



HOLY SEE

Intervention of
Monsignor Pietro PAROLIN
Under-Secretary of the Section for Relations with States of the Secretariat of
State

Head of the Delegation of the Holy See
At the Third Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the
Comprehensive Nuclear- Test-Ban Treaty

Vienna, 4 September 2003

Mr. President,

Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of this third Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In this important assignment you can count on the full support of the Delegation of the Holy See. It is my duty, first of all, to bring to this Conference the greetings and encouragement of Pope John Paul II who, in sending me here, wishes to renew his appeal for a common and generous effort for peace and security. Peace is a building always under construction, and among those committed to the task is this Organization which, as affirmed in the Preamble of the Treaty, contributes effectively to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, to the process of nuclear disarmament and therefore to the enhancement of international peace and security.

The Holy See, in fact, by ratifying the Treaty on 18 July 2001, intended precisely to advance the promotion of a culture of peace based upon the primacy of law and of respect for human life.

Before this Conference the Holy See wishes to express its profound conviction that the time is ripe for the nations of the world to put a definitive end to all nuclear weapons testing. The Holy See, commending Algeria and Cyprus for ratifying the Treaty, adds its voice of support to all efforts aimed at ensuring the entry into force of the Treaty and renews its appeal to all those States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so as soon as possible. We call on them whose ratification is needed to take all the necessary steps. They bear a special responsibility and the present moment is a unique occasion to show both courageous leadership and a high sense of political responsibility. Any accumulated delay inevitably increases the risk that nuclear testing will resume and non-proliferation be much harder to sustain. For this reason the Secretary of the Holy See's Relations with States wished to associate himself with the Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT of 14 September 2002.

Mr President, as for other sectors of international life, the Holy See is convinced that today, more than ever, close international co-operation and a multilateral approach are essential in order to face the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction to peace and international security. Global security will be guaranteed through global cooperation within the framework of an authentically multilateral system. However, in order to be effective, multilateralism requires the responsible, honest and coherent cooperation of all the members of the community of nations.

During the 2nd Session of the Preparatory Committee on the NPT held in Geneva last April, the Holy See noted that today an uncertainty is emerging about the commitment to many of the international instruments which for years were considered the pillars of the global arms control and reduction regime. The geo-political situation has changed and certain dimensions of the disarmament scenario may require updating. But it would be a serious mistake to begin to take the current system apart or to allow it to disintegrate. A so-called "peace" based on nuclear weapons cannot be the type of peace we seek for the 21st century! The present state of the non-proliferation regime and of nuclear disarmament indicates that many still believe in the use of force and rely on nuclear weapons. This means, unfortunately, that the force and the primacy of law, as well as trust in others and the will to dialogue, have not yet become priorities.

Mr. President, the Holy See welcomes the moratoria on testing, but such unilateral measures cannot take the place of signature and ratification of the Treaty which offers to the global community the prospect of a permanent and legally binding commitment to end nuclear testing.

To conclude, Mr President, the Holy See wants to speak for many people of good will who strive to make the world a safer place and not to engage in a new arms race which, as in a chain reaction, will encourage to pursue the nuclear option with the risk of nuclear weapons falling into irresponsible hands. The CTBT invites all of us to have the courage of ambition: to finally free this world of the threat of nuclear weapons. Why should this not be possible?

Thank you.