

Non-paper on including tactical nuclear weapons in Europe in a broader nuclear disarmament and arms control process

Poland and Norway welcome the global revival of the debate in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Engagement of the whole international community is crucial in order to reach the overall political objective of a world free of nuclear weapons, but the primary responsibility lies with the nuclear weapon states. Therefore, the new agreement between the main possessors of nuclear arsenals, the United States and the Russian Federation, on strategic arms reductions will constitute an important step towards a nuclear weapons free world.

The constructive development with regard to strategic arms highlights the challenge posed by sub-strategic/tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) arsenals. Their reduction and elimination has not yet been the subject of any legally binding international agreement. The goal of a world without nuclear weapons cannot be met without addressing this challenge.

This problem is of crucial importance for the security and stability of Europe. Substantial arsenals of TNWs remain non-transparent, as there is a lack of information about their location, operational status and level of security. They are also believed to be more prone to proliferation and unauthorised use than strategic nuclear weapons. Moreover, TNWs may continue to play an important role in the military doctrines of certain states.

The elimination of the danger posed by the continued presence of numerous tactical nuclear weapons in Europe should be achieved by including them in the broader nuclear and arms control framework.

This process must be subject to consultations among allied countries, and not pursued unilaterally or allowed to weaken the transatlantic link. The process should furthermore be based on the principle of indivisibility of security and reciprocity with the Russian Federation. Having that in mind, one could move in a step-wise fashion from enhancing transparency and confidence-building measures to reducing and eventually fully eliminating tactical nuclear weapons through legally binding agreements.

Step I – Transparency - Initial information-sharing and reaffirmation of the PNIs

- a) The US and Russia should be encouraged to reaffirm their mutual commitments, such as the 1991 and 1992 initiatives to reduce tactical nuclear weapons (Presidential Nuclear Initiatives - PNIs).¹
- b) The US and Russia should provide official information about progress on eliminating TNWs following previous unilateral declarations.

¹ This step was also proposed in recommendation 21 of the WMD Commission, which presented its report in 2006.

- c) The US and Russia should declare their numbers of TNWs.
- d) The above-mentioned declarations could be announced in the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty review process or in the UN General Assembly.
- e) The US, its NATO Allies and Russia should also declare their willingness to undertake further steps aimed at elaborating a set of confidence-building measures, which would allow more detailed information-sharing on TNW inventories. Expression of such intent would facilitate step II.

Step II – Confidence-building

- a) The confidence-building process should build on information exchange between the US and Russia on the number, location and operational status of TNW warheads. Such exchange could take place within the NATO-Russia Council. Experience may be drawn from the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, which was used before 1999 as a forum to exchange information on implementation of the PNI commitments.
- b) Confidence-building should be reinforced by review of the role tactical nuclear weapons play in the military doctrines of NATO, Russia and the US. Depending on the participation, the exchange of views could take place in the NATO-Russia Council or in the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) of the OSCE.

Step III – Withdrawal of Russian and US tactical nuclear weapons from Europe and their subsequent elimination²

- a) A process of withdrawing US and Russian TNWs to central storage places outside Europe could be initiated.
- b) The US, its Allies and Russia should agree on a verification mechanism that enables them to monitor the withdrawal of tactical nuclear arms from locations in Europe.
- c) In a wider context, the initiation of a process with the aim of achieving a global ban on certain categories of TNWs should be considered. This would help to simplify verification and would be a significant step in the process of non-proliferation and disarmament.
- d) It is envisioned that the next round of US–Russian talks on strategic nuclear weapons reductions include TNWs. This stage could also embrace smaller arsenals of other nuclear weapons states and thereby contribute to reaching the goal of the world free of nuclear weapons

² This stage can be reached (a) once and when there is clarity that it will not affect NATO deterrence policy; and (b) in conjunction with overall progress in nuclear disarmament.