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Review of the Non-proliferation Treaty Nuclear arms in North Korea and Iran

Gomes (PSE). - (PT) Nuclear weapons are illegal and immoral. Five years ago, the world was celebrating the historic consensus reached with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a significant landmark for world peace, as Kofi Annan put it. Five years on, ahead of the Treaty Review Conference, the outlook is starkly different. The United States has shifted its position away from the commitments it made and the current administration has even announced that it will develop new nuclear weapons technology, costing astronomical amounts of money.

The United States and other nuclear weapon states that are signatories to the Treaty have, thus far, failed to honour their commitments to disarm, nor have they given any signs that they intend to reduce their nuclear arsenals. At this very moment, the United States has 480 nuclear weapons stationed in Europe and has yet to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. The upshot of which is that other states party to the Treaty do not feel they have a binding commitment to comply with the NPT following the invasion of Iraq on the false pretext of the existence of weapons of mass destruction. Possessing - or pretending to possess - nuclear weapons has come to have a certain status, and has in fact come to be perceived as a deterrent or a means of self-defence.

Countries such as Israel, India and Pakistan, which also have nuclear weapons, remain outside the Treaty and feel neither encouraged, nor under any pressure whatsoever, to sign up to it. More worryingly still, North Korea is trying to withdraw from the Treaty and is blackmailing the international community. We have reached the point where applicants to join the permanent Security Council cite this status to support their candidature.

The United Nations' High Level Panel on dangers, threats and challenges says that the stage has been reached where the process of eroding the non-proliferation regime could have passed the point of no return and could result in galloping proliferation. Additionally, we know that there is a high risk of nuclear materials falling into the hands of terrorists, often completely out of state control.

Such galloping proliferation can only be prevented if the international community channels all its efforts into effective multilateral solutions. The forthcoming NPT review is an opportunity that must not be wasted. The EU must play a key role in making the Treaty work as a permanent bureau, which would entail coordination with EU nuclear weapon states if there is to be genuinely coordinated action within the terms of the foreign and security policy and the security and defence policy. Given the urgency of the situation, Parliament should send a mission to the conference to monitor European intervention, to monitor what the Member States do and to encourage action on the Treaty, in line ...

(The President cut off the speaker)