

## “Progressive Initiatives”

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Remarks by Ambassador Henrik Salander, MPI Chairman

*(check against delivery)*

Dear participants, ladies and gentlemen,

There are a lot of progressive initiatives out there these days. In addition to Gareth's commission in cooperation with Japan, we have had in the last two or three years the Blix Commission, the Nuclear Threat Initiative and the Wall Street Journal articles, the Global Zero project, the bold initiative of the UN Secretary-General of 24 October last year with his five-point program, UK's "Lifting the Nuclear Shadow" document, and several others – and, in its own way, President Obama's Prague speech one month ago, a fantastic event, which is shaping our personal and professional future at this very moment.

These initiatives and others reinforce one another, and sooner or later – and quite often suddenly! – one or two or more of them will bear fruit.

I will do four things in my limited time today. First, a quick look at where we are today after an unfortunate ten, eleven years. Second, briefly see what's needed now and where the consensus lies today. Third, I will look at where we need to go and where there is no consensus yet. And finally, fourth, I will bring up two often forgotten issues, one near-term and one longer, which need to be solved before the world can go to zero nuclear weapons.

Eleven years ago there were some bright signs: the NPT seemed to hold up reasonably well, no nuclear tests had taken place for a while, an entry-into-force of the CTBT seemed possible, and FMCT negotiations were almost starting. But soon Indian and Pakistani tests overturned this, the CTBT was defeated in the US senate, and the FMCT drowned in the work program quagmire in the CD in Geneva.

Progressive initiatives were badly needed. At this crucial time, my predecessor Senator Douglas Roche created one such initiative, the Middle Powers Initiative, sponsored by eight NGOs active in nuclear disarmament. The original plan was to encourage and help develop a coalition of non-nuclear-weapon state governments which could articulate those countries' demands and pressure the nuclear weapon-states. Suddenly, independently of the Middle Powers Initiative, that happened: the New Agenda coalition

took the floor, and later came to be, in the NPT Review Conference in 2000, the negotiating counterpart to the five nuclear weapon-states. It resulted in a success for the NPT and for the NAC, in that the NAC position paper came out, at the end of the conference, in a pared-down shape, as the “thirteen steps”, which were adopted by consensus.

The second phase of MPI life began half a year later with the election victory of George Bush and the subsequent gradual US and French retreat from the 2000 agreements. Later, in the 2005 NPT review, frustrations had built up, non-NWS did not have a coordinated position, and the conference broke down. Which led the MPI to some soul-searching and to the creation of the Article VI Forums, six of which have been held to date, with the latest one in Berlin in January this year – which serve as off-the-record policy debates between non-NWS wanting to change the status quo and renew the NPT bargain. This phase lasted for close to four years – and the third one has just begun with President Obama’s Prague speech.

[Even though the MPI is more of a process and a vehicle than a fixed program, or a number of precise demands, I will soon get to what the MPI, in spite of this, proposes at this point.]

The difference now, after the Wall Street Journal articles and the Prague speech, is that there is a much broader understanding that nuclear weapons don’t create security, but rather insecurity, and that therefore reliance on them must diminish, so that, as soon as this is politically possible, there is no reliance on them. During this process there are several building blocks which are necessary but not sufficient, and around which there is almost full consensus. These are, as you know, to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off; to get the CTBT into force; and that the two largest nuclear weapon possessors agree upon deeper reductions of their weapons numbers, including also stored weapons, with legally binding instruments, and looking ahead to further cuts.

So far, so good. These measures have been proposed by virtually every package proposal, every commission, every observer and analyst for many years now, and have been agreed but not realised by NPT parties for fourteen years.

In addition to this, there are a number of other measures included in most packages and proposals which have not yet met with consensus; including some identified two years ago by the Middle Powers Initiative’s Article VI Forums – these were negative security assurances; some kind of multilateral regulation of the nuclear fuel cycle; de-alerting of launch-ready weapons; and improved governance of the NPT itself. There are several similar ones –

you recognize all these since one or two decades back. They are a variation of what has been proposed in the thirteen steps, in UN resolutions by the NAC, Japan and the NAM, by the Blix Commission, in the Wall Street Journal articles and by the UN Secretary-General. Why are these packages so similar? Well, probably because these measures are the logical building blocks for securing confidence and restoring the bargain once made between possessors and non-possessors of nuclear weapons.

But – and this is important – the package outlined by the Secretary-General differs somewhat from the others. He holds up the possibility of a nuclear weapons convention – either that, or a framework of instruments, in order to secure that the NPT is upheld and Article VI fulfilled. This is a remarkable arrival; the nuclear weapons convention has stepped forward, from a slightly utopian conversation piece, to a fully pragmatic and even logical instrument for strengthening the security of nations.

Three of the MPI's sponsoring organisations have collaborated on the most detailed investigation so far into what's required by a nuclear weapons convention and what it may look like, in "Securing Our Survival", which has recently been updated. All the crucial problems are tackled there: enforcement – the international security system – the problem of breakouts – deterrence – verification – knowledge and reversibility – and economic aspects.

As a former governmental negotiator myself, I know that the tendency is strong to think of a convention as something which takes away focus from more immediate partial measures, which either are not in place yet, or not even started: the CTBT, the FMCT, and so on. To some extent, this tendency is still understandable. Even President Obama's "to do-list" will require many years of difficult negotiations. But what is new now is the growing understanding that all these packages do not cover everything that's needed – that even far fewer nuclear weapons are too many – and that some way of outlawing them is what's needed, even if it takes one or more lifetimes.

The draft convention has a practical role already today. This is because it jumpstarts analysis, leads directly to the central issues, and helps to focus our thinking about the next steps after the packages that the great majority of governments agree upon. I am grateful to the three MPI partners, the International Physicians, the Association of Lawyers, and the Network of Engineers and Scientists, for their enormous work, which will be of permanent value.

Finally now, I will bring up two sometimes neglected issues which have been parts of many initiatives; also outside the nuclear weapons debate. Both have been discussed a lot, but to no avail. The first one concerns NPT governance, how the treaty is treated in practical terms. The Forums of the MPI did identify this as a permanent weak point of the NPT – the lack of a secretariat; the lack of intermediate meeting possibilities, where urgent matters, like for example threats of withdrawal, can be addressed quickly; and the lack of a standing bureau for continuity. These things may seem trivial, compared to the dangers of nuclear weapons. But the fact of the matter is that states parties treat their treaty as if it doesn't matter very much and doesn't need good governance, which I believe is a grave mistake.

An even more important issue, but most probably more long-term as regards the search of its solution – and one that I personally think is indispensable on the road to zero nuclear weapons – is reform of the UN Security Council. In a world with very few nuclear weapons, or none at all, it will not be tenable over time that the five ultimate guardians of compliance with a future convention, or with an overlapping jigsaw puzzle of treaties, or whichever other way we will design to achieve stable security conditions in a world with no reliance on nuclear weapons – that these guardians would be exactly those five states which have monopolized the possession of these ultra-violent weapons for such a long time, and which have the best knowledge of how to manufacture them and maintain them. Such a state of affairs will probably be unacceptable to many non-nuclear weapon states, and therefore – but not only therefore! – a reform and modernization of the Security Council is necessary.

We've often heard the joke that there is more proliferation of initiatives for nuclear disarmament these days, than of nuclear weapons. Maybe. That's fine with me. We need even more progressive initiatives. For our part, the Middle Powers Initiative will continue to work with influential non-nuclear weapon states to encourage the NWS to reduce nuclear dangers and commence negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons. We will invite governments to new forums during the coming year leading up to the NPT Review Conference, starting exactly a year from now.

Thank you.