



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

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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.

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EDITORIAL: GAPS

Ray Acheson | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

The “gap on nuclear disarmament is still wide,” announced the President of the NPT Review Conference during a brief plenary meeting on Wednesday. She suggested that the informal discussions she is hosting on this subject would continue into the night. And she encouraged the Chairs of Main Committees II and III to carry on their work as long as necessary tonight as well, given that there is still no consensus on their texts either. If there is to be an outcome from this Conference, the draft text will have to be circulated to capitals by 15:00 on Thursday. Whether or not agreement is reached on a draft, however, the real outcome of this Conference will be the Humanitarian Pledge. It is the pledge that distinguishes this Review Conference from other meetings of the NPT. While traditional positions of nuclear-armed states, their allies, and the pro-disarmament countries have fallen into their usual predictable patterns, this is the first time that countries have banded together in this way to move towards a new legally-binding instrument on nuclear weapons.

With nearly 100 states so far endorsing the international pledge to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, whatever happens at this Review Conference cannot hold them back from finally achieving real progress on multilateral nuclear disarmament. States will be in a strong position to start implementing this pledge after the Conference adjourns, whether or not a document is adopted here.

What would an outcome document from this Review Conference even represent? The informal meetings being held in back rooms with only a few delegations may or may not produce some sort of agreement. But what meaning does an agreement reached amongst a handful of states hold in the context of a Conference of 189 states parties? What does it signal about democracy and transparency?

This is the way things have traditionally been done in UN forums. We have all seen it before. But just because this reflects past practice does not make it reasonable or constructive. It does not mean it is the way things should be done now, especially in “the new reality” identified by Ireland and lived by everyone attending this Review Conference.

Any agreement reached at this point will represent a process that privileges the opinions and positions of only a few states that are handpicked by the President and have the resources and stamina to continue participating as long as it takes into the night. The most contentious issues in these discussions, according to the President, are related to effective measures, humanitarian impact, and reporting by the nuclear-armed states. These are issues that concern all NPT states parties—and civil society around the world.

To hear that the gaps remain wide indicates that there are clearly some very strong pro-disarmament delegations in the room fighting hard on behalf of everyone else. But what kind of pressure will they come under from the nuclear-armed states? Will they be cajoled or intimidated into accepting a weak outcome? What would such an outcome mean for the future of nuclear disarmament?

It would not necessarily have to mean anything. With the Humanitarian Pledge firmly on the table and representing the majority of states, those committed to action on disarmament can move forward after this Review Conference in the full knowledge that they came, they tried, and the path was blocked by the nuclear-armed states, who were unwilling to compromise. The non-proliferation aspects will survive to another Review Conference, whether or not an outcome is agreed here. But the disarmament aspects must be taken forward elsewhere. The nuclear-armed have refused to comply with their legal obligations under article

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#ALittleMoreReaction TO BAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Editorial, continued

VI, their commitments made in 1995, 2000, and 2010, and now they are refusing to agree to the demands of the majority that they accept time-bound, measurable, verifiable, and irreversible actions to disarm. While they continue to call for states to “strengthen the NPT,” it is they who are undermining the Treaty with their intransigence.

There is more than a just a gap between the nuclear-armed states and those states wanting nuclear disarmament. There is also a clearly identified legal gap when it comes to the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. The solution for filling this gap is to move ahead and prohibit nuclear weapons without the nuclear-armed states. Whether a document is agreed here in New York this month or not, it is clear that those states possessing nuclear weapons are blocking the path to any meaningful progress on nuclear disarmament. Thus it is up to the committed states to take the lead and start a process to prohibit nuclear weapons, even if the nuclear-armed states oppose it and refuse to participate. The Humanitarian Pledge is the first step towards doing so and will mark an historic outcome from the 2015 NPT Review Conference. •

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NEWS IN BRIEF

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.

- The President reported that there is no update to give on MCI; gaps are still wide on nuclear disarmament, particularly on issues related to effective measures, humanitarian impact, and reporting by the nuclear-armed states, but efforts for reaching consensus is still ongoing.
- The President explained that MCII and MCIII have been holding informal meetings to agree on text.
- The chair of MCII informed the plenary that no consensus has been reached, but he is willing to keep trying.
- The chair of MCIII reported that they might be in a position to agree on some language later Wednesday afternoon.
- The President pleaded to delegations for extra efforts to agree on an outcome document, and encouraged them to continue in night sessions if they cannot agree.
- Morocco asked for more substantive updates on the MCI work, since it does not know how the President is proceeding.
- The President reiterated that there is nothing more to report; the gap remains wide.
- The Secretariat explained that the outcome documents would need to be agreed upon by the latest at tomorrow at 3PM, as delegations need 24 hours to get approval from capitals.

WHO IS DOING BETTER?

Rick Wayman | *Nuclear Age Peace Foundation*

On 27 April, the opening day of the NPT Review Conference, Marshall Islands Foreign Minister Tony de Brum delivered a speech in which he pleaded with delegates that “we can and must do better” in implementing NPT nuclear disarmament promises. Over the course of the four-week conference, we have heard from many countries about the urgent need for nuclear-armed nations to reduce the operating status of their nuclear arsenals—which means taking nuclear weapons off of high-alert or hair-trigger alert.

We have also heard many proclamations from the nuclear-armed states (United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, and China) about their dedication to the 2010 NPT Action Plan. Action 5 of the plan calls upon these states to “further (reduce) the operational status of nuclear weapons systems in ways that promote international stability and security.”

In the early morning hours of 20 May, the United States Air Force conducted a test launch of a Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile. This was the 291st test launch of a Minuteman III missile since it entered the force in 1970. However, this was no ordinary test. This one took place less than three days before the end of the Review Conference.

The Minuteman III is the United States’ land-based missile that can deliver a nuclear warhead to most locations on the planet in well under an hour. These weapons are ready to fire with just minutes’ notice. The

test flies in the face of the many NPT states parties that are demanding reductions in high-alert nuclear weapon systems. We can and must do better.

Action 5 of the 2010 NPT Action Plan also calls on the NPT nuclear-armed states to “further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons.” Wednesday’s Minuteman III test demonstrates that the United States intends to continue relying heavily on nuclear weapons for its perceived security and has no qualms about showing the world what it thinks of diplomatic engagement at the NPT. We can and must do better.

The Minuteman test is a tangible symbol of the desperate resistance shown by the nuclear-armed states at this Review Conference toward anything that would provide meaningful progress toward actual nuclear disarmament. The intransigence of nuclear-armed states is a big reason why the Marshall Islands brought lawsuits against them for their breaches of article VI of the NPT and customary international law. It is a big reason why nearly 100 states have signed the Humanitarian Pledge, initiated by Austria, to take concrete action on the issue.

Led by these courageous non-nuclear-armed states, we can and will do better in fulfilling the nuclear disarmament promises of the NPT.



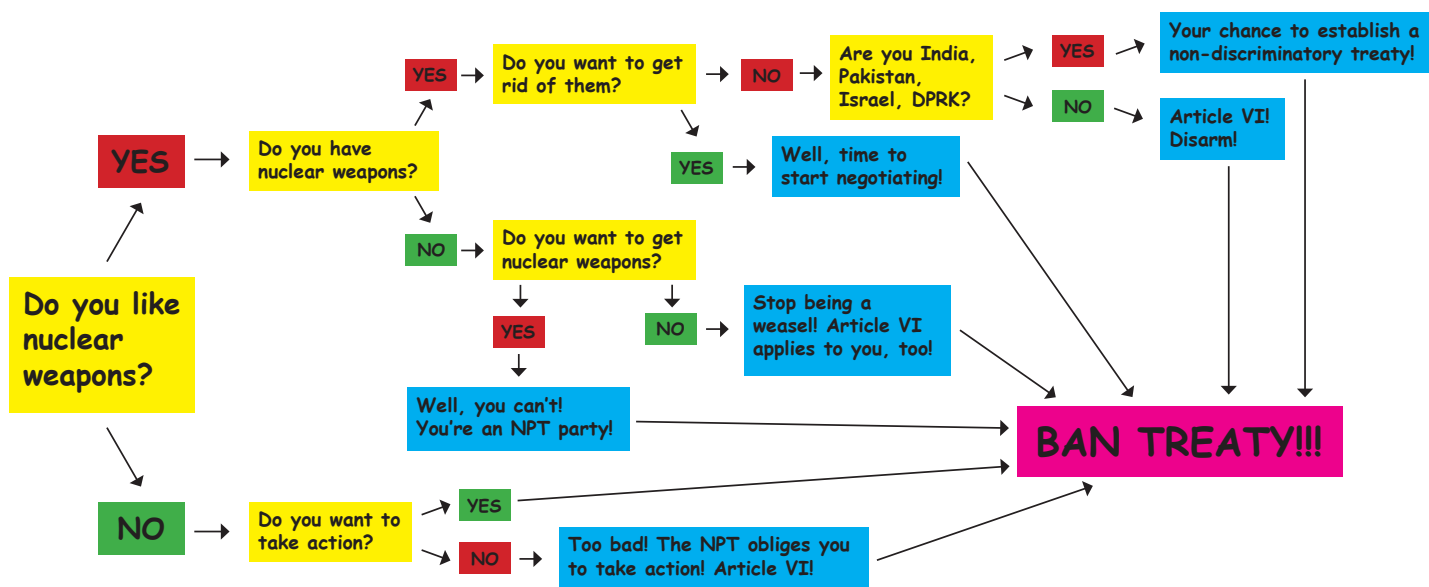
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

When	What	Where	Who
10:00-13:00	Plenary	Trusteeship	
10:00-13:00	Drafting Committee	ECOSOC	
13:15-14:30	Shadows and Ashes vigil	Isaiah Wall, First Ave & 43 St	NYC War Resisters League
15:00 -18:00	Plenary	Trusteeship	
15:00 -18:00	Drafting Committee	ECOSOC	

ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE BAN!

SO GET ON THE BAN-WAGON!



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