



NPT News in Review

Civil society perspectives on the third Preparatory Committee
for the 2010 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference
4–15 May 2009



The importance of being earnest

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On Tuesday morning, the Chair opened the floor to general comments on his draft recommendations to the 2010 NPT Review Conference (RevCon). Before the meeting, many representatives from diverse regions expressed hope that the document could be adopted with minimal changes in order to maintain a positive spirit going into the RevCon. However, when the floor opened for general comments, a few cautiously suggested specific areas in which they felt the draft could be improved.

Nineteen delegates provided general comments on the draft. The primary complaint expressed was of a perceived lack of balance between the Treaty's three pillars. Some delegations, such as Australia, argued that the high degree of specificity articulated in the nuclear disarmament section is not reflected in other sections, particularly that on non-proliferation. The French and Russian delegations suggested that since Section 2 contains an action plan for nuclear disarmament, Sections 3 and 4, on non-proliferation and nuclear energy, should likewise contain action plans. Alternatively, the French delegate proposed, a single joint action plan could be developed.

All three sections do contain action plans to some degree. Section 2 specifically lists several "practical disarmament initiatives" to be identified by the RevCon and recommends it examine ways and means to commence negotiations on a nuclear weapon convention. Section 3 does not list specific initiatives but rather recommends the RevCon itself identify ways to universalize and strengthen the safeguards system and to achieve legally-binding security assurances. Section 4 makes some suggestions on how the RevCon could move forward on the issue of multilateralizing the fuel cycle while addressing concerns about additional restrictions and discrimination. The action plans as currently formulated in

Sections 3 and 4 are not as explicit as that for Section 1, though the intent is similar, calling on the RevCon to identify ways forward on all of these issues.

Despite the variety of suggestions, the vast majority of speakers called for flexibility and compromise to guide the Committee in its work. Many emphasized the importance of the Chair's introductory, or *chapeau*, paragraph, which specifically notes that the recommendations do not preclude future initiatives nor stand as declarations of states parties' positions. The Brazilian delegation said this paragraph is sufficiently clear that the recommendations do not preempt the work of the RevCon in any way.

Despite this clarity, the US delegation called on the Committee to "defer" some of the details in the recommendations until 2010, because they contain "a level of substantive detail" that the United States is "not fully able to address at this time." It requested the Committee wait until the US administration is ready to engage with the rest of the world on these issues—specifically until after it has completed its upcoming defense and nuclear posture reviews, which, in turn, will determine how hard and how fast the Americans are willing to push (or allow themselves to be pushed) toward achieving nuclear disarmament.

The rest of the world has waited a long time for the United States. We can no longer put off substantive work with which every other state party is ready to move forward. Hopefully the US delegation will understand, as the other delegations do, that the recommendations in no way bind their positions or create commitments to be undertaken between this year and next. It would be devastating for the NPT and the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes if the US

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Nuclear sharing in Germany

Nicolas Apfel | NPT TV

In the year of the parliamentary election in Germany, a debate about nuclear sharing with NATO was reopened in April. Chancellor Angela Merkel still supports nuclear weapons on German soil, whereas social democratic candidate Franz Walter Steinmeier, underpinning president Obama's call for disarmament, seeks to end nuclear sharing.

Disarmament has occurred in the NATO nuclear sharing countries since 1990. Exact numbers are not known, but there are estimated to be around 400-480 US nuclear weapons in Europe. During the Cold War, the number peaked around 7000. In Germany, in 2007, 130 bombs were quietly retired from the airbase Ramstein, according to experts Hans M. Christensen (Federation of American Scientists) and Ottfried Nassauer (Berliner Informationszentrum für transatlantische Sicherheit). Now, 20 remain in Büchel, where dropping a nuclear bomb is still a regular training exercise for pilots under German command.

Nuclear sharing is a crucial component of NATO's 1999 strategic concept, which still sees the nuclear planning group as central for military solidarity between NATO members. NATO argues that decisions on the use of strategic or tactical weapons are shared between US command and those of the "non-nuclear weapon" host states.

Article I and II of the NPT question this double-standard that Western countries have created.

While criticizing the US-India Deal or Iran's nuclear program, western European countries under this nuclear sharing agreement are violating core articles of the Treaty. Given the non-compliance of Western states, other countries have less incentive to remain within the Treaty. The goal of a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East could grow more unlikely without a contemporaneous zone in Center Europe.

That is, if dialogues fail. The beginning of a successful dialogue must be non-discrimination and equal standing among all parties. Disarmament and non-violation of the first two articles would give the US and Europe a stronger position from which to request additional non-proliferation activities from other states, and would assure other states that no nuclear threat is constituted by NATO countries.

In Germany, broad protests over this issue did not occur, so the loudest criticism during the 2009 election campaign came from the Social democratic party and the left party. Airplanes provided to use nuclear weapons in 2012 would apparently be replaced by non-nuclear "Eurofighter" airplanes. But the bombs in Büchel and the NATO doctrine remain, so there is no time to rest. If disarmament is to happen, pressure is needed during the upcoming elections in Germany as well as the rest of the NPT review cycle. If no consensus to oppose nuclear sharing is found, Germany and NATO will not feel enough of the pressure that is urgently needed to abolish double-standards hidden behind the mask of "military solidarity".

The 2009/2010 NATO strategic concept may be a supplementary ray of hope or an additional threat for the credibility of the non-proliferation regime. The new strategic concept should drastically limit or abolish the relevance of nuclear weapons and should pave the way for confidence-building measures, such as negative security assurances for non-nuclear NPT states.

The decisive steps have to be taken in German parliaments leading up to the 2010 Review Conference, when former and future demands of non-nuclear weapon states with reference to NATO nations are taken into account and the German Air Force will switch to planes that are not built to deliver nuclear bombs.

Nicolas Apfel is a member of NPT TV, www.npt-tv.net.

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Reaching Critical Will

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News in Brief

Michael Spies | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Recommendations to the 2010 RevCon

- The chair opened to floor on Tuesday for general comments on his draft recommendations to the 2010 RevCon.
- The chair expressed reluctance to go down the path of submitting the recommendations as a chair's working paper.
- The chair indicated he would facilitate consultations between delegations over the text on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning. He stressed that engaging in detailed negotiations over the text would not be feasible.
- The next plenary meeting of the PrepCom will take place on Wednesday afternoon, where it is hoped delegations can take action on a likely revised text.

General views of states on the recommendations

- Many delegations implicitly or explicitly expressed support proceeding on the basis of the chair's text, notwithstanding their desired revisions or their views that the text could be strengthened. Several referred to it as a good basis for discussion, including Brazil, Japan, the New Agenda Coalition, the ROK, Malaysia, and South Africa.
- As a caveat intended to help persuade reluctant delegations to move forward on the basis of the chair's text, a number of delegations positively noted, as reflected in the document, that the recommendations will not prejudice the work or outcome of the RevCon.
- Several delegations faulted the text for not reflecting balanced treatment of the three pillars of the Treaty, including the NAM, Russia, the US, the UK, France, and the ROK.
- Some specifically argued that the nuclear disarmament section was more detailed than those dealing with the other pillars. Russia called for actions plans on all three pillars, not just disarmament. France agreed, but noted a single action plan would be sufficient if it addressed all three pillars.
- The NAM and Iran faulted the structure of the recommendations as not sufficiently reflecting the three pillars.
- Several delegations cautioned against tinkering too much with the text, especially in a manner that necessitates wide negotiations or that includes provisions that are not widely supported. In this context, Canada and Norway

appealed for flexibility.

Calls for specific language in the recommendations

- The NAM called for the inclusion of, inter alia, a reference to legally-binding security assurances and concrete measures for implementing the Middle East resolution.
- The United Kingdom and Russia said the portion on the Middle East should reflect discussions and proposals made during the third PrepCom.
- Egypt and Canada disputed the draft text's suggestion that the presently constituted "strengthened review process" is "indispensable," highlighting their calls and support for NPT institutional reform.
- Canada suggested the text recommend establishment of subcommittees on the topics of withdrawal and institutional reform.
- Egypt contested as too narrow the idea, expressed in the draft, that restrictions on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy not be applied "for political purposes," arguing instead that restrictions should never be applied.
- Russia and Canada suggested the non-proliferation section could be strengthened.
- The United States suggested it could not support any disarmament steps that go beyond the policies described in President Obama's 5 April speech. The US delegation expressed its desire to defer taking any decision on disarmament measures until after it completes its upcoming defense and nuclear posture reviews.
- Algeria called for the text to reflect progress toward achieving a compromise programme of work in the CD.
- Algeria also called for the recommendation on universality to call for states not party to the Treaty to join as non-nuclear weapon states rather than to adhere to the Treaty without preconditions.
- Delegations expressed divergent views on the text's treatment of withdrawal, with Canada requesting more language reflecting positions that have been expressed. Algeria, on the other hand, suggested the language in the draft text went beyond the positions of many states.
- Several delegations, including France and the UK, also indicated they would be submitting suggestions on changes or amendments to the chair.



Operational status of nuclear weapons

Lacy Orme | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

This lunch-time panel, hosted by John Hallam of the Nuclear Flashpoints campaign and chaired by Ambassador Alfredo Labbe of Chile, featured one of the most practical steps toward nuclear disarmament: de-alerting nuclear weapon systems. In lockstep, Ambassador Jurg Streuli of Switzerland, Ambassador Don McKay of New Zealand, Steven Starr of Physicians for Social Responsibility, and Dr. Geoffrey Forden of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology each gave persuasive arguments for decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear arsenals and beginning an open and honest debate about the dangers of high-alert levels for the world at large.

Ambassador Labbe, while noting that the “atmosphere is much clearer than a year ago,” asserted that as a President, Mr. Obama has not yet taken action on de-alerting as he had promised to do during his campaign. Without the United States and Russia’s commitment to removing their warheads from high-alert, the necessary confidence-building will not occur, said Steven Starr. The panelists reported that thousands of nuclear weapons remain on high-alert, which leave only moments for decision-makers to decide whether or not information about an attack is credible and whether or not to retaliate. Because of this, Ambassador Streuli called for a “lengthening of the fuse,” while admitting that such a move would require “specific strategic considerations” for the states involved.

Ambassador McKay said that removing the weapons from high-alert “remains one of the key steps that can be taken as part of a incremental process towards disarmament.” According to Ambassador Labbe, Article VI of the NPT gives advocates a legal means to push for de-alerting. We have a “narrow opportunity,” he said, adding that “obligations from Article VI fall upon not only the nuclear weapons states but on all the states party to the NPT.” This will require global effort and “contribution from civil society is terribly important for giving us the ammunition to sustain the discussion.”

The panel seemed deeply concerned with the potential for catastrophe posed by keeping weapons of mass destruction on hair-trigger alert, both from accidental launch and accidental detonation. Ambassador McKay, citing one of the oft espoused retorts to such concerns—that the chances

of an accident are too small to be of concern — quipped that when insurance companies examine customers for representation, they do not just factor in the likelihood of an accident, but how massive the damages would be were an accident to occur. What sort of damages might occur if the unthinkable happened? According to Mr. Starr, if the current 2200 weapons on high-alert went off, the world would be cloaked in a 150 ton cloud of smoke for 10 years, resulting in sub-zero temperatures in all of the world’s temperate agricultural areas. In short, nuclear weapon states’ high-alert weapons of mass destruction would make them uninsurable.

This harrowing picture became even more disturbing as the panel detailed the many possible ways such “accidental launches” could occur: terrorist sabotage, computer or human malfunction, or cyber warfare. Such an occurrence seems unlikely; however, historically, as Dr. Forden described, there have already been four major instances—resulting from human and technical error—in which the world narrowly avoided nuclear war. Mr. Hallam added that the “careful decision making that is claimed ... is simply not credible,” and that the phrase, “the gun is in the holster” is misleading. “In reality the gun has been cocked for 40 or 50 years,” he asserted. According to this panel, it’s time the “gun” went into the holster.

The importance of being earnest (cont. from front page)

delegation were to stall the momentum created by its President’s pledge in Prague to work for a nuclear weapon free world.

In order to give a chance for states parties to discuss specific modifications to the text, the Chair facilitated consultations between delegations on Tuesday afternoon and will hold another session Wednesday morning. As noted by the Cuban representative, who urged the Committee to act “pragmatically and realistically,” there is little time left to take apart these draft recommendations and put them together again. It is essential that the Committee forward consensus recommendations to the RevCon, both to give a strong signal of states parties’ commitment to the Treaty and the review process and to ensure that the RevCon has sufficient guidance for its substantive work—something severely lacking in 2005.



Learn about Nuclear Weapons

www.slmk.org/larom/ENG

Learn about Nuclear Weapons is a comprehensive online educational tool produced by SLMK, the Swedish affiliate of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, IPPNW.

The new and updated material was launched in Swedish in late 2008 and in English in early 2009. It provides information about nuclear weapons and related critical issues, suitable for users of all levels of expertise.

Learn about Nuclear Weapons is already being used by Swedish Teachers for Peace, as an aid for education in disarmament and peace. Work is also underway to provide users of the website with a Q&A forum, with answers provided by a panel of experts.

All material, and access to the website, is completely free of charge, and no registration is required. Anyone interested in finding and using easily accessible facts about nuclear weapons or related issues, will find it on the site.

UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR DISARMAMENT RESEARCH

UNIDIR

UNIDIR invites you to the seminar

Unfinished Business *New Opportunities for the CTBT*

13 May 2009, 13:00–14:30

Room 8

a sandwich lunch will be provided

IDEAS FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

WWW.UNIDIR.ORG

www.reachingcriticalwill.org

**65 years of the worst
weapons of terror.**

**It's time for compulsory
retirement in 2010.**

This NPT PrepCom will be crucial in paving the way.

You can find out more about our campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Convention at www.icanw.org.





What's On Today's Calendar of Events

Abolition 2000 Caucus

Where: Conference Room E

When: 8:00–8:50 AM

Contact: Anthony Salloum, Abolition 2000

NWD Simulation - Negotiation Article VI (Phases of Implementation)

Where: Conference Room E

When: 10:00 AM–1:00 PM

Contact: Regina Hagen, INESAP

Medical and Environmental Consequences of Nuclear War

Where: Conference Room E

When: 1:15–2:45 PM

Contact: Steven Starr, Physicians for Social Responsibility

CTBT Entry Into Force

Where: Conference Room 8

When: 1:15 AM–2:45 PM

Contact: UNIDIR

Meeting with Shigeko Sasamori

Where: Conference Room D or E

When: 2:30 (D) or 2:45 (E)

Contact: Kathleen Sullivan

Actions by NGOs Brainstorming for 2010

Where: Conference Room E

When: 3:00–6:00 PM

Contact: Manuel Santiago, le Mouvement de la paix

Nuclear Crossword

Across

1 Currently, the Group of 21 has now many member states?

3 Acronym for world's oldest women's peace organization

6 The amount of energy released by a nuclear explosion

9 Water that contains a higher proportion than normal of the isotope deuterium is known as ____ water

10 The splitting of the nucleus of a heavy atom into two lighter nuclei

13 The process of using mechanisms to collect data that demonstrate a party's compliance with an agreement or treaty

15 Increasing the number of nuclear weapons among states that already possess them is ____ proliferation

16 In March 2009, a nuclear-powered US submarine and a US attack vessel collided in the Strait of ____, spilling 25,000 gallons of oil

17 Who said, "...with the development of nuclear weapons man [sic] has has acquired, for the first time in history, the technical means to destroy the whole of civilization in a single act."

18 Use of a computer code to determine the location where a missile will strike

19 The ____ Arrangement is the successor to COCOM and has 39 members

21 The energy equivalent released by 1000 kilotons of TNT

Down

1 The implementation of a formal legal process established by a country to legally bind its government to a treaty

4 Treaty on the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone is also known as the Treaty of ____

5 The season that the UNDC meets in (according to the northern hemisphere)

7 Penalties against a state in response to treaty violations

8 The final phase of a warhead's trajectory when re-enters the earth's atmosphere and strikes its target

11 Name of the CD's permanent agenda

12 The first treaty banning an entire category of WMD was the ____ Weapons Convention

14 Former Australian Prime Minister who set up the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

20 To send out

