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The Undiminished Relevance of Disarmament and Arms Control: Ten Theses

- Overcome the crisis of the nuclear non-proliferation regime
- Fulfil the disarmament obligation of the Non-proliferation Treaty
- Give up all tactical nuclear weapons
- Develop further the biological weapons convention
- Seek ways round the obstruction of the Geneva disarmament conference
- Improve control of small arms and light weaponry; ban cluster munitions
- Strengthen the multilateral treaty regime by means of better verification, the strengthening of the export control regimes, and the extension of international cooperation
- Control effectively delivery technologies
- Overcome the crisis of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)
- Set regional initiatives in motion

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Arms control and disarmament – many still associate these concepts with a bygone age, with summit meetings of the superpowers in Vienna and Reykjavik and the Helsinki Final Act within the framework of the CSCE. But they are still very topical. Disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation lie at the core of Social Democratic foreign and security policy. In the context of *détente* and *Ostpolitik* they were instruments of crisis management and a platform for institutionalized dialogue between different political systems and worldviews.

After a decade of disarmament that began in 1987 with the INF Treaty and ended in 1997 with the convention on chemical weapons, military expenditure has increased significantly since 1998. According to the SIPRI Yearbook 2007, in 2006 approximately € 900 billion were expended on military purposes worldwide, 3.5 percent more than in 2005. In the last ten years global defense spending has increased by 37 percent. The USA is at the forefront by a considerable margin: with € 396.2 billion it accounts for 42 percent of global defense spending. In the international arms trade, too, there has been a 50-percent rise since 2002.

Almost 20 years after the end of the Cold War there are still around 32,000 nuclear warheads worldwide. Humanity's capacity to destroy the world several times over has therefore barely diminished since 1989. Instead, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has exploded. Furthermore, among the planning staff of the Great Powers the atom bomb is enjoying a strategic renaissance. Virtually unnoticed by the general public the leading military powers have been embroiled in a new nuclear arms race that must be halted urgently.

Disarmament and arms control are today indisputably in a profound – perhaps even existential – crisis. Has arms control therefore exhausted its influence over international relations? Absolutely not! Having said that, it must be recognized that fundamental achievements in the area of arms control – from which Europe has benefited considerably – are under threat. Neither the amended Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) nor the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) are in force. In 2005 the review conference on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty broke down. The increasing spread of missile systems is also a major cause for concern.

The diagnosis is therefore clear: the whole system of international relations and treaties intended to prevent arms proliferation is in imminent danger of collapse. It dates from a time of “clearness,” namely the Cold War. The nuclear “balance of terror” was certainly not as stable and assured as it may appear

in retrospect. According to the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* in recent decades there have been four nuclear false alarms: in 1979, 1980, 1983, and 1995 either the USA or Russia had their fingers dangerously near the trigger. The East–West conflict was, moreover, a chronologically delimited exceptional situation. Two rare factors came together: a military balance of power and rational political leaders. Neither can be counted on any longer. Today, regional powers have come on the scene that pursue their power interests outside any kind of East–West pattern. Although it is true that the threat of a “nuclear world war” has diminished, at the same time in place of this clearly discernible danger hitherto unknown threats to international security have arisen: weak and unstable states with weapons of mass destruction, or non-state actors that are increasingly gaining in importance. With the passing of the Cold War by and large awareness of the need to maintain what has been achieved in terms of arms control, as well as further efforts in the area of disarmament and arms control, appears to have been lost. In this connection it is the existing multilateral treaties that form the basis for a cooperative security architecture.

The purpose of formulating the following ten theses – basically, a list of measures with concrete proposals – is to establish why disarmament and arms control remain indispensable for a peaceful world order. If they are implemented consistently they can strengthen cooperation and peaceful coexistence. This is of course conditional upon the political will, which, however, has been lacking in recent years.

1. Overcome the crisis of the nuclear non-proliferation regime

At the beginning of the twenty-first century nuclear weapons are no longer perceived only as the ultimate deterrent, but increasingly as a means of conducting war. With the ongoing modernization of their arsenals not only the USA, but also Russia, China, France, and the UK are calling into question the disarmament commitment of Article VI of the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and deviating from the 13-point action plan adopted by consensus at the Review Conference in 2000. Despite declarations to the contrary on the UN Security Council fewer and fewer nuclear states are prepared to provide assurances of non-deployment and furthermore reserve the right to deploy nuclear weapons preventatively. Instead of the aim of a “nuclear weapon free world” laid down in the nuclear non-proliferation treaty a “renuclearization” of world politics threatens. We therefore urgently need to give nuclear disarmament new momentum. The

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NPT Review Conference in 2010 must not be allowed to break down. The 13 points contain the measures needed for further progress in nuclear disarmament. This includes the rapid coming into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the commencement of negotiations on a ban on fissile material for weapons purposes (Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty or FMCT), as well as an exhortation to the five official nuclear powers to fulfill their disarmament obligation (Article VI of the NPT). The multilateral treaty system will be further eroded if some states or groups of states unilaterally interpret their treaty obligations and rights in their own favor. North Korea and Iran, at any rate, have drawn the lesson from the Iraq War that the best insurance against a US invasion is to become a nuclear power as soon as possible. The nuclear programs of these problem countries could rapidly set off a disastrous chain reaction. Japan and South Korea will not stand idly by and the Sunni rulers of Saudi Arabia and Egypt will scarcely assent to Shi'ite Iran setting itself up as an unchallenged regional power by means of nuclear missiles. While there appears to be an easing of tensions in the North Korean nuclear crisis, the crisis due to Iran's nuclear program is still far from over.

2. Fulfill the disarmament obligation of the Non-proliferation Treaty

The five nuclear states recognized by the Non-proliferation Treaty (China, France, the UK, Russia and the USA) still have at their disposal approximately 12,000 operational nuclear weapons. If one includes all nuclear warheads (that is, also those kept in reserve) these five states possess around 32,000. The strategic nuclear weapons with which the super powers guaranteed mutually assured destruction many times over during the Cold War are today virtually meaningless. A few hundred bombs would suffice for any kind of residual deterrent. It can certainly be considered a step forward in disarmament policy that since 1990 the USA and Russia have dramatically reduced the number of their nuclear warheads. Further steps are necessary, however. The START Treaty of 1991, which provides for the reduction of strategic missiles on both sides by a third to a maximum 6000, expires on 5 December 2009. If no successor regulations are adopted the sole legal basis for the inspection of the arsenals of the two nuclear powers will lapse. By the end of 2008 it must be decided whether the treaty will be replaced by a new one, amended, or prolonged for five years. Apart from that, in 2002 the US and Russian presidents concluded the Mos-

cow Disarmament Treaty (Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty or SORT). This provides for the reduction in the number of strategic nuclear warheads by 2012 to between 1700 and 2200 on both sides. The treaty has a number of snags, however: the disarmed warheads do not have to be destroyed but only put into storage. After the expiry of the treaty in 2012 theoretically all weapons put into storage can be redeployed. In addition, during the ten years there is a right of withdrawal at any time of 90 days. The SORT Treaty too is still a much too timid step in the right direction.

3. Give up all tactical nuclear weapons

While the supposed use of strategic nuclear weapons can be disputed, all experts agree that tactical nuclear weapons no longer have security-policy significance after the end of the East–West conflict. This concerns not only the few nuclear weapons still deployed in Germany, but all tactical nuclear weapons. In two articles (*Wall Street Journal*, 4 January 2007 and 15 January 2008) former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, among others, called on world leaders to give up all tactical nuclear weapons as soon as possible if they wished to avoid the risk of nuclear exchanges. The new nuclear era threatens to become "more precarious, psychologically more confusing and economically even more expensive" than the Cold War. The signatories of the articles are four politicians none of whom can be accused of pacifist naivety; besides Kissinger, they are William Perry, George Schultz, and Sam Nunn. The appeal contains eight concrete proposals. They range from a cross-party initiative in Congress on ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to global control of uranium enrichment and an end to the production of weapons-grade fissile material throughout the world. The four elder statesmen also demand a substantial reduction in the number of nuclear weapons, the complete elimination of all short-range nuclear missiles, as well as ratification of the test ban treaty.

4. Develop further the biological weapons convention

The deployment of biological (bacteriological) weapons has been prohibited by the Geneva Gas Protocol since 1925, an international agreement that also forbids the use of bacteriological agents in war. The agreement on a ban on the development, manufacture and storage of bacteriological (biological) and toxic weapons and their destruction, signed in 1972 and coming into force in

1975 – the Biological Weapons Convention or BWC – has so far been signed by 167 states and ratified by 151, including all NATO members, as well as Russia, and so, at least on paper, accepted. Syria and Egypt have signed but not ratified the Convention. Israel has not even signed it. In contrast to the Chemical Weapons Treaty the BWC still lacks an effective monitoring and control system, which has so far foundered on US resistance. An important component of such a system is inspections, which, should suspicions arise, can be carried out quickly wherever the violation has taken place and on a broad legal basis. While no such control system exists the Biological Weapons Convention remains a paper tiger, a treaty that describes a legal norm but may not implement it. Even the Review Conference of 2006 was unable to change anything in this respect. In the closing document at least an ambitious work program for strengthening the BWC was agreed before the next Review Conference in 2011, as well as additional measures for further implementation and the continual universalization of the Convention.

5. Seek ways round the obstruction of the Geneva disarmament conference

It is to be feared that the fiasco of the Geneva disarmament conference will continue into the next round in 2008. At the end of 2007 the annual UN disarmament conference ended once again without results after almost eight months. That brings the total blockade into its eleventh year. The disarmament conference has been blocked since the adoption of the nuclear test ban agreement in 1996 because irreconcilable interests hinder all movement. The participants were repeatedly unable to agree even on an agenda. The USA still refuses even to negotiate on a reduction of nuclear weapons, as well as on averting an arms race in space. In response, the developing countries reject talks on a ban on producing weapons-grade material. Discussions should be recommenced at the beginning of 2008 and may – it is to be feared – be broken off at the end of the year again without result. Some governments have already reduced their delegations in order at least to save money in the face of inactivity. This stagnation is a further symptom of the deep crisis in which arms control has found itself for several years. The Geneva disarmament conference, still the sole global negotiation forum on questions of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, increasingly threatens to become a farce. In Geneva in the 1970s and 1980s no fewer than seven international treaties

were negotiated across a broad range of disarmament areas. The revival of this still important forum is urgently required in order to show greater commitment to global arms control and above all to make a particular contribution in the area of verification. This, however, requires the political will towards disarmament among all governments.

6. Improve control of small arms and light weaponry; ban cluster munitions

The current approaches within the framework of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations should be pursued further and intensified. It remains the case that small arms are the real weapons of mass destruction. In Afghanistan and Central Africa there have been countless victims of old, second-hand Kalashnikovs, Uzis and G3 rifles. According to some estimates, every year half a million people are killed by small arms, 300,000 of them in armed conflicts, above all in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Every year several million small arms are produced. According to the annual report of the Swiss “Small Arms Survey” project there are currently 875 million small arms – pistols, rifles and also bazookas – in circulation. After the dissolution of the Soviet and other armies after 1989 large quantities of this kind of weapon disappeared. Effective (export) control of small arms has so far broken down in the face of resistance from the weapons lobbies in such important countries as Russia, China, and the USA.

A further important aim remains the banning of cluster munitions under international law. Here too civil society organizations contributed decisively to substantial progress within the framework of the so-called Oslo Process last year. The aim for 2008 must now be to bring international negotiations on the banning of cluster munitions to a successful conclusion by means of a binding agreement.

7. Strengthen the multilateral treaty regime by means of better verification, the strengthening of the export control regimes, and the extension of international cooperation

Included here are unannounced on-site inspections, the use of new monitoring technologies, and the setting up of qualified, impartial inspection teams. Within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) the aim should be that all NPT members conclude comprehensive *Safeguard* agreements and additional protocols and rapidly bring them into force. The IAEA's right to special inspections, also of undeclared facilities, must be strengthened and extended. The program

for reducing threats due to atomic, chemical, and biological weapons (*Cooperative Threat Reduction Agreement*), the initiative on the global reduction of threats (*Global Threat Reduction Initiative*), and the initiative to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (*Proliferation Security Initiative*) are, like the additional protocols to the Non-proliferation Treaty, innovative approaches and new effective means against undermining the Non-proliferation Treaty and for the enhancement of global security. Instead of a "coalition of the willing" complete codification, institutionalization and implementation would be more meaningful. The EU should consistently implement its 2003 strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which also aims at better adherence to the multilateral treaty system.

Another innovative approach comprises different proposals for the internationalization of the nuclear fuel cycle. In this way the supply of all interested states with nuclear fuel for energy generation would be ensured and at the same time the risks of the proliferation of nuclear weapons would be diminished. A proposal from Federal Foreign Minister Steinmeier envisages, among other things, that the IAEA be given a special area under its administration. A uranium enrichment plant would be built there on a commercial basis. The IAEA would have sole responsibility for the export control of nuclear fuel from this area. The precise form of the different proposals is currently under negotiation in Vienna.

The international arms export control regimes must be urgently strengthened and developed. Within the framework of the EU the Federal government should speak up for an arms export policy that is as restrictive, uniform, and transparent as possible, as well as a more binding Code of Conduct.

8. Control effectively delivery technologies

The development, purchase, possession, and transmission of military delivery technologies have so far not been regulated by bans or non-proliferation norms under international law, and the export control system the "*Missile Technology Control Regime*" (MTCR) has been rendered less effective. Missile proliferation has increased considerably in recent years and involves serious risks to the stability and security of the regions concerned. With the signing of the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOB) on 25 November 2002 a first step was taken to close this loophole. This initiative must be taken forward. Here too

there have been disturbing developments. Russia, for example, suspended its membership in November 2007 because the USA has not yet fulfilled its notification obligations.

9. Overcome the crisis of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)

The most recent development concerning the CFE Treaty shows that there is an urgent danger that a further refined apparatus in the area of conventional arms control is being put at risk without good cause. The CFE Treaty signed in 1990 between NATO and the Warsaw Pact is one of the most important arms control agreements. It limits the number of weapons systems located between the Urals and the Atlantic, and makes possible extensive and regular mutual inspections. The background of the Russian suspension is the dispute concerning the US missile defense plans and the ratification of the amended Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) of 1999 by the NATO states. The West has so far made this dependent on a withdrawal of Russian troops from the former Soviet Republics of Moldova and Georgia. The suspension of the CFE Treaty does not mean Russia's final exit from the disarmament agreement. However, Russia has temporarily suspended all its obligations. For example, it no longer informs NATO about its troop movements and maneuvers, or permits inspections. Also, even Moscow emphasizes that Russia's withdrawal from its treaty obligations does not signify an automatic upgrading of Russian forces on the Western border Russia is plunging the CFE regime into crisis. Everything possible must now be done to ratify the CFE Treaty and rescue the CFE regime. This requires movement on all sides and the resumption of the constructive dialogue commenced by Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier in Bad Saarow. The possibility considered there of a stepwise parallel CFE ratification process with consistent simultaneous fulfillment of the Istanbul Commitments on Russia's part could point to a way out of the crisis. It is in the interest of Germany and Europe that Russia is once more integrated in the CFE system and that the CFE Treaty remains a central element of arms control policy confidence building in Europe.

10. Set regional initiatives in motion

In the Middle East and South Asia nuclear disarmament initiatives should be conducted in such a way that they lead to the creation of nuclear weapons free zones in these regions, as is already

the case in Central and Latin America, Africa, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, and, most recently, in Central Asia. In the case of the planned Indian–American nuclear agreement Germany should insist, within the framework of the *Nuclear Suppliers Group*, that India recognize the disarmament commitment of Article VI of the NPT, sign the nuclear test ban treaty, and declare a moratorium on the production of weapons-grade fissile material.

Also within the framework of NATO disarmament and arms control must be brought more strongly into focus. Therefore the initiative of Federal Foreign Minister Steinmeier and his Norwegian colleague Store within the framework of the NATO meeting of foreign ministers on 7 December 2007 represents an important and correct signal. It is in fact urgent that the world's most powerful military alliance concerns itself once more with disarmament and arms control and makes a contribution to them. At the same time, the alliance would be taking up a good and successful tradition. In the past too NATO, alongside military deterrence, has shown itself ready for dialogue and cooperation, for example, in the Harmel Report of 1967, the London Declaration of 1990, and the Strategic Concept of 1999. The NATO–Russia Council, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the NATO–Ukraine Charter, the Partnerships for Peace, and the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue impressively document the alliance's efforts as regards cooperation. With the German–Norwegian disarmament initiative an attempt is being made, by the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008, to determine arms control and disarmament aims and to integrate the so far still skeptical partners, the USA and France. We may hope that with the disarmament initiative not only will NATO's arms control policy profile be strengthened, but also that arms control as such will be brought out of its current impasse and that arms control policy achievements will be preserved.

Another important initiative is "Global Partnership," initiated by former Chancellor Schröder and President Putin at the G8 Kananaskis summit in Canada in 2002. It contributes to the reduction of nuclear, chemical, biological, and radiological proliferation risks in Russia. This includes the elimination of chemical weapons, the disposal of Russian submarines, and making safe fissile material. By 2012 a total of up to USD 20 billion should be employed for that purpose.

Summary

As this thesis-based and by no means complete overview shows clearly, disarmament and arms control must urgently be made a regulatory principle of international relations again. In recent decades this strategy has made the world a safer place. During the East–West conflict arms control contributed decisively to the prevention of war and confidence building. It created the conditions for cooperation and change. The restriction and reduction of strategic nuclear weapons, the elimination of all medium-range missiles, the Non-proliferation Treaty, the chemical weapons agreement, the Bio-Weapons Convention, and the limitation of conventional weapons in Europe are only a few, important examples. With the implementation of the ban on anti-personnel mines and the campaign against the proliferation of small arms and, recently, of cluster munitions, another important actor appeared on the arms control stage: without the so-called non-governmental organizations the Ottawa land mines agreement would never have come into force. All this shows that arms control is not an "exhausted concept," but more necessary than ever in light of new security policy challenges.

Furthermore, one should have no illusions that also in the future there will not be possibilities to avoid or circumvent arms control treaties and the control and monitoring mechanisms they contain. Nevertheless, there is only one alternative to treaty-based and verifiable arms control: a worldwide nuclear, chemical, and biological arms race. Such a thing cannot be in the interests of, for example, the USA. In any case, the risks resulting from the triad of threats from transnational terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and failing states can be combated more effectively with intelligence, arms control policy and police measures than by military intervention.

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