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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA PRIMA SESSIONE DEL COMITATO PREPARATORIO DELLA VIII CONFERENZA DI ESAME DEL TRATTATO DI NON PROLIFERAZIONE DELLE ARMI NUCLEARI (VIENNA, 30 APRILE - 11 MAGGIO 2007)

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Il 1° maggio scorso Mons. Michael W. Banach, Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso le Organizzazioni Internazionali a Vienna, ha preso la parola nel corso della prima sessione del Comitato Preparatorio della VIII Conferenza di esame del Trattato di non proliferazione delle armi nucleari, in corso a Vienna dal 30 aprile all'11 maggio 2007.

Riportiamo qui di seguito il testo dell'intervento.

• INTERVENTO DI MONS. MICHAEL W. BANACH

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of the Holy See warmly congratulates you on your appointment as a Chairman, as well as the Ukrainian Ambassador on his appointment as Vice-Chair. We assure you of our support.

With this Preparatory Committee we embark on a journey whose primary goal is to prepare fertile ground so that the VIII Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, scheduled for 2010, will produce consistent and encouraging results not only for strengthening the Treaty itself, but also for making it a more effective instrument in responding to the new challenges that are continually emerging on the nuclear horizon.

We commence our discussions after the less than satisfactory outcome of the 2005 Review Conference, during which it was not possible to adopt a substantial consensus document on account of the differences existing within the international community.

The difficulties that emerged in 2005 should help us to reflect upon and to chart a course of action that, in three

years time, might allow us to celebrate the 2010 Review Conference with satisfactory results in the areas of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. My Delegation would like to contribute to this debate by proposing three areas for our reflections.

A first element for our reflection is the recognition of the strong bonds that exist between nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation: they are interdependent and mutually reinforcing and their transparent and responsible implementation represents one of the principal instruments not only in the fight against nuclear terrorism, but also in the concrete realization of a culture of life and of peace capable of promoting in an effective way the integral development of peoples. Here it is fitting to recall that "in place of the arms race....there must be substituted a common effort to mobilize resources toward objectives of moral, cultural and economic development, redefining the priorities and hierarchies of values" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2438).

A second element for reflection, inevitably connected with the preceding one, is the need to create within this forum a climate of confidence and real cooperation. The less than satisfactory outcome of 2005 demonstrates a prevalence of individual interests over collective security, thus risking to weaken even further the already fragile frameworks on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, of which the NPT represents the principal multilateral point of reference. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that there is a growing awareness of how the interests of national security are deeply connected with the interests of international security. In acknowledging this interdependence, it thus becomes all the more evident how the NPT represents a fundamental pillar in nuclear non-proliferation, furnishing the legal basis not only for international verification on nuclear material, under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency, but also for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Pope Benedict XVI, in his 2006 Message for the World Day of Peace, stated: "What can be said, too, about those governments which count nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? Along with countless persons of good will, one can state that this point of view is not only baneful but also completely fallacious. In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims. The truth of peace requires that all – whether those governments which openly or secretly possess nuclear arms, or those planning to acquire them – agree to change their course by clear and firm decisions, and strive for a progressive and concerted nuclear disarmament. The resources which would be saved could then be employed in projects of development capable of benefiting all their people, especially the poor" (No. 13).

A third point for reflection is the need to raise awareness within the international community so that it might be more ambitious in making the NPT an adequate instrument in the promotion of peace and international security. In order to accomplish this an innovative approach on determining the legal, political and technical requirements to promote effectively the objectives of the NPT is called for. In this direction, an analysis and determination of practical steps is necessary so that these steps may more effectively respond to questions concerning, for example, verification and transparency of the activities of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, fissile material, negative security assurances, nuclear fuel cycle, control of radioactive material, expansion of nuclear-weapons-free-zones, recognizing the value of the CTBT, and improving the governance of the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

"Peace is more than the absence of war: it cannot be reduced to the maintenance of a balance of power between opposing forces nor does it arise out of despotic dominion, but it is appropriately called the work of justice....Peace will never be achieved once and for all, but must be built up continually" (*Gaudium et Spes*, No. 78). The foundations of peace are built upon respect for human life and the primacy of the rule of law. The principal aim of the rule of law is, in fact, to substitute "the material force of arms with the moral force of law" (Benedict XV, Appeal to the Leaders of Peoples at War, August 1, 1917). These words might be able to enlighten the way that leads from Vienna 2007 to New York 2010 and the VIII Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!

