

Plesch Speech 23 Mar Check Against Delivery

Your Eminences
Cardinal Parolin,
Cardinal Koch,
Cardinal Ayuso Guixot,
and Cardinal Tomasi,
Revered Religious Representatives,
Distinguished Speakers and Guests,

Dear Friends,

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis asked people of goodwill to act concretely to promote disarmament as a way to achieve integral peace.

We hope that our SCRAP weapons team can offer precision tools to the international community to respond to this call, in support of the two “ingredients” considered by Pope Francis as fundamental for a peaceful world: international norms and ecumenical and interreligious dialogue; reinforcing the United Nations call for a global ceasefire.

The pandemic is further shaking an already unstable world, where climate chaos and war compete for the dubious honor of most perilous threat. We know that temperatures are racing beyond historic norms, arms races are now also beyond the mathematical models

War and the threat of war escalates. Suffering mostly amongst women and children is tolerated.

This ancient city of Rome carries these scars and one profound realistic lesson. We are asked to believe that if only the warriors of the past had had nuclear arms they would never have used them, and war would have stopped- that had the Visigoths and the last Emperors had nuclear arms, the Roman Empire would be with us still.

Today nearly \$2,000,000,000,000 of taxpayers moneyⁱ goes on spending for military activity the belief that the weapons will never be used, the apostolic journey of the Pope to Iraq clearly demonstrates that this is unrealistic.

Nevertheless, the advocates of deterrence would have us believe that had the ancient civilisations of Mesopotamia possessed nuclear arms, then peace would have reigned since.

In our own time, we have survived by luck as much as statecraft.

But however long our luck lasts, it cannot last long enough.

Away from the attention of media and politicians, weapons systems become ever more complex.

States mix nuclear and conventional, offense and defense, sword and shield, satellites and cyber. Across the Middle East and Asia arms buildups are uncontrolled.ⁱⁱ

The Global norm of non-proliferation accompanied by disarmament is deteriorating.

On Climate Chaos we understand that it is practical to adapt complex global industry. BUT controlling weapons chaos is considered impractical.

The military equivalent of carbon neutrality – General Disarmament – is dismissed as an unrealistic dream. Perhaps because we fear attack if we lay down our arms.

But from a technical perspective establishing general disarmament is easier than achieving a carbon neutral world –

so we need a programme that can build trust,
create a positive synergy of rapid progress:
and achieve a soft landing from the present race to a literal dead end.

Our team brings together the best of past practice and the benefits of new technology.

We offer for your consideration a synergy rather than a step by step approach.

A synergy of Freezing, of Tracking, of Controlling and of Eliminating the world's weapons, where nuclear weapons elimination remains the most urgent focus.

We offer today draft parliamentary language for Freezing weapons supplies.

We offer concepts for a Global Weapons Tracking Service because in the age of Google Earth and inspections there is no place to hide weapons.

And we offer a draft Treaty for our Strategic Concept for the Removal of Arms and Proliferation to verifiably eliminate Weapons of Mass Destruction and provide Confidence Building and Arms Control measures -- encompassing all types of general purpose conventional arms in the arsenals of nations.

To connect these solutions to the perils we face we must integrate grand concepts with present diplomacy. There is much to concern us. Almost daily it seems we hear of new weapons announcements, most recently from the United Kingdom.

Fortunately, there are signs of a renaissance in disarmament. The extension of the US-Russian nuclear arms control treaty and the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) are important humanitarian stepping stones to security. President Putin offers a Freeze on types of missiles and nuclear warheads, and President Biden a Freeze on some weapons to the Arabian peninsula. The agreement with Iran is ready to be re-energised.

Our suggestion of Freezing weapons production and supply builds on these examples.

Just as one initiative, one windmill or solar panel does not reverse climate chaos -- but still makes a difference; every weapon stopped builds trust and momentum. Every weapon stopped saves taxpayers their hard-earned money, money they so badly need, and which our communities need to build a sustainable honorable future. Every weapon stopped removes a carbon footprint.

We should reflect that individuals and communities acting on climate have national, regional and global efforts in which to place their actions. When it comes to weapons control, efforts are fragmented and lack an organized global focus. This is where the holistic approach of SCRAP offers assistance.

Freezing, Tracking, Controlling, Eliminating provides a tool box for regional actions. Gun control at home and Gun Control abroad are needed to help realize integral human development. In the Americas, guns flow South as drugs flow North. Across the African continent the guns are not silent. A gun without bullets is a club therefore Ammunition is an effective place to focus.—The Arms Trade shows the potential of global agreements on weapons control. A Europe of values is a Europe that stops weapons production internally, stops the supply and seeks to globalize the arms control regimes from which it has benefitted since 1990.

But we must beware of cheating, the world sadly is not only made up of the just. Back in the day, verifying weapons agreements was hard, but it worked for decades in US-Russian agreements. In the case of Iraq, the UN inspectors did their work, and no weapons of mass destruction were found there.

Today in the world of Google Earth and citizens' organisations such as Bellingcat there is really nowhere much to hide. We suggest a verification aid to governments and global society: a Global Weapons Tracking Service.

Weapons Tracking using Open Sources can be of great use. The Open Skies Treaty provided confidence and security across two continents, until President Trump's administration decided to withdraw – now experts are keen on repairs. A common sense approach is to use digital technology to create a global Open Skies that can track all weapons.

Weapons Tracking can provide assurance to encourage Freezes, Tracking also provides the needed reassurance to support Elimination and Controls. My colleagues Dr. Pierce Corden and Dr. Olamide Samuel will amplify the tools that we offer. Combining past best practice in weapons diplomacy with the best of information technology.

We offer the draft SCRAP Treaty to reinforce the efforts to eliminate nuclear and other WMD and reduce and control other armaments. In the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty all states parties have a legal obligation to negotiate general disarmament for the world. There is therefore a great opportunity for dialogue and engagement. It cannot wait to be an ultimate goal, the need for dialogue is now, the tools to enable dialogue are here now, and now we have an opportunity to act.

So, the synergy of Freeze, Track, Eliminate and Control offers realistic norms to make our dream of a more peaceful world incarnate.

If we fail in our endeavours we can see our future in the ruins of Rome's past, when we succeed as we surely shall, the humanitarian benefit will be transformational. Saving just half current spending of

\$2,000,000,000,000 would reduce taxes, fund global public health, support carbon neutrality and remove so many of the causes of war.

At the end of the Second World War nations agreed that for Realistic as well as Ethical reasons nations must end the use of force. They were right.

ⁱ <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2020/global-military-expenditure-sees-largest-annual-increase-decade-says-sipri-reaching-1917-billion>

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