

4th meeting of the Track 2.5 working group on the
“US-Russia Dialogue on the NPT Review Process and the role of youth”

jointly organized by the PIR Center (Russia) and the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (USA)

Carnegie Corporation of New York, 15 August 2022

**Welcome address by Ambassador Félix Baumann,
Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament**

Dear Dr Orlov,
Dear Prof Potter,
Ladies and Gentlemen, dear participants

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to be here today in the premises of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Let me first of all express to you my sincere gratitude to have invited me to say a few words at the opening of the fourth meeting of the Track 2.5 working group on the “US-Russia Dialogue on the NPT Review Process and the role of youth”, organized jointly by the PIR Center and the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies.

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs has been pursuing a fruitful cooperation with both Centers for many years. I had personally the privilege to attend many inspiring events organized by the PIR Center as I was posted as a diplomat in Moscow more than a decade ago. And I always hoped that my duties would one day allow me to participate in the famous Annecy Meeting organized by Bill Potter – it took me quite a while, but this year I finally managed to achieve this goal and be there...

Switzerland welcomes the pursuit of the 2.5 track working group on the US-Russia dialogue on the NPT Review Process. In this challenging geopolitical context marked by conflict and distrust, attempts to maintain open channels of communication between the US and Russia are of even greater value than they were before. Switzerland fully supports these efforts.

Dear Participants,

We are now just half-way into the 10th Review Conference. The hard and challenging part of the conference started this morning as we’re now working on the draft reports of the MCs and SBs. Statements heard over the first two weeks lead to a moderate optimism, but as you all know, there are quite many obstacles on the way. Let me now take a few minutes to share with you the Swiss view on the Conference and our priorities.

The international security landscape is a daunting one. We have deep concerns concerning certain developments related to nuclear weapons. This concern relates first and foremost to the threats of the possible use of nuclear weapons made this year by one of the nuclear weapon States. We condemn all types of nuclear threats, as they run counter to fundamental norms, including the principles and rules of international law, including the UN Charter.

Furthermore, Switzerland is concerned about the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament, and even developments in the opposite direction in recent years. Rather than welcoming progress in the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan, such as the reduction of global arsenals, we are witnessing quantitative increases in the nuclear arsenals of some nuclear weapon states. We also see significant efforts to modernise nuclear arsenals, including the development of less predictable systems that are more difficult to detect, raising questions with regard to strategic stability.

The lack of progress in reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security strategies and doctrines is equally worrying, especially in light of this year's regrettable developments. There has been no significant progress towards the widespread adoption of "no-first-use" or "sole purpose" doctrines, or even towards the adoption of robust negative security assurances. And it is also regrettable that 25 years after its negotiation, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) has still not entered into force and that we are not making progress on banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

In light of this difficult situation, it will be essential that the Strategic Stability Talks among the nuclear-weapon states resume as soon as possible. These will be essential for the development of new arms control instruments and in view of the fact that New START will come to term in 2026. The Strategic Stability Talks could lead to the beginning of negotiations. These efforts should be gradually expanded in terms of participants and scope to address issues such as cyberspace, outer space or hypersonic weapons.

Thus, foremost we need to define the course of action to be followed in order to resume the path of nuclear disarmament. The existing commitments under the NPT - in all three pillars - remain valid even in changed international conditions. In the area of nuclear disarmament, the latest commitments date back to the 2010 Review Conference and its Action Plan. Clear and concrete steps to advance the 2010 Action Plan and, by extension, the implementation of Article VI must be a priority.

Switzerland has been active within the Stockholm Initiative, a grouping of 16 States of a diverse geographical background, which has outlined in the Stepping Stones the form that these measures should take. The deterioration of the strategic environment and certain technological developments have made nuclear risk reduction a priority, while this issue has not received the necessary attention in past NPT cycles. The risks posed by nuclear weapons will continue until all arsenals are dismantled. It will be necessary to integrate this aspect into the nuclear disarmament efforts. The proposals made within the Stockholm Initiative emphasize that the Review Conference should both send a clear message about risk reduction and adopt practical measures to achieve it, as well as establish a follow-up process.

Other elements will also need to inform and feed into our work. Progress towards nuclear disarmament is necessary in view of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. In this context, we consider it essential that the Review Conference reiterates its concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, as did the 2010 Conference. It should endorse the statement made by the nuclear-weapon States on 3 January that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, which we have welcomed. In addition to this statement, the Conference should further emphasize that it is in the interests of humanity and the security of all people that nuclear weapons are never used again. In terms of principles, we also hope that the Conference will condemn any threat to use nuclear weapons.

Dear Participants,

You will address in your discussions this afternoon the question of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). We believe that the Conference should take note of the entry into force of the TPNW. We hope that the Review Conference will be able to clarify the nature of the relationship between this instrument and the NPT and ensure that it is constructive. For your memory, Switzerland did not adhere to the TPNW but participated as an observer in the first Meeting of States Parties in June in Vienna.

In conclusion: in order to strengthen the role of the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear architecture, a positive outcome of this Conference in the disarmament pillar is essential. We need to reaffirm the continued validity of the final documents and previous commitments, and we need to agree on measures to advance the implementation of the Treaty's obligations, including Article VI disarmament, and reduce nuclear risks in the process.

Dear Participants,

I concentrated my remarks on the 1st pillar, as the reaffirmation of existing commitments and further efforts towards disarmament as well as nuclear risk reduction are two main objectives of Switzerland at the Conference. Time is too short to get into details about the other two pillars. Let me just stress that it is of utmost importance to uphold and strengthen the global non-proliferation architecture. The IAEA and its robust safeguards regime are the backbone of our non-proliferation regime. We continue to hold the view that a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement supplemented by an Additional Protocol should constitute the current safeguards standard, and believe that this consideration should be reflected in the outcome of the Conference. We welcome that a number of States parties have brought into force an Additional Protocol since the last Review Conference and we hope that those who have not yet done so will follow their lead. Full compliance with safeguards obligations - at all times and without conditions - is indispensable for upholding the NPT's integrity and a well-functioning safeguards and non-proliferation regime.

When it comes to the third pillar, Switzerland considers the application of the highest standards of nuclear safety and security a crucial element for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. This Conference should reaffirm past commitments by encouraging all States to maintain the highest possible standards of nuclear safety, nuclear security and physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities. The Director General of the IAEA has outlined Seven Pillars of Nuclear Safety and Security, derived from existing safety standards and security guidance. For Switzerland the "Seven Pillars" constitute the safety and security measures which have to be observed under all circumstances, including during armed conflict. We urge all NPT States Parties to recognize and respect the Seven Pillars as the indispensable elements of nuclear safety and security and as a blueprint for promoting States Parties' continued benefit from peaceful uses.

Dear Participants,

Let me conclude by welcoming the efforts made by the PIR Center and CNS to promote the engagement of young people in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by offering training, dialogue platforms, mentoring, internships, fellowships, scholarships and international exchanges. Rigorous education and capacity-building help foster a new generation of experts in disarmament and non-proliferation, with a special attention on further increasing the number of women active in this field. And the dual-degree programs between Russian and US academic institutions are a powerful vector to better understand each other's national interests and positions, create a network of personal bonds among participants and ultimately help to foster trust. With tensions arising, we need to count on the next generation of seasoned experts to help navigate us through the storm. I wish you good luck for your future endeavors as well as fruitful discussions today.

Thank you for your attention.