

Remarks By President Jimmy Carter

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First, I would like to express my personal gratitude for this Middle Powers Initiative to protect, or revive, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is deeply wounded and whose very life is threatened.

Five years ago I made a similar speech at a similar meeting in this same place, in advance of the 2000 round of Non-Proliferation Treaty discussions at the United Nations. Later, with your help, I prepared an editorial in the Washington Post outlining the problems relating to implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

I read them both last night, and it is disturbingly obvious that there has been no improvement over the situation as it was described in our previous meeting. In fact, proliferation and the behavior of the nuclear weapon states with regard to disarmament have worsened over the past five years.

I am willing to prepare another editorial if you think it helpful, and will save my notes for possible repetition in 2010. Hopefully, there won't be a global catastrophe before then.

A recent United Nations report starkly warned: "we are approaching a point at which the erosion of the non-proliferation regime could become irreversible and result in a cascade of proliferation."

Prospects for this year's discussions are not encouraging. I have heard that the prepcomm for the forthcoming Non-Proliferation Treaty talks have so far failed even to achieve an agenda because of the deep divisions between the nuclear powers who seek to stop proliferation without meeting their own disarmament

commitments, and the non-aligned movement, whose demands include firm disarmament commitments and consideration of the Israeli arsenal.

The Middle Powers Initiative approach remains an effort to build a bridge between the new agenda coalition countries (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden) and the eight NATO states that voted last year for a new agenda resolution calling for implementing commitments already made to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Tragically, Britain, France and the United States all voted against this resolution.

Our common goal is simply stated: "to exert leverage on the nuclear powers to take minimum steps to save the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2005." Prospects for success are not good, because of the dire state of long-standing tediously negotiated international arms control agreements and the present indifference among nuclear weapons states to their decline or demise.

All of us American Presidents, from Eisenhower to George Bush, Sr., were avidly seeking to restrict and reduce nuclear arsenals – some more than others. This was one of my highest priorities. So far as I know, there are no sincere efforts underway by any of the nuclear powers to accomplish these crucial goals.

The Moscow Treaty worked out between the U.S. and Russia in 2002 did not mandate any means of verification, and "arms cuts" no longer represent confirmed dismantlement and disposal but simple storage, with rapid redeployment understood to be permitted.

The United States claims to be upholding Article VI, but yet asserts a security strategy of testing and developing new weapons re: Star Wars and the earth penetrating "bunker buster," and has threatened first use, even against non-nuclear states, in case of "surprising military developments" and "unexpected contingencies."

Some corrective actions are obvious:

- The United States needs to address the issues left unresolved from the Treaty of Moscow. It should demand the same standards of transparency, verification and irreversibility of past arms control agreements and pledge to dismantle and dispose of any decommissioned weapons.
- "No first use" has now slipped off the agenda for all of the nuclear weapons states. Russia renounced this policy in 1993 and NATO continues to reserve the right to deploy nuclear weapons as a cornerstone of its policy. The commitments against first use need to be re-addressed and hopefully rewritten as both India and Pakistan have followed the older nuclear powers and reserved the right to strike first for themselves. While all nuclear weapons states should agree to non-first use, as the sole superpower the United States should take the lead on such issues.
- The United States needs to de-emphasize the role of its nuclear weapons in NATO and possibly consider an end to their deployment in Western Europe. Despite the eastward expansion of the organization, NATO is keeping the same stockpiles and policies as it did when the iron curtain divided the continent, an odd standard for the West's nuclear weapons states to be setting.
- Both America and Russia remain on hair trigger alert status. This is a serious threat to global security and drastically increases the chances of an accidental or unprovoked launch. We must remember that a global holocaust is just as possible now, through mistakes or misjudgments, as it was during the depths of the Cold War.
- The United States needs to return to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, but is unfortunately moving in the opposite direction. The Administration's 2005 budget refers, for the first time, to a list of test scenarios. This is a dangerous precedent to set; China is holding off on its decision regarding nuclear testing

following the U.S. Senate's failure to ratify, and India and Pakistan are also watching and waiting.

- The issue of a Fissile Materials Treaty to prevent the creation and transport of highly enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium has become increasingly important. The United States should also lead in the creation of such a treaty with full verification measures.
- The development of the infeasible missile defense shield (Star Wars) has already wasted a huge amount of American taxpayers' money, in addition to the \$40 billion spent annually on the general development and design of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. This failed experiment has broken its commitment to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty without replacing it with a working substitute.
- At a much lower cost, we could address perhaps the world's greatest proliferation threat by fully securing Russia's stockpiles.

Nuclear proliferation is an increasing source for instability in the Middle East. Iran has repeatedly hidden its intentions to enrich uranium while claiming that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only. This explanation has been given before, by India, Pakistan, and North Korea, and has led to weapons programs in all three states. Iran needs to be called to account and held to its promises under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

- The Iranian case also remains a primary example of the need to ban highly enriched uranium for any purpose. Meanwhile, Israel's nuclear weapons stockpile continues to exist unaccounted for and its reactor at Dimona is not subject to inspection by the IAEA because Israel has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

While the international community is justified in exerting strong pressure on Iran to comply with the non-proliferation treaty, there is no public effort or comment in the United States or Europe calling for Israel to comply with the Non-Proliferation Treaty or submit to any other restraints. At the same time, we fail to acknowledge what a powerful incentive this is to Iran, Syria, Egypt, and other states to join the nuclear community.

There is no more important subject than the one you are addressing, and illogical approaches to resolving the problem threaten world peace. The tragic and unnecessary Iraqi invasion was based on false allegations of Saddam Hussein having a nuclear weapons program, and the threat of war in Korea in 1994 was narrowly averted after Kim Il Sung announced the expulsion of international inspectors with the prospect of reprocessing nuclear fuel. Since then, the Korean situation has deteriorated badly. More recently, high officials have made public insinuations of American or Israeli military interventions in Iran.

I used the words "illogical approaches" because the launching or threat of military invasions becomes necessary only because the five historic nuclear powers, Pakistan, India, and Israel refuse to initiate or respect restraints on themselves while, as Brazil has described it, "raising heresy charges against those who want to join the sect." This is, indeed, an irrational approach.

In closing, let me say that your sustained, courageous, and sometimes frustrating efforts are of vital importance. We at the Carter Center are eager to help with your worthy cause.