

**Ansprache D2A bei Eröffnung des *Berlin Framework Forums: Creating the Conditions and Building the Framework for a Nuclear Weapons-Free World*,
am 21. Februar 2013 im Auswärtigen Amt**

Chairman Akiba, Excellencies, Honourable Members of Parliament, dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you here at the Framework Forum, also on behalf of Foreign Minister Westerwelle. Minister Westerwelle would have wished to attend the opening, too. Unfortunately though, due to other commitments, he is unable to attend. He sends his warm greetings.

It is my privilege and honor to open this conference with MPI Chairman Tadatoshi Akiba. As former mayor of Hiroshima he can talk on the issue before us with great authority. Nobody else knows the suffering of the inhabitants of his city as a consequence of nuclear use better than he does.

It is also a great pleasure to welcome to the premises of the Federal Foreign Office, Ms. Uta Zapf, Chairperson of the Subcommittee on disarmament and arms control of the German Bundestag, as well as a number of her parliamentary colleagues. We are grateful to the Bundestag and specifically the Subcommittee for the support of our activities.

A lot of work and conceptual effort has gone into the preparation of this conference. I want to thank all collaborators of MPI, all parliamentarians and the affiliated civil society organizations for their dedicated commitment. The German Government considers civil society an important partner in the pursuance of its disarmament, arms control and non- proliferation agenda.

I would also like to thank the Austrian Government, the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation and the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation for their willingness to co-sponsor this important event together with the German government.

You have chosen for this two-day Conference an arduous, but promising task, namely how to create the conditions for a Nuclear Weapons-free World. As Chairman and Secretary-General Ban-ki Moon has said, many avenues lead to Rome, but political will is needed to keep the focus.

Germany is committed to the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. Visions can become reality, when the time and the conditions are ripe. Sometimes this happens faster than many think. 25 years ago nobody would have predicted that the wall would come down a year later.

Germany is one of the leading nations in disarmament and arms control. We see ourselves as an advocate for global zero. We try to encourage friends, allies and partners to take a more proactive stance, unfortunately not always with the kind of success we would like to see.

As an active member of the so called Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), a cross-regional grouping of 10 countries particularly committed to the NPT, we are working towards the implementation of the treaty in all its aspects

- Non-proliferaion of nuclear weapons
- Elimination of nuclear weapons
- Access to the civilian use of nuclear energy for those countries who choose to use it.

We are convinced: A world without nuclear weapons is a safer world. It would also be more secure. The consequences of nuclear war would be catastrophic. The nuclear taboo must be strengthened.

Disarmament and arms control are central pillars of the global security architecture of the 21st century, which in our view must be based on a cooperative approach.

Disarmament and Arms Control are of a complex nature. Progress on nuclear matters, must be seen in a broader context. Stalled progress on one front should not jeopardize progress on other fronts.

We are deeply convinced that progress is feasible. We feel encouraged by the fact that NATO's new Committee on Disarmament does exist now and is finally getting down to work. We expect the committee to make a significant contribution to transparency in the field of substrategic nuclear weapons, thereby facilitating talks between the US and Russia on the reduction of strategic and substrategic nuclear weapons, both deployed and non-deployed.

Substrategic nuclear weapons in Europe are of a questionable military value. If it had only been for us, we could live without them. As a member of the Alliance, however, we cannot and do not want to act unilaterally. We have to take the more reluctant viewpoints of our allies into consideration. Here I see an important task for civil society, particularly in those countries the representatives of which say they feel reassured by those weapons.

Within NATO and with our partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative we are lobbying the Nuclear Weapon States to further reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. We are also pushing them towards more transparency with respect to their nuclear arsenal. Some headway has been made over the years, but more is possible. We must reduce the appeal of nuclear weapons for

some nuclear “have nots”. Thanks to the German Government, this topic is now firmly established on the international agenda.

Progress in the area of nuclear disarmament can help to further our non-proliferation objectives. The international non-proliferation regime is under stress. The non-proliferation crises with respect to Iran or North Korea pose serious challenges to the NPT and international security. The third nuclear test carried out by the North Korean regime in stark violation of its obligations, has further escalated an already volatile situation in the region. Strong international action must be taken at the level of the UNSC. We must deal with countries which profit from cooperation within the NPT and then leave the treaty. The IAEA must be strengthened.

Concerning the conflict around Iran’s nuclear program, Germany - together with its E3+3 partners - is strongly committed to finding a diplomatic solution. The next meeting with Iran in Kazakhstan on Feb 26 will be an important one. Iran must start to engage seriously.

The security environment in East Asia is under severe strain. China is developing and modernizing its nuclear arsenal. The nuclear build-up between India and Pakistan continues unabatedly. It constitutes a serious threat. Dialogue and confidence building are absolutely essential.

The natural forum for debates on these issues, the CD in Geneva, is in need of revitalization. The early start of negotiations on an FMCT remains one of our priorities. The establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts is by far not enough, but a cautious first step into the right direction.

Balance of terror and mutually assured destruction are no longer sensible concepts in a new security environment characterized by global interdependence and new threats. Deterrence can fail and nearly has on a number of occasions during the Cold War. And clearly, nuclear weapons do not deter terrorist attacks. On the contrary, in the hands of terrorists they are a clear and present danger for the world.

Nobody should underestimate the challenges connected to the vision of a world without nuclear weapons and the forces of inertia at work. Verification issues, universality, legal and institutional issues etc. All are relevant and complicated. They must be addressed if we are to move from a vision to an objective.

Let’s get to work. We expect new ideas and fresh proposals to emerge. I wish all of you success and good results for your important debates.

Let me thank once again all those who have made this meeting possible.

Thank you for your attention.