



ABSTRACT

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Universal Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Instruments

The contribution of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation instruments to the security of the international community depends primarily on two elements. Such instruments must be effective by addressing relevant security concerns; and they must enjoy the broad support of the international community. The assessment on the importance of the instruments by the majority of states must converge.

The NPT-based¹ nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture has been remarkably successful in the past and has, by and large, fulfilled these criteria. Today, however, the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime is in a serious crisis as the basic international consensus has eroded. This is due to the cyclical debate about which NPT commitment takes precedent over the other, non-proliferation versus disarmament, which paralyzes the process and further undermines the confidence in the effectiveness of the regime.

The same debate is evident in the European Security Strategy “A Secure Europe in a Better World” from 2003 where the issue of nuclear disarmament is omitted due to the fact that the opinions are greatly divided between European Nuclear Weapon States and proponents of nuclear disarmament.

While non-proliferation efforts need to be intensified, progress towards nuclear disarmament should be pursued simultaneously. Effective multilateralism to confront nuclear threats, as asked for in the EU Strategy, will require such a convergence in the EU.

¹ Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); 1968