



HO CHI MINH CITY DECLARATION ON DISARMAMENT

October 2013

We the undersigned members of the Asia Pacific Leadership Network on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament,

Noting with grave concern that the Asia Pacific is the only region in the world where the number of nuclear weapons is growing,

Declaring our strong continuing commitment to a region and world free of nuclear weapons, for the reasons that

- nuclear weapons are the most indiscriminately inhumane weapons ever invented, their use an affront to every fundamental principle of international humanitarian law;
- so long as any state has nuclear weapons, others will want them; so long as any nuclear weapons remain anywhere, they are bound one day to be used – by accident or miscalculation if not design – by state or non-state actors; and any such use would be catastrophic for life on this planet as we know it; and
- the risks associated with the possession of nuclear weapons in today's world far outweigh any deterrent utility they may have had in the past or continue to have,

Expressing our strong continuing concern that nuclear policymaking in this region and elsewhere continues to be dominated by Cold War habits of mind, in which far too much reliance is placed upon unsubstantiated or highly questionable arguments about the utility of nuclear deterrence, and far too little on the risks associated with any state acquiring or retaining them, and

Expressing our strong belief that a world free of nuclear weapons is achievable, through a step-by-step process involving

- in the short to medium term – freezing and reducing existing nuclear weapon stockpiles, minimizing their deployment, and amending nuclear doctrine to dramatically minimize reliance upon them;
- in the longer term – overcoming the technical (verification and enforcement), geopolitical and psychological barriers which presently stand in the way of their final complete elimination,

Call upon policymakers in the Asia Pacific region to recognize the gravity of the risks associated with the possession of nuclear weapons by any state, the urgent need to re-energize the nuclear disarmament agenda, and to act accordingly as follows:

In the case of both the United States and Russia

- negotiate a follow-on agreement to New START designed not only to dramatically further reduce the number of deployed strategic weapons, but to make major reductions in the number of *all* nuclear weapons in their respective stockpiles;
- dramatically reduce the number of nuclear weapons deployed with launch-on-warning alert status;
- embrace the principle of 'No First Use' in their respective nuclear doctrines;

In the case of the United States

- intensify efforts to secure Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as soon as possible;
- seriously address the concerns that have been raised by Russia and China about the potentially destabilizing impact of its Ballistic Missile Defence program, and the further development of conventional capability, in particular Conventional Prompt Global Strike,

In the case of China

- reaffirm its commitment to a 'minimum nuclear deterrence' and maintenance of a 'No First Use' nuclear posture;
- continue to keep its nuclear weapons arsenal at its present level, relatively low as compared to the U.S. and Russia;
- persuade the National People's Congress to ratify the CTBT without waiting upon the US or any other necessary party to complete that process first, or at least seek to negotiate simultaneous ratification with the U.S.;
- continue to take all possible and appropriate steps, together with other participants in the Six Party Talks, to persuade North Korea to dismantle its nuclear weapons facilities and capability to achieve the permanent denuclearization of, and sustainable peace on, the Korean peninsula;
- enter into sustained and serious high-level official dialogue on strategic issues with India and Pakistan;

In the case of India

- enter into sustained and serious high-level official dialogue on strategic issues with China and Pakistan;

- commit to not increasing its nuclear arsenal from its present level, with no further development of any new nuclear weapon systems, including battlefield nuclear weapons, new missile delivery systems and ballistic missile defence;
- ratify the CTBT without waiting upon the US or any other necessary party to complete that process first, or at least seek to negotiate simultaneous ratification with the US, China and Pakistan;
- revert to the unqualified statement of the principle of 'No First Use' in its nuclear doctrine;

In the case of Pakistan

- enter into sustained and serious high-level official dialogue on strategic issues with India and China;
- commit to not increasing its nuclear arsenal from its present level, with no further development of any new nuclear weapon systems, including battlefield nuclear weapons, new missile delivery systems and ballistic missile defence;
- ratify the CTBT without waiting upon the US or any other necessary party to complete that process first, or at least seek to negotiate simultaneous ratification with the US, China and India;
- cooperate in the commencement of serious formal negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, designed to halt further production of fissile material for weapons purposes;
- embrace the principle of 'No First Use' in its nuclear doctrine;

In the case of North Korea

- immediately freeze the production and testing of fissile material, nuclear weapons and delivery systems;
- enter into serious negotiations, and complete them expeditiously, to dismantle its nuclear weapons capability, in the context of achieving the permanent denuclearization of , and sustainable peace on, the Korean peninsula;
- rejoin the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state;

In the case of U.S. allies and partners

- accept a significantly reduced role for nuclear weapons in their security protection, in particular by accepting and encouraging moves by the U.S. toward embracing the principle of 'No First Use' in its nuclear doctrine (including in the first instance by clearly stating support for the U.S. declaring that the 'sole purpose' of its nuclear weapons is, so long as nuclear weapons exist, to deter their use by others).

APLN members recognize that nuclear disarmament is only one element in a nuclear policy agenda which must include strong continuing commitment to strengthening, regionally and globally, nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear security and nuclear safety regimes.

We strongly believe that movement toward disarmament should not be held hostage to improvement in the overall geopolitical situation, globally or within our region: the two developments should be seen as complementary and mutually reinforcing, and should properly be pursued in tandem.

The real and immediate threat posed by nuclear weapons can no longer be ignored or downplayed by policymakers. The time for serious action on disarmament is *now*.

Ho Chi Minh City, 13 October 2013

SIGNED

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