



News In Review

A collection of NGO views on the NPT PrepCom 2002

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Nuclear Safety: Wouldn't We Be Safer Without Nuclear?

Yesterday began with a discussion of nuclear safety and security. Setting a precedent, following a letter of request by NGOs to the Chair of the PrepCom, NGOs were granted access to the beginning of the discussion, for the IAEA presentation by Tariq Rauf, the head of Verification and Security Policy Coordination of the IAEA. This presentation was largely on the history, principles and objectives of the IAEA safeguards mechanism, drawing attention to the Additional Protocols, noting that of those Treaty Parties which have yet to bring into force Additional protocols, 53 have nuclear facilities under safeguards but only 29 have signed such a protocol. The presentation was very clear and informative, especially for new diplomats who might not be as familiar with the work of the IAEA. Following this presentation, NGOs were asked to leave for the remainder of the closed session.

In the statements yesterday on safeguards, US, Norway, EU, France, and Japan referred to the danger of nuclear terrorism. Tonight, from 6:30pm-8pm, there will be a discussion on the 12th floor of 777 UN Plaza on "The Threat of Nuclear Terrorism: The possibilities and impact of nuclear terrorism, including attacks on power plants and 'dirty bombs', and approaches for security and prevention", with Dr. Ira Helfand, Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW).

On the subject of IAEA and inspections in Iraq, it was interesting to note the difference in language used in the statement of the IAEA regarding Iraq this year compared to the 2000 Review Conference. "...although the Agency was able recently to inspect the presence of the nuclear material subject to safeguards which is still in Iraq, this inspection had a limited objective and was in no way a substitute for our required activities under the relevant

Security council resolutions. At present therefore, the Agency cannot provide any assurance that Iraq is in compliance with its obligations under those resolutions". (IAEA Statement, 24 April 2000). Iraq has used the 'clean bill of health' that the IAEA gives to it annually after its inspections to claim that it is in compliance with the NPT. This year, however, the statement of the IAEA seemed to be careful to put that piece of information in the context of an overview of the situation. "The IAEA's objective should it return to Iraq, is clear: but to provide assurances through verification measures that the situation with regard to nuclear activities in Iraq has not changed since the Agency verification ceased in December 1998, and, provided that the status quo ante could be re-established, it could be possible to move to the implementation of the Agency's ongoing monitoring and verification plan." (IAEA Statement, 8 April 2002). The IAEA seems to be asserting that while the IAEA has indeed carried out its annual inspections, the results are not conclusive by any means. In addition, the IAEA added references to the Security Council resolution, tying the work of the IAEA to other key activities in that realm, such as monitoring and verification.

The statements at this NPT PrepCom on issues related to the peaceful use of nuclear energy neglect to address the fact that nuclear energy is unsustainable and dangerous. Many NGOs present at this NPT PrepCom have deep concerns regarding the safety of nuclear plants, the level of environmental contamination from nuclear waste disposal and the danger presented in transportation by ship or train of nuclear waste. A great initiative is the Model Sustainable Energy Fund Statute written by the Global Resource Action Center for the Environment (GRACE), which can be found at the following website: http://www.gracelinks.org/nuke/sustainable_energy.htm.

Emily Schroeder, Reaching Critical Will, WILPF

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Who's Who - Diplomat Profile

H.E. Mr. Christopher Westdal

Canadian Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva

1. What are your hopes or expectations for the 2002 Nuclear Non-Proliferation 2002?

Above all, we need a good start during this first Preparatory Committee meeting is shaping the substantive issues on which this new review cycle should focus. We need to find ways to keep the promise of the 1995 Review Conference for "permanence with accountability". That principle is now central to the integrity of the Treaty; we need concrete recommendations to fulfill it at the 2005 Review Conference. Second, we came here hoping for reaffirmations of Negative Security Assurances from the nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States-- and are heartened, because early in the session we heard such reaffirmations from all five. Finally, our expectation that NGOs would play an active role has already been borne out. We have attended some very useful roundtables and seminars, and are very favourably impressed by the quality of publications that have been made available to delegates.

2. What topics do you work on most or find the most interesting in this forum?

As you know, Canada has submitted a working paper on reporting. This initiative responds to the twelfth of the thirteen practical steps from the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. The elaboration of a format for the reports requested under this step could be a concrete outcome of the 2005 Review Conference, and would deepen accountability of all States Parties. This may seem a little dry, but transparent reporting is the essence of accountability; greater access to, and clarity of, implementation information would create genuine positive momentum. This kind of accountability should unnerve no one- it is a good way of focusing us all on the measures we are taking, and should take in the future, to realize our common goals.

I noted earlier that we have also sought to make the most of the strong NGO presence at this meeting. Interactions with NGOs have enriched our experience here, and we are doing some thinking, as a delegation, about how NGO access might be enhanced, to the benefit of all concerned. Incidentally, immediately following this Preparatory Committee meeting, I will be involved in the Canadian Government's annual Consultations with Civil Society on Nuclear and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. These two days of discussions with Canadian NGOs and academics in Ottawa will allow us, among other things, to take stock together of how we think this meeting went and what our goals might be for the Second Preparatory Committee meeting next year.

3. What led you to be doing the work that you are doing now?

The Personnel Branch of my Department. Ideally, you get phases in a rotational career when experience and conviction converge; I am fortunate enough to be enjoying that now. Multilateral work has been a strong thread throughout my career working for the Canadian Government, twice as Ambassador for Disarmament and once earlier in Ottawa, responsible for relations with International Organizations more generally. Of my posts abroad, serving in Kyiv after Ukraine took the historic step of renouncing its nuclear weapons and acceding to the NPT as a nuclear-weapon State underlined for me the importance of this Treaty and its fundamental contribution to global security.

Quote of the Day

Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, 16 April 2002

In a Charter-based world where the resort is renounced in favour of the pacific settlement of disputes, weapons derive their legitimacy only because of their possible use for individual or collective self-defence- a right guaranteed by Article 51 of the UN Charter. By that token, the nuclear weapon by virtue of its massive lethality, like other weapons of mass destruction, is, in my personal view, totally illegitimate and immoral.

Will Washington Break the Taboo on Using Nukes?

By Christine Kucia

The Bush administration's plan for the U.S. nuclear arsenal came to light last month amid a great uproar of surprise, anger, and condemnation from world leaders. And rightly so: the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), sent to Congress in January, outlines some of the most frightening plans for broadening, and potentially using, the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Bush promised to cut the U.S. nuclear arsenal to 1,700-2,200 warheads by 2012. However, the NPR indicates that the "reductions" would just move ready-to-launch warheads into a reserve stockpile, also known as the 'hedge.' To date, no warhead destruction has been promised, and moving them into the hedge leaves the warheads available for future redeployment.

Another alarming development is the possible production of new nuclear weapons systems. The U.S. Nuclear Weapons Council has authorized a three-year study into the development of a low-yield, earth-penetrating nuclear warhead to defeat hardened and deeply buried targets. Developing new nuclear weapon systems such as these 'bunker busters' will ensure a U.S. nuclear weapons capability far into the future.

Accolades surrounding the proposed reductions masked the plans to develop new weapons, as well as an enormous change in policy: nuclear weapons are no longer to be kept as a last resort, but are potentially weapons of first choice to be used in combat.

The new U.S. policy suggests that bunker busters could be used against non-nuclear countries that have signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), including Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea and Syria to counter biological or chemical attacks. This undermines their "negative security assurance," a promise made by the United States and the other nuclear weapon states not to use their weapons against countries without nuclear weapons.

The United States is treating international agreements, like the recently abandoned ABM Treaty, as a nuisance that can be ignored. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty may be the next to fall by the wayside: development of new nuclear weapons will also require renewed testing. Washington's outright dismissal of the agreement, combined with the revocation of its own unilateral moratorium on testing, could seal an unfortunate fate for the treaty.

Worse, the Bush administration expects the international community to abide by, "do as I say, not as I do." Yet if the United States restarts nuclear weapons development and testing, while turning its back on global security agreements, what will stop other countries from doing the same?

Washington's new policies governing nuclear weapons moves them from a last resort for defense to being a usable option in combat. Breaking this 'taboo' would irreparably damage global efforts to control nuclear weapons, and potentially launch a devastating period of nuclear anarchy.

The writer is an analyst for the British American Security Information Council (BASIC)
For key documents and analysis from the NPT, visit http://www.basicint.org/nuk_nptmain.htm

WHY DO THEY NEED THEM ANYWAY?

In reality, no rational answer can be advanced to explain in a satisfactory manner what in the end is the consequence of Cold War interia and an attachment to the use or the threat of brute force to assert the primacy of some states over others.

Nelson Mandella

Greenpeace Star Wars 17 Case Over

Fifteen international activists from Greenpeace and two journalists have, since July 14 last year, been facing double felony charges and up to six years in jail following an anti-Star Wars action at Vandenberg Air Force Base last year. The felony charges were dropped in January when all plead guilty to a misdemeanor offence of conspiracy to trespass. Greenpeace also agreed to be bound by a civil injunction preventing them from breaking the law at any military base supporting US Star Wars plans for the next five years as part of the deal. Nine were sentenced to probation in January and on Monday the last eight faced sentencing. The good news is that all eight got between a year and three years jail time.

-Greenpeace International

What's On: WEEK TWO

* **NOTE CHANGE- Daily:** Abolition 2000 Morning Caucus, 9am , Monday-Friday, Conf Room D, United Nations.

Wednesday, April 17th, 2002

* Youth Caucus". 1:15-2:45pm, UN Conference Room 4. A panel of young people will speak about the dangers of nuclear power, nuclear terrorism, and pose question to NWS delegates about their apparent failure to work towards nuclear disarmament. Facilitated by: Educators for Social Responsibility.

* "The Threat of Nuclear Terrorism". The possibilities and impact of nuclear terrorism, including attacks on power plants and 'dirty bombs', and approaches for security and prevention". 6:30pm- 8pm, 777 UN Plaza, 12th Floor. Facilitated by Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW).

Thursday, April 18th, 2002

* "Counter-proliferation, New Nuclear Weapons, and Counter-strategies", 1:15pm-2:45pm. Panel discussion on new nuclear weapons, counter-proliferation, US nuclear doctrine, and alternative approaches to security. Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). UN Conference Room D.

* "The New Nuclear Danger: George W. Bush's Military-Industrial Complex", Dr. Helen Caldicott, Discussing her new book. 7pm, at Swayduck Auditorium, New School University, 65 Fifth Avenue (Between 12th and 13th Streets).

Friday, April 19th, 2002

* "Into the Future: what should we be trying to do before the next NPT PrepCom?" Discussion with Rebecca Johnson of Acronym Institute (UK) and Ernie Regehr, of Project Ploughshares (Canada). 1:15pm, Conference Room D. Facilitated by the NGO Committee on Disarmament.

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

