

Chapter 28

Introduction



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The two years that have passed since the last Edoardo Amaldi Conference have registered a sudden change of climate in Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation.

In 2015 one could quote opinions expressed by well know personalities in the international arena, among them one President of the United States, pointing to a nuclear weapon free world. Discussions between Iran and representatives of the P5 group on the Iran nuclear weapon program were heading towards a successful conclusion.

Soon thereafter, US and Russia have manifested the intention to upgrade their military strength, the US President has put in doubt the validity of the agreement reached by Iran and P5 in Vienna and North Korea has given a serious blow to Non-Proliferation, with a string of nuclear and missile tests.

In January 2017, the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist has advanced by 30 s the Doomsday Clock, bringing it to 2½ min from midnight.

The preoccupations of the technical and scientific community working in the Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation have clearly emerged in this Conference, in particular in the opinions expressed by the experts participating in this Panel, from China, Russia and US, and in the subsequent interventions from the floor.

Some light seems to come from the fact that inspections under New START have continued to proceed smoothly in both Russia and the United States and by the hope that a new START bilateral agreement can be renovated at the expiration of the present one, in 2021.

In this connection, the scientific community is called to an increased effort to inform Governments and public opinion of the risks implied by changes in the

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policy of armaments and to increase the opportunities of dialog and exchange of information among its members.

Following the examples of Panofsky, Amaldi and others, we have to use our “pessimistic minds and optimistic hearts” (as proposed to us by Lowenthal) to counter the raise of national and regional confrontations we are assisting in these days.

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