

ABOLITION 2000

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ABOLITION 2000 GLOBAL COUNCIL STATEMENT ON IRAQ

The Global Council of the Abolition 2000 Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons reaffirms its urgent call for the universal abolition of nuclear weapons and categorically rejects the use of force against Iraq in the current situation. We are gravely concerned that conflict in the region might spiral out of control and that the U.S. would again use nuclear weapons. The U.S. Nuclear Posture Review, which expands the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. military planning, and the new U.S. National Security Strategy, which claims a U.S. right to take military action preemptively and unilaterally in the name of self-defense, give rise to our fears that the fragile taboo that has held since Nagasaki may be breached. Further, several states in the Middle East are known to possess nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, which might be used, with devastating consequences. Military action will only increase the likelihood that these terrible events will come to pass. We call upon all states to renew their commitments to the United Nations Charter and the values it embodies by undertaking positive, diplomatic approaches to conflict resolution; by renouncing the threat, use or possession of nuclear weapons; and by embracing a universal, nondiscriminatory compliance regime.

1. We welcome the return of inspectors to Iraq and call for all states either known or suspected of having nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to accept inspections of their own facilities on the same terms.

The Abolition 2000 Statement, adopted at the United Nations in New York in April 1995, calls for implementation of the following measures:

Subject all weapons-useable radioactive materials and nuclear facilities in all states to international accounting, monitoring, and safeguards, and establish a public international registry of all weapons-useable radioactive materials (point 6); and

....[S]ubject all nuclear weapons laboratories to international monitoring....(point 7)

2. With respect to Iraq, the inspectors must be given enough time to complete their inspections and report back to the UN Security Council before any further steps are decided. There is no precedent in international law for use of force as a *preventive* measure in response to a *potential* threat of violence. Preventive war is not permitted under the UN Charter and should not be considered by the Security Council. To the contrary, the Charter emphasizes the peaceful resolution of disputes and the non-use of force. *Even if Iraq is found to possess WMDs or their components, the U.S. approach is wrong.* The Security Council should not authorize the use of force, and the United States must not undertake unilateral military action. Though nuclear weapons represent the ultimate form of violence, they cannot and should not be eliminated through the use of force. They must be abolished through a multilateral process of consensual negotiations.

The Abolition 2000 Statement calls upon “all states, particularly the nuclear weapons states, declared and de facto” to

Initiate immediately and conclude negotiations on a nuclear weapons abolition convention that requires the phased elimination of all nuclear weapons within a timebound framework, with provisions for effective verification and enforcement. (point 1)

3. The problem of WMDs in the Middle East must be solved regionally, as well as globally. Security Council Resolution 687, which in 1991 recorded the formal cease-fire ending the Gulf War, recalled “the objective of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East,” while noting “the threat that all weapons of mass destruction pose to peace and security in the area and ... the need to work towards the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of such weapons.” This must include Israel. While we condemn Iraq’s record of human rights violations, the U.S. policy towards Iraq is selective and hypocritical. The U.S. continues to support Israel which has nuclear weapons as well as a long record of noncompliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions, and which has occupied Palestine for decades.

The Abolition 2000 Statement calls for creation of “additional nuclear weapons free zones such as those established by the treaties of Pelindaba and Raratonga” (point 8). In this regard, we call for full implementation of the resolution adopted by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation (NPT) 1995 Review and Extension Conference and confirmed by the NPT 2000 Review Conference calling for establishment of a Middle East zone free from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their delivery systems. Instead of U.S. aggression, the only assured way to prevent the proliferation of WMDs is to free the region of these weapons.

4. The continued development and deployment of more advanced weapons systems, both nuclear and non-nuclear, including ballistic missile defenses, as described in the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review, propels the region into greater insecurity. In particular, the introduction of theater missile defense systems in the Middle East would allow the U.S. and its allies to launch preemptive strikes while their armed forces are shielded from counter strikes.

In our March 2002 Call to Action, the Abolition 2000 Global Council “condemns the United States Nuclear Posture Review and U.S. plans to develop new nuclear weapons that are more useable, and thus more likely to be used.... as insane, immoral and illegal.” In this context, we strongly support efforts to prevent the deployment of theater missile defenses in the Middle East.

5. While the current Iraqi crisis is generally characterized as a conflict over WMDs, U.S. access to oil undoubtedly plays an important part. In our May 2001 Saffron Walden Declaration, the Abolition 2000 Global Council recognized that

The western nuclear weapons states and their allies believe they can put a ‘lid’ on the rising tide of discontent at the economic inequity and lack of social justice among the vast majority of the earth’s people in order to maintain their access to world resources and their unsustainable levels of consumption. We assert that this dangerous and destabilising paradigm cannot endure.

We call instead for a new security framework that will serve all humanity, based on respect for international law and treaties, conflict prevention and co-operation through a reformed United Nations.

In pointing the way towards positive solutions, the Abolition 2000 Statement calls for establishment of “an international energy agency to promote and support the development of sustainable and environmentally safe energy sources.”(point 10)

6. The Abolition 2000 Global Council expresses its solidarity with civil society groups and peace movements in the Middle East, who are making every effort to:

Convince Iraq to accept the return of international weapons inspectors;

Urge governments of the region to respond rationally to provocative statements and acts by the U.S. government;

Prevent the use of military bases and facilities by U.S. armed forces in the region; and

Advocate for a Middle East free from all weapons of mass destruction in order to bring to an end U.S. pretexts to launch aggressive acts and wars in the Middle East.

7. The International Court of Justice has affirmed that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is illegal, and that all states have an obligation to eliminate nuclear weapons. We categorically reject the use of force to achieve disarmament, believing it to be contradictory, counterproductive, discriminatory, illegal, immoral, inhumane, and unnecessary.

Our strength as a Global Council comes from the over 2000 citizen groups in more than 90 countries who form the Abolition 2000 Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons (www.abolition2000.org). Since our founding in 1995 at the NPT Review and Extension Conference, our network's many groups have demonstrated their commitment to a more sustainable world by creating ways to bring about nuclear abolition. One of our most valuable tools has been the law: the treaties our nations have signed and ratified, the International Court of Justice 1996 Advisory Opinion on the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, and the model Nuclear Weapons Convention.

As we concluded in our May 2001 Saffron Walden Declaration

We call for immediate negotiations to abolish nuclear weapons, ban all missiles, and keep space for peace. We envisage a world that is free of nuclear weapons, free of the resultant environmental contamination, and free of social and economic injustice. We affirm our belief that this new framework is more than practical and ethical. *It is imperative for our planet's future.*