



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA SECONDA SESSIONE DEL COMITATO PREPARATORIO DELLA VII CONFERENZA DI ESAME DEL TRATTATO DI NON-PROLIFERAZIONE DELLE ARMI NUCLEARI (NPT)

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Riportiamo di seguito l'intervento pronunciato lo scorso martedì 29 aprile dal Capo della Delegazione della Santa Sede, l'Osservatore Permanente presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite a Ginevra, S.E. Mons. Dermuid Martin, davanti alla seconda sessione del Comitato Preparatorio della VII Conferenza di esame del Trattato di Non-Proliferazione delle Armi Nucleari, in corso a Ginevra dal 28 aprile al 9 maggio:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. DIARMUID MARTIN

Mr Chairman,

Global security will only be guaranteed through global cooperation, within the framework of an authentically multilateral system. Multilateralism is not, however, a magic formula. For multilateralism to work, it requires the responsible, honest and coherent cooperation of all.

It is thus disconcerting to note, as we look back to the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, that so many of the pledges made then have not been fulfilled. Proliferation is occurring among states outside the NPT and challenges to the integrity of the Treaty occur from within. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty has yet to enter into force. Negotiations for a ban on the production of fissile material have not even started. While reductions of deployed strategic weapons have started, these reductions are neither verifiable nor irreversible. There are thousands of nuclear weapons still not included in any regime of nuclear disarmament. What then is to be said of the "unequivocal undertaking" to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons?

Today, an uncertainty is emerging about the commitment to many of the international instruments which for years were considered the pillars of the global arms control and reduction regime. Yet, peace is just as fragile in this twenty-first century as it was in any century of the past. Grave tensions exist between nations in different parts of the world. The tensions in a number of key regions are such that they constitute a challenge to the security of the entire world. Terrorism, on its part, presents new, hitherto unthought-of scenarios.

The geo-political situation has changed and certain dimensions of the disarmament scenario may require updating. But it would be a serious mistake to begin to take the current system apart or to allow it to disintegrate, without having a clear commonly-agreed road map of a future security system, which respects the legitimate rights and interests of all.

This current situation of fragility thus requires all of us to take a hard look at our responsibilities concerning nuclear non-proliferation. We must address seriously the diverse challenges that are on the international non-proliferation agenda, some unresolved for years, others more recent in origin, still others emerging as we speak. It would be foolish to think that we can put any of these realities to one side, if we wish together to advance international security. The architecture of the NPT must be reinforced to enhance international security. This architecture must include effective reporting, verification procedures, mechanisms to combat cheating, and an enforceable rule of law. The valuable work of the International Atomic Energy Agency should be sustained and should meet with the complete cooperation of all nations. It is true that the construction of such an architecture requires time and a favourable environment for it to take root. In some cases, it would appear, that rather than just taking time, steps are being taken which move in the opposite direction. This would be quite unacceptable.

The end of the Cold War should never permit us to overlook the calamitous damage which the use of nuclear weapons would cause. A so-called "peace" based on nuclear weapons cannot be the type of peace that we seek for the 21st century. The proliferation of nuclear weapons can only make the possibility of their use ever more real. No State – big or small - can morally justify escalating such a risk.

The Delegation of the Holy See would like to stress three points in particular:

1. In the Final Document of the NPT 2000 Review, all parties recognised that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Many delegations at the first session of this Preparatory Committee stressed further that without progress towards the fulfilment of Article VI of the Treaty there is a real danger that the NPT will lose its true value. It is in article VI, in fact, that non-proliferation and disarmament are seen as mutually interdependent and reinforcing. The preservation of the non-proliferation dimensions of the Treaty demands unequivocal action towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

2. The fight against terrorism also requires enhancing our commitment to an integrated programme of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The threat of terrorist attacks using nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction ought to galvanise the community of nations to ensure that the NPT, the cornerstone of the non proliferation regime, is strengthened.

3. Neither must we lose sight of the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty. The presence of weapons of mass destruction in any region of the world represents, in fact, a threat to long term regional and global security. The peace process in the Middle East should thus aim at rapidly consolidating the necessary security presuppositions which will permit the establishment there of a zone verifiably free of all weapons of mass destruction.

Mr Chairman, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has over the years helped limit proliferation and create a spirit of cooperation in the common aspiration to avoid a catastrophic nuclear conflagration. The fragility of world security today requires that adherence to this instrument, in both its non-proliferation and disarmament goals, be strengthened and that it be coherently enforced by all. We cannot let any opportunity go by to work to sustain honestly together the integral application of the NPT, for the good of this and of future generations.