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58th Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs
Justice, Peace and Nuclear Disarmament

Conference Statement of the Pugwash Council
22 April 2009, The Hague, Netherlands

The Council of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, recipient of the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize, welcomes the new international climate that is being generated which makes it possible for multilateral cooperative solutions to be negotiated for the critical issues affecting the global community. On nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, weapons of mass destruction terrorism, the international economic crisis, the urgent problem of climate change, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the strengthening of the rule of law, human rights, and other issues, the moment has arrived and we must seize the opportunity. As always, Pugwash stands ready to play its part.

Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

From its inception in 1957 the Pugwash Conferences has focused on the threat posed by nuclear weapons to humanity. Nuclear weapons are the ultimate indiscriminate genocidal weapon of warfare, and as such must be eliminated and declared illegal and immoral. Recent statements by many senior political leaders and others around the world calling for a nuclear weapon-free world are surely welcomed, and give credence to a goal that Pugwash has espoused for more than 50 years.

The Pugwash Council applauds the April 1 joint statement of President Obama of the US and President Medvedev of Russia, where the two leaders pledged to work for the goal of a nuclear weapon-free world. The two Presidents enumerated a wide range of steps that would facilitate the elimination of nuclear weapons. These include US-Russian negotiation of a new verifiable strategic arms treaty, support for efforts to conclude a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty, US ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), consultation and possible cooperation on missile defense, and many others. In doing so, Russia and the United States appeared poised to put behind them several years of deteriorating relations over NATO expansion, the Russia-Georgia conflict, missile defense, the suspension of the CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) Treaty, and other divisive issues.

Several days later, on April 5 in Prague, President Obama delivered an historic speech that firmly committed his administration to fulfilling its obligations under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to reduce nuclear stockpiles through significant progress in reducing nuclear weapons toward the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. If followed up by concrete action, this renewed US commitment will set a positive example for the other original nuclear weapons states, as well as those countries with nuclear weapons that remain outside the NPT Treaty, to take seriously the prospect of joining the nuclear disarmament process leading to zero.

Prospects for a successful NPT Review Conference in 2010 will be dim, however, if the nuclear weapons states have not made significant early progress in reducing their nuclear arsenals. Over the near term, the Council urges all necessary steps be taken to devalue the importance of nuclear weapons and concepts of nuclear deterrence, including:

- All nuclear weapons states should move immediately to remove their nuclear weapons from quick reaction alert status;
- All nuclear weapons states should adopt no-first-use policies and unqualified non-use policies against non-nuclear weapons states;
- The US and Russia should conclude a new START that goes even further in reducing their numbers of nuclear weapons;
- The UK should help lead the way towards the total abolition of nuclear weapons by deciding not to renew, renovate or replace its Trident nuclear weapons;
- The US and NATO should complete the withdrawal of all US tactical nuclear weapons based in Europe;
- Russia should include all its tactical nuclear weapons in negotiations with the US on deep cuts;
- NATO should ratify the adapted Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty;
- The international community must give high priority to preserving space as a weapons-free sanctuary;
- And most urgently, there remains the need for rapid action to control and/or eliminate the still substantial stockpiles and sources of highly enriched uranium (HEU) around the world that could provide the means for a catastrophic terrorist nuclear attack.

Prospects for a “nuclear power renaissance” are driven by concerns over global climate change and the need for low-carbon diversified energy sources. There are serious obstacles facing any such increase in the building of civilian nuclear power plants, including environmental concerns, cost, lead times, plant safety and security, and waste disposal issues. There are also serious concerns over the proliferation ramifications of an expansion of enrichment and reprocessing capabilities and facilities. Options for the multilateral control of nuclear fuel cycles could also help strengthen the barrier between civil and military nuclear programs.

Regional Conflicts and Nuclear Weapons

On-going and escalating regional tensions and conflicts, especially those in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, South Asia, and the Korean peninsula, pose a very real danger that the outbreak of armed conflict in any of these areas could escalate to both major conventional war and the possible catastrophic use of nuclear weapons. When combined with possible acquisition of nuclear materials and expertise for terrorist purposes, there is the real possibility that an attack with a nuclear device or weapon could occur for the first time since 1945, with horrific consequences.

Given that a possible use of nuclear weapons could come from regional conflicts around the world where nuclear weapons are present, the Pugwash Conferences focuses its efforts on working to resolve such conflicts and calling for a global elimination of such weapons.

The Middle East

In the Middle East, the recent armed conflict in Gaza has created an unprecedented crisis. The excessive use of Israeli military force against densely populated civilian areas and the current living conditions of the survivors are unacceptable. Rocket attacks on Israel must stop and a comprehensive ceasefire implemented. Access of goods and persons to and from Gaza should be restored and assured. The goal of an end to the occupation and a peace agreement should be pursued through an inclusive process, perhaps following the framework of the Arab peace initiative, that involves all representatives chosen by Palestinians and Israelis.

Pugwash has been especially active in promoting international dialogue on Iran. The Council welcomes the US invitation for talks with Iran without conditions and we look forward to positive results leading to a comprehensive dialogue. Constructive developments could help with a broad range of regional issues, from Iraq and Afghanistan to Syria and Lebanon. Most especially, the Council urges the cooperation of the entire international community, including Iran, to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In Iraq, progress in dampening sectarian violence offers hope for the future. But efforts will be needed to ensure that all parties in Iraq are adequately represented in the political and economic reconstruction of the country.

Finally, in parallel with regional conflict resolution efforts, the Pugwash Council reiterates its support for efforts to delineate the steps needed to implement a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

South Asia

The deteriorating situation in Afghanistan has made it clear that it is time that all stakeholders take steps to make the process of governance and dialogue more inclusive. Regional efforts to stabilize must include positive cooperation with Iran, Pakistan, India and Central Asian countries, as well as the broader international community.

The internal situation in Pakistan, including the recent developments in Swat, are a cause of serious concern. Terrorist acts have destabilized the region and dealt a serious blow to the dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad. Progress on issues including Kashmir and the overall security situation between the two nuclear-armed countries has been put in jeopardy, and the Council urges both Pakistan and India to resume their comprehensive dialogue in all good faith.

Northeast Asia

North Korea's launch of a multi-staged rocket on April 5, 2009, purportedly to put a satellite into space, was condemned by the UN Security Council presidential statement. In response, North Korea decided to halt the process of disabling its nuclear facilities and to stop participating in the Six-Party Talks. It is regrettable that North Korea has expelled the IAEA inspectors and decided to reactivate the reactors as well as its reprocessing plant. These are serious setbacks to ongoing efforts in achieving a denuclearized Korean peninsula.

It is urgent and necessary to refrain from further escalation of tensions; what is needed instead is to re-establish confidence among all the countries concerned. To this end, it is vital to start the US-North Korean dialogue first and then resume the Six-Party Talks in order to implement already reached agreements by providing security assurances, normalization of relations, and by creating a peace mechanism that would replace the current truce regime. This would pave the way for the DPRK to return to the NPT before the 2010 NPT Review Conference. A nuclear weapon-free Korean peninsula will help to sustain peace and stability in the region as well as strengthen the NPT regime. More broadly, efforts are needed to prevent arms competition, whether conventional or nuclear, throughout the region.

Global Climate Change

We recognize that the climate change is an urgent global security threat and urge leaders of both developed and developing countries to work together to meet these challenges and at the same time meet special needs of developing countries. We welcome the positive attitude of the new US administration that indicates it understands the urgency to act immediately on this threat. The upcoming Conference of the Parties (COP) meeting at Copenhagen must secure the commitment of all nations to undertake major changes that will result in a global society that satisfies its energy needs from low-carbon sources. We must undertake large scale effective technology transfer and diffusion of

“low-carbon technologies.” This will require measures such as increased funding, better financing, management of intellectual properties, and trust building that satisfy needs of both developing and developed countries..

Conflict Resolution, Justice and Human Rights

Meeting in The Hague, with its centuries-old reputation for concepts and practices of international law and justice, the Pugwash Council is acutely aware of the importance of fairness and equity in laying a lasting foundation for peace. From Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) and the birth of international law to the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions to the modern International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, The Hague represents for many of the world’s war-torn societies and dispossessed peoples a beacon of hope that the rule of law will prevail over the use of military force and violations of fundamental human rights.

In carrying out its work, Pugwash recognizes that conflict resolution requires a great deal of compromise in talks and negotiations between opposing parties to a conflict. This applies to conflicts between states and those between states and non-state groups. Pugwash believes firmly that dialogue and communication, and the movement of people involved in such dialogue, should be allowed to the maximum extent possible. Restrictions by states on dialogue and the movement of people, and the injunction of “not talking with terrorists,” ultimately is self-defeating in seeking the resolution of enduring conflicts.

Genuine human security is achieved not just through the absence of conflict, but through equitable access to natural resources such as food, water, healthcare, education, and economic opportunity. For too many of the world’s peoples, these basic necessities have been sorely lacking for far too long. An active role for civil society and the rule of law are essential to the promotion of human dignity and the expansion of fundamental civil and human rights.

As discussed at the 58th *Pugwash Conference*, the application of new technologies for human welfare, the sustainable use of resources, and greater scientific and international cooperation do offer hope for a more just and equitable world.

The Pugwash Council reaffirms its commitment to a nuclear weapon-free world and particularly recognizes the importance of engaging the younger generations on these issues. Such weapons have no role in a just and humane world and Pugwash calls for their total elimination.

*The 58th Pugwash Conference, **Justice, Peace and Nuclear Disarmament**, was attended by more than 180 participants from 30 countries, including 31 International Student/Young Pugwash participants, and was held at the Golden Tulip Bel Air Hotel in The Hague, The Netherlands. As is now the custom, an International Student/Young Pugwash Conference*

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