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FROM THE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN TO THE CONVERSION OF ATOMIC ARSENALS

“With the resumption of talks in Vienna for the Nuclear Agreement with Iran, there is scope for bargaining aimed at relaunching negotiations: failing that, the situation could degenerate. The unclaimed attack against the Iranian enrichment plant of the Natanz Nuclear Center is recent news...”.

This is what nuclear engineer Giuseppe Rotunno, founder and president of the “Committee for a Civilization of Love”, said in a statement to “Orbisphera”.

In 1992, Mr Rotunno, along with eminent collaborators, developed the first “Technical-economic feasibility study for the conversion of nuclear weapons”.

This study, which also set out the consequent economic gains to be allocated to the poor countries of the world, was presented at an International Conference which took place in Rome with the participation of Pope John Paul II.

This study and related expert analysis were subsequently substantiated by the international agreement signed between the USA and Russia in 1993 in the form of the twenty-year “Megatons to Megawatts” Program, which led to the conversion of an initial 20 thousand nuclear warheads into peacetime energy.

The program was then revived in 1994 at an international conference at the FAO and repropounded in 1998 in Assisi. It was finally presented in Rome to the Nobel Peace Laureates during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

With the support of the Holy Father and the patronage of the Italian Government, in October 2002, the Peace Summit “Economy, Ecology, Peace” was held in Assisi, in the Basilica of San Francesco, which led to the “Program for converting arms into development projects in the Global South - Megatons to Development”.

Returning to our days, Rotunno stressed that “it is possible to take advantage of the restoration of the Nuclear Agreement with Iran to initiate dialogue between the nuclear powers on a new phase of disarmament, as foreseen in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Art. VI”.

“This can happen – he specified – if a Member State of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) makes an explicit request to the Council of Governors of the Atomic Agency in Vienna”. In this regard, it is worth recalling that the Holy See is a founding member of this organization.

According to Mr Rotunno, it is urgent to start this negotiation now as an example to the world of the need to progressively and jointly reduce the size of nuclear arsenals, with an effort characterized by responsibility and trust.

“It is necessary - Rotunno reiterated - that the United States and Iran reach an agreement as soon as possible to agree on the modalities of re-entry into the agreements provided for by the JPCoA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) of 2015”.

Under these agreements, Iran has consented to eliminate its medium-enriched uranium reserves, to cut low-enriched uranium reserves by 98%, and to reduce its gas centrifuges by two-thirds for thirteen years. For the next fifteen years, Iran will only be able to enrich uranium to 3.67%.

Iran has also agreed to not build any new heavy water nuclear reactors in the same period. Uranium enrichment activities will be limited to a single plant, using first generation centrifuges for ten years. Other plants will be converted to avoid the risk of nuclear proliferation.

To monitor and verify Iran’s compliance with the agreement, the IAEA will have regular access to all Iranian nuclear facilities.

“To prevent the risk of military conflict and renew peace agreements - suggested Rotunno - it would be desirable for the Holy See, which is a member of the IAEA, to ask through a specific declaration addressed to the Council of Governors to activate a diplomatic negotiation for restore JCPoA operations, to guarantee peace in the area”.

“This solution – he argued – would be a historic event to initiate progressive disarmament throughout the world, and would constitute an important precedent for a peaceful solution to transform nuclear threats into opportunities for the entire international community”.

“Nuclear disarmament – concluded Mr Rotunno – is possible with the conversion of arsenals into energy for peace and sustainable development in the world, as already experienced with the US-Russia ‘Megatons to Megawatts’ Plan, and as requested by the ‘Committee for a Civilization of Love’ in the March 12th Conference held in the Sacred Convent of Assisi”.

For further information:

Nuclear for Peace

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