



NPT News in Review

*Civil society perspectives on the
2010 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference
3–28 May 2010*



Is this what momentum looks like?

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The closed door negotiations continued on Wednesday, with states parties reviewing the draft declaration paragraph by paragraph. The debate is still rife with disagreement over many elements of the text and many delegations seemed confused on how to move forward from here within the limited time left. After three weeks of assertion that “the stakes are high” and “failure is not an option,” some delegates are expressing concern about the Conference’s ability to agree on a strong outcome document within the next two days. The P5, especially France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, have continued a seemingly coordinated assault against all concrete disarmament steps; in some cases, their “amendments”—if accepted—could result in a document weaker on disarmament than in 2000 or backtrack from language to which they have previously agreed.

The Russian delegation, for example, continued to pursue the deletion of Action 6e in the action plan, which calls on nuclear weapon states to “consider further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons” as part of the P5 “consultations” mandated by Action 6. It is worth noting that the language of 6e is pulled directly from UN General Assembly resolution 64/47 “Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons,” which the Russian Federation voted in favour of in 2009.

It is not just specific measures being rejected by the NWS. They seem allergic to accepting any language related directly to disarmament. Reportedly, they have asked for the elimination of any reference to timeframes in the declaration chapeau and of course have already ensured the removal of specific dates related to disarmament steps in the action plan. They are also apparently seeking the deletion of Action 5, which very mildly says that nuclear weapon states “commit to cease the development of and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and to end the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons.” Some of them have also

rejected the reference to the UN Secretary-General’s five-point plan, which notes that this proposal “contributes toward this goal” of establishing the framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

Curiously, the French and UK delegations are also reportedly having problems with the language on international humanitarian law in the action plan, which states that IHL must be observed by all states at all times. It seems that both delegations said their lawyers are looking at the language to make sure it is consistent with international law. This apparently prompted a number of interventions from other delegations seeking clarity on the UK and French positions on this matter. Perhaps it is worth noting here that it was not only NGOs and press that were kept out of the conference room on Wednesday—by a sign written in pink highlighter—but also all official observers, including the International Committee of the Red Cross. They, and the several lawyers with NGO badges who were waiting outside in the hallway, would have been particularly interested in this element of the discussion.

Other delegations seem to be maintaining hard lines as well. Many appear reluctant to compromise. The Non-Aligned Movement has reportedly been reiterating its lengthy list of amendments to the draft, insisting that its preferred language be reflected in the text. Attempts to resolve divergences over issues such as withdrawal, the additional protocol, and other non-proliferation concerns have proved equally contentious. Yesterday evening, the informal plenary broke up into three groups dealing with similar issues of the previous subsidiary bodies in an attempt to reach agreement on key pieces of the draft declaration. In the group dealing with disarmament, delegates were given until 9:30 PM to submit inputs and a revised text is due out this morning.

On Wednesday afternoon, in the midst of the ongoing negotiations, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon sent a letter to the

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DROP THE RHETORIC, NOT THE BOMBS.

IT'S TIME TO TURN THE **VISION** OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE WORLD INTO A **REALITY**.
AGREE AT THIS REVCON TO BEGIN WORK ON A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONVENTION.

Is this what momentum looks like? (cont.)

Review Conference urging delegations “to be pragmatic and coalesce around solutions that will advance the interest of the whole community of nations.” He encouraged all states parties to “step up their work with flexibility and in a cooperative spirit, to reach agreement on an outcome document that will contribute to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and to further progress on disarmament.”

Unfortunately, we are not seeing a spirit of compromise or cooperation at this Review Conference and the positive atmosphere that characterized the opening weeks has slowly changed to a skeptical concern among most participants. Compromise, like balance, is apparently in the eye of the bolder. Many of the so-called “key delegations” seem to be treating the art of compromise like a zero sum game of “winners” and “losers”, in which one party demands another change its position to meet theirs, rather than agreeing to meet that party in the middle. Quick to point fingers at each other, opposing delegations do not appear to be engaging in diplomacy but in a

game of chicken.

Coming into this Review Conference, and over the last year, we have heard a lot about the “new momentum” for nuclear disarmament. Momentum can be defined, as it is by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, as “strength or force gained by motion or through the development of events”. It can also be defined, as it is by the same dictionary, as “a property of a moving body that determines the length of time required to bring it to rest when under the action of a constant force or moment.” This Review Conference can perhaps be defined as the property of the “vision” of nuclear weapon free world that will determine the length of time required to bring this vision to rest. The constant force applied against this vision has come from the governments of some of the most vocal professors of this “vision”.

However, regardless of how much force the nuclear weapon states apply against their own purported vision, there will always be those to carry the vision forward with conviction and integrity, to see it implemented, concertized, operationalized. •

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Answers to yesterday’s Nuclear Crossword



Threats to the nuclear establishment—the UK and a Nuclear Weapons Convention

Tim Street | International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons UK

With the UK General Election taking place during the first week of the NPT, British pronouncements were thin on the ground as Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) mandarins withdrew from public gaze until a new government had been formed. Workshops, including an off-the-record briefing on behalf of the 'Western Group' of states and another on 'multinational approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle' were hurriedly postponed. One presentation which did go ahead concerned the joint research project the UK has undertaken with Norway, to verify the dismantlement of nuclear weapons.¹

Such simulations to achieve best practice are laudable and help prepare the UK for the strong verification and trust-building measures that will be necessitated by a global nuclear weapons abolition treaty. But they remain simulations, whereas the threat to international security posed by the UK's Trident nuclear weapons system—and its planned replacement—are all too real. Such concerns were reflected by Norway itself, when it argued, on Day 9 of the NPT, that states parties must "establish a new international nuclear agenda with an action plan for nuclear disarmament with clear benchmarks and deadlines holding us all accountable".²

The UK's promotion of its verification work with Norway is a key part of a public relations campaign that aims to convince the world that the UK is serious

about "paving the way towards a safer world without nuclear weapons". The campaign includes a Nuclear 2010 background paper prepared for the NPT (notable for its single reference to the UK's "nuclear defence," not the usual "nuclear deterrent"), whilst John Duncan (UK Ambassador for Multilateral Arms Control and Disarmament) has begun a regular blog and even 'tweets' on occasion.³

One blog entry in particular, entitled 'A Nuclear Weapons Convention: Legislating for Security', merits dissection.⁴ The blog begins by celebrating the new START nuclear arms reduction agreement between the US and Russia as the potential saviour of the NPT. Importantly, Duncan sees a threat to the NPT's survival coming from "some commentators and NGOs" who are now "declaring the NPT obsolete". Not only are these (unidentified) individuals clamouring for the NPT's downfall, but they are "calling for a brand new global agreement to ban nuclear weapons".

At the 2010 NPT, the states supporting a Nuclear Weapons Convention have increasingly made themselves known. They include, in no particular order and to name but a few, Indonesia, Switzerland, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Austria, New Zealand, Senegal, Iran, Yemen, Egypt, Costa Rica, Lebanon, Colombia, and Malaysia. The reason why these countries and

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N J U C I K B I H Q Y Y J C M
N C H N A E H T E G T N X G E
C S R O X W H G D E Z O L J M
E L Y G R E N E I W C R F L B
L G D E V E N C C A B T K N E
Z U L N L Y O V L R K U G P R
Q Y G L A S I N Z H V E K I S
G F A J L D T O V E E N N K T
S H H I Z O A I Z A M T L D A
C K V C B C R S Z D A P W D T
L I Q T H U A O G H N O W P E
C A X B S M L L G Q E L N I F
U W A T G E C P T P D I I L P
R X F E E N E X V J O C C T Y
F C U D W T D E A C C Y S I X

DECLARATION
CIVIL SOCIETY
ENERGY
DOCUMENT
MEMBER STATE
NPT
EXPLOSION
WARHEAD
CHALLENGE
NEUTRON
CODENAME
POLICY
CTBT



Threats to the nuclear establishment (cont.)

civil society groups from around the world back a Nuclear Weapons Convention is because they realise the need to, as Mexican Ambassador Claude Heller puts it, “prohibit these weapons with a timeframe that provides certainty to the international community”.⁵

Such calls are imbued with a welcome sense of urgency. They stem from long-standing frustration amongst many of the non-nuclear-weapon states at the lack of progress on disarmament by the nuclear-weapon states and the failure to establish a Middle East WMD-free zone, measures which were central to the NPT’s indefinite extension in 1995. The beginning of negotiations now on a Nuclear Weapons Convention with “aspirational and practical steps” for the short and long term would thus finally provide the political momentum to reach the summit of abolition and realise the legal obligations for nuclear disarmament enshrined by the NPT.⁶ Instead, the brakes on the abolition locomotive are being applied precisely by some of the nuclear weapon states. By planning to modernise their nuclear weapon systems, the US and UK could send the train the other way down the track, back towards the Cold War balance of terror.

Previously, the UK government has stated that “there may be a role for a Nuclear Weapons Convention in the future when the time comes to establish a final ban” but that calls for negotiations to begin now are “premature”.⁷ Ambassador Duncan goes far beyond this in his blog, stating that the “underlying thought that by legislating against nuclear weapons would make the world a safer place is a dangerous one” (sic). He justifies this position by stating that “the purpose of nuclear deterrence is to ensure that the weapons are never used,” meaning that the world is safer with the threat of nuclear war than without. Dan Plesch has aptly described the nonsense of deterrence as “boiling down to arguing that the more dangerous things are, the more safer we are,” for example, if one believes that war can only be prevented by declaring a readiness to turn a conventional war into a nuclear war.⁸

The Ambassador goes on to state that “one cannot legislate for security even in the domestic environment.... Laws against murder have unfortunately not prevented murders taking place”. Such bizarre logic (which ignores elementary objection e.g. laws and their enforcement are desirable because they reduce crime) is carried over into a denial that we may draw lessons for nuclear abolition from the bans on landmines or cluster munitions. These sentiments are pure scaremongering. For, as with these bans and the chemical and biological weapons conventions, a nuclear abolition treaty would build

on and eventually include and succeed existing legal instruments.⁹

The UK finally made its statement to the NPT on 20 May, citing ‘UK progress towards the “13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI”’.¹⁰ As Rebecca Johnson observed, such recitations (similar in style to those of France, Russia, and the US) are simply inadequate, as they refer to “reductions and closures of nuclear facilities undertaken in response to the end of the cold war twenty years ago”.¹¹ It is also important to recognise, as Ireland did in an open committee meeting, that “reductions in nuclear weapons ... do not necessarily equate to a commitment to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons”.¹² This was perfectly illustrated by Liam Fox’s first speech as the new Defence Secretary, which stated that “We have got a very clear agreement that we will continue with the nuclear deterrent”.¹³ The UK government may have changed but it seems that the nuclear addiction and the deterrence nonsense remains.

Tim Street is the Coordinator for the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) in the UK. •

Notes

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4. John Duncan, ‘Arms Control Blog’, <http://blogs.fco.gov.uk/roller/duncan/>
5. The Acronym Institute, ‘Day 9 at NPT’, <http://acronyminstitute.wordpress.com/>
6. Patricia Lewis, ‘Life at 40: Prospects for the NPT and the 2010 Review Conference’, Arms Control Association, http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2010_03/Lewis
7. UK Parliament, Hansard, 30th June 2009, <http://services.parliament.uk/hansard/Commons/ByDate/20090630/writtenanswers/part014.html>
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9. Rebecca Johnson, Nuclear Weapons Abolition: an idea whose time has come, Abolition 2000, p.12
10. ‘UK statement to the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference’, UK FCO, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=22266131>
11. Rebecca Johnson, ‘NPT conference: half time glass half full’, Open Democracy, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/npt-conference-half-time-glass-half-full>
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Yes, We Can't! Inconsistencies in the US Position on a Nuclear Weapons Convention

Jay Marx | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

After listening to the US delegation at the NPT Review Conference over the past few weeks, some alarming inconsistencies appear between America's promising rhetoric and the apparent actual US position toward nuclear abolition.

Clearly, the US is proud of its recent steps toward nuclear disarmament. Americans point to tangible progress on several levels, especially: the New START between the US and Russia; a seemingly less aggressive Nuclear Posture Review; a Nuclear Security Summit in Washington last month; new transparency about the US arsenal size; and renewed support for a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East. Over it all, of course, soars the inspirational rhetoric of President Obama, repeating like a mantra his commitment to "the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

But Obama and his deputies, from Vice-President Joe Biden on down, always make sure to emphasize the caveat to this mantra: "maybe not in my lifetime." They say it in different ways, but they always say it, and it always means the same thing: Not Now, Not Yet, Not Soon. Nuclear abolition may be possible and attainable, but later, in the obscure future, when someone else is in charge.

The US delegation has said it so often now, it seems that the hedge phrase "maybe not in this lifetime" has taken on a life of its own. More than a mere hedge, it starts to look like an invocation, even a declaration. Taken with the US delegation's opposition to a Nuclear Weapons Convention (a multinational negotiation for nuclear weapons abolition, already supported by a majority of UN member countries), and the US administration's proposed 2011 budget that actually cuts funding for dismantlement programs while providing hundreds of millions more for new weapons development facilities, it appears to be a decision. And, considering America's position as one of the P5 (permanent veto-wielding members of the UN Security Council), the world's sole superpower, and the only country ever to actually use a nuclear weapon in war, within the context of this NPT Review conference, "Not In Our Lifetime" looms like an unfortunate edict.

The US seems determined to stick to its program of repetition of its mantras ("Patience and Persistence" is another favorite), single-minded insistence on a step-by-step program of incremental action, and abject refusal to reach any further than that. The most accurate reflection of the American attitude toward nuclear abolition at this NPT Review might be, "Thus far and no farther."

Why is this? And, how can they get away with it? How can the US so vocally support "A World Without Nuclear Weapons," and at the same time actually *oppose* a Nuclear Weapons Convention—the multilateral negotiations so necessary if we are ever to achieve the much desired nuclear free world? During a side event at the Review Conference, Ellen Tauscher, US Undersecretary of State for Arms Control, justified America's resistance to an NWC by pointing to a chart of US warhead reductions since 1968 (reductions which plateaued during the 1990's) and claimed, "When I was in school, 84% was a B-plus!" Since when is the United States, and our ex-professor President, satisfied with B grade work? At a moment when the whole world is looking to the US for inspirational disarmament leadership, is *this*, as my teachers used to ask, the best we can do?

Too bad no one has asked the US delegation some more probing questions, such as:

Given that the US has many thousands of warheads stockpiled and awaiting dismantlement under the previous and now New START treaties, why does the proposed 2011 budget actually *shrink* the weapons dismantlement budget by one third, from under \$100 million to less than \$60 million? If the US wants the world to believe it is serious about getting rid of nuclear weapons, wouldn't it make more sense to, say, double that budget?

Meanwhile, the same new budget adds *hundreds of millions* to the nuclear weapons labs for a new plutonium pit facility in Los Alamos, new uranium enrichment in Oak Ridge, and even a brand new bomb component facility in Kansas City, with not millions but *tens of billions* now promised in future years. So can the US be serious when it says to the United Nations, "These measures are consistent with President Obama's commitment to move toward a world without nuclear weapons"? Aren't these actions more consistent with a generational commitment to a nuclear weapons program for the next 30 to 50 years at least—essentially an American guarantee that a Nuclear Weapons Free World will *not* happen "in our lifetime"?

The United States remains committed to talking about non-proliferation while resolutely ignoring an obvious fact: the single greatest incentive in the world for nuclear proliferation remains the vast nuclear arsenals of the US and Russia, and our determination to maintain, even enhance the US arsenal no matter the (economic or geo-political) costs.

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Yes We Can't! (cont.)

It is tragic, really, because right now—US recalcitrance aside—the appetite here for dramatic nuclear disarmament progress is almost palpable. And momentum matters. For two weeks at the beginning of the Review Conference, from country after country, delegates rose to announce how their nations would support negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. In the halls connecting the conference rooms, hundreds of NGO delegates from around the world unite in their support for nuclear abolition. Over seventy percent of Americans, and even higher percentages of populations in other countries, support global nuclear disarmament. If the world is serious about a nuclear free future, then the time for us to reach for it is right now! Yet the United States—the world's most influential nation, and the country whose president was recently honored with a Nobel Peace Prize (chiefly for his nuclear disarmament rhetoric)—not only will not support it, but has actually emerged in opposition.

In the face of this seeming paradox, the world can only wonder: "What is really going on here?" And how many lifetimes must expire before we all overcome America's nuclear weapons addiction?

Jay Marx is a member of the DC Chapter of WILPF, co-sponsor of the 100-mile Peace Walk to New York for Nuclear Abolition (one of four peace walks from four directions arriving in New York for this NPT Review). •

Table of (Nuclear) Content

United States	5,113 (+ ? in dismantlement queue)
United Kingdom	225
Russia	TBC?
France	TBC?
China	TBC?

*Mural by Harold Freedman
"Legend of Fire"
Eastern Hill Fire Station, Melbourne*

What's On Today's Calendar of Events

Abolition Caucus

Where: Conference Room A, NLB

When: 8:00–8:50

Contact: Alice Slater, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

Off-the-record dialogue between U.S. Government & Youth: "Efforts to be taken after the NPT conference"

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and BANg

Where: Conference Room A, NLB

When: 13:15–14:45

Contact: Nina Eisenhardt, Ban All Nukes generation

What to do now? A plan for action

Where: Conference Room A, NLB

When: 15:00–18:00

Contact: Nina Eisenhardt, Ban All Nukes generation





NO NGO'S.
CLOSED MEETING
NO PRESS