



LAWYERS ALLIANCE FOR WORLD SECURITY

COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

Ambassador Thomas Graham, Jr.

President

VIA FACSIMILE

June 14, 1999

The Right Honorable Tony Blair
Prime Minister
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Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I would like to congratulate you for the progress made at the recent Washington Summit, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of NATO, toward reducing the political value of nuclear weapons and opening the door for a clear incorporation of nuclear non-proliferation objectives into NATO doctrine. Further, peace with justice in the Balkans now appears to be possible, for which we all should be grateful. However, we must not forget that over the medium to long term the potential proliferation of nuclear weapons is the gravest threat NATO and its member states face in the post-Cold War world. Steps to reduce the political value of these weapons are the best way to retard their spread. The importance of this was brought home during the Kosovo crisis when all of us were thankful that Slobodan Milosevic did not possess nuclear weapons.

NATO member states should be particularly proud of the revisions to the Alliance Strategic Concept of April 24, 1999 which characterize the possible use of nuclear weapons as "extremely remote" and recognize nuclear non-proliferation as an important security aim of the Alliance which is inextricably linked to nuclear disarmament. While troubling anachronistic references to the importance of nuclear weapons as an "essential military and political link between the European and North American members of the Alliance" and the "supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies" remain, the new document represents an important step toward the harmonization of NATO doctrine and the nuclear non-proliferation efforts of the Alliance and its member states. By recognizing the need to address the proliferation threat, NATO is moving in the right direction.

The Summit Communiqué further clarifies this objective and opens the door for near-term progress. It states that, "in the light of overall strategic developments and the reduced salience of nuclear weapons, the Alliance will consider options for confidence and security building measures, verification, non-proliferation and arms control and disarmament. The Council in Permanent Session will propose a process to Ministers in December for considering such options."

NATO thus has indicated its intention to promote non-proliferation and disarmament through, among other things, a review of its nuclear policy and doctrine. As a result of thoughtful contributions of Canada and Germany among others, this review will consider, along with other matters, whether it is now time to revise NATO's long-held policy of retaining the option to use nuclear weapons first and to adopt a policy of not being the first to introduce nuclear weapons in future conflicts. An Alliance nuclear weapon use doctrine made consistent with the negative security assurances offered in conjunction with the 1995 indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by the adoption of a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons would go a long way to reducing the political value of these weapons. Such a policy should be integrated into NATO doctrine to demonstrate to the world the importance of the NPT regime to Alliance security.

There is growing concern in many capitals that little progress will be made toward the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament before the 2000 NPT Review Conference. This would be a dangerous outcome for the health of the NPT regime; it would be seen by many as bad faith on the part of the nuclear weapon states – not only with regard to their NPT Article VI disarmament obligations but also with regard to their commitment to the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Document adopted by the NPT states parties in 1995 in connection with the indefinite extension. It is important to remember that the Principles and Objectives Document, as well as the 1995 negative security assurances, were inextricably linked to the NPT indefinite extension and essential to its achievement. As the first review of the NPT since it was made permanent, the 2000 Review Conference will hold the Treaty – and its states parties – to a higher standard than ever before, but it has been a long time since the nuclear weapon states had so little to deliver.

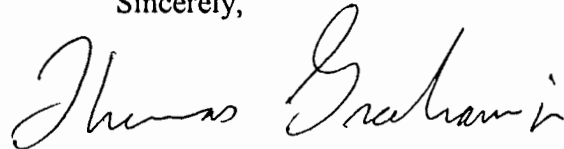
Additionally, an overt policy of deterrence by NATO of chemical and biological weapons with nuclear weapons would cause the three nuclear weapon state NATO members to be in violation of their negative security assurances, as the nuclear weapon states essentially committed themselves in 1995 never to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against NPT non-nuclear weapon state parties. If NATO, the most powerful conventional force in history and facing no major military threat, insists that it needs to use the threat of retaliation with nuclear weapons to deter, say, biological weapons, then why does not Iran or Egypt or any other state which has a regional rival need them as well for this purpose? Clearly, such a policy by NATO would undercut efforts to persuade additional states to stay in the NPT regime and not to acquire nuclear weapons. Moreover, the utility of a policy of “calculated ambiguity” toward a state threatening the use of chemical and biological weapons has vanished with the disclosures in memoirs by the relevant senior policy makers that whatever its implied policy was, the United States never had under any circumstances any intention of using nuclear weapons in the Persian Gulf War. Any future believable deterrence would have to involve explicit nuclear threats, which is certainly not desirable.

Adoption by NATO of a no first use policy may be the only remaining opportunity to demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of the NPT before the 2000 Review Conference, and the desirability of the policy option should be understood in this context. Moreover, the adoption of such a policy would remove the inconsistency between NATO nuclear weapon use

policy and the NPT-related obligations of the three nuclear weapon state Alliance members undertaken pursuant to the 1995 negative security assurances. Further, as NATO adopted a new mandate for out of area crisis management operations at the Summit, it would seem inadvisable for NATO to appear to combine such possible future out of area operations with the potential for the first use of nuclear weapons. In the absence of the Soviet threat, the military value of the first use option for Alliance security has fallen precipitously while its political cost has risen exponentially with the linkage of the negative security assurances and the Principles and Objectives Document to the indefinite extension of the NPT.

I hope that NATO will seriously consider adopting a policy of not being the first to introduce nuclear weapons in future conflicts and make any such policy decision prior to the 2000 NPT Review Conference. This would be infinitely valuable in helping to achieve NATO's nuclear non-proliferation objectives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas Graham, Jr." The signature is written in dark ink and is centered below the word "Sincerely,".

Thomas Graham, Jr.