

**54th Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs
Bridging a Divided World Through International Cooperation and
Disarmament**

Seoul, South Korea, 4-9 October 2004

**Statement of the Pugwash Council
9 October 2004, Seoul, Korea**

The Pugwash Council, meeting during the 54th Pugwash Conference held in Seoul, Korea from 5-8 October 2004, expresses its grave concern that the international community faces a critical turning point in the threat to global security posed by nuclear weapons.

The potential collapse of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the weakening of the taboos in place since 1945 on the use of nuclear weapons, coupled with the very real dangers of a terrorist group manufacturing and detonating a nuclear explosive device, combine to produce a recipe for unmitigated disaster.

Regarding the non-proliferation regime, the upcoming Seventh Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty - being held in the spring of 2005 - faces daunting challenges. The original nuclear weapons states (US, Russia, UK, France and China) have not lived up to their obligations under Article VI of the NPT to move decisively toward the irreversible elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Such inaction invites charges of hypocrisy when these same countries seek to deny access to nuclear technologies to non-nuclear weapons states, or - in the case of the United States - threaten and carry out military pre-emption to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons by other countries.

On the Korean peninsula - the site of this year's Pugwash Conference - stability and the relaxation of tension is undermined by continued hostility between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United States and by the continued crisis over the nuclear program of the DPRK. The DPRK's withdrawal from the NPT in early 2003 poses a serious challenge to the non-proliferation regime and must be solved through multilateral negotiation and cooperation as soon as possible.

In the Middle East, Israel's policy of opacity concerning its nuclear weapons program, while meant to avoid embarrassing NPT-parties in the region, does provide arguments to those who advocate nuclear weapons programs in other countries. Israeli policy also provides a justification to those in other countries who oppose the chemical and biological weapons conventions, resulting in a net decrease, in our judgment, of Israel's security. There are also grave uncertainties and concerns with Iran's nuclear intentions that need to be resolved through transparent fulfillment with IAEA obligations. In this volatile region in the world, bold steps are needed to support the proposals for a WMD-free zone in the Middle East as well as such initiatives as the Arab Plan and the Geneva Accord that can bring about effective regional security.

In South Asia, India and Pakistan continue to face each other with nuclear arsenals. Although significant progress has been made in improving relations between the two, there remains the very real possibility of the resumption of open hostility and conflict.

More broadly, the entire framework of nuclear weapons disarmament is in danger of being swept away. Strategic arms control between the US and Russia is moribund, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not entered into force, and serious negotiations have not even started on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) to eliminate production of weapons-grade Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) and plutonium. Moreover, too little is being done to control and dispose of existing stockpiles of HEU that run the risk of falling into the hands of terrorist groups. No attention is being paid to large numbers of tactical nuclear weapons that continue to exist in great numbers with no military rationale whatsoever, while the deployment of weapons in space moves closer to reality. Adding fuel to this nuclear fire is the fact that the Bush administration in the US has increased the role of nuclear weapons in US national security policy by its renewed interest in nuclear war-fighting strategies, in possibly developing new nuclear weapons, and in a possible resumption of nuclear testing.

At the same time as little progress is made toward the twin objectives of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, the phenomenon of international terrorism continues to cast a spectre over the international community. The US-led military presence in Iraq has become a source of continued instability and loss of life and a focus for international terrorists. We hope for an early mitigation of this violence and believe that a major step in this direction would be the transfer of authority to a democratically-elected (under UN supervision) and effective Iraqi government. This government should then be provided with all necessary military support by the international community in order to re-establish democratic law and order in Iraq.

At the 54th Pugwash Conference in Seoul, all of these themes were touched on by such speakers as Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency; Dr. Hussain Al-Shahristani of Iraq, who was imprisoned by Saddam Hussein for refusing to work on nuclear weapons, and by Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Kim Dae-Jung, former President of South Korea, and Dr. Joseph Rotblat, co-founder and past President of the Pugwash Conferences.

These speakers and others stressed the need to reduce the tensions that undermine global security, whether between nuclear and non-nuclear states, or between those who act unilaterally and those committed to a multilateral international legal order, or between those who continue to rely on the primacy of nuclear weapons for security and those who would reduce the insecurities that stimulate interest in nuclear weapons in the first place. In particular, Dr. Hussain al-Shahristani spoke eloquently from his own experience of the moral imperative of scientists not to work on nuclear weapons and other instruments of indiscriminate destruction.

Time is running out if a nuclear catastrophe is to be averted. Political solutions are urgently needed to resolve those conflicts that either spawn international terrorism, or increase the risk of nuclear weapons use, or both. Global security must be based on international institutions and the rule of law rather than on unilateral action and an excessive reliance on military force.

In looking ahead to the 2005 NPT Review Conference, the Pugwash Council calls on national governments, multilateral institutions, and international NGOs to lead the international community away from a misplaced reliance on nuclear weapons and the catastrophic dangers that await us if clear progress is not made to decisively reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons.