



HOLY SEE

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE TO THE UNITED NATIONS 25 EAST 39th STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10016-0903 (212) 370-7885

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Statement by H.E. Archbishop Celestino Migliore,
Permanent Observer of the Holy See
to the United Nations

Conference on Facilitating the Entry-into-Force of the
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)
21 — 23 September 2005

New York, 22 September 2005

Mr. President,

This Conference started with the realization that the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is growing in impact, shown by the increase in signatures and ratifications. The growth of the CTBT demonstrates that the great majority of States wants to move towards a nuclear weapons-free world.

The goal of the CTBT – to put an end forever to the testing of nuclear weapons – should be the aim of every State. For nuclear weapons are incompatible with the peace we seek for the 21st century.

Yet the movement to CTBT entry-into-force is impeded by the lack of universality. The Holy See adds its voice in appealing to the States whose ratification is necessary for the entry-into-force of the Treaty. The achievement of universality in ending the development of nuclear weapons would show a courageous leadership and a high sense of political responsibility in advancing the culture of peace based upon the primacy of law and respect for human life.

Next year will mark the 10th anniversary of the opening of the CTBT for signatures. It is already past time for the entry-into-force to take effect. In 2003, the Conference reaffirmed the importance of entry-into-force to allow forward progress for systematic efforts toward nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. However, the persisting blockage impedes progress of the world community.

The failure of the recent Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference shows the weaknesses in the non-proliferation regime. All humanity must be concerned that nuclear weapons are becoming a permanent feature of some military doctrines.

Nuclear deterrence, as an ongoing reality after the Cold War, becomes more and more untenable even if it were in the name of collective security. Indeed, it is threatening the existence of peoples in several parts of the world and it may end up being used as a convenient pretext in building up nuclear capacity.

We must respond to these growing dangers by increasing our resolve to build a body of international law to sustain a nuclear weapons-free world. The CTBT, once in effect, would be a pillar of international law. It would be an encouragement for subsequent measures, such as the systematic destruction of all nuclear warheads and their delivery vehicles, that would greatly strengthen the architecture for a new human security regime.

Already the work of the CTBT demonstrates how its verification techniques, designed to detect nuclear explosions, show promise in aiding tsunami warning systems. Humanity will greatly benefit from the full operation of the verification techniques already established.

There is a great deal of work to be done to build the conditions for an enduring peace in the world.

Courage and vision are required to move forward. Although the century opened with a burst of global terrorism, this threat must not be allowed to dilute the precepts of international humanitarian law, which is founded on the key principles of limitation and proportionality. The use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated.

Through courage and vision, we can muster the strength to lift the international community out of the quagmire of reliance on nuclear weapons for security'. The CTBT is a tool for lifting up humanity.

Thank you, Mr. President.