



NPT NEWS IN REVIEW

Civil society perspectives on the 2015 Review Conference of the
nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 27 April–22 May 2015



Reaching Critical Will

14 May 2015
Vol. 13, No. 10

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 | Editorial
- 2 | The NPT non-non-nuclear armed states
- 3 | News in brief
- 4 | Event: Strengthening safeguards
- 4 | Event: Arms control verification
- 5 | US policies belie claims of article VI compliance
- 6 | Event: GICNT
- 6 | Event: Prospects for the NPT post-2015
- 7 | No new information on the consequences of nuclear weapons?
- 8 | Event: Banning nuclear weapons
- 8 | Calendar of events

The *NPT News in Review* is a daily publication produced by the Reaching Critical Will programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom during meetings of NPT states parties.

See reachingcriticalwill.org for information, statements, papers, reports, archived *NPT News in Reviews*, and more from the NPT.

EDITORIAL: TIMELINES, THEN AND NOW

Ray Acheson | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

Work on the nuclear disarmament portion of the outcome document carried on behind closed doors on Wednesday, in anticipation of a new, merged draft being circulated Thursday morning. But at the opening plenary in the morning, the Non-Aligned Movement emphasised once again that timelines must be added to the commitments related to disarmament in the outcome document. And once again, the nuclear-armed states have been rejecting any attempts to create timeframes or benchmarks for disarmament.

Thus the fight continues from 2010. At that Review Conference, the nuclear-armed were equally resistant to timeframes. The French, for example, argued that the imposition of "artificial deadlines" in nuclear disarmament has never worked and said that timelines would weaken the non-proliferation regime because nothing is gained by imposing deadlines and not meeting them.

We have heard this argument again from some of the nuclear-armed states at this Review Conference. Of course, timelines do not just get magically missed. Those responsible for meeting a timeline have to actively fail to do so either by choice or due to extenuating circumstances. Refusing to establish timelines or benchmarks is not the solution. Real commitment and effort to meeting those deadlines is the solution.

Furthermore, a critical look at this assertion reveals the double standard: that deadlines or timeframes for disarmament cannot be established, or if established, they cannot be expected to be met, because they are "artificial," but that deadlines and timeframes must be imposed and met for non-proliferation in order to remain "in compliance" with one's Treaty obligations.

As we wrote in 2010, the Treaty's non-proliferation obligations are in force swiftly and in perpetuity. The comprehensive IAEA safeguards agreement must be concluded

within 90 days of ratification and stays in force indefinitely, providing a clear benchmark by which to measure states' compliance. But there is no benchmark by which to measure the pace at which the nuclear-armed states comply with their disarmament obligations, the degree to which they comply, the sustainability, the verifiability, or the irreversibility, of said compliance.

Initially conceived of by Ireland as an urgent "stop-gap" needed while the two major military powers continued their negotiations on general and complete disarmament, the NPT is credited with preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons beyond a handful of states. However, the NPT "discriminates between those who possess and those who do not possess nuclear weapons," commented Reaching Critical Will and Article 36 in a joint publication last year. "This makes it vulnerable to accusations that it maintains a double standard while also enshrining disincentives for the nuclear-armed states to seriously undertake effective actions for nuclear disarmament."

Article VI does not establish a timeline or an accountability or verification mechanism for nuclear disarmament. The disarmament obligation it contains originated at a time when the Soviet Union and United States were conducting formal negotiations on disarmament. But these negotiations never resumed after the NPT was concluded, despite those two states immediately reaffirming their intention to do so. They did embark on a programme of arms control, which continues to this day. However, that programme has a different objective: ensuring the sustainability and predictability of their nuclear weapon enterprises, not preparing them for inevitable disarmament.

But as Ireland said last week in Main Committee I, there is no opt-out clause or conditionality to fulfilling article VI. All states have an obligation to pursue effective measures to prohibit and eliminate nuclear

continued on next page

THE NPT NON-NON-NUCLEAR-ARMED STATES

Tim Wright | ICAN Australia

The NPT divides its parties into two distinct categories: nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear-armed states. But in reality there is a significant group in between: the 30 or so states that claim a role for nuclear weapons in their military doctrines while not actually possessing the weapons themselves.

Far from being champions of nuclear disarmament, these states reinforce the false belief that nuclear weapons are legitimate, useful, and necessary instruments of war. And far from occupying a “middle ground” on this issue, they sit towards the extreme end of the spectrum of views on nuclear weapons.

The humanitarian-based approach to nuclear disarmament has shone a spotlight on these enabler states, revealing them as a significant part of the problem we face. Their insistence that nuclear weapons provide security is an incitement to proliferation, underscoring also their lack of commitment to Article VI of the NPT.

Among the worst offenders within this group are the five states that host US nuclear weapons on their soil: Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey. Some have argued at this Review Conference that their practice of “nuclear sharing” should be affirmed as acceptable under the NPT.

But in recent days we have also seen a push by other states to strengthen the draft outcome document in a way that places greater pressure on the enabler states to reduce and eliminate any role for nuclear weapons in their military doctrines. This would represent a major step towards nuclear disarmament.

Negotiating a nuclear weapon ban treaty would be the best way to achieve this objective. It would force states to decide: are nuclear weapons acceptable or unacceptable? Through its normative force, it would compel states to join the international mainstream in rejecting nuclear weapons categorically.

The reason for the enabler states’ dismissal of the ban treaty proposal is not that they see it as unrealistic or impractical. Quite the contrary: they recognise its tremendous potential to alter the status quo in a fundamental way. This Review Conference has made clear that the momentum for a ban continues to grow. •



Editorial, continued

weapons. The continued failure to do so would signal acquiescence and acceptance by the non-nuclear-armed states that the indefinite extension of the NPT equates to the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons and further entrench the two-tier international system, backed by the incredibly dangerous and unjust assertion that the possession of nuclear weapons are the ultimate source of power and authority. •

NPT NEWS IN REVIEW 14 MAY 2015 | Vol. 13, No. 10

Reaching Critical Will
a programme of the Women's International League
for Peace and Freedom

777 UN Plaza, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10017
ph. +1 212.682.1265
email: info@reachingcriticalwill.org
web: www.reachingcriticalwill.org

Editor: Ray Acheson

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom or the Reaching Critical Will programme.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Mia Gandenberger and Gabriella Irsten | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

The News in Brief is not a comprehensive summary of all statements. It highlights positions on a few critical issues covered during plenary discussions.

Plenary

- The chairs of the three Main Committees presented an update on the progress of their draft reports.
- NAM called for balance between the three pillars in the outcome document and stressed that the section on nuclear disarmament should include time frames for the implementation of measures.
- Cuba reiterated that point referring to the current state of debate in SB1 and MCI.
- Egypt stressed the need for practical steps and new measures to be included in the outcome document.

Main Committee I

- Subsidiary Body I met in a closed meeting following Plenary.

Main Committee II

General

- The afternoon session in MCII heard the last comment from delegations on the Chair's first draft NPT/CONF.2015/MC.III/CRP.2.
- The Chair informed that he would have a new draft out tomorrow afternoon upon which continued debates would be based.
- The main disagreements concerned the reference to forums other than the IAEA, such as Nuclear Security Summit (NSS), and references to export controls and language referring to NWS reservations to NWFZs.

Nuclear security

- Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, Iran, and Syria called for the deletion of references to the NSS and the other initiatives outside the IAEA due to their limited membership.
- Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Sweden, UK, and US supported keeping references to the NSS due to its close relationship with the issue of the NPT and its inclusion in the 2010 outcome.
- Morocco suggested a compromise to keep the reference but to modify it so it says "recognized the contribution of other international initiatives as for example the NSS;" this proposal was supported by South Africa, Argentina and Chile.
- Canada, Finland, and Japan, while supporting the paragraph as it is, also highlighted the proposal of Morocco.

- Iran highlighted that it will not agree on any other more "natural" language, but wanted the paragraph deleted.

Export controls

- Iran reiterated its view that export controls should not be legitimised and therefore does not support the language in the first sentence of paragraph 32. It suggested that the first sentence could be balanced with a new paragraph to emphasise that export controls should not hamper the right to PUNE. This was supported by Brazil, Cuba, and Egypt.
- Australia, Canada, Finland, and UK supported the paragraph as it is and said that the first sentence reflected action 35 in the Action Plan.
- Egypt highlighted that in paragraph 34, dealing with access and conditions to acquiring fissile material, refers to the NWS and that it should include that all states receiving fissile material from a NWS must require acceptance by full safeguards and accession to the NPT as non-NWS, this was supported by Iran and Morocco.

NWFZs and NSAs

- Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Mongolia wanted to add language calling for the NWS to withdraw any reservations from the NWFZ.
- The UK and US highlighted that this is normal international practice for them to add reservations, so they do not support the addition of the language.
- Morocco and Nigeria could not agree on whether the 2015 Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to NWFZs took place or not.
- Sweden suggested to add "without reservations" to paragraph 38 that talks about the signature and ratification by NWS of the Central Asia NWFZ.
- Brazil wanted to add language on paragraph 38 calling for the importance of signing a legal binding treaty on NSAs.
- Iran stated that in connection to paragraph 40 on the Middle East NWFZ it would like to see language on a future NWFZ in Europe but due to the sensitivity of the issue with two European NWS they will not suggest this addition of language.
- Cuba supported the Europe reference in paragraph 40.
- Algeria, Egypt, Iran, and Iraq supported the paragraph as it stands, until the placeholder of regional issue in the draft is added.



EVENT: STRENGTHENING SAFEGUARDS AND NUCLEAR SECURITY THROUGH ENGAGEMENT, COOPERATION AND FACILITATION

The all-male panel hosted by the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC) and the United Kingdom on Tuesday, 12 May, discussed VERTIC's activities on facilitating safeguards and security implementation; experience in assisting states; and ways to address future challenges in implementing safeguards.

Ambassador Matthew Rowland of the UK, Mr. Ashley Hilsdon from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Mr. Ché van Haastrecht, Counsellor for Nuclear Affairs at the Permanent Mission of Canada to International Organisations in Vienna delivered introductory remarks expressing their ongoing support for VERTIC's efforts.

Scott Spence, VERTIC Programme Director for National Implementation, introduced the National Legislation Implementation Kit on Nuclear Security. The Kit, initiated by Indonesia and developed by VERTIC, was presented as the Indonesian gift basket to the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague. It contains

model law to ensure a consistent, coordinated and focused approach to nuclear security and was created to help states develop comprehensive national legislation adapted to their respective legal cultures and processes. Additionally it provides states with consolidated elements and provisions of the global framework for nuclear security. In legislative assistance activities, it serves VERTIC both for reference in legal framework reviews and as a guide for drafting additional legislation.

Larry MacFaul, VERTIC Acting Programme Director for Verification and Monitoring focused on national implementation obligations and implications as contained in comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocol.

All VERTIC presenters highlighted the centre's offer for tailored assistance complementary to other tools and programmes available, by the IAEA and other, to states for implement their safeguards and security obligations. •

EVENT: ARMS CONTROL VERIFICATION - 15 YEARS OF US/UK CO-OPERATION

Mia Ganderberger | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The United States and United Kingdom held a joint briefing on the 15th anniversary of US/UK verification cooperation, chaired by Ambassador Matthew Rowland. Ms. Michele Smith of the US National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and Mr. Atilla Burjan of the British Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) presented the Joint U.S.-U.K. Report on Technical Cooperation for Arms Control on the 15-year collaboration in technologies and methodologies to enable monitoring and verification.

Preliminary steps toward this cooperation began in 2000 and the first Joint Measurement and Data Analysis Campaign began in April 2001. A series of workshops, exercises, and meetings ensued over the years. The report itself provides a fairly comprehensive overview of these joint efforts, reviews some highlights, and briefly touches upon next steps.

Lessons learned included the need to test and evaluate technologies for verification in an open environment; the need to strike a balance between protecting information and providing sufficient information; the development of applications, technologies, and methods take time; bilateral cooperation is a symbiotic process; and despite challenges of verification of nuclear weapons and components it is feasible.

During the Q and A session after the debate questions arose around how irreversibility was factored in, the potential problems arising from classified documents and access, possibilities of including other nuclear-armed states, availability of information on these exercises to the wider public, and possible lessons learned from verifying the disarmament of South African nuclear weapons. •



US POLICIES BELIE CLAIMS OF ARTICLE VI COMPLIANCE

Greg Mello | Los Alamos Study Group

The story being presented by the US delegation to this NPT Review Conference that gradual nuclear disarmament is underway is an egregious falsehood. The reality of US policy is exactly the opposite.

No effort or cost is being spared to replace or modernize every part of the entire US nuclear arsenal, including every delivery system and every launch platform, and including all the expensive factories required to build thousands of modified and new warheads and bombs. Every resulting weapon system will have one or more new military characteristics, including greater stealth, accuracy, variable yields, and greater killing power against silos and command centers with shorter flight times. New long-range stealthy nuclear cruise missiles, not subject to any treaty limitations, are to be built in large quantities. This, not gradual reduction or disarmament, is the US program of record.¹

This unprecedented, audacious plan was negotiated within the government in 2010, the year after President Obama's Prague speech and Nobel Peace Prize, when New START was submitted for ratification. The plan has been successfully presented to Congress for authorization and funding every year since then, and is fully funded. While a (very) few members of Congress have (unsuccessfully) argued that this program is excessive in one or another part, not one member of Congress has argued for any process that could lead to complete nuclear disarmament.

Meanwhile no nuclear weapons are actually being retired. Only obsolete warheads retired by previous administrations are being dismantled—and these only partially, with some hard-to-produce nuclear components being retained for potential reuse. The Obama administration has retired fewer warheads than any other in post-Cold-War history. All dismantlement of warheads retired since 2009 is being deferred indefinitely, pending successful initiation of production of new warheads and bombs in the new factories now under design and construction and slated for completion in the mid-2020s.

Given these realities, how are we to interpret statements to the Review Conference like this one from Ambassador Wood on 1 May?

Disarmament is taking place every day in the United States. Over the past two decades alone the United States has dismantled 10,251 nuclear warheads. That works out to dismantling an average of more than one warhead per day, every day, for 20 years. And this complex and costly work continues.

Yes, the partial dismantlement of warheads retired many years ago is still taking place, though the pace of dismantlement has dramatically slowed since the early 1990s and may stop altogether in the early 2020s when dismantlement of obsolete warheads can be stretched no further.² Even so, Secretary Kerry's promise to the

Review Conference to increase the pace of dismantling old warheads by 20% was immediately attacked by the congressional majority and is now essentially dead. In response to Kerry's promise, language was added to the annual military authorization bill to limit dismantlement spending to about the current level—which was also the administration's requested amount, raising the question of how Secretary Kerry's promise was to be paid for in the first place.³

Thus at the moment there is unanimity within the US government *against* any pursuit of "negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament," as required by NPT Article VI. Congress has even repeatedly passed (and this President has signed) laws of dubious constitutionality restricting the President's authority to negotiate further disarmament.⁴

Deploying, sustaining, and modernizing the huge US nuclear arsenal will cost at least *one trillion dollars* through the early 2030s, a huge expense even for the US and a commitment that demonstrates the perfect vacuum of sincerity in US disarmament promises. Nuclear weapons are now, and are slated to remain, central in US security policy. As former Obama White House nuclear czar Gary Samore recently said, "Nuclear disarmament is not going to happen.... It's a fantasy. We need our weapons for our safety, and we're not going to give them up."⁵

And that's the way things will remain unless the non-nuclear-armed states decide, on their own, to fill the legal gap that lends legitimacy to nuclear weapons and prestige to the states that possess them, with a treaty banning the production, possession, sharing, and use of nuclear weapons. Such a ban would be an "effective measure" to end the nuclear arms race and bring about nuclear disarmament, as envisioned by article VI. •

1 Further details and references are available in the U.S. chapter of *Assuring destruction forever*: 2015 edition. See also "Air Force Wants 1,000 New Cruise Missiles," Kingston Reif, Arms Control Association, May 7, 2015, http://www.armscontrol.org/ACT/2015_05/News/Air-Force-Wants-Thousand-New-Cruise-Missiles.

2 U.S. Department of State, "Transparency in the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Stockpile," April 27, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/npt/statements/241165.htm>.

3 "HASC Republicans Oppose Admin. Plan to Accelerate Dismantlement Work by 20 Percent; Kerry Announces Current Stockpile Size of 4,717," Todd Jacobson, Nuclear Security and Deterrence Monitor, May 1, 2015 (paywall). Modest increases in dismantlement spending over the authorized and appropriated amounts could be done but would require approval of congressional committee chairs and ranking members, which under present conditions would almost certainly not be forthcoming.

4 See for example sections 1041-1047 under Section E, "Nuclear Forces," in the FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112hr1540enr/pdf/BILLS-112hr1540enr.pdf>. Subsequent NDAs expand on these first post-New START limitations.

5 "U.S. unease about nuclear-weapons fuel takes aim at a South African vault," Birch, Douglas, and Smith, R. Jeffrey, Center for Public Integrity, 14 March 2015, www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/us-unease-about-nuclear-weapons-fuel-takes-aim-at-a-south-african-vault/2015/03/13/b17389f6-2bc1-4515-962d-03c655d0e62d_story.html.



EVENT: GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO COMBAT NUCLEAR TERRORISM (GICNT)

Emily Watson | *Reaching Critical Will* of WILPF

This event outlined the vision of the GICNT and discussed how to tackle underlying symptoms of terrorism. The all-male panel was comprised of Ambassadors Kai Sauer and Klaus Korhonen of Finland, Mr Mikhail Ulyanov of Russia, Assistant Secretary Thomas Countryman of the US, Mr Richard Matthews of Australia, and Mr Carlos Torres-Vidal of Spain.

The speakers explained that the GICNT was founded in 2006 and now comprises 86 states and 4 international observers. It is co-chaired by the UK and US and has a special focus on collaboration between states. A recurring theme in speeches was the increasing risk of nuclear terrorism.

Klaus Korhonen described the GICNT as a practical initiative with an emphasis on global capacity building. A common misconception is that the likelihood of chemical, biological, and radiological terrorism is low, he argued. He asserted that “experts unanimously testify” that the technical skills of terrorist groups are increasing. Terrorist threats “know no borders”. Finland sees benefits from participating in GICNT to prepare for whatever threats might arise.

Mikhail Ulyanov agreed that the threat of nuclear terrorism has “grown dramatically”. Russia has ratified all GICNT documents and hopes other states will follow suit. International efforts help bolster national security. There is a demand for nuclear and radiological materials “for malicious use” according to Thomas Countryman. The GICNT places an emphasis on exchanging information between disciplinary fields.

Richard Matthews reiterated that the spread of nuclear technology enables “nefarious purposes”. Australia chairs the forensics group. If illegal uranium is discovered, forensic scientists have the ability to analyse “isotopic signatures” to establish where the uranium originated. Carlos Torres-Vidal clarified that the probability of a nuclear terrorism incident is not necessarily high, but there is a trend of increasing risk. We do not know exactly how high the risk is.

Matthews stated that Australia is involved in other initiatives addressing terrorism, for instance, social programmes reducing the likelihood that young people are radicalised. Countryman believed that Syria’s use of chemical weapons inspired terrorists in the Middle East. It is “conceivable” that terrorists seek nuclear materials out of a sense of injustice that some states hold nuclear weapons whilst others cannot, he asserted. A terrorist detonation would not cause as much damage as a full-scale war and “might just cause radiation”. Later this year, the GICNT will convene a conference in Helsinki, which all states are invited to attend. •

EVENT: PROSPECTS FOR THE NPT POST-2015 REVCON

Emily Watson | *Reaching Critical Will* of WILPF

Canadian Pugwash organised this discussion about the NPT Review Conference and suggestions for progress. The speakers were Cesar Jaramillo, Project Ploughshares in Canada; Paul Meyer, International Security Faculty at the Simon Fraser University; Erika Simpson, International Relations Faculty at Canada’s Western University; and Susi Snyder, PAX in the Netherlands.

There were a number of commonalities in the assessments. Speakers praised the humanitarian initiative, civil society activism, and the increasing desire of states to speak out. The spread of nuclear weapon free zones is a great achievement. However, the NPT is a flawed document containing significant legal gaps. It has been interpreted to favour nuclear-armed states at the expense of the majority. Continued modernisation of nuclear weapons casts doubt on commitments of states to disarmament. Progress on the Middle East has been too slow, and states are not equally represented due to financial barriers.

Cesar Jaramillo stated that there will never be ideal security conditions for disarmament; we must pursue progress in spite of this. There will always be resistance to disarmament if there is reliance on nuclear “deterrence” doctrines. Actual possession of nuclear weapons is more dangerous than potential proliferation. Evidence proves nuclear risks are indisputable. We don’t have a process for complete disarmament: we must create this.

Paul Meyer lamented that the NPT has no Executive Council, no annual meetings, no permanent secretariat, and no organisation promoting compliance with all provisions. When nuclear-armed states report on disarmament progress, they speak from reference points in the 1990s instead of detailing progress over the last five years.

An issue worthy of more attention according to Erika Simpson is a nuclear weapon free zone in the Arctic. This would prevent the passage of nuclear submarines under the ice. After the Review Conference, countries must concentrate on issues related to Ukraine, DPRK, and the implications of the US ballistic missile defence project.

Susi Snyder noted that a weak or non-existent conference outcome would not detract from past commitments. We still have the 13 practical steps, the 64-point action plan, and humanitarian statements. Whatever happens, states will not leave the NPT as it offers technology and diplomatic benefits. The humanitarian initiative will continue: enough states have shown their support for it to carry forward. •



NO NEW INFORMATION ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS?

Dr. Matthew Bolton | Pace University and Article 36

Many diplomatic discussions of nuclear weapons tend toward the dry and mind-numbing—perhaps by design—trying the patience of those who working for a nuclear free world. However, late in the afternoon on Monday, the debate in Main Committee I of the 2015 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) took a turn for the dramatic.

France took the floor and delivered a statement that astounded both in its absurdity and forcefulness, dismissing the humanitarian initiative on nuclear weapons, including the conferences in Oslo, Nayarit, and Vienna. “There has been no new information” on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons “in decades,” the French ambassador fumed. Shortly thereafter, the delegate of the Russian Federation mused that those who believe that nuclear disarmament efforts are slowing must be using a “different version of maths”.

As I listened to this, I noticed I had started shaking. This sort of “emotional response” is often disparaged as not belonging in the United Nations, but I think my fear was justified.

France’s claim that there is “no new information” sounds remarkably like what social psychologists would identify as a projection of fault onto others. The claim that there is no new information is actually an admission that they do not listen to new information or wish there was no new information.

Indeed, the French and Russian statements unmask the brutal madness underlying the discourse of nuclear “realism” peddled by nuclear-armed states. It is an assertion that reality is what we with power say it is, not what scientists have observed about it. It recalls the comment made by a Bush administration official in 2002 to a journalist that those who “believe that solutions emerge from ... judicious study of discernible reality” are misguided because, “We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you’re studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we’ll act again, creating other new realities.”

The philosopher Hannah Arendt actually saw this attitude, what she called “action-as-propaganda,” as the essence of totalitarianism: claim something blatantly surreal and then force everyone to live in that reality, creating the evidence for your own claim. Say there is no new information; block any attempts to gather new information; then say, “See! There’s no new information!” Might, apparently, makes right.

Ironically, this view recognizes the possibility that the status quo can change through exercising power. It also perhaps explains the ferocity of France’s rhetoric—they

understand the fragility of the status quo and sense the possibility of losing control.

The Austrian ambassador’s response during the debate offered an alternative vision for global policy-making, distinct from unabashed great power strong-arming. Listing the voluminous new insights into the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons since the 1980s, he called for an approach to nuclear disarmament based on “human security.” He also suggested that those states that claim there is no new information might have benefited from attending the conferences in Oslo, Nayarit, and Vienna (which France did not).

But at a certain point, he paused uncomfortably and said he was “lost for words”. I empathize. At a certain point when someone makes such a brazen claim of denial, does it make sense to continue to try to state the obvious?

It strikes me that it is actually the silence of the nuclear-dependent states that most enables the ongoing “nuclear consequences denial” of the nuclear-armed states. They remained conspicuously quiet after France’s statement.

In his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. argued that it was seemingly well-intentioned white “moderates” —those who said “I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods” —who perpetuated the persistence of racism and segregation. “Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection,” he said. They provided the veneer of legitimacy and normalcy to an illegitimate system. Dr. King noted that a “gentle” segregationist was still “dedicated to maintenance of the status quo.”

Similarly, eliminating nuclear weapons requires that those states acknowledging the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons but remaining complicit with the nuclear-armed states break their silence. “Building consensus” around denial would be a consensus of delusion and support a “security” system based on the most inhumane weapons ever built. •



EVENT: BANNING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Tim Wright | ICAN Australia

More than 80 nations have endorsed the Pledge issued at the Vienna conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons “to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons”. But is there indeed a legal gap to fill? Over the past week, several states with nuclear weapons in their military doctrines have asserted that there isn’t.

Yesterday’s side event by Article 36 and Reaching Critical Will (RCW) showed this position to be baseless. Speakers from the two organisations presented a new joint paper titled Filling the legal Gap: the prohibition of nuclear weapons, which lays out the deficiencies in existing law.

They called for the urgent negotiation of a nuclear weapon ban treaty to establish an explicit and comprehensive prohibition on nuclear weapons and a framework for their elimination. Importantly, they argued, it should be pursued and adopted even if the nuclear-armed states refuse to participate.

Elizabeth Minor of Article 36 said the treaty must recognize the rights of victims and survivors of nuclear weapons, in line with other treaties outlawing indis-

criminate weapons. Her organization recently published a paper making the case for including provisions to this effect.

Ray Acheson of RCW said the proposal for a ban treaty is “the only real issue being discussed” at this NPT Review Conference. Support for such a treaty has grown considerably over the past two years with the convening of three major conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

“Are nuclear weapons good or bad? That is what it comes down to,” Acheson said. The nuclear-armed states are rattled by this proposal because they know a ban treaty can be negotiated even without them, and it will force allied states to reject any role for nuclear weapons in their defence doctrines.

Acheson and Minor did not prescribe a particular forum for the negotiations, although they insisted it be “open to all and blockable by none”. They suggested that the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is an appropriate deadline for the launch of a ban treaty process. •

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

When	What	Where	Who
	Government briefing for NGOs (CANCELLED)		Reaching Critical Will
10:00-13:00	Main Committee I	Trusteeship	
10:00-13:00	Main Committee III	ECOSOC	
10:00-11:30	The way forward for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation	Conference Room C Conference Building	Canadian Pugwash
11:30-13:00	Film screening: Article 9 Comes to America	Conference Room C Conference Building	WILPF
13:15-14:30	United Nations initiatives for nuclear abolition	Conference Room C Conference Building	UNFOLD ZERO
13:15-14:30	EU as a global actor in the field of nuclear safety and security	Trusteeship	European Union
13:15-14:30	Options to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons	Conference Room C Conference Building	Office for Disarmament Affairs
15:00 -18:00	Subsidiary Body I	Trusteeship	
15:00 -18:00	Subsidiary Body II	ECOSOC	