

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear comrades,

it's a pleasure and an honour for me to open the second session of the SI Committee on Disarmament here today in New York....

Before I give the word to Marc Saxer I want to thank him and the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation for their excellent work.

After years in the doldrums, there is once more wind in the sails of nuclear arms control. Important aims and proposals of the arms control community, which in recent decades have been worked out by nongovernmental organizations, think tanks, and commissions, alike are once again an integral part of world politics. During the eight years of the George W. Bush administration the arms control and disarmament process, which was launched after the Cold War, was systematically neutered and reversed.

US President Obama, in his Prague speech of April 5, 2009, declared – to widespread astonishment – that America was committed »to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons«

In the meantime, the debate on whether and to what extent a nuclear weapons-free world is desirable, feasible, or realistic is proceeding all over the world in newspapers, blogs, and conferences. Sam Nunn has compared the desirable aim of a nuclear weapons-free world to a mountain peak which is shrouded in clouds but has to be reached. It now remains to be seen whether the principles and aims of arms control, disarmament, and conflict prevention can be transformed into concrete steps towards a world which is more secure, more just, and more peaceful.

The Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) takes place in New York in May 2010. After the collapse of the 2005 Review Conference, a successful conclusion will be imperative to strengthen the NPT as the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

I'm very glad, that since our last meeting there are a lot of constructive and positive signals which give me hope that the 2010 Review Conference could be a success:

At a historic summit meeting presided over by President Barack Obama and addressed by 13 other Heads of State and Government, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1887 (2009) and pledged its support for broad progress on long-stalled efforts to staunch the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ensure reductions in existing weapons stockpiles, as well as control of fissile material.

I also welcome the negotiations between U.S. President Obama and Russian President Medvedev to cut the American and Russian nuclear arsenals by as much as a third, laying out a path to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). One month away from START's Dec. 5 expiration date, it is unclear whether a replacement treaty will be ready for signature by that time.

President Obama's decision to cancel the deployment of ABM systems in Poland and Czechia facilitates the conclusion of negotiations by the end of 2009 which would send out a signal that nuclear weapon states are prepared to follow their obligations to disarm under Art VI of the NPT.

Before I open the discussion I will shortly recur on some of the key elements of the Statement of the SI Committee on Disarmament on 21/04/09 in Berlin and the 10-point-plan, which I understand also as an working program for the committee.

- Common security through disarmament and cooperation are the cornerstones of a social democratic peace and détente policy.
- Treaty-based, multilateral arms control and disarmament must become the firm and binding basis of international relations.
- All states should disarm on this basis, in particular the great powers must set a good example by unilaterally and irreversibly reducing their arsenals and by cutting the production and trading of arms.
- Only when the nuclear states are ready to reduce their arsenals will we be able to irreversibly stop the spread of nuclear weapons around the world.
- We urge the nuclear weapons states to commit to a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons and undertake not to use or threaten to use them against non-nuclear

weapons states and nuclear weapons free zones.

- We welcome the agreement between US President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to begin negotiations on the drastic and verifiable reduction of strategic nuclear weapons even before the START I treaty expires at the end of 2009. This is an important step in reviving the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in which the nuclear powers commit themselves to total nuclear disarmament.
- Ever more countries and alliances are planning to develop or expand their missile defence systems. A new arms race in this area, which is leading to new uncertainties, must be prevented.
- We need a new arms control agreement to limit missile defence (ABM treaty), which covers as many regions of the world as possible. The outer space must be kept totally free of weapons.
- The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the Adapted Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (ACFE) must be brought out of deadlock and adapted to the new realities – following the end of the Cold War – and thereby become once more an anchor of security and stability in Europe.
- Furthermore, the number of so-called tactical nuclear weapons on both sides is not precisely known. NATO continues to insist on the deployment of around 150–240 American warheads in Europe, while Russia justifies its 2,000 or so tactical warheads on the basis of NATO's conventional superiority. The nuclear doctrines of both sides are based on first-use of nuclear weapons in a political environment in which the deployment of such weapons for military purposes is now inconceivable.

If the two major nuclear powers were each to achieve a target figure of 500 to 1,000 warheads, the three other established nuclear powers could be brought on board as well to make further reductions and disarm proportionately. Multilateral negotiations – which also settle such important issues as procedures for disposing of warheads, improved safeguards, and the inspection of treaty implementation – should be included.

The USA, still the strongest military power on earth, has taken the lead in the strive towards a nuclear weapons-free world. This cannot be done without the cooperation of friendly states, organizations, and experts, not to mention patience, time, and scientific

and security-policy expertise. I'm sure that the SI committee will contribute substantially to that aim.

A global effort is needed to overcome the hurdles, but if a beginning is now made in all earnestness it can help to ensure that nuclear weapons will never be used again.

Ladies and gentlemen: Thank you very much for your attention. I'm looking forward to a lively discussion.