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Today the world lives a time of high insecurity. I prefer to say **insecurity** and not **poor security** to spark a sense of urgency to find solutions and changes to improve the current situation. Many experts think that it is perhaps the most insecure and uncertain moment since the Second World War to date. In fact, during the long period of the Cold War, actors were known and predictable, and events were then, more foreseeable. The present international environment shows a very different reality in which no evolution can be taken for granted. It is an historic time when actions by states combine with actions by many relevant non-state actors to influence global/ regional balances. This time requires of all of us, governments, non-governmental organizations and, ultimately, individuals, **deep understanding, realism, creativity, courage**, and **responsibility** to do what is required.

First, it requires a **deep understanding** of the evolving international threats and of their systemic nature, as well. It means that actions taken over any part of the global system clearly influence the whole system. We live in a world where risks of escalation of conflicts are in general uncertain and, consequently, cannot be accurately dimensioned in advance.

This moment also requires **realism**, to find practical solutions, that could be successfully implemented better sooner than later. In this moment, and it is my opinion, **aspirational thinking is not enough** to face current challenges, and bring solutions to security dilemmas. I strongly believe in **creative thinking, based on understanding and realism**. I mean, creative thinking that can be flawlessly translated into fast positive actions.

This time also demands **courage** to break old paradigms, old practices that reality is leaving behind, and to propose and implement new solutions to the old and brand-new problems.

To finish, it requires **responsibility** to choose the right courses of action, bearing in mind that not all innovative proposals are truly solutions, and even can shape bigger problems for the future.

After this brief summary of my thoughts, the following are my reflections about the current map of world developments that could be considered as **threats to non-proliferation and disarmament**. Reality shows that those threats intertwine in a systemic way, to become powerful drivers of global insecurity. I won't go in depth on each of them, but I will try to

outline the big picture considering those elements. In advance I can say that nuclear issues dominate the scene.

I want to mention first the different open conflicts in different regions of the planet, mostly involving state actors but, in certain cases, including the action of non-state actors. Among them, I will briefly focus on the **crisis in the Korean Peninsula** and on two aspects of the **complex situation in the Middle East: Iran and Syria**.

Secondly, I will refer to **transnational terrorism and organized crime**, as drivers of instability and proliferation.

And finally, I will briefly speak about what I see as the **crisis on global governance, in terms of international instruments**.

Concerning open conflicts, let's begin with the **DPRK crisis**. In my opinion, it is the most urgent and dangerous threat that the world faces today. The risk here is that the conflict can escalate **from a current perilous rhetoric to a devastating war**. It is a fact that aggressive words trigger aggressive actions. The war of verbal outbursts can bring unmanageable tensions that accelerate a confrontation, either due to deliberate decisions, or by errors of calculation or misinterpretation of the steps taken by the opponent. Should it happen, the use of nuclear weapons cannot be discarded at all, either as a reaction to a conventional attack or as a first strike. In both cases, decisions only depend on the leaders.

While King Jong-un's regime is advancing on his nuclear and missile programs, Trump style has dramatically changed the dynamics of this longstanding conflict, as well as it broke rituals of decades, making the outcomes less predictable. The imbalance is so notorious that traditionally hard powers, specifically China and Russia today are forced to act and mediators to lower the risk of potential escalation.

It's clear that any kind of war involving such actors is **a war in which everyone loses**. Experts have estimated a daily loss of twenty thousand lives in both sides of parallel thirty-eight if conventional means are employed, but such loss would rise to a half a million in the case of a single nuclear detonation of similar yield of the last DPRK test. There is also an increasing risk that North Korean missiles reach the West Coast of the United States in the short/ medium term. So that, the only acceptable way forward is negotiation at the highest political level. In my opinion, success would derive from an agreement of the United States, Russia and China on a few basic points, as a basis to include then all the relevant actors.

An essential first step would be to moderate the threatening rhetoric on both sides, but mainly on the United States' one. I believe that it is a key move and Trump should carefully reconsider the advantage of that relevant decision. Another positive proposal would be a larger involvement of the UN and of its Secretary General to help restore a reasonable conversation. I think that Mr. Guterres is clearly skilled to play that role.

The second issue is **the complex situation in the Middle East**, with a diversity of actors and sub-conflicts. From all of them, I find as extremely worrying the **use of chemical weapons in Syria** on both sides of the conflict, and mostly in the case of the government, despite the state became a party of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Concerning other different aspect of the Middle East situation, we have the threats to the Iran-P5+1 nuclear deal. Contrary to recommendations and warnings last October, **president Trump did not certified Iran's compliance of the JPCOA**. It brought big distress to the deal, once the IAEA already had verified Iran's compliance in eight opportunities, and the highest authorities of the EU and other signatories, had not endorsed Trump's decision. Iran, on the other hand, promptly responded indicating that it would not be the first state to withdraw, but that if its interests were no respected it would stop the implementation, **resuming completely its nuclear activities**. In this sense, I think that **nobody wants such a setback**; therefore, the agreement should be protected, provided Iran keeps its level of compliance on a verifiable way.

It is important to notice that the style by the current US administration, in my view, is risky for both, the domestic front and the foreign policy of the United States, with potentially disastrous consequences for the global system. In this way, the alliance with Europe, and therefore the cooperation in the North Atlantic could become vulnerable in front of Russia and China, since credibility of the United States as the key global broker could become severely resented.

In terms of **transnational threats**, we foresee the risk of passage **from current low-cost jihadist terrorist attacks to the use of more sophisticated means**, involving Weapons of Mass Destruction. To pass from knives, trucks and conventional explosions to **chemical, radiological, or in the worst of scenarios, to an improvised nuclear device – IND**, also implies the action of organized crime and likely of any sponsor state to provide technology, materials, logistics, funding, etc. These scenarios should be prevented at any rate as they are also, sources of mistrust, instability and of proliferation.

States, not only should be active parts of the key international instruments, as well as should put embrace a robust national implementation, but also they should participate of a strong network of international cooperation, in terms of intelligence to identify potential perpetrators, and of prevention of the financial support to such acts. A change of mindset in vast political sectors, around the world and in Europe, to reach zero tolerance to terrorism and its related activities, (such as recruiting of potential prospects and indoctrination for radicalization) would be of substantial progress.

It should be in the top of the mind of policymakers that Europe already lost 500 lives in terrorist attacks since 2015 to date, and this number multiplies several times on a global basis. Countering terrorism and associated organized crime should be of common interest for all countries. The world has already experienced the action of a network, such as that of AQ Kahn. **Once an illicit network is set up, it may serve to the purposes of terrorists or proliferating states with no distinction. This clearly shows that all threats are intertwined.**

A recent study by the NPSGlobal Foundation, shows that the effects of a nuclear terrorist attack in a big capital city of the developed world, go far beyond the physical damage and victims. The economic depression derived from it would be equivalent to the 2008 Global Financial crisis, the worst after the 2nd World War. Under certain conditions, such attack could even spark nuclear use between states, among many other multidimensional impacts. So that a clear reflection is that, **what happens to one, happens to everyone in the world.**

Finally, my third point is **how the international community deals with risks of armamentism, proliferation and terrorism.** In my view the situation is worrying. In terms of global governance, key essential instruments are, either experiencing a crisis such as the NPT, are too fragmented as the instruments of the Nuclear Security regime, or are not yet in place such as CTBT and the FMCT.

To illustrate the situation, I just will take an example that will be profusely discussed during the next months/ years, in advance of the 2020 NPT RevCon, and even beyond: the dichotomy about the NPT and the brand-new Nuclear Ban Treaty and the challenge it poses to the current global nuclear order.

Concerning the **Ban Treaty**, the huge risks derived from the existence of nuclear weapons are out of question, and they have been accepted even by Nuclear-armed States. It is also true an increasing disappointment about many see as poor accomplishment of NWS pledges of disarmament under the Art 6 of the NPT, and, therefore about the pace of the step-by- step process to disarmament. It is true that all States that **own nuclear weapons are investing significant amounts on modernization, and some them are increasing their arsenals in numbers. This happens because, despite what was foreseen at the end of Cold War, security doctrines of states and alliances still rely on nuclear weapons as deterrent.** Unfortunately, in this belief is now enhancing, and will increase in the future.

Negotiation of a **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** is a symbolic milestone, that represents genuine interests of a big number of Non-Nuclear Weapons States worldwide, that see the prohibition of nuclear weapons as the only the path to total disarmament. Of course, that path is rejected by Nuclear-armed States. Therefore, a Ban treaty, is **today a strong moral statement, rather than an instrument of practical application.** The rules and process applied to negotiate the Treaty, closed the door to the participation of Nuclear-Armed States, in many ways. For example, by exclusively focusing the negotiation on the prohibition, giving no room to essential and more practical arms control measures, for example a No First Use Agreement involving all possessors, or an agreement about Negative Security Assurances. The inclusion of these topics in the discussion could have made the process more feasible to be accepted by possessors, without betraying the final aspiration. In this sense it is noticeable the explicit terms of rejection of the Treaty quickly released as a joint statement of the Presidents of the US and France, and the UK Prime Minister.

The total lack of participation/ endorsement by all nuclear weapons possessors (and by most of their NNWS allies) **shows once again that the Ban Treaty was made for, and engages those states who are already disarmed.** Experts also point out some inconsistencies with the international law of armed conflicts, and with disarmament verification and safeguards issues in the NPT language

Therefore, the most important point **is a strong need for harmonization with the NPT provisions.** In this sense, it is important to dissipate all confusion, and one of the key points but not the only one here is related to the verification, and to prevent erosion of the NPT due to the existence of the Ban Treaty, a fact that would be extremely counterproductive in practice. In this sense the 2020 NTP RevCon process will be very challenging to prevent the worst scenario: the erosion of an almost universal, imperfect but useful Treaty, the NPT by another Treaty, the Ban, which so far counts on 3 over 50 ratifications required to enter into force. and which leaves completely outside those who possess nuclear weapons.

As a conclusion of this short summary of key security challenges in this current problematic world. It is good to bring the Einstein's famous quote that says: **"we cannot solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them"**.

In this sense I think it is time to articulate all these apparently separated issues into a **Comprehensive Approach to Reduce Security Risks** - applied to any WMD risks but specially to nuclear ones - as the best way to improve current global situation, in a systemic and sustainable way. When analyzing reality, and mostly since globalization, and after the appearance of non-state actors as relevant sources of global risks, risks are interrelated, **so that disarmament, non-proliferation and physical security measures should be jointly designed and implemented.** Another important concept is that within these comprehensive approach, all states are responsible to improve the situation.

The priority is, in my opinion, to work comprehensively on a global nuclear risks reduction scheme, and on reducing risks deriving from the existence/ potential use of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials in all ways. Sustainability of any strategy for nuclear risks reduction it is important to achieve an active participation of Nuclear-Armed States. An interesting way forward is to open the possibility of to embrace negotiations by topics, which can involve states of different profiles under a common goal, in the style of the Nuclear Security Summit Gift Baskets. Several of the most relevant topics on the international table could be appropriate to explore such possibility, for example a No First Use Agreement.

To finish I envision a clear role of Latin America and of my country, Argentina, as a facilitator of these virtuous processes. To make all this possible, visionary leaderships around the world really will make the difference. Thank you!