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***International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons***

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***Presentation at High Level Meeting by Jonathan Granoff,***

***President Global Security Institute***

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***“Nuclear Weapons Are Unworthy of Civilization”***

Mr. Secretary General, Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Friends,

Senator Alan Cranston often said, “Nuclear weapons are unworthy of civilization.”

If we contemplate the consequences of the explosion on a civilian population of any of the present 16,300 of these devices of death -- the inferno, the radiation, the destruction in proportions beyond human reckoning -- our sense of conscience, our sense of common humanity, must compel us to act. Silence, equivocation or procrastination in the face of this threat nine countries recreate each day, each moment, is complicity.

Mr. President, the convening of this high level meeting is thus praiseworthy and it is an honor to speak here today.

Promises to seek the security of a nuclear weapons free world abound. The unanimous decision of the International Court of Justice underlined that duty and declared it universal. Elementary considerations of humanity and conscience embodied in International Humanitarian Law highlight the prohibition of weapons of indiscriminate effect. By international treaties biological and chemical weapons are banned.

But, imagine if the Biological Weapons Convention said no state can use small pox or polio as a weapon but we will entrust nine states to modernize the delivery, accuracy, and stockpiling of the plague as a weapon to pursue international order and security. Would that be coherent, equitable, sustainable, wise?

Inequity and incoherence bring instability and coherence and equity bring stability.

The resolution convening us today properly “Calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament” to obtain a comprehensive convention eliminating nuclear weapons. This process need not be limited to only one forum. The issue is indeed sufficiently critical that many forums – bilateral, multilateral, regional, and global – at diplomatic, military, ministerial, high level, and summit level should be devoting time, resources and skills to moving forward. Also, discussions should include other forms of moving forward such as a framework of instruments or a ban. As the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon reminded us today: “What matters most is not which path is taken, but that the chosen path is heading in the right direction — towards the internationally agreed goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.” We know this won’t be done overnight, but if we don’t start it won’t be done.

The valuable summits addressing the security of nuclear materials could also include in its agenda acceleration of the elimination of nuclear weapons or a series of summits on this urgent matter at the same level could be commenced.

Our real security interests are a stable climate, control of pandemic diseases, cybersecurity, building stable societies where human dignity flourishes, stable financial markets, elimination of poverty, healthy rainforests and oceans. These are the real security issues we face. Achieving success in these issues is our common good. The pursuit of our common good will help address numerous crises.

Recently we have seen increased appropriate attention to the climate. Failure on this issue is slow burn, slow death; nuclear weapons, fast burn, and fast death.

To adequately address the climate and other real threats, mature leadership that creates cooperation is needed. With respect to the climate there can be no them. We share the same air, there is just us. Nuclear weapons are not only dangerous and costly, but they are a wall where we need bridges. It is time to tear down this wall. Which nation, which leader, will step forward first, redefine security, pursue our common good, and move the nuclear disarmament negotiation process with appropriate speed?

Many believe it is all in God’s hands. I agree. But, it is also in our hands. Thank you.

Jonathan Granoff is President of the Global Security Institute which participates in numerous initiatives including Unfold Zero, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament, United Religions Initiative, and the Middle Power Initiative.