



News In Review

A collection of NGO views on the NPT PrepCom 2002

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WHO'S AFRAID OF REPORTING?

There is celebration at the United Nations for the victorious announcement that the International Criminal Court will Enter into Force on 1 July 2002. This is an enormous step forward for multilateralism, the rule of law, and justice. Much to the disappointment of the NGO disarmament community, language regarding the threat or use of weapons of mass destruction did not make it into the ICC statute. Nevertheless, the NGO community celebrates the 66th ratification.

This feeling of jubilation for the entry into force of the ICC was quite in contrast to the NGO feelings towards the current NPT PrepCom, which now appears to have an uncertain future if a programme of work cannot be agreed upon. The NPT PrepCom "will be postponed indefinitely" if the NPT party states do not agree on a plan of work by Monday 10am. Meanwhile, NGOs have been relegated to couch potato status, as they are closed out of the NPT sessions until the last day of the PrepCom. While the information to most NGOs is limited on the proceedings inside Conference Room 4 and in the back rooms, we understand that the NPT PrepCom is in grave danger of folding altogether.

It seems that the issue of controversy is that of reporting. While it may seem that the obstacles in moving forward are merely procedural in nature, as agreement on a programme of work

would appear to be, the deeper political forces at work are expressed by differing perspectives on how to qualify the discussion on reporting in discussion of specific substantive issues. It seems that certain nuclear weapon states are particularly adamant about keeping the reporting issue off the official programme of work.

How scary can it be to merely discuss the issue of reporting? What is the point of having the NPT as the "cornerstone" of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, when there is no accountability, transparency, or enforcing mechanism in place? **NGOs feel very strongly that in NO WAY should those opposing the issue of reporting be permitted to shut down the PrepCom.**

One may juxtapose this denial of the commitment made to the reporting mechanism at the 2000 Review Conference by the nuclear weapon states, with various efforts and statements by some NPT party states advocating the concept of reporting. NGOs welcome the submission of reports from Reports on Implementation of the NPT to the PrepCom by Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Poland and Thailand. NGOs also welcome the working papers of the New Agenda Coalition, and in particular, the Canadian working paper on Reporting by States Parties to the NPT.

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While several of the NGOs present at this PrepCom do not agree with the entirety of Canadian policy, especially relating to its nuclear energy industry and uranium mining, NGOs fully support the leadership role the Canadian delegation has taken on the issue of reporting. The Canadian mantra of "permanence with accountability" calls to strengthen the NPT review process through this confidence-building measure, and must be accepted and implemented by all party states, in order to increase accountability and transparency. Canada has a positive, and hopefully infectious, attitude towards the reporting mechanism. While NGOs would have liked to have seen more focus on reporting on the 13 steps of the 2000 Review Conference, or on categories outlined in the NGO Shadow Report (see www.reachingcriticalwill.org), a reporting mechanism based on the articles of the NPT is acceptable as a building block for further progress in this area.

Delegates, especially those complicating and lacking cooperation to decide on the programme of work, please do not let civil society down by prematurely ending this NPT PrepCom. Your constituencies are counting on you to rid the world of nuclear weapons, as public polls all over the world prove. Take advantage of the beginning of the new Review cycle to be brave and venture to new, progressive disarmament strategies to fulfil your Article VI commitment.

- Emily Schroeder, Reaching Critical Will, WILPF

MULTILATERAL MEETINGS GROUP BINGO

I hesitate to intervene, however...	Other organization....	My capital can live with...	Very clear and comprehensive.	Autonomy of decision-making...
Without duplication	I have nothing much to add, however...	Clearly a lot of hard work has been done...	Sending the right signals	I am a little confused...
A good basis for further work	Very briefly, Mr. Chairperson...	Transparency	I agree with much of what has been said...	I would like to support the Chairperson...
I congratulate the Chairman	In the spirit of compromise...	Balanced text	I have no instructions, however...	The fullest co-operation
I regret I have no flexibility on this point...	As appropriate	I am sorry to take the floor again, but...	Just to clarify a couple of points...	At the risk of prolonging the debate...

HOW TO PLAY:

Check off each block when you hear the phrase it contains during a multilateral meeting. When you have checked the five blocks horizontally, vertically or diagonally, stand up and shout BINGO!

TESTIMONIALS FROM SATISFIED PLAYERS:

"I had only been in the meeting for five minutes when I won"

"My attention span in meetings has improved dramatically"

"The chairman was stunned when eight of us screamed 'BINGO' for the fifth time in 30 minutes"

REMEMBERING HIROSHIMA: NEVER AGAIN?

By Jacqueline Cabasso and Andrew Lichterman
Western States Legal Foundation, in Oakland,
California (www.wsifweb.org)

The recent revelations about secret U.S. nuclear warfighting plans are a wake up call. When the Cold War ended more than 10 years ago, people everywhere breathed a collective sigh of relief, desperately wanting to believe that the threat of nuclear Armageddon had passed. But while ordinary people put nuclear weapons out of their minds, the U.S. military-political establishment regrouped following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and fabricated a new set of justifications for retaining nuclear weapons and refining them for greater utility in the changed international context.

Mahatma Gandhi, in a deeply prophetic statement, warned that the world would return to violence with "renewed zeal" after revulsion at the destructive power of the first atomic bombs had worn off. "The atomic bomb brought an empty victory but it resulted for the time being in destroying the soul of Japan. What has happened to the soul of the destroying nation is yet too early to see...."

The consequences that Gandhi foresaw are now apparent. The Bush Administration's Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) reaffirms the centrality of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security policy and makes their use more credible. Nuclear weapons are no longer relegated to the category of weapons of last resort. They are to be been fully integrated into a broad spectrum of warfighting capabilities. The NPR identifies three scenarios in which nuclear weapons might be used: "against targets able to withstand nonnuclear attack," in retaliation for the use of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, or — most disturbing, "in the event of surprising military developments." This last condition reads like chilling footnote to the Administration's open-ended and undefined "war against terrorism."

The NPR cannot be dismissed as a mere "contingency plan." The National Nuclear Security Administration relied on the NPR as its primary justification for requesting \$5.9 billion from the U.S. Congress for nuclear weapons activities — not including delivery systems — in FY2003.

The budget request states: "Most importantly, this [Nuclear Posture] review reemphasizes the importance of nuclear weapons to deter the threats of weapons of mass destruction, to assure allies of U.S. security commitments, to hold at risk an adversary's assets and capabilities that cannot be countered through non-nuclear means and to dissuade potential adversaries from developing large-scale nuclear or conventional threats."

In a society where talk about "nuking" our food and "nuking" our enemies has become routine, we have forgotten what nuclear weapons are. In 1995, before the International Court of Justice, Hiroshima's Mayor, Takashi Hiraoka, described the unimaginable horrors of nuclear weapons. "Beneath the atomic bomb's monstrous mushroom cloud, human skin was burned raw. Crying for water, human beings died in desperate agony. With thoughts of these victims as the starting point, it is incumbent upon us to think about the nuclear age and the relationship between human beings and nuclear weapons."

More than 50 years after dropping atomic bombs on two Japanese cities, the U.S. — the only country that has ever used nuclear weapons — is again contemplating their potential use. If the programs and policies advocated in the NPR go forward, they will doom hopes for progress on arms control and disarmament for the foreseeable future, and will add to the increasingly unstable global security environment. Russia will retain an arsenal large enough to destroy the U.S., and China will be prompted to modernize and expand its own relatively small nuclear forces. Moreover, the viability of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which has limited the spread of nuclear weapons, will be endangered. If the world's most powerful nation feels that it must rely on the threatened use of nuclear weapons to ensure its "national security," why shouldn't we expect other countries to follow suit? As responsible global citizens, we must insist on a more sustainable concept of "human security" based on the security of all people everywhere — in their homes, in their communities, in their jobs, and in their environment. Nuclear weapons have no place in this new security paradigm.

What's On: WEEK ONE

Daily: Abolition 2000 Morning Caucus, 8am to 9am, Monday-Friday, Episcopal Center, 815 2nd Ave and 43rd St.

Friday, April 12th, 2002

* "Nuclear Non-Proliferation in South Asia: The Need for New Approaches" Panel. 1:15-2:45pm, UN Conference Room D. Facilitated by Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)

* "The Shape of Things to Come: The Nuclear Posture Review, Missile Defense, and the Dangers of a New Arms Race", Panel Presentations by several NGOs. 9:30am-12:45pm; 3:30-6pm, 777 UN Plaza, 12th Floor.

Monday, April 15th, 2002

* "Sustainable Energy fund: Ending the Toxic Legacy of the Nuclear Age: Health, Waste, and Power", 1pm-3pm, Conference room D, facilitated by Global Resource Action Center for the Environment (GRACE)

* "The Nuclear Mystique", nuclear disarmament from the psychological perspective, 6pm-9pm, 777 UN Plaza, 11th Floor, Facilitated by Psychologists for Social Responsibility/ Committee on Global Violence and Security

Tuesday, April 16th, 2002

* Presentation of the Alan Cranston Peace Award, Presented to Under-Secretary General for Disarmament Jayantha Dhanapala, by Jane Goodall. 1:15pm-2:45pm, Conference Room 4, facilitated by Global Security Institute.

Please check venue and times against daily schedule as these may change

NPT CITIZEN ACTION:

- To sign the "Petition for a Missile Freeze", go to the Moving Beyond Missile Defense website: www.mbmd.org
- To learn about the annual "Embassies Walk", happening this year on May 20, 2002, contact Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, <http://www.gn.apc.org/CCND>.
- La Mouvement de la Paix is submitting 2000 petition-postcards from French citizens demanding nuclear disarmament to the NPT party states.

Quote of the Day

Ambassador Javits, of United States:

Engaging in technical or legal interpretation of the [13] steps [agreed to at the 2000 NPT Review Conference Final Document] individually or collectively would not, in our judgment, be a useful exercise. The question that should be before us on Article VI is not whether any given measure has or has not been fulfilled, but rather: is a nuclear weapon state moving toward the overall goal? For the United States, the answer is an emphatic yes.



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