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Cloudbusting: Ways to address the growing salience of nuclear weapons in the NPT

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This paper reflects discussions among members of the ELN's project **Protecting the Non-Proliferation Treaty**. The project seeks to preserve the multilateral nuclear non-proliferation regime and prevent further erosion of the nuclear taboo and the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). Bringing together an intergenerational, pan-regional Network of experts, it works to identify pathways to success in the eleventh review cycle, taking a holistic approach to the NPT and its three pillars.

For more information on the project please go to www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/protecting-the-non-proliferation-treaty.

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Executive summary

- Nuclear-weapon states (NWS) are disregarding political commitments accepted under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to “further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies”¹ and increasing nuclear risks by boosting the salience of nuclear weapons.
- The NPT is inclusive, nearly universal, and connects the disarmament and non-proliferation dimensions of the global nuclear order. These factors make it a good place to address nuclear weapons salience. In a polarised international environment, the NPT can also link up other contexts where nuclear weapons are discussed.
- The ambition of efforts to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons will depend on the overall trajectory of international politics. But the growing role and significance of nuclear weapons is both the result and a driver of rivalry between the NWS.
- Under a dark sky for the NPT, where the international security environment further deteriorates, it will be important for NPT states parties to defend and strengthen the nuclear taboo in both language and action.
- Under a grey sky, where the global context remains similar to today, NPT states parties should act against a nuclear mission creep by initiating a series of dialogues, aimed at increasing transparency on nuclear doctrines and agreements.
- Under a blue sky, where international relations improve, NPT states parties should aim to endorse collective statements and agree on measures to limit and reduce the salience of nuclear weapons.

The growing role and significance of nuclear weapons is both the result and a driver of rivalry between the NWS.

Introduction

Reactions to the trend towards greater reliance on nuclear deterrence are indicative of a growing polarisation among NPT states parties on how to view nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence.

The nuclear-weapon states (NWS) are increasing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in their military and security concepts.² Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine and associated nuclear threats have moved the problem of the growing salience of nuclear weapons to the centre stage of the political debate around disarmament, arms control, and proliferation.³ China's nuclear buildup is raising questions on whether Beijing's no-first-use policy remains consistent with its new nuclear posture. The United States recently updated its nuclear weapons employment guidance to "take into account the realities of a new nuclear era" by emphasising "the need to account for the growth and diversity"⁴ of China's nuclear arsenal and the perceived requirement to deter Russia, China, and North Korea simultaneously.

These policies increase the risk of nuclear weapons use. They are also at odds with the 2010 call on the NWS by nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) states parties "to further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies".⁵

Reactions to the trend towards greater reliance on nuclear deterrence are indicative of a growing polarisation among NPT states parties on how to view nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence. As nuclear threats move to the forefront of great power relations, the divide between those who see nuclear weapons as an asset and those who see them as a liability has grown. It is also likely to continue to deepen unless the current trajectory towards more reliance on nuclear deterrence is reversed.

This paper treats the growing competition among NPT nuclear weapons states (N5) and the role of nuclear weapons in Chinese, French, Russian, UK, and US military and security concepts as interdependent problems. Rivalries among the nuclear weapon states, and the respective perceptions of such competition, are catalysts for the increased salience of nuclear weapons. But, vice versa, N5 policies to leverage nuclear threats for their own security interests, sometimes with tacit or open support of their allies, also drive and deepen competition. From this perspective, policies aimed at decreasing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in military and security concepts, doctrines, and policies can help to bust the darkening clouds over the NPT.

The NPT itself is well-suited for such cloudbusting. The treaty's inclusiveness and the fact that it connects the disarmament and non-proliferation dimensions of nuclear weapons' salience are its strengths. Thus, the NPT is a good place to address the problem that "the doctrine of nuclear deterrence has proven to be contagious"⁶ as former UN-Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, had argued. Ban warned at the time that the growing significance of nuclear weapons makes "non-proliferation more difficult, which in turn raises new risks that nuclear weapons will be used".⁷ At NPT meetings of states parties, all stakeholders can debate the causes of the increased salience of nuclear weapons and identify ways to tackle the problem. At the 2026 NPT Review Conference, state parties can take politically-binding decisions to reduce the role of nuclear weapons, charting a way forward towards a world where nuclear deterrence plays only a residual role, and would eventually disappear altogether. The Preparatory Committee

(PrepCom) meetings leading up to the 11th Review Conference are opportunities to pave the way for such decisions.

This paper provides background on efforts to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in the NPT and other disarmament contexts. It elaborates options for states parties and other stakeholders in the NPT for lowering nuclear weapons' salience in different scenarios, namely under a dark sky where relations between the N5 continue to deteriorate, under a grey sky where relations are basically unchanged and under blue sky, where international relations are improving. It argues that efforts to reduce the role of nuclear weapons can help to improve the climate for disarmament. For this to happen, non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS) will have to be pragmatic in acknowledging that NWS have security concerns, while the NWS must not use the bad state of relations between them as an excuse for not tackling the problem of the growing role of nuclear weapons.

Frameworks for tackling the salience of nuclear weapons

The NPT is the central place for debating the quantitative and qualitative aspects of nuclear disarmament.

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The NPT: commitments and actions to reduce the role of nuclear weapons

In the 64-step Action Plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the NWS committed to accelerate concrete progress on the steps leading to nuclear disarmament “in a way that promotes international stability, peace and undiminished and increased security”.⁸ States parties collectively called upon the N5 “to further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies”.⁹

The commitment to tackle the salience of nuclear weapons was made at a time when relations between the N5 were better than they are today. US President Barack Obama, in his 2009 Prague speech, had promised that the United States would “take concrete steps towards a world without nuclear weapons”.¹⁰ As his first action point, he argued that to “put an end to Cold War thinking”, Washington would “reduce the role of nuclear weapons in [its] national security strategy, and urge others to do the same”.¹¹ Ahead of the 8th Review Conference, Russia and the United States had agreed to new limits on their strategic nuclear forces in New START. In November 2010, NATO members had stated that they are seeking “a true strategic partnership”¹² with Russia.

Yet, with Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea and with turmoil in the Middle East following the so-called Arab Spring, states parties at the 2015 NPT Review Conference were unable to agree on a consensus outcome.

The 10th NPT Review Conference began in August 2022 against the background of Russian nuclear threats. These threats were made to constrain and reduce Western support for Ukraine in their defence against a full-fledged Russian invasion. Subsequently, the three Western nuclear-weapon states (France, UK and United States) and many other NPT states parties raised concerns about Russia’s attempted nuclear coercion. Moscow rejected this criticism and also single-handedly prevented the adoption of the draft Final Document.¹³ That draft document had contained a commitment by the NWS “to refrain from any inflammatory rhetoric concerning the use of nuclear weapons”.¹⁴

The N5: creating a better understanding among nuclear weapon states

Up until Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the dialogue among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (P5), which are also the five nuclear weapon states recognised by the NPT, was a valuable framework for information exchange and confidence-building. This included conversations on the role of nuclear weapons in N5 security policies. Thus, a 2020 study on the N5 process found that "officials from all P5 states highlighted the 'immense value' of these discussions in interviews for they provide a platform for addressing misunderstandings and misperceptions about the nuclear doctrines of other P5 states. For example, the doctrines dialogue enables a P5 state to ask another member to clarify aspects about its nuclear doctrine and posture".¹⁵

Under the Russian 2023-24 chairmanship, the level and frequency of interactions among the N5 decreased, although the issue of nuclear doctrines apparently remained on the group's agenda.¹⁶ It remains to be seen whether the N5 will be able to meet at more senior levels and engage more effectively on nuclear doctrines when China takes over as chair after the 2024 PrepCom.

The TPNW: prohibiting nuclear deterrence

The TPNW is the first international treaty that commits states parties to "never under any circumstances" use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons.¹⁷ The treaty entered into force in January 2021. At the August 2022 NPT Review Conference, Western states and NATO members criticised TPNW states parties for not explicitly condemning Russia's nuclear threats at the first Meeting of TPNW states parties (1MSP), which had taken place in June 2022, just four months after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. TPNW states parties replied by pointing out that the Political Declaration adopted in Vienna stated that "any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations".¹⁸ They also argued that participants at 1MSP had condemned "unequivocally any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances".¹⁹

The G20 and G7: the inadmissibility of (some) nuclear threats

In September/October 2022, the risk of nuclear weapon use by Russia in Ukraine rose to unprecedented levels, underlining the acute importance of addressing nuclear threats. The crisis also demonstrated the importance of multilateral diplomacy as it was defused not only through deterrence, but also diplomatic pressure. States with better relations with Russia, including China, played an important role in signalling concerns about a possible nuclear escalation in Ukraine.²⁰

In the wake of that crisis, at their November 2022 summit in Bali, Indonesia, the G20 agreed that "[t]he use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible".²¹ This language was remarkable for two reasons; first, it came close to the TPNW's prohibition of threats of nuclear use. Second, the N5, as well as India, which also possesses

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nuclear weapons, and several states in nuclear alliances signed on. G20 leaders repeated the Bali language one year later at their Delhi summit.

G7 leaders (of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, and United States), in their May 2023 ‘Hiroshima vision on nuclear disarmament’ recalled the Bali declaration but took a somewhat narrower view of the issue. They singled out Russia by stating that “threats by Russia of nuclear weapon use, let alone any use of nuclear weapons by Russia, in the context of its aggression against Ukraine are inadmissible”.²²

Key statements on the role of nuclear weapons and nuclear threats

Fora/group	Year	Statement
International Court of Justice	1996	“The notions of ‘threat’ and ‘use’ of force under Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter stand together in the sense that if the use of force itself in a given case is illegal—for whatever reason—the threat to use such force will likewise be illegal”.
Final Document of the 6th NPT Review Conference	2000	NWS agree to take steps towards “A diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies to minimize the risk that these weapons will ever be used and to facilitate the process of their total elimination”.
Final Document of the 8th NPT Review Conference	2010	NWS are called upon “To further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies”.
TPNW	2017	“Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to: (d) Use or threaten to use nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; ... (Article 1)”.
N5	January 2022	“We reaffirm the importance of addressing nuclear threats and emphasize the importance of preserving and complying with our bilateral and multilateral non-proliferation, disarmament, and arms control agreements and commitments”.
G20	November 2022	“The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible”.
TPNW 1MSP	2022	“We are alarmed and dismayed by threats to use nuclear weapons and increasingly strident nuclear rhetoric. We stress that any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. We condemn unequivocally any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances”.
Draft Final Document of the 10th NPT Review Conference	2022	“The nuclear-weapon States commit to refrain from any inflammatory rhetoric concerning the use of nuclear weapons”.
G7	May 2023	“[T]hreats by Russia of nuclear weapon use, let alone any use of nuclear weapons by Russia, in the context of its aggression against Ukraine are inadmissible”.

Options and recommendations: cloud-busting and the salience of nuclear weapons

The level of ambition of such efforts to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons will depend on the overall trajectory of international politics.

It is important that nuclear-weapon states reduce their reliance on nuclear weapons not only to lower nuclear risks but also to tackle one of the causes of tension between them. Non-nuclear weapon states can induce NWS to move in that direction by opposing any move to increase roles of nuclear weapons in deterrence and defence postures.

The NPT remains the most important framework for such discussions on the salience of nuclear weapons. Meetings of states parties are an inclusive platform to debate the effects of the growing role of nuclear weapons, and the legitimacy of nuclear threats. NPT Review Conferences can agree standards for reporting on the role of nuclear weapons in military and security concepts, doctrines, and policies. Ideally, states parties can commit to specific steps to reduce the importance of nuclear weapons. Subgroups of NPT states parties are also debating and taking actions related to the salience of nuclear weapons, including at meetings of the TPNW, the N5, military alliances, groups of like-minded states, and regional groupings. It will be important to connect such discussions to the NPT to strengthen the normative framework around the nuclear taboo. This can take place through regular reporting and, wherever possible, structured discussions that allow NNWS to better understand and question NWS military and security concepts, doctrines, and policies.

The level of ambition of such efforts to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons will depend on the overall trajectory of international politics. Should the global context for nuclear disarmament continue to deteriorate, NPT states parties should focus on reinforcing the nuclear taboo, to avoid a “fatal blow to NPT”.²³ If circumstances are still marked by competition but have not significantly worsened compared to today, NPT states parties could intensify dialogues on role of nuclear weapons and engage in discussions around definitions of nuclear threats. Such efforts could help to avert the slow death of the NPT, where the treaty regime falls into disregard because states parties are no longer willing to seriously engage on nuclear disarmament. Under a blue sky, where N5 relations begin to improve, NWS states and their allies should take tangible steps to reduce role of nuclear weapons, including in dedicated working groups that could draw on the expertise and outcome of discussions in various like-minded groups.

It would be positive if NPT states parties were to take some or all the steps outlined here under any circumstance. A reaffirmation of the G20 statement that nuclear threats and nuclear weapons use are inadmissible would, for example, underpin the political commitments made at the 2000 and 2010 Review Conference to reduce the role of nuclear weapons. The following categories of specific measures therefore are based primarily on an assessment of their feasibility, rather than overall desirability. It also reflects the uncertainty that policymakers and analysts face given the unclear political circumstances under which the 2026 Review Conference will meet.

Under a dark sky: reaffirming the nuclear taboo

In a worsening international environment, NWS will likely increase their reliance on nuclear weapons and nuclear threats, either

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implicitly or explicitly. In such an environment, it will be key “to defend and strengthen the nuclear taboo in both language and action by reinforcing and expanding other norms enshrined in the NPT, including the norm against explosive nuclear tests”.²⁴

As consensus agreements on the reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in the NPT will be difficult to achieve under a dark sky, the willingness of individual states parties or groups of like-minded states to signal that they will diminish (or at least not increase) the role of nuclear weapons in deterrence and defence postures will be key to upholding the goal of reducing the salience of nuclear weapons. By adopting a ‘gift basket approach’, meetings of NPT states parties could remain the place where such statements and steps are recorded and recognised. NNWS could also engage NWS at NPT meetings on arguments that nuclear deterrence can improve nuclear stability.

As we saw in the context of the Ukraine nuclear crisis in September and October 2022, when concerns around the use of nuclear weapons by Russia were particularly high, groups of like-minded states could warn of growing risks of nuclear use and reiterate “the importance of the nuclear taboo and the principle of non-use of force. This could take place through the NPT and the UN General Assembly, the added value of the latter being that non-NPT weapons states could join”.²⁵

Collectively, states parties at the very least should be able to reaffirm the statement contained in the 13 Practical Steps agreed at the 2000 Review Conference and contained in the 2010 Action Plan that the “total elimination of nuclear weapons” constitutes the “only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons”.²⁶

A failure by NPT states parties to (re-)confirm that NWS remain, as a baseline, committed to reducing nuclear risks and pursuing nuclear disarmament would likely fuel fears of nuclear arms racing and vertical as well as horizontal proliferation. A continued questioning of the tenets of the NPT might be perceived as giving all NWS a free hand to further increase reliance on nuclear deterrence. This would lead to a race to the bottom that would lower thresholds for nuclear weapons use and increase the likelihood of nuclear war.

Under a grey sky: initiating conversations and enhancing transparency

Under a grey sky for the NPT, NWS would remain reluctant to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons. The trend towards an expansion of nuclear the role of nuclear weapons would likely continue. It would be important in such a context that NPT states parties act against a nuclear “mission creep”.²⁷ At PrepComs, at the 2026 Review Conference, and particularly in next review cycle, NPT members should attempt to initiate a series of dialogues, aimed at increasing transparency on nuclear doctrines and agreements.²⁸

N5 deliberations will be particularly important as a space where the NWS can discuss amongst themselves, as part of their long-standing dialogue on nuclear doctrines, what shape such agreements might take. Given current tensions between the N5, it

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would be particularly important that NPT nuclear weapon states could reaffirm their January 2022 joint statement that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought”.²⁹ While China, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States have reaffirmed this statement, Russia has rejected such efforts. Without such a willingness to compartmentalise nuclear arms control from their broader conflicts, and a willingness to recognise that the avoidance of war between nuclear weapon states and the reduction of strategic risks are the “foremost responsibilities” of the N5, little headway is likely to be made.³⁰

Efforts to reestablish the N5 consensus could be underpinned by efforts to make better use of existing confidence-building and risk reductions accords, agreed between the Soviet Union/Russia and Western nuclear powers and by a resumption of the US-China dialogue on nuclear risk reduction. It would be an important step towards an N5 accord if China were to respond positively to the US offer to engage in discussions on Beijing’s proposal for a mutual no-first-use agreement.³¹ At the very least, such conversations among the N5 could help to clarify the role of nuclear weapons in deterrence and defence postures and reduce possible misperceptions.

A previous ELN study had recommended that the N5, “in order to enable a more structured comparison and a more in-depth understanding of each state’s doctrine”,³² should collate written responses to the following questions in a single P5 doctrines document:

- What is the role of nuclear weapons in your national security strategy?
- To what extent has this and your state’s arsenal evolved since the end of the Cold War?
- How does your force posture and force planning support your state’s national security strategy?
- Under what circumstances would you consider the use of nuclear weapons?

To strengthen the NPT, the N5 collectively should inform and engage NNWS in the NPT context on the outcome of such deliberations. Thus, the N5 had planned to jointly brief NPT states parties at a side-event on the role of nuclear weapons in the security policies at the 10th Review Conference. They subsequently cancelled that event against the background of Russia’s nuclear threats in the context of its full-fledged invasion of Ukraine. Rescheduling that event would be an indication of the N5 willingness to be more transparent on, and accountable for, the role they assign to nuclear weapons. Another step in that direction would be the adoption of NPDI proposals for a standard reporting format in which the NWS would regularly and in a comparable manner report to meetings of NPT states parties on the measures they have taken to diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in military and security concepts, doctrines, and policies.³³

Russia’s nuclear threats and uncertainty about the scope and goal of China’s nuclear build-up have led US regional allies to seek reaffirmations of extended deterrence arrangements.³⁴ At the 10th

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Review Conference, some NNWS urged nuclear allies to be more transparent on their involvement in nuclear deterrence doctrines. NATO nuclear sharing states pushed back against such requests. Yet, with Russia now having entered into its own NATO-like sharing arrangements with Belarus, there may be value for NATO members to reconsider whether they want to heed calls for more openness about the role of nuclear weapons in their deterrence and defence postures, thereby putting Russia on the spot when it comes to its nuclear defence arrangements with Belarus.³⁵

On the other side of the spectrum, TPNW states parties have embarked on an intersessional consultative process on their own security concerns. A report on “threat and risk perceptions enshrined in the [TPNW] that result from the existence of nuclear weapons and the concept of nuclear deterrence”³⁶ will be discussed at the third meeting of TPNW states parties in March 2025, only a few months ahead of the third NPT PrepCom. This engagement ultimately is aimed at “using all available fora where nuclear weapons and security can be addressed” to initiate a “discursive and political process”³⁷ around the role of nuclear weapons. It could and should also inform discussions at meetings of NPT states parties.

NPT states parties collectively could engage in a dialogue on nuclear doctrines and security policies. This could “give adequate consideration to the security interests of NNWS by taking stock of nuclear doctrines, declaratory policies and security assurances in light of the present security environment”.³⁸ Strengthening and harmonising existing security assurances, including in the framework of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs), doctrinal restraint of NWS as a concrete risk reduction measure are some of the interim steps that could be taken up in such a group. As a first step, the NWS could issue unconditional negative security assurances to all member states of NWFZs, who have a dual commitments not to acquire nuclear weapons, through the membership in the NPT and the respective zone treaty.³⁹

On a more ambitious, and perhaps more controversial, note, NPT states parties collectively could embark on an exercise around perceptions of the (in-)admissibility of nuclear threats and work towards a common understanding of what NPT state parties consider a nuclear threat and condemn such threats collectively.⁴⁰ Such an effort could build on the International Court of Justice’s 1996 advisory opinion to “offer a consensus on whether it is possible to objectively distinguish between varieties of ‘nuclear threats’, including whether a legitimate and objective distinction between ‘offensive’ and ‘defensive’ nuclear threats exists, and if so, how it could be defined on a consensus basis amongst all parties”.⁴¹

Finally, the Final Document of the 11th Review Conference could incorporate the language agreed by the G20 under the impression of increased risks of nuclear weapons use by Russia in Ukraine in November 2022, that “use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible”. The NPT could also be a framework to discuss with NWS how they intend to operationalise the statement. This could, for instance, be done at meetings of states parties where the NWS could explain what consequences the inadmissibility of nuclear weapon use would have military and security concepts, doctrines, and policies.

Under a blue sky: from words to actions

If international relations improve over the next few years, NPT states parties should aim to endorse collective statements and agree on measures to limit and reduce the salience of nuclear weapons. Such a blue sky is currently not in sight, as relations between the West and Russia continue to deteriorate, Russia's war against Ukraine drags on, and China hedges its bets with the US presidential elections looming in November 2024. But NPT states parties should use their imagination to envisage circumstances where a more ambitious set of measures to reduce the role of nuclear weapons, as a meaningful step towards a world free of nuclear weapons might be possible.

One way to give such discussions continuity, would be to establish a subsidiary body both within next review cycle and/or the Conference on Disarmament, to work towards an unconditional, universal, and legally binding instrument to assure NNWS against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.⁴²

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Frameworks for tackling the salience of nuclear weapons

This looming nuclear arms race is made more dangerous by the expansion of the roles NWS ascribe to their nuclear forces.

The prospect for NWS to live up their article 6 obligations, committing them to work towards nuclear disarmament, are as bleak as they have ever been since the end of the Cold War and the 1995 decision to extend the NPT indefinitely. All nuclear weapon states are modernising their nuclear arsenals and almost all are building up their nuclear forces.

This looming nuclear arms race is made more dangerous by the expansion of the roles NWS ascribe to their nuclear forces. Russia, attempting to leverage its nuclear weapons to support its attack on Ukraine, has triggered discussions around the value of nuclear weapons in deterrence and defence postures in other NWS. The competition between China and the US and the Chinese nuclear weapons buildup likewise have raised the issue of what role nuclear deterrence can and should play.

This makes for a dangerous situation with unacceptably high risk of nuclear weapons use. The NPT is the place where the international community can debate and begin to address nuclear threats and the role of nuclear weapons more generally. While there are other important venues to engage NWS on their political commitments to further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines, and policies, meetings of states parties are the place to take stock of where the international community stands, and agree on steps to bust some of the clouds darkening the sky.

Ideally, such cloudbusting will take place collectively. But given the fact that the last two Review Conferences ended without an agreed outcome document, states parties should be creative in finding ways to brighten the sky. This can involve unilateral steps and statements, actions by like-minded groups, creative ways to reform outdated rules and procedures and a willingness to clearly speak up on the dangers of nuclear weapons. Such an honest and constructive approach can help to revitalise the NPT as venue where nuclear dangers are debated in a way that is transparent and accessible to decision-makers and the public not involved in the NPT meetings. Forging a broad political coalition focused on diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in security policies would, in itself, be a major achievement.

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