

## **International Symposium on the Minimisation of HEU (Highly-Enriched Uranium) in the Civilian Nuclear Sector**

**Nobel Peace Center, Oslo 19 June 2006**

**Summary of address by  
Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre**

### **Talking points**

### **Check against delivery**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

#### **Introduction**

- It is a pleasure to welcome you all to Oslo, and it is a privilege for the Norwegian Government to host this symposium in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency – the IAEA.
- It is particularly fitting to be hosting an event with the IAEA at the Nobel Peace Center this year.
- I would like to take the opportunity once again to congratulate the Agency staff and its Director-General, Dr ElBaradei, for their outstanding efforts, which earned them the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.

#### **The present situation**

- The issues being discussed today are major issues, issues of survival.
- We could easily respond to the present situation with a gesture of despair (But we shouldn't). Because in the area of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, we have been locked in stalemate for too long.
- All of you here today are steeped in the challenges confronting our multilateral nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and we hear about them in the news every day:
  - from flashpoints on the Korean peninsula and Iran to illicit networks trading in nuclear technology

- from the risks of nuclear terrorism to the threat of a nuclear arms race in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Meanwhile, the multilateral forums designed to address such challenges find themselves in deadlock.
- Narrow perspectives on the range of challenges we are facing have created a climate of distrust.
- We have witnessed last year's Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the September 2005 World Summit, where states were unable to reach agreement on a single meaningful sentence related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. However, this could have been achieved. It is a matter of politics.
- But we cannot allow the stalemate that has become the norm of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime to parade as stability or sustainability.
- On the contrary, this stalemate is upholding the risks posed by existing nuclear arsenals.
  - It is increasing the risk of proliferation and illicit networks. And
  - it amounts to a criminal neglect of the real and grave risk of nuclear terrorism.
- The present obstacles to addressing these challenges through international cooperation reveal deep-seated disagreement about what aspects of non-proliferation and disarmament are most important.
- Multilateralism is a facilitator, not a substitute, for consensus and cooperation.
- There is common ground. And we must seize it. This is the perspective of the Norwegian Government.
- Bridges must be built between science and politics, and between scientists and politicians. We need to bring politicians on board. [Example: seminar on climate change in Washington D.C. last week].

#### The seven-country initiative

- Last year, as many of you are aware, Norway [ – and I would like to honour my predecessor Mr Jan Petersen and his team for their work – ] joined with six other countries – Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Romania, South Africa and the United Kingdom – in agreeing to a comprehensive agenda on non-proliferation and

disarmament. The deadlock at the 2005 World Summit could, however, not be broken.

- But the support for our seven-country initiative is noteworthy. So, too, is the fact that the initiative is the first of its kind to reach across country groupings – including the nuclear and non-nuclear weapon state divide – and agree on common principles and priorities.
- Therefore we are continuing our efforts.
- And I would like to commend the courage of my colleagues. We are standing by our original declaration and continuing to support the initiative.
- The Government – and I personally – am strongly committed to it. My colleagues have distributed the political declaration to all of you.
- The premise of the seven-country initiative is simple:
  - Firstly, a comprehensive approach is needed to the challenges we face.
  - Secondly, we must address the totality; all three pillars of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime – disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses – are equally important. We cannot, need not, and should not pick and choose.
- Recent visit to the US. Talks in Washington D.C. one this issue.

#### Steps to be taken

- Unfortunately, this is not yet the predominant view. But despite the current constraints, important steps could be taken in both bilateral and multilateral forums. Such steps could prove worthwhile in themselves, and they could also help to shake us out of our current inability to act.
  - First, we must work towards an international consensus on how to promote peaceful nuclear cooperation without increasing proliferation risks. There are efforts in Vienna and numerous other capitals to advance such a consensus that merit our full support, as do investments in proliferation-resistant fuel cycle technologies.
  - Second, we must improve efforts to secure nuclear materials from non-state actors as well as rogue state actors. Both are important here. Many states have such controls in place, and others are establishing them in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1540 and the revised Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

It is also imperative to help the IAEA consolidate its verification capacity. This means encouraging all states that have not yet done so to conclude and implement relevant Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols without delay. Support to the IAEA.

- Third, it is essential to expand the ratification and entry into force of nuclear weapons free zones agreements, including their protocols. States must maintain moratoria on nuclear testing.
- One of the most vital and urgent measures on this front is to prevent a nuclear arms race in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This means negotiating and concluding a fissile material cut-off treaty without preconditions, and without further delay.
- Collectively, these measures will help to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in states' security policies.

### The IAEA

- The IAEA has a vital role to play in many of these areas. The Nobel Peace Prize gave momentum, platform, focus.
- Through verification and technical cooperation, the Agency helps to facilitate adherence to many international agreements.
  - Verification is obviously essential for monitoring safeguards obligations under the NPT, including the Additional Protocol.
  - Technical cooperation helps states to adhere to these obligations.
- The relationship of trust and expertise which the Agency has built with member states means it is in a position to assist states with their obligations under UN Security Council resolution 1540.
- The IAEA also contributes to disarmament efforts. Some 50 years ago, US President Eisenhower saw the Agency as an appropriate recipient for fissile materials decommissioned from weapons under international control. He placed trust in the IAEA.
- Recently, the Trilateral Initiative has renewed this vision to some extent.
- But more broadly, the Agency's activities bolster international confidence in the commitment of states to non-proliferation, and they promote accountability regarding the uses of nuclear technology. These efforts are building up the foundation needed for disarmament to proceed. International confidence – and accountability.

- The Agency also plays a role in poverty alleviation, which is at the core of Norway's international development policy – and foreign policy.
  - Technical cooperation can foster social and economic development in recipient countries, by helping the public and private sectors to utilise peaceful applications of nuclear technology in the health, agriculture, water management and environment sectors.
  - Technical cooperation is most effective in partnerships, where the Agency strengthens cooperation with recipient countries, and recipient countries mobilise domestic resources for clearly defined priorities.

### The HEU agenda

- Now, to the agenda [Re: also the article in the Financial Times the other day – which is more “my language” used to discuss these complicated issues]: The goal of minimising trade in, stocks and use of highly-enriched uranium (HEU) is not merely a non-proliferation concern.
  - Neither should it be seen only in the context of disarmament.
  - Nor does it relate only to peaceful applications of nuclear energy. There is a balance to strike.
- The HEU agenda relates to all these areas, and it is in this broader context that the Norwegian Government sees the task before us.
- Let me emphasise that this does not mean that HEU minimisation should be held hostage to the current deadlock. Rather it presents an opportunity to chip away at this deadlock – and move further.
- Globally there are nearly 1900 tonnes of HEU, between 50 and 100 tonnes of which are civil stocks.
  - Most of the world's HEU is for military use.
  - The quantities on the civilian side are much smaller, but still sufficient to constitute a threat, especially where security is poor.
  - Nearly 100 civilian facilities around the world operate with weapon-grade HEU, and nearly 30 countries possess substantial quantities of weapon-usable material.
  - It is noteworthy that, while we have guidelines for plutonium management, none have yet been adopted for HEU. This is worrying.
- We know that HEU is the material of choice for improvised nuclear devices and, therefore, for nuclear terrorism.

- And our global interdependence means that we are all vulnerable to the weakest link in nuclear security.
- From a disarmament perspective, we also know that successful minimisation of HEU and a growing market for low-enriched uranium (LEU) in the civilian sector could spur further down-blending of military stocks.
- And from the perspective of peaceful uses, we know that minimising HEU could advance international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, by making progress towards a fuel cycle that is proliferation resistant in all its aspects – from production and transportation to storage and repositing.
- There is a growing consensus for a wider HEU minimisation agenda – one which is non-discriminatory, timely and practical.
- In essence, we wish to facilitate the peaceful uses of nuclear energy while preserving security interests of all states.
- I believe there is also widespread recognition that a fissile material cut-off treaty is urgently needed. This should be on our agenda.
- There are, of course, technical, political and economic challenges, and that is precisely why you are here today, to address these challenges:
  - Firstly, as regards knowledge. The states, academic institutions, industries and international organisations represented here – you all have unique roles to play and insights to share in our efforts to resolve these challenges. We need the knowledge, and the knowledge needs to be spread – including to the politicians – as “yes-able” propositions.
  - Secondly, regarding exchange of information and views, I am confident that this symposium will be a forum for a lively exchange of wide-ranging national and international experience.
  - Thirdly, I also hope that this symposium will foster useful discussion on the potential of multinational research programmes to give all states equal opportunity to enjoy the commercial and technological dividends of cutting-edge scientific inquiry.
  - Finally, I hope that you will remain mindful in your discussions of the larger context of the non-proliferation and disarmament challenges which we all face today.

### Conclusion

- This symposium will be a success

- if you start working towards a convergence of views, and
  - if you help to identify the best frameworks – public, private, multilateral, bilateral and otherwise – at our disposal for guiding our collaboration for further progress in HEU minimisation.
- 
- And finally, I hope that this setting – here at the Nobel Peace Center – will inspire and encourage you! [Perhaps there are future prize winners among you here today?!]
  - Thank you for coming here to take part in this symposium.