

# Statement to the 2nd Preparatory Meeting for the 2026 NPT Review Conference

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Delivered by Cesar Jaramillo

Project Ploughshares, Canadian Pugwash group, SEHLAC Network

Chair,

More than five decades after the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty entered into force, the world remains overshadowed by the threat of nuclear weapons. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has laid bare the dark underbelly of nuclear deterrence and the urgent need for an alternative approach to global security.

The conflict has been marked by a persistent narrative on both sides suggesting that a decisive military victory is in the cards. This dangerously underestimates the complex dynamics of nuclear deterrence, feeds unrealistic expectations, prolongs the conflict, and results in countless casualties. Critically, it could create conditions under which nuclear weapons might be used.

The well-documented threats to use nuclear weapons in this conflict are reckless and merit strong condemnation. But let us be clear: the primary risk lies in the very existence of these weapons, which is underpinned by the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, embraced by all nuclear-armed states and their allies, including those now rightfully alarmed at the current risk.

Ukraine presents a grim reminder that nuclear deterrence does not eliminate the risk of nuclear war; it merely cloaks it under the illusion of stability.

Despite the real possibility that nuclear weapons might be used, there is a remarkable lack of political and diplomatic leadership that prioritizes diplomatic approaches over military ones. The fundamental question thus remains: what is a realistic endgame in Ukraine – one that does not heighten the risk that nuclear weapons will be used?

A frontal challenge to nuclear deterrence was issued last year in the final declaration of the Second Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW: "Far from preserving peace and security, nuclear weapons are used as instruments of policy, linked to coercion, intimidation and heightening of tensions."

The alternative, by definition, must be the establishment of common security arrangements that promote adherence to widely accepted norms and ensure a stable and predictable international order. Respect for agreements to control and limit the means of violence, including the abolition of nuclear weapons, will be crucial in this regard.

Regrettably, there is a real risk of drawing all the wrong conclusions from the Ukraine crisis. Instead of learning from the near-catastrophic risks and moving towards disarmament, the international community appears poised to engage in further militarization and nuclear proliferation. Such actions would repeat the mistakes of the past, driving the world deeper into an arms race, escalating tensions, and increasing the likelihood of future conflicts involving nuclear weapons.

Chair,

In addition to the Ukraine crisis, the failure of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10th NPT Review Conferences serves as a stark reminder of the colossal challenges facing nuclear disarmament. The inability to agree on an outcome document at two consecutive Review Conferences is regrettable, yet it highlights the profound inadequacies and deep-seated disagreements that permeate the global nuclear disarmament regime.

By now, the pattern is familiar. As Review Conferences draw to a close, any references to specific measures, benchmarks, targets, or timelines for nuclear disarmament are systematically stripped from successive drafts of the outcome document. And we all know the reason: stiff resistance from nuclear-weapon states and their allies.

The NPT has been critical to address the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. But it has fallen woefully short of the goal of nuclear abolition. Today, the question is not just whether the world is better off with the NPT than without it, but whether this treaty will in fact lead to complete nuclear disarmament. The record is hardly promising.

Still, nuclear-weapon states remain unpersuaded to change course. They extol the value of nuclear weapons in safeguarding their national interests while expecting other states to forgo the same rationale. They demand strict compliance with non-proliferation obligations but neglect their own responsibility to disarm.

They accept the nuclear-weapons programs of their military or economic allies, even outside the NPT framework. They continue to spend billions of dollars modernizing their arsenals, disregarding their disarmament obligations and perpetuating the threat of nuclear conflict.

And it is not just the nuclear-weapon states that obstruct progress. States that participate in nuclear alliances, such as NATO, are directly complicit in keeping the nuclear threat alive. For far too long, nuclear-dependent states have been allowed to reside in two camps. When it suits, they present themselves as responsible international actors that are non-nu-

clear-weapon states under the NPT. At the same time, they are party to, and endorse, a security arrangement that runs contrary to the letter of the NPT and the broader goal of nuclear abolition.

Chair,

Sixty-nine states – the total membership of the TPNW, all of which are also parties to the NPT – declared last year that each of the United States, the Russian Federation, China, France, and the United Kingdom is in breach of their legal obligations under the NPT – a remarkable condemnation of the highest level.

They stated that the behavior of these nuclear-weapon states “unquestionably” represents “a failure to meet their legally binding obligations under Article VI” of the Treaty. Furthermore, they declared that since the First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW, “none” of the nuclear-weapon states have made progress... in their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the elimination of their nuclear weapons.”

Such a formal rebuke is anything but routine. The implications are profound and must reshape the discourse on nuclear abolition, prompting a reassessment of how best to respond to blatant instances of non-compliance with the NPT. This also underscores a new-found willingness among states to collectively hold NWS accountable and sets a precedent for a more assertive and unified stand on this existential issue.

Of course, the fundamental problem with nuclear weapons predates and extends beyond Ukraine. However the crisis may end, the problem of nuclear weapons will persist, implicating all nuclear-armed states and their allies who overtly support nuclear deterrence.

As has been stated by many others before me, there are no right hands for wrong weapons. We will continue to reject any narrative that frames certain nuclear-armed states as more legitimate or trustworthy than others. All nuclear-armed states, regardless of their political or ideological alignments, contribute to the global risk of nuclear war. Their reliance on nuclear deterrence as a security strategy is inherently flawed and unacceptably dangerous.

The path to global security must include the complete abolition of nuclear weapons, ensuring that no state has the ability to hold humanity hostage to the threat of total annihilation. The time for decisive action is now. And it involves everyone in this room.

Thank you.