



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Speech by H.E. Mr Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverwe, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

Security Council

High-level briefing in support of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

New York, 2 April 2019

Mr President,

First of all, allow me to thank you for organising this high-level briefing in support of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Indeed, one year before the Review Conference of the Treaty and the 50th anniversary of its entry into force, this is an opportunity to reiterate resolutely, within the Security Council, our support for this foundation of the collective security system.

I would also like to thank Mr Yukiya Amano, and the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms Izumi Nakamitsu, for their contributions, which merely highlight the importance of the issue before us today.

Mr President,

Belgium is concerned by the erosion of the multilateral system based on international law, which is particularly visible in the context of non-proliferation and disarmament. I would only mention here the threats to the implementation of the INF Treaty and the JCPOA, as well as the uncertainties regarding the future of the New START Treaty and the North Korean issue.

These recent developments reflect the increased polarisation within the non-proliferation community, where trust and cooperation among States are falling sharply. This climate is challenging the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, making it even more difficult to achieve the progress that is essential at a time of increasing proliferation risks.

Belgium therefore reaffirms its strong support for the three pillars of the NPT and continues to call for the full and balanced implementation of the 2010 Review Conference's plan of action. Its mutually reinforcing practical measures for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy continue to be relevant and provide a basis acceptable to all for progression towards the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

With regard to **nuclear proliferation**, its containment is one of the great successes of the NPT. This is an incontrovertible achievement for our collective security, and requires constant consolidation and strengthening.

At the same time, it is necessary to continue to promote **peaceful uses of nuclear energy**, facilitate the exchange of nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes, and encourage cooperation with developing countries.

Lastly, Belgium remains committed to the pursuit of **nuclear disarmament**, in accordance with **Article VI** of the Treaty. The goal of a world free of nuclear weapons is both a common goal and a shared responsibility. In this context, Belgium wishes to underline the primary responsibility of the five permanent members of the Security Council who possess nuclear weapons.

Mr President,

No other weapon has the destructive power of a nuclear bomb. This fact underlines not only the need for urgent disarmament, but also the need for a proactive approach to non-proliferation. On this difficult road, it is essential to put in place a legally binding instrument banning nuclear tests. Belgium, which together with Iraq coordinates Article XIV of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), calls on States that are not yet parties, in particular Annex 2 States, to accede to the Treaty so that it can finally enter into force. A world without nuclear weapons implies a world without nuclear tests. For my country, this principle also applies to North Korea and therefore makes the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty a relevant instrument for any negotiated solution aimed at ensuring a verifiable and definitive denuclearisation.

Mr President,

The future of the INF Treaty affects the security of Europe and we reiterate our call to Russia to resume full and verifiable compliance with the Treaty in order to preserve its existence. The treaty is being eroded at a time of rapid developments in missile technology, such as the emergence of hypersonic missiles, with potential consequences for doctrine and nuclear deterrence. This development demonstrates the need to give appropriate prominence to the issue of missiles in international debates. I also reiterate my country's wish to see the New START Treaty extended as the only instrument regulating the deployment of strategic nuclear missiles between the United States and Russia.

Mr President,

Belgium therefore strongly reaffirms its support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which must be preserved in its entirety. The NPT is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for continued nuclear disarmament and an important element in prevention and confidence-building with a view to maintaining international peace and security.

Thank you.