

EUROPEAN
LEADERSHIP
NETWORK

BUILDING A SAFER WORLD

STATEMENT BY THE EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY LEADERSHIP GROUP (EASLG)

Prepared for Presidents, Prime Ministers, Parliamentarians, and Publics

Three Essential Steps for Reversing the Slide to Nuclear War

Reducing and eliminating any nuclear risk that could lead to catastrophe is a common interest for all and an enduring responsibility for all nuclear-armed states. In January 2022, the leaders of China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States together affirmed that, “**a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought**” and that strategic risk reduction was among their foremost responsibilities. These vital principles are fundamental to ensuring predictability, building trust, and reducing the danger of nuclear war. They should continuously and publicly be reaffirmed by leaders in both nuclear and non-nuclear armed states and constantly reinforced through enhanced public awareness efforts.

Over the past three years, the reality of, and potential for, wars by nuclear-armed nations have created a yet more urgent context for the January 2022 statement. **More must be done now by the “N5” and all other nuclear armed nations to build on its principles.** Without practical steps to reduce nuclear risks, a conventional conflict preceding a nuclear catastrophe—whether by design or by blunder—becomes an ever-greater possibility.

The Euro-Atlantic region has an essential role to play in reducing nuclear dangers: four of the N5 nuclear-weapon states recognized in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), including the United States and Russia, and more than 90 percent of global nuclear inventories, are located here. That said, the Asia-Pacific, South Asia and Middle East regions now encompass five other nuclear-armed states, with growing nuclear inventories and competing and possibly conflicting global interests characterizing every region. **Reducing nuclear risks is thus a global challenge requiring a global solution; hence, dialogue on nuclear risk reduction must be global.**

Washington and Moscow can make a crucial contribution by making clear they will not exceed current levels of deployed U.S.-Russian nuclear arms before the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) expires next year. In addition, the following urgent steps, **supported by nuclear-armed states in every region**, would build on the essential principle that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought:

1 Prevent a return to explosive nuclear testing and strengthen the existing testing moratoria.

Despite only North Korea's having tested since 1998, some are arguing for a resumption of nuclear explosive testing. A resumption of testing by any nation, especially any of those who are signatories to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), would almost certainly trigger nuclear tests by other nations and an even more precarious nuclear arms race. Renewed testing by any one or more of the N5 would severely undermine their individual and collective credibility and also risk the collapse of the NPT, whose extension in 1995 was linked to the conclusion of the CTBT.

Leaders of all nuclear-armed states should reaffirm their commitment to sustain the existing moratoria on explosive nuclear testing. Confidence in the existing moratoria would be strengthened if the United States, Russia, and China—bilaterally or together—could agree on transparency measures about activities at their respective test sites. Such measures could also lead to coordinated efforts to bring the CTBT into force.

2 Advance nuclear fail-safe in every nation with nuclear arms.

In February 2023, at the Munich Security Conference, the EASLG called on all nuclear-weapon states to lead with their own internal nuclear fail-safe reviews, including steps to strengthen safeguards against the unauthorized, inadvertent, or accidental use of a nuclear weapon based on faulty judgment, false warnings of attack, or other miscalculation. All nuclear-armed nations have a responsibility to prevent the accidental or mistaken use of a nuclear weapon; and all nations, nuclear and non-nuclear, have a shared interest in preventing such a calamity. We live in a time when dialogue and formal arms control increasingly have become challenging and the development of cyber-threats and artificial intelligence have compounded the risk of nuclear conflagration. Thus unilateral nuclear fail-safe reviews are something that every nuclear-armed state should do and strengthen as a matter of urgency. For example, the United States recently concluded a new and comprehensive fail-safe review of its own. Such reviews require no negotiation, treaty, or verification, and the sharing of results or actions is entirely at the discretion of each individual state.

Leaders of the N5 nations should now engage and demonstrate leadership on this topic. Acting unilaterally, bilaterally, trilaterally, or as a group, they should develop appropriate statements covering their commitment to nuclear fail-safe in advance of the 2026 NPT Review Conference. Such statements could include details about their fail-safe commitments and could highlight principles and best practices, including in crisis communication.

3 Affirm and strengthen the fundamental principles governing the use of outer space.

Today, more nations than ever are contributing to and benefiting from the exploration and use of outer space. In the past five years, more satellites have been launched by governments and commercial companies than in the previous six decades. More than 90 nations now have at least one satellite in orbit. Safeguarding the space environment and the uniquely positive benefits derived from it now constitute one of the principal challenges of the 21st century. All nations have a role to play.

Since the early 1960s, the United Nations has passed, and nations have concluded, a series of resolutions and agreements containing principles and obligations pertaining to the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. Today, those principles and obligations have been put at risk through the combination of technological development, including cyber and artificial intelligence, and the exploitation of space for military activities by an increasing number of nations. Furthermore, and underlining that space could become a battlefield, simulated and actual testing of anti-satellite weapons has been conducted by several nations, in some cases creating dangerous debris in space. Even the legally binding commitment to not place in orbit any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction appears at risk. Any use of these weapons would indiscriminately and devastatingly affect us all and render space unusable.

Leaders of nuclear-armed nations and other states parties to the Outer Space Treaty, many of whom possess or have the potential to develop capabilities to disrupt the peaceful use of outer space, should affirm the historic principles governing the use of outer space for peaceful purposes and begin a new space dialogue. Such a statement would communicate clearly that leaders recognize their responsibility to work together to prevent war in space. The statement could also lay the groundwork for practical steps to reduce risks, such as measures governing the testing and deployment of anti-satellite and other space weapons. It is crucial that space should remain regulated and free, not free of regulations.

Signatories

Co-Conveners

Des Browne

Vice Chair, Nuclear Threat Initiative; Chair of the Board of Trustees and Directors of the European Leadership Network; and former Secretary of State for Defence, United Kingdom

Ambassador (Botschafter a.D.)

Wolfgang Ischinger

President, Munich Security Conference Foundation Council, Germany

Ernest J. Moniz

Co-Chair and CEO, Nuclear Threat Initiative; and former U.S. Secretary of Energy, United States

Sam Nunn

Co-Chair, Nuclear Threat Initiative; and former U.S. Senator, United States

Participants

Ambassador Nobuyasu Abe

Former UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs; and former Director-General for Arms Control and Science Affairs, Japan

James Acton

United States

Steve Andreasen

National Security Consultant, Nuclear Threat Initiative; and former Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control, White House National Security Council, United States

Professor Dewi Fortuna Anwar

Chairman of the Board of Directors, The Habibie Center, Indonesia

Joel Bell

Chairman, Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership, Canada

Julia Berghofer

Senior Policy Fellow, European Leadership Network, Germany

Kathryne Bomberger

Director-General, International Commission on Missing Persons, United States

Philip Mark Breedlove

General (Ret.), U.S. Air Force; former Commander, U.S. European Command; and 17th Supreme Allied Commander Europe of NATO, United States

Participants (continued)

Richard Burt

Managing Partner, McLarty Associates, United States

General (Ret.) Vincenzo

Camporini
Vice President, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy

Hikmet Çetin

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Turkey

Ambassador Oleksandr Chalyi

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Ukraine; and President, Grant Thornton (Ukraine), Ukraine

Richard A. Clarke

Former Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs; and former Special Advisor to the President for Cybersecurity, White House National Security Council, United States

Ambassador (Ret.) James F.

Collins
Senior Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, United States

Ambassador (Ret.) Alper Coşkun

Senior Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Turkey

James Cowan

CEO, HALO Trust, United Kingdom

Hans Dahlgren

Former Minister for European Affairs, Sweden

Federica Dall'Arche

Senior Research Associate, Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, Italy

Professor Shen Dingli

Institute of International Studies, Fudan University, Shanghai, China

Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola

Former Chief of Defence; former Chairman of NATO's Military Committee; and former Minister of Defence, Italy

Professor the Honorable Gareth

Evans
Former Foreign Minister; and Founding Convenor of Asia-Pacific Leadership Network, Australia

Vasyl Filipchuk

Ukrainian diplomat; former Political and EU Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine; and Senior Advisor at the International Center for Policy Studies in Kyiv, Ukraine

Alexander Graef

Senior Researcher, Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg, Germany

Nikita Gryazin

Policy Fellow, European Leadership Network

Sir Chris Harper KBE FRAeS

Air Marshal (Ret.); and former Director General, NATO International Military Staff, United Kingdom

Dr. Clemens Häusler

Communications Executive, Germany

Alexander Hug

Head of Mission, Iraq Program, International Commission on Missing Persons; and former Principal Deputy Chief Monitor of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Switzerland

Patricia Jaworek

Director, Global Nuclear Policy Program, Nuclear Threat Initiative, Germany

James L. Jones

General (Ret.), USMC; and President, Jones Group International, United States

Angela Kane

Former UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Germany

Juhani Kaskeala

Admiral (Ret.); and former Chief of Defence of the Finnish Defence Forces, Finland

Aleksandra Khramova

Member, Younger Generation Leaders Network; Head of Strategic Communications and Partnerships, Ukrainian Education Hub in Greece; and Independent Researcher, Russia

Jane Kinninmont

Acting Director, European Leadership Network, United Kingdom

Andreas Kleiser

Director for Policy and Cooperation, International Commission on Missing Persons, Germany

Bert Koenders

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands

Łukasz Kulesa

Associate Fellow, European Leadership Network, Poland

Henrik Larsen, PhD

Research Fellow, Institute for Peace & Diplomacy; and Non-Resident Fellow, Center for European Policy Analysis and the International Center for Defence and Security, Denmark

O. Faruk Loğoğlu

Former Ambassador to the United States; and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey

Tom McKane

Former Director General Security Policy, Ministry of Defence, United Kingdom

Dr. Oliver Meier

Policy and Research Director, European Leadership Network, Germany

Mark Melamed

Deputy Vice President, Global Nuclear Policy Program, Nuclear Threat Initiative, United States

Sabine Mengelberg

Member, Senior Network, European Leadership Network; and Netherlands Defence Academy, Netherlands

Professor Chung-in Moon

Co-convenor and Vice Chair, Asia-Pacific Leadership Network; former Special Advisor of National Security and Foreign Affairs to the President of the Republic of Korea; James Laney Distinguished Professor, Yonsei University; and Editor-in-Chief, Global Asia, Republic of Korea

Pierre Morel

Former Ambassador, France

Rolf Mowatt-Larssen

Former William J. Perry Distinguished Fellow, Nuclear Threat Initiative, United States

Mike Mullen

Admiral (Ret.), United States Navy; and 17th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, United States

Ferdinando Nelli Feroci

Senior Advisor, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy

Nadezhda Neynsky

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria; former Ambassador to Turkey; and Fellow, Advanced Leadership Initiative, Harvard, Bulgaria

Bernard Norlain

General (Ret.); President, Initiatives pour le Désarmement Nucléaire, France

Joan Rohlfing

President and Chief Operating Officer, Nuclear Threat Initiative, United States

Matthew Rojansky

President, The U.S. Russia Foundation, United States

Lynn Rusten

National Security Consultant; and former Senior Director for Arms Control and Nonproliferation, White House National Security Council, United States

Sir John Scarlett

Former Chief of the British Secret Intelligence Service; Director, SC Strategy Ltd; and Distinguished Fellow, Royal United Services Institute, United Kingdom

Dr. Manpreet Sethi

Senior Research Adviser, Asia-Pacific Leadership Network, India

Douglas Shaw

Senior Advisor to the President, Nuclear Threat Initiative, United States

Shatabhisha Shetty

Executive Director, Asia-Pacific Leadership Network, United Kingdom

Stefano Stefanini

Former Italian Permanent Representative to NATO; and European Leadership Network Executive Board, Italy

Page Stoutland, PhD

Consultant, Scientific and Technical Affairs, Nuclear Threat Initiative, United States

Sir Adam Thomson

Senior Associate Fellow, European Leadership Network, United Kingdom

Nathalie Tocci

Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali; and Special Advisor, HR/VP, Italy