



866 United Nations Plaza
Suite 4050
New York, NY 10017
Tel: +1 646 289 5170
Fax: +1 646 289 5171
general@gsinstitute.org
www.gsinstitute.org

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Pushing Forward and Pushing Upward Jonathan Granoff, President Global Security Institute

Framework Forum
Geneva, Switzerland
August 24, 2013

Sponsored by Parliamentarians for Nuclear
Nonproliferation and Disarmament, the Middle Powers
Initiative, and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Your Excellencies, diplomats who like the parliamentarians gathered in Geneva with you today care not only about their own country, but also future generations and the survival of the entire human family, and civil society activists and experts like myself who are informed by a call of conscience and reason, it is an honor to be part of the Framework Forum taking place auspiciously during and in support of the United Nations Open Ended Working Group addressing the necessity of progress on the universal, legal, verifiable and enforceable elimination of nuclear weapons.

I want to particularly thank Alyn Ware for his diligent work to bring this meeting and the Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament into being. I would also like to thank Hon. Uta Zapf for her leadership and the MPI team and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung for making today's gathering a success.

Dealing with the fact today of thousands of devices of destructive capacity that surpass human imagination and present a prospect of horror unmatched in history is not pleasant. It is not popular. Working to eliminate this threat is not glamorous or exciting. It is however

necessary and it is our responsibility to succeed in this endeavor.

There are a number of hurdles we must overcome now and which are in the gift of countries without nuclear weapons.

It is high time the notion that progress on arms control and disarmament will stimulate proliferation be discredited and ended. This argument is advanced in the United States as an excuse to continue the Cold War umbrella and its attendant doctrine of extended deterrence. Is it true? If so then let the leaders of such states state that if progress on NPT disarmament duties are fulfilled they will break out of the NPT. If it is not true, if the Cold War has really ended, then let such leaders speak out and make clear that they demand progress on a nuclear weapons free world.

Much of what happens in the diplomatic exchanges and formal commitments of nations reminds me of Las Vegas – what happens in that venue stays there. Does the general population anywhere know that the nuclear weapons states made an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament pursuant to treaty duties under the NPT in 2000? Do they know this commitment has been reiterated numerous times? Do they know that the meetings taking place in Geneva now are to address fulfilling this commitment?

Because they do not know heads of government must lead and inform them. This will help generate needed global public support. The issue must be raised up the political ladder and be broadcast in a manner commensurate with its importance. At the General Debates in United Nations every leader of a state in the 114 nuclear weapons free zones should share with vigor and clarity: “My country benefits from being in a nuclear weapons free zone and we are committed to achieve a nuclear weapons free world.”

Leader of countries not in such zones similarly must speak out since their populations are down-winders like everyone else. What if a critical number of their leaders spoke openly: “There is no national boundary to the fall out of a nuclear blast. My citizens and all citizens have a right to a nuclear weapons free world.”

It is also important that the first High Level Meeting, scheduled for September 26, 2013 at the United Nations be enlivened by leaders stating there collectively and forcefully what they intend to do to advance nuclear disarmament. If they are serious they will support commencement of substantive disarmament work in numerous venues, not just the Conference on Disarmament burdened by a rule of consensus which is not serving the world well.

Such actions would help answer the real hurdle we face now, a failure of political leadership generating appropriate political will. We must make sure these matters go up the political ladder fast.

There is a healthy and intelligent bio diversity of approaches to progress:

1. Fulfillment of the incremental steps such as deep cuts the arsenals, fissile materials cut off treaty, entry into force of the test ban treaty, stringent controls and protection of existing nuclear material stocks, and strengthening verification and monitoring systems.
2. A nuclear weapons ban.
3. A nuclear weapons elimination framework agreement.
4. A nuclear weapons convention.

All of these approaches have commendable aspects and in fact reinforce one another. None are in opposition. Nothing could so generate support for the important incremental steps as forcefully as commencement of preliminary negotiations on elimination through a framework, ban, or convention with or without the inclusion of nuclear weapons states.

Such a process would demonstrate to the world a new realism rather than the continued proliferation of preconditions to progress on a sustainable future.

Realism requires commitment to address the entire set of existential threats to the survival of civilization such as protecting the climate, the health of the oceans and rainforests as living systems, and a security system that does not generate the uses of science and technology to develop and deploy instruments of indiscriminate

horrific destruction. Such realism means cooperation in achieving public common goods of the highest value, made more difficult to be obtained in a nuclear apartheid world.

The peril of not obtaining all these public common goods should compel a great sense of urgency to our labors and a sense of humility and sobriety regarding our skills. No nation can achieve these goals alone. The truth of our interconnectedness as one human family is highlighted by the threat of our collective annihilation through nuclear holocaust. Our working now together to protect all that is precious is our opportunity to honor the glorious gift of life and creation.

Thank you for allowing me to share these thoughts with you.

Postscript:

The Global Security Institute and PNND will continue to advance the role in parliaments around the world, including in the United States, where PNND Co-President Senator Ed Markey is an effective and committed champion of nuclear disarmament and human security issues. Senator Markey will be hosting a global conference of parliamentarians on nonproliferation and disarmament in 2014. This will build on the success of the PNND Assembly, which took place in Astana, Kazakhstan in 2012.

Further, we are pleased to note the outstanding work of Hon. Uta Zapf recently at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Her leadership helped achieve support from all parliamentary delegations – including those from France, Russia, United Kingdom and USA -- to support the UN Open Ended Working Group and the Inter Parliamentary Union program on parliamentarians helping establish a nuclear weapons free world.

