



NEWS IN REVIEW

A Collection of NGO Views on the NPT PrepCom 2004

April 30, 2004 - No. 5



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom-

UN Office: 777 UN Plaza, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10017 Phone: (212) 682-1265 Fax: (212) 286-8211 Email: wilpfun@igc.org

International Secretariat: 1, rue de Varembe, C. P.28, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland Phone (+41 22) 919-7080 Fax: (+41 22) 919-7081 Email: info@wilpf.ch

WE CAN'T HEAR YOU!

Normally, this space would report on the interesting aspects of statements to the PrepCom, but, as the cluster debates are closed to civil society, we are not able to see or report on these statements without permission at this time. For those who have found these newsletters useful, imagine how much more useful this issue could have been if we had had access to the cluster debates that began yesterday.

All articles contained in the News In Review are the sole responsibility of the author or organization submitting the piece. The opinions herein are not necessarily those of the Editors, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) or the Reaching Critical Will project.

WHO'S WHO- PROFILE

Rodolfo Benitez Verson,
Specialist, Director of Multilateral Affairs,
Cuban delegation

What are the priorities for the Cuban delegation at this PrepCom?

Cuba has been working very hard within the Non-Aligned Movement Working Group on Disarmament, and we have decided as a group- and Cuba has aligned completely these decisions- that this PrepCom should focus on three main issues: nuclear disarmament- which for Cuba is the ultimate priority- negative security assurances, and the issue of the Middle East. This is the position of the NAM and this is the position of Cuba.

What is the best that you can hope for looking forward to 2005?

You have to take into account the international context. My personal opinion is that I should not have too many expectations for the 2005 Review Conference. In any case, we will continue to push for our priorities there. We cannot accept these tendencies to replace nuclear disarmament with non-proliferation. Some delegations are trying to impose that upon us. We cannot accept that. We think non-proliferation is important, but non-proliferation must be a contribution to the main goal, nuclear disarmament.

Putting your hopes aside for a moment, what are your expectations, taking into consideration the international context, and the governments that you are dealing with, what are your predictions?

You never know. It is going to be difficult, that at the end of the conference we will have something good if the nuclear powers do not commit to comply with Article VI. For us, this is the main issue. So far, I do not see any real political will from the nuclear powers to really comply with their unequivocal undertaking toward the completion of Article VI. We will continue to work toward that objective, but so far we do not see any political will. That's the main condition. If you do not have the political will, we will never see nuclear disarmament. But on the issue of negative security assurances, some delegations have some expectations, but my personal feeling is that it is going to be difficult to have that... but it is the LEAST result that we could have in 2005: at least a commitment to begin negotiations on a legally binding instrument on security assurances.. Not to have the instrument, but at least to have the commitment to begin negotiations.

Where do you envision these negotiations to take place? In a subsidiary

body of the CD, or in another forum?

Well, there is a resolution in the First Committee that has been approved for many years and Cuba is a co-sponsor of that resolution. That resolution says that the CD could be a good body to negotiate this kind of instrument. But of course we open to suggestions. For the time being the most important thing is to have the commitment, the political commitment to begin negotiations. After that we can decide if the CD is the best body... we can take into account proposals to decide if we need to have an Additional Protocol to the NPT or if we need a separate instrument. I think for the time being we can leave open these questions and try to get the political commitment to begin negotiations.

What's your delegation's view on NGO participation and the work you see coming from NGOs? What is most useful from the NGO community?

I think the NGOs are playing a very very important role in this PrepCom and in previous meetings. In the field of disarmament peace and security, NGOs are playing a key role. Some powerful countries are trying to impose some kind of policy that we cannot accept. They are trying not to speak about nuclear disarmament, or that their nuclear weapons are not the main problem, but NGOs are putting the emphasis where it needs to be: that nuclear disarmament is the main objective. Cuba would support more space for NGOs to spread their views, not just in the open format, but to have more opportunities to interact with delegations to express their views and not just be outside the room the whole time. We can support more participation, more interaction on these issues... You know that you are a problem for some delegations. Certain delegations do not like to listen to what you are saying. That's a real fact of life.

How do you feel about working on disarmament and non-proliferation?

I began working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Cuba in 1993. To tell you the truth, I thought at first that this would be a boring issue. But I knew it was my responsibility and I tried to do my best. After a bit, I started to really enjoy trying to do something for international peace and security. It's really difficult to move forward, but when you can have some concrete goal, you feel you are contributing directly to international peace and security. I think that it is a privilege to represent Cuba, because we have a clear position on this and we are doing something good for the world as a whole.

REPORT FROM A CITIZEN WEAPON INSPECTOR

-By Carol Naughton, Consultant, BASIC

You have to wonder why sometimes! Why am I standing here with three other women outside Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment surrounded by about twenty Ministry of Defence (MOD) police, all armed and practically pointing machine guns in our faces? Are we Citizens Inspectors so very dangerous? I thought point nine of the famous thirteen point plan of NPT 2000 was about openness and accountability.

The four of us had arrived to carry out a Citizens Inspection at the home of UK nuclear weapons, the fourth inspection in a series of six on nuclear weapons-related establishments in the UK. We had written in advance and been refused entry, so decided to carry on anyway. We only got to the car park, granted inside the MOD fence, before being surrounded and told either to leave or be arrested. We told them we would leave but had questions that needed answers first and began to ask all staff present about their knowledge of nuclear weapons, International Treaties, the World Court opinion and Nuremberg principles. I loved it when Juliette gently reached out and just moved the gun aside, saying very politely, 'Oh please, don't point that at me while we are talking'.

At the NPT in Geneva last year we were very frustrated by the hypocrisy of the US and UK particularly, and indeed all the NWS. They had such complete disregard for their own vertical proliferation, while berating others for horizontal proliferation, that we felt a more direct approach was called for in 2004. Citizens Inspections have been a tool of the NGO movement for many years and are very effective campaigning and media actions. They can also be a lot of fun. They can include direct action where people cut their way into a base to inspect or they can involve lots of people turning up at the gates and asking to inspect - in fact anything your imagination leads you to.

However we felt that for the purposes of NPT 2004 a serious collaborative approach by people in as many of the five nuclear weapons states as possible, plus the NATO nuclear states, would be even more effective. We agreed that we would make a concerted effort to bring solid information on both the lack of progress by the NWS to implement the Thirteen Point Plan agreed in 2000 and on vertical proliferation.

We would each carry out the inspections using whatever method was possible, given the nuclear establishment and our own resources, but would all use a common introductory letter, inspection questionnaire (tailored to each establishment) and compile a report. Pol and others from 'For Mother Earth' in Ghent agreed to collate the findings. The final report would be presented to this

PrepCom to enhance delegates' knowledge. Thank you Pol, and everyone else, for all your work on it!

In the UK the Citizens Inspectors were from many different NGOs depending on the locality. At Aldermaston and Burghfield there were women from Nukewatch. When we inspected Faslane and Coulport in Scotland, Jane and Sam from Scottish CND and Trident Ploughshares took part as well as myself and my partner Tony. Faslane, the home of the Trident nuclear submarines, and Coulport the nuclear bombs depot, were just as impenetrable as Aldermaston though the MOD police were a lot more friendly and took it all in good part. When I phoned the base, the Public Relations woman took us seriously, asking me if we were in the area for long!! When I explained that the UK had signed the additional protocols to the IAEA and therefore we should have immediate access to all areas, she complied and arranged for security to meet us at the main gate within ten minutes. However the head of security took one look at us, recognised Jane, a long time activist at Faslane, and just laughed. We didn't get in on that occasion!

At Rolls Royce Derby seven of us from West and East Midlands CND took part and surprisingly they let us in - as long as we promised not to destroy anything. Derby is where the nuclear reactors for Trident are produced. We had about an hour and a half discussion with the head of the base and a media relations person and were able to have a productive discussion. The whole thing was captured on video twice, once by the MOD and once by base security. They have promised us copies but they have not appeared yet.

At Devonport the base could not accommodate us on the day of the planned inspection but invited us to spend the day there a week later. Jenny and I did and again had a very fruitful day at the base where the four Trident nuclear subs will all have a re-fit over the next ten years. We learned a lot, even getting a tour of a nuclear sub. Vanguard was in the dry dock for its re-fit and I felt physically sick when we went to see it. I can't help it, the sight of a submarine that can carry such total and utter devastation just makes me so emotional, even though it was not loaded I still couldn't look at it without wanting to DO SOMETHING.

I suppose that is why I was doing all this really. For me nuclear weapons remain the real weapon of mass destruction, the ultimate evil. Having the knowledge of what a nuclear weapon does, the thought that one might once again be used, is what drives us all isn't it? Yes lobbying, letter writing, marching, researching and analysing, writing good briefings for our MPs (even attending the NPT!) are all very necessary and valid but sometimes so is just being there, confronting the beast.

Panel Spotlight: The Other Vertical Proliferation

- by Sarah Estabrooks, Project Ploughshares

The discussions at the PrepCom are concerned primarily with the explosive potential of nuclear weapons. But the delivery systems and missile defense options were of concern for a panel yesterday, hosted by International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation.

Andrew Lichterman of the Western States Legal Foundation examined new developments in the area of US delivery systems. He suggested that efforts to expand the accuracy and capability of delivery systems, including the Trident Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile, might indeed pose a greater threat than programs to modernize warheads themselves. The FALCON project includes two additional programs designed to increase delivery capacity across long distances, the Common Aero Vehicle and the Small Launch Vehicle. Mr. Lichterman argued that States would be likely to respond to these developments, not by trying to duplicate the technology, but by increasing their nuclear capabilities.

Missile proliferation is the primary argument used to justify development of a U.S. ballistic missile defense system. Dr. Randall Forsberg of the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies examined the scope of the ballistic missile problem, from short to medium and intercontinental range. She asserted that missile range is the key factor in terms of regional stability, citing the programs of Israel, China, North Korea, Pakistan, Iran and India. Each of these States has ballistic missile with ranges in excess of 500 km, particularly destabilizing in their respective zones of conflict. Despite the potential for these national ballistic missile programs, particularly the programs with space launch programs, to spur regional arms races, there is currently no missile with proven range to reach the U.S.

Jeffrey Lewis of the University of Maryland highlighted two Air Force programs currently in the development phase, which pose the most imminent threat to break the norm against placing weapons in space. The Near Field Infrared Experiment, in development under ballistic missile defense, and the XSS-11 microsatellite program, show signs of great momentum toward offensive space systems. Microsatellite technology has dual-use potential to both service satellites and increase space surveillance, or to monitor and target other satellites. Mr. Lewis argued that outer space is crucial to Pentagon visions for defense, but the vulnerability of space systems is of major concern.

The real problems posed by proliferation of ballistic missiles and developments in space technologies require committed solutions. Regina Hagen of the International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation posed several options:

Bored?

Frustrated?!

PrepCom going nowhere?
Come to the NGO
activities!!

At 8 - 8:50 AM, **Abolition 2000** holds their daily **Strategy Session** on the 8th floor of UNCC

From 9- 10 AM, **Chairman Sujadnan Parnohadinigrat** will be holding a **open briefing** in Conference Room A.

Meanwhile, over at the Church Center, the **Youth Caucus**, convened by Educators for Social Responsibility starts at 9 AM on the 2nd floor.

At 10, Los Alamos Study Group will be hosting a panel entitled, "**Overview of Nuclear Weapons Development in the U.S.**" in Conference Room A.

The Youth Caucus continues at 1 PM in Conference Room A.

At 1:15, the Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy will hold a workshop on **Citizens Weapons Inspections**.

Also at 1:15, the **UK** will deliver a **presentation on verification** in Conference Room VII.

At 4:30, Abolition 2000 is hosting a Town Meeting Forum entitled, "**Nuclear Abolition, Proliferation and War: What you need to know and what you can do.**" This meeting will be held at the All Souls Church on 80th street and Lexington Avenue, and will run until 10 PM. Dinner will be served.

- the Zero Ballistic Missile strategy proposed by Federation of American Scientists
- a ballistic missile flight ban
- launch detection systems
- pre-launch notification regimes
- a new and internationalized anti-ballistic missile treaty
- a permanent space weapons ban including weapons based in, from, through and to space.

For more on missiles and delivery systems and proposals from civil society, see the NGO presentations from 2003 and 2004, available on the Reaching Critical Will website, www.reachingcriticalwill.org.