, and Argentina made quiet diplomatic interventions to Moscow and Washington, at the highest levels, to good effect. Beginning in 1984, they persisted until 1989. Practical suggestions helped move the then two superpowers toward clear progress.

The need for similar effort today is clear. The issue of eliminating nuclear weapons must be addressed at the highest political level. The message has already been crafted with clarity and eloquence. This opportunity must be seized.

I have every confidence that amongst us here today are those who appreciate the gravity of the moment and have the passion and capacity to raise advocacy up the political ladder. I have confidence that you will because the need is clear and compelling.

Let us join together now and waive good-bye to nuclear weapons. Thank you.

**Appendix to Nuclear Weapons Free Zones:
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**THE SIX-NATION INITIATIVE (SNI) 1984-1989
Mission and Focus**

Monitored the arms control negotiations of the two superpowers – the USA and the USSR – with a focus on advocating steps toward nuclear disarmament (especially the banning of nuclear tests).¹

Key Players

* Formed by the NGO Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA). Originally called Parliamentarians for World Order, PGA is “a worldwide network of parliamentarians dedicated to advancing disarmament and development issues.”²

*Some leaders were chosen because, although being aligned with either the Soviet Union or the United States, they had demonstrated an ability to pursue initiatives and action independent of the superpowers.³ To maintain a sense of international legitimacy, other leaders were chosen for their affiliation with the non-aligned movement (NAM).⁴ The SNI was ultimately comprised of the Heads of State and Government of:

- *Argentina*: President Raul Alfonsin
- *Greece*: Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou
- *India*: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (1917-1984); *succeeded*
by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi
- *Mexico*: President Miguel de la Madrid
- *Sweden*: Prime Minister Olaf Palme
- *Tanzania*: President Julius Nyerere

Strategy, Highlights and Achievements

* Following the breakdown of US-USSR disarmament negotiations, “all six leaders of the SNI signed a Call for Action and met together in New Delhi in 1984 to press the two superpowers to stop nuclear testing and get on with [disarmament] negotiations. The SNI became...an effective channel for the views of many governments, parliaments, and citizens

¹ Vajpayee, Shri Atal Bihari. *Address by the Prime Minister of India at the XII Non-Aligned Movement Summit*. Durban, South Africa. September 1998. [Available courtesy Federation of American Scientists, <http://www.fas.org/news/india/1998/09/980903-pmdurban.htm>]

² Roche, Douglas. *Scrapping the Bomb: The Role of Middle Power Countries*. The Ploughshares Monitor. Vol. 18, No. 3. September 1997.

³ Frangonikolopoulos, Christos. *Six Nation Initiative for Disarmament: A Third Party in the Arms Control Process*. The Kent Papers in Politics and International Relations. The University of Kent. 1992. [Available at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/politics/research/kentpapers/Frangonikolopoulos.html>]

⁴ Ibid.

working for common security. The Initiative could not, of course, take sole credit for the resumption of Soviet-American negotiations...but it was an important element in demonstrating world support for nuclear disarmament to the two superpowers.”⁵

*Provided a focal point for NGO communities working on nuclear disarmament by serving as “a vocal, persistent and authentic voice for nuclear disarmament.”⁶

*Proposed in 1988 that the UN General Assembly commission a report outlining a UN verification system. This proposal was merged with another resolution drafted by Canada, France, and the Netherlands. The result was a final resolution asking the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive report on the role of the United Nations in verification.⁷

*October 25 1988, delegates “presented a concrete proposal...[for] the endorsement, in principle, of [a multilateral] international verification agency within the United Nations.” The draft resolution was entitled "Verification within the United Nations."⁸

* Through its work as a third party arbiter, the SNI helped to revive dialogue on disarmament between the USA and USSR. One example of such work was the SNI's support of and help with facilitating negotiations on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which eliminated all nuclear-armed ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers and their infrastructure - the first nuclear arms control agreement to actually reduce nuclear arms, rather than establish ceilings that could not be exceeded.⁹

⁵ Roche, *Scrapping the Bomb*.

⁶ Dubey, *Muchkund. For Nuclear Disarmament*. The Hindu. March 6, 2004. [Available at http://www.southasianmedia.net/index_opinion4.cfm?id=23556]

⁷ Dorn, A. Walter. *U.N. Should Verify Treaties*. Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Vol. 46, No. 6. July/August 1990. page 13.

⁸ Rao, Mr. P. V. Narasimha. United Nations 17th Plenary Meeting, 43th Session. October 4, 1988. Available at [<http://www.un.int/india/ind191.htm>]

⁹ Frangonikolopoulos. *Six Nation Initiative for Disarmament*, and Anonymous. Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces [INF]. Federation of American Scientists website. <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/inf/>