



News In Review

A collection of NGO views on the NPT Review 2000

15 May 2000 - No. 15



UN Office: 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017. phone (212) 682-1265 Fax: (212) 286-8211 E-mail: wilpfun@igc.org

Int Secretariat: 1, rue de Varembe, C.P.28, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Phone: (+41 22) 733-6175 E-mail: wilpf@iprolink.ch

Too Early for Despair, Too Late to be Late Again

The credibility of this treaty is on the line. Nuclear weapon states and others that worked so hard to achieve the indefinite extension decision and the Principles and Objectives in 1995 have had three weeks to show us how and what they will do to illustrate its usefulness. Based on the last three weeks, some are doubting the wisdom of the extension decision and the investment made in this treaty which is not paying off. Yet.

Everybody gathered in New York and thousands following on the internet understand that this NPT Review Conference, the first after the decision to extend the treaty indefinitely, cannot afford to fail. But what constitutes a success? Some of the nuclear weapon states claim that three of the five Review Conferences have failed to produce a consensus text and that a frank exchange of views is good enough. No, it is *not* good enough, say the NGOs and many non nuclear weapon states (even the most obedient) who feel that is the time for action plans and progress, not more promises and exchanges of views on disarmament, safeguards and energy questions.

Running against the clock, the chairmen of the two subsidiary bodies on nuclear disarmament (Clive Pearson of New Zealand) and regional issues and the Middle East resolution (Chris Westdal of Canada) were mandated by a plenary session on

Friday to continue their work in the hope of obtaining consensus on their respective documents. The chairmen are asked to report to Baali by Tuesday 16th in the morning, at the latest, on the outcome of their further deliberations.

The Chairmen of three Main Committees also presented their texts on Friday, all of which contain paragraphs that do not enjoy consensus. A drafting committee started to meet immediately following the plenary session in order to work on the language of Main Committee II and III. From Tuesday on, Baali proposes to convene a representative informal consultative group to concentrate efforts on developing consensus, including on the forward looking document, as well as Chairman Reyes' text of Main Committee I. Baali will continue consultations on his Strengthened Review Process text so as to finalise the paper and will soon present it to the plenary.

Baali was asked by both Egypt and Mexico to clarify what he meant by "representative". Mexico, speaking on behalf of the NAC, indicated that all NAC members want to be present, not merely represented, of which Baali took note. Portugal, speaking on behalf of the EU, indicated a willingness to see Baali as and when necessary.

Felicity Hill
Director UN Office
WILPF

News In Review is funded by Ploughshares Fund, The Simons Foundation, The Ford Foundation & others

All articles contained in News In Review are the sole responsibility of the author or organisation submitting the pieces. 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.

Annual Reporting on NPT Article VI & 1995 Principles and Objectives, Para 4(c)

While all states have a stake and a role to play in nuclear disarmament under the NPT, the nuclear weapon states have special obligations and responsibilities. Therefore, any annual reporting process as proposed in the forward looking document on disarmament from Subsidiary Body 1 should be two-tiered to take this into account. Many NGOs very much support this annual reporting mechanism which would give nuclear weapon states an opportunity to answer calls for transparency and accountability under the treaty and would perhaps guide the work of the PrepComs. However, it is necessary to standardise the reports so as to ensure a balanced set of information.

Annual Reporting:

Non-nuclear weapon states could provide:

1. Amount, location and policy regarding nuclear weapons stationed on or visiting territory
2. Location and capability of nuclear facilities (i.e., power plants, research reactors, uranium mines, enrichment and reprocessing facilities etc.)
3. Fissile material holdings
4. Transfer, acquisition, research and development of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information on nuclear science
5. National policies, activities and positions taken on Universality, Non-proliferation, Nuclear Disarmament, Nuclear Weapon Free Zones, Security Assurances, Safeguards, Peaceful (*sic*) uses of nuclear energy
6. Activities and positions taken in international fora (i.e CD, DC, GA 1st Committee, NPT) on Universality, Non-proliferation, Nuclear Disarmament, Nuclear Weapon Free Zones, Security Assurances, Safeguards, Peaceful (*sic*) uses of nuclear energy

Annual Reporting:

Nuclear weapon states could provide:

1. Amount, location and operational plan regarding both strategic and tactical nuclear weapons stationed or stored anywhere
2. Activities specifically undertaken in accordance with Article VI of the NPT (i.e amount and types of weapons dismantled)
3. Location and capability of nuclear facilities (i.e power plants, research reactors, uranium mines, enrichment and reprocessing facilities etc.)
4. Fissile material holdings
5. Transfer, acquisition, research and development of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information on nuclear science
6. National policies, activities and positions taken on Universality, Non-proliferation, Nuclear Disarmament, Nuclear Weapon Free Zones, Security Assurances, Safeguards, Peaceful (*sic*) uses of nuclear energy
7. Activities and positions taken in international fora (i.e CD, DC, GA 1st Committee, NPT) on Universality, Non-proliferation, Nuclear Disarmament, Nuclear Weapon Free Zones, Security Assurances, Safeguards, Peaceful (*sic*) uses of nuclear energy

Road block at the Benalla Women's Peace Action 1994 in Australia - over 1,000 women attended



We the women of the world....

We, the women of the world,

Gathered at or supporting the United Nations celebration of the first International Women's Day of the 21st Century under the theme of Peace, call on the Secretary General of the United Nations, and all member states to make good the undertakings of the first resolution of this house.

The first resolution of the General Assembly unanimously called for the "elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction."

Women call for the implementation of this resolution because:

- * Nuclear weapons are suicidal, genocidal and ecocidal;
- * Women were, and are, excluded from nuclear science and the institutions and practices it has inspired,
- * Nuclear weapons were created under conditions of absolute secrecy;
- * Nuclear weapons epitomize a most extreme form of militarism and the erroneous concept of security as the ability to destroy others;
- * Nuclear weapons, due to the absolute nature of their destructive capacity, make conventional or "lesser wars" seem less horrific and therefore more justifiable;
- * Nuclear Weapon States, due to their permanent war economies, are responsible for 80% of the trade in conventional arms;
- * Nuclear weapons violate international law and the cannon of values the United Nations has evolved and enshrined through environmental, women's rights and human rights, labor as well as humanitarian conventions;
- * Nuclear weapons have cost trillions of dollars and have caused massive contamination of our environment, the food we eat and the genes we pass on to the future generations.
- * The nuclear weapon has become a symbol of power in the political structures and discourse of our world through the bestowing of prestige on those states that are capable of mass murder and environmental contamination.

We, the women of the world, reject this notion of power and we approach the international table in order to reset it.

The survival of this planet and all life on it requires a fundamental shift in the concept of peace and security. As we women pull up our chairs to finally sit at the international table, we will create such momentous change. Nuclear weapons and power through military force must no longer be at the head of the international table.

Secretary General Annan, and all member states of this

house, we put you on notice that the women of the world approach the World Conference on Nuclear Weapons that will bring together 187 governments in April of 2000, with a determination that this meeting will be the turning point in the Nuclear Age.

The five nuclear weapon states must reject nuclear weapons as the corner stone of their security policies – a first step the majority of the worlds' governments and people have been waiting for since the dawn of the Nuclear Age. Our patience is running out as the opportunities presented by the end of the Cold War slip through our fingers. The danger is that our generation of leaders will be remembered as the ones who could have, but didn't, resolve the Cold War and learn its lessons, redefine human security, and put the nuclear threat behind us.

The Millennium Forum, Summit and Assembly will examine the future of the United Nations. For the UN to remain a relevant and effective body it must dispell, through structural change, the perception that power in the international community is determined by the possession of nuclear weapons.

We must all take heart and be emboldened by positive examples of change for peace through the new diplomacy wherein NGOs, governments and the UN system work in partnership such as: the advances in the recognition of women's human rights; the optional protocol to CEDAW; the end of apartheid in South Africa; the ban on landmines and the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

At times these shifts and changes might seem impossible. In English, the word "impossible" with the addition of just one apostrophe and one space, becomes "I'm possible". In any language, the inclusion of women is the missing apostrophe in the international sentence. The United Nations is the space, created by a generation that knew war and wished to abolish it, that recognized injustice on the grounds of race, sex and economic class and wished to abolish it. Let the women and men of the 21st century realize their vision at this Peace House, the United Nations, through the implementation of the promises made in the Charter, the treaties, the World Conference documents and the resolutions of the General Assembly, beginning with the very first.

This letter will be presented to Ambassador Baali, President of the NPT Review 2000 Conference, with signatories from over 350 women in over fifty countries and from organisations representing millions of women.

It was drafted by WILPF and has been circulated globally since March 8, 2000.

Sexualising Technology - or how we've come to love the bomb

In Stanley Kubrick's film *Dr. Strangelove* (or *How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*) the Nazi scientist who understands the creation of an atomic weapon and the military men who deploy it have learnt how to transmute their fear into a sexual desire for the bomb. Kubrick's apocalyptic *film noir* portrays the men of science and the military as sexually turned on by a nuclear attack. The erect warheads and the cascading mushroom clouds are perceived to signify male penetration and ejaculation. But the fetishization of nuclear weapons is not only the stuff of fiction. The connection between sex and atomic science has a very long history. The use of sexually explicit, often violent language to describe the scientific method long preceded the development of nuclear bombs. When Francis Bacon, the seventeenth century philosopher who is widely recognised as the father of modern science, described the "interrogation" of a female nature as that which must be "bound into service", "put in constraint" and made a "slave", he was laying the ground work for a sexualized lexicon that continues to characterise the language of so-called defense intellectuals and much of modern science and technology.

Indian scientist and social activist, Vandana Shiva maintains that "[the development of] modern science was a consciously gendered, patriarchal activity. As nature came to be seen more like a woman to be raped, gender too was recreated. Science as a male venture, based on the subjugation of female nature and female sex provided support for the polarisation of gender" (1989: 17). Thus, modern science has cemented a dualistic rationality that still persists and continues to be effectively used as a tool for controlling and repressing the autonomy of women.

The language developed by nuclear defense intellectuals is a sexualized lexicon which degrades the female/nature half of the male/culture binary. There are several examples of the sexualizing of nuclear technology, where on the one hand, nuclear bombs are represented as the virile son of 'hard' science, and on the other, nuclear power is the sexy love-child of technocratic culture. With regards to nuclear-philias, perhaps the most bizarre example of the perceived feminine sexiness of nuclear bombs has to be the Bikini bathing suit.

In 1946, the beginning of an era which lauded the presence of the 'blonde bombshell', the French designer, Louis Reard, named his two-piece bathingsuit the Bikini (Ruthven 1993: 63). The famous, and at the time shocking, swimming costume was named after the Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific, which the US government commandeered from its inhabitants. Bikini was the site of early atmospheric nuclear tests including the hydrogen bomb test, code named 'Bravo'. Bravo was the largest nuclear bomb ever exploded by the US. It literally vaporized three of the twenty-three islands in the atoll system and spread radioactive debris across nearly 50,000 square miles. Ken Ruthven, an Australian cultural theorist, highlights the sexualizing of nuclear technology when he asks, "who knows what gang-bang fantasies lurk subliminally in the subtitle of W. C. Anderson's book on those Marshall Islands tests: '12,000 Men and One Bikini'?" (1993: 63). Today, Bikini is still heavily contaminated with radiation. And yet many people may

never recognize the connection between nuclear technology and seductive swimwear.

Thirty years after bikini bathing suits hit the fashion industry, an advertisement for nuclear energy by the Crouse Group of companies featured an illustration of a young, white woman in a see-through night gown. Next to her is the question in bold lettering, "Why is a beautiful woman like a nuclear power plant?" The answer, in small print, is given as follows. "In order to remain beautiful she must take good care of herself. . . . She schedules her rest regularly. . . . When she is not feeling well she sees her doctor. . . she never lets herself get out of shape. . . She is as trim now as she was ten years ago. . . . In other words, she is a perfect example of preventative maintenance." (Nuclear News Buyers Guide, February 1976, quoted in Caputi 1988: 507).

Here, the nuclear industry accomplishes two tasks simultaneously. The advertisement attempts to placate public fears by implying that there is no reason to worry because the experts are in control and they will take care of the community dependent on nuclear power. It also serves to reinforce male-defined gender roles for women. The woman, like a nuclear reactor, must be perfectly maintained by male-defined science. Her 'preventative maintenance' requires that she be slim, white and beautiful; and that she waits around all day in her see-through negligee, willing to be 'fixed' at any moment. In this way, nuclear power is rendered 'sexy'. It will, like this woman, give the public what it wants because it only exists to serve. The sexualizing of nuclear technology — testing grounds represented as provocative bathing suits and nuclear reactors represented as alluring women — serves to reassure the public regarding issues of safety and to keep women in their rightful, unreconstructed place. After all, who could be afraid of a sexy bomb and a pretty, white reactor? The question remains: how can women empower themselves to break out of the male-defined gender-trap, when even weapons of mass destruction are used to remind them of their place in male-defined culture?

Specific to the sexualization of nuclear technology read in its manufactured connection to the female gender, is the work of Carol Cohn. Cohn's (1987) case study of US defense intellectuals has brought a critical spotlight to bear on the sexualizing of the language of nuclear technology and its resulting imagery. Cohn describes the work of a defense intellectual as "[formulating] what they call 'rational' systems for dealing with the problems created by nuclear weapons: how to manage the arms race; how to deter the use of nuclear weapons; how to fight a nuclear war if deterrence fails[.] In short, they create the theory that informs and legitimates American nuclear strategic practice" (Cohn 1987: 688).

Cohn spent a year as a participant observer "immersed in the world of defense intellectuals" in order to pursue her persistent question: how could these men (and they were exclusively men save the administrative staff) think this way? (1987: 688). After learning to speak and understand their 'specialized language', which she refers to as 'techno-strategic speak', Cohn

found that her own 'rationalizations' were changing. "Soon, I could no longer cling to the comfort of studying an external and objectified 'them'. I had to confront a new question: How can I think this way? How can any of us?" (1987: 688). There are two central aspects of Cohn's research. Firstly, that images of sex and death dominate the rationalization of defense-intellectual-speak; and secondly, that inherent to the technology being sexualized is the glorification of male procreation and reproduction. Illustrated here is a modern Baconian notion of male pregnancy and birth; that is, men giving birth to nuclear bombs.

Cohn was surprised at the overt nature of the sexual innuendo in the description of nuclear bombs that she found among defense strategists. In her research she notes that, "American military dependence on nuclear weapons was explained as 'irresistible, because you get more bang for the buck.' Another lecturer solemnly and scientifically announced 'to disarm is to get rid of all your stuff.' (This may, in turn, explain why they see serious talk of nuclear disarmament as perfectly resistible, not to mention foolish. If disarmament is emasculation, how could any real man even consider it?) A professor's explanation of why the MX missile is to be placed in the silos of the newest Minuteman missiles, instead of replacing the older, less accurate ones, was 'because they're in the nicest hole — you're not going to take the nicest missile and put it in a crummy hole.' Other lectures were filled with discussion of vertical erector launchers, thrust-to-weight ratios, soft lay downs, deep penetration, and the comparative advantages of protracted/versus spasm attacks — or what one military adviser to the National Security Council has called 'releasing 70 to 80 percent of our megatonnage in one orgasmic whump.' There was serious concern about the need to harden our missiles and the need to 'face it, the Russians are a little harder than we are.'"(1987: 693).

Cohn was furthermore privy to strange, ritualistic (and again, overtly sexual) gestures towards nuclear bombs such as, "patting the missile". In touching actual nuclear weapons, or weapons systems, the men of the nuclear fraternity seem to derive some sort of sexual pleasure. Their sycophantic gesticulation of missile patting summoned great excitement among the defense intellectuals. One claimed that "the only real reason for deploying Cruise and Pershing II missiles in western Europe was 'so that our allies can pat them'" (1987: 695). Having heard that Cohn was in the near vicinity of a B-1 bomber, one of her colleagues "enviously" said to her "I hear you got to pat a B-1" (1987: 695). Thus, defense intellectuals will discuss, with 'breathless eagerness', their exciting adventures in patting missiles, yet they will only refer to human death as 'collateral damage'. These defense strategists appear to love sexualizing their weapons, their technology, their 'thrust to weight ratios', but they appear equally unwilling to articulate the outcome of the destructive power of nuclear weapons. They are interested in their creations but they altogether skip the human and earth-scale details that their creations will bring.

Along with the fetishization of nuclear technology, the development of nuclear weapons is rife with metaphors about birth. The first atomic bomb constructed at Los Alamos was

called "Oppenheimer's baby" (1987: 700).

"The hydrogen bomb was called 'Teller's baby' (1987: 700). Later, Teller would send a telegram to Los Alamos from Eniwetok to signal the successful test of another hydrogen bomb. The telegram read: 'It's a boy' (1987: 701). After witnessing the Trinity Test, Laurence wrote that [t]he big boom came about a hundred seconds after the great flash — the first cry of a new-born world. . . . They clapped their hands as they leaped from the ground — earthbound man symbolising the birth of a new force" (1946: 10).

Through their visions of male technological procreation, the men of the Manhattan Project as well as today's defense intellectuals hark back to the beginnings of modern science. Like Francis Bacon and Victor Frankenstein, the practice of the masculine-birth of technology is fathered in science. Caputi states that Shelley "conceived the exemplary monster of technological myth to be purely fathered (from dead flesh) and utterly unmothered" (1988: 511). Cohn points to the outcome of male-birth in science. "The nuclear scientists gave birth to male progeny with the ultimate power of violent domination over female nature" (1987: 701).

Beyond violence against 'female nature', there seems to be a normative acceptance of violence in US society, that archetypal nuclear nation, which appears to condone the iconography of atomic symbols. The mushroom cloud, symbolizing a nuclear explosion, has won its place among major cultural icons (Caputi 1993). The words: 'atomic', 'nuke', 'mutants', 'meltdown' and 'ballistic' show up in an array of cultural contexts (Chaloupka 1992). The predominance of nuclear imagery in US popular culture reveals a general acceptance of it. It is as if people from the US live under the rule of a nuclear mythology. Mushroom clouds, radiation signs, phallic caricature bombs, and other symbols of pending nuclear doom have been elevated to a cult status (Hilgartner 1982, Weart 1988). As the glamorized reversals of their true nature, these symbols are perceived as 'cool' and 'sexy', and as such, 'nukes' and 'mutants' have won their place in culture.

Kathleen Sullivan

References cited:

- Caputi, Jane.** (1988) 'Seeing Elephants: The Myths of Pallotechnology', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3: 487-521.
- Caputi, Jane.** (1993) *Gossips, Gorgons & Crones: The Fates of the Earth*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Company.
- Chaloupka, William.** (1992) *Knowing Nukes: The Politics and Culture of the Atom*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cohn, Carol.** (1987) 'Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 12, No. 4: 687-718.
- Hilgartner, Stephen et al.** (1982) *Nukespeak: The Selling of Nuclear Technology in America*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Ruthven, Ken.** (1993) *Nuclear Criticism*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Shiva, Vandana.** (1989) *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*. London: Zed Books.
- Weart, Spencer R.** (1988) *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

AMBASSADOR BAALI - NGO ACCESS

Letter to H.E. Abdallah Baali,
President
2000 NPT Review Conference

NGO Access in the NPT review process

12 May 2000

Your Excellency,

Please accept our sincere congratulations on your appointment as President of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We offer our support for your efforts in undertaking this very important task and wish you much success. As you begin your deliberations on final conference documents, we would like to take this opportunity to share a few of our ideas with you on the role of NGOs in the NPT forum.

We are writing to you regarding an issue of high importance for non-governmental organizations and for the health and strength of the NPT itself: access to and participation in the NPT review process. We welcome and appreciate the steps taken in the past five years to improve access. In that time, NGOs have been invited to make presentations to informal plenary sessions of the Preparatory Committees and to the Review Conference; have provided information and documentation to delegations immediately outside the conference room; have been provided with an NGO room with equipment; and have been given one copy of speeches and other official documents to share amongst ourselves. Most of these measures have been instituted since 1995 and have greatly improved our efficiency and ability to actively participate in the proceedings. For this we wish to express our sincere appreciation to you as President, Ms. Hannelore Hoppe, the Secretary-General of the Conference, the States Parties, the Secretariat, as well to the Presidents of the previous PrepComs.

In many other international bodies, the role of NGOs includes not only speaking to informal plenary sessions, but also addressing committees, submitting working papers as official documents, and receiving all conference documentation, among others. This higher level of access stems from the recognition that decisions taken in these bodies affect the wider world community, and that therefore representatives of public opinion and experts from civil society should be included in the deliberations. Evidence of the increased recognition that NGOs have a positive contribution to make in the NPT forum is reflected in the fact that this year an unprecedented number of countries have chosen to send NGO representatives as part of their official delegations.

It is in this context that we propose the following measures for consideration in the final documents on the functioning of the strengthened review process:

- that NGOs have full access to all meetings except closed consultations; and
- that NGOs have greater access to all conference documentation.

This latter point would include specifically the ability to request papers from the documents window and to receive copies of all speeches and working papers. Conference rules and codes of conduct would be communicated to NGOs so that they be understood and observed. While these are relatively modest requests given the level of participation of NGOs in other fora, we feel that these two elements would serve as a sound basis for the next five years. Further steps to broaden participation in the future should also remain open for consideration.

Both NGOs and governments would benefit were this proposal adopted. NGOs play a crucial role in disseminating information and analysis from these meetings to the wider community. Increased access would facilitate the provision of balanced and comprehensive reporting and analysis, as well as provide additional opportunities for contact and information sharing between delegates and NGOs. Moreover, public awareness and education -- which is vital for future progress under the NPT -- would improve with better information and documentation.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss this proposal. We look forward to working together towards our shared goal of supporting and strengthening this vital treaty.

Sincerely yours,

• Sharon RIGGLE
Centre for European Security and Disarmament

• Jenni RISSANEN
The Acronym Institute

• Corey GAY HINDERSTEIN
Institute for Science and International Security

• Felicity HILL
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

God of Modern Hell - Plutonium, Politics & Posturing

Plutonium - so aptly named after the Greek god of the underworld. The debate on plutonium within the current off-Broadway production - the NPT Review Conference - also contains many elements of tragedy that would be recognizable to the ancient the Greeks.

There are a number of contentious issues surrounding plutonium, its production and its management. There's the what, who and how of plutonium taken from warheads and its exact designation and safeguarding. There are the military stockpiles of fissile material - and the testy question of halting the production of plutonium and/or highly enriched uranium for military use. Last but by no means least there is also the question of what to do, physically, with these materials if and when they are handed over for civilian use or disposition.

Much of this debate has taken place in MCII (which is charged with discussing the NPT and links to IAEA safeguards on nuclear material and technology transfer as well as NWFZs). However, there are also many parts of MCII which are directly linked with text being discussed in Main Committees I and III. For example, if a country disarms (MCI) then it has to do something with plutonium and that means discussing long-term management (in terms of protection, verification and disposition) of plutonium (MCII). That also, inevitably, leads to a broader discussion on civilian stockpiles - particularly the question of their potential for diversion (MCIII).

In the past week there have been a number of minor and major changes to the text in the Chairman's Draft Report of the MCII. Most of these have been put forward by the NWS, all of which have concerns over differing aspects of including or broadening safeguards over fissile material, the production of plutonium and HEU and the irreversibility of processes to prevent access to nuclear weapons materials in the future.

Amendments and additions made ensure that measures currently being applied to plutonium removed from warheads will be held in limbo - and also no progress will be made in this field in the next five years beyond the current limited agreements. For example, paragraph 45 states "The Conference notes the announcements made by some nuclear weapons states that they have ceased the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and *urges those that have not done so to make a similar announcement.*" The last part, emphasized here in italics, was deleted. It's obvious which countries pushed for that change.

But beyond the contentious issue of a fissile material treaty disappearing ever further into the future there are also many other unanswered questions concerning the disposition of plutonium from warheads. For example, which body should have control over fissile material once it is designated as not for military purposes? Many groups, Greenpeace included,

believe that an independent agency should be established which oversees disarmament and that that should be the responsible organisation for supervising the disposition of fissile materials. The IAEA is not considered to be the appropriate body, not the least of which is because of the agency's conflicting aims. The IAEA's sanctioning of the use of plutonium in MOX, unacceptable on environmental, proliferation and health grounds, is rightly leading to serious questions over the actions of the agency.

Questions have also been raised over whether fissile material from weapons programs should be managed under a traditional, safeguards regime or a different verification mechanism. Whatever form such legal controls might take will decide who has interim control of fissile material and its disposition.

Assuming, however, the accurate identification of weapons material, the verification of inventories and the physical protection of such are resolved (assuming also it is not used in peaceful, applications) then the discussion turns to how it is managed and stored. This involved questions over the retrievability of fissile materials and just how irreversible, is the disarmament process?

It is no secret that the safe and effective long-term immobilization of radioactive wastes, spent fuel and separated fissile materials is a major problem confronting the nuclear industry. Apart from the obvious issues pertaining to environment and health, securing fissile material so it can never be used again is a significant challenge. Plutonium has to be incorporated into materials that cannot be readily processed and allow for re-conversion for weapons purposes.

An ISIS-sponsored seminar on 27th April at the NPT discussed the options open for dealing with plutonium. Differing opinions were expressed over whether the US Department of Energy's favoured option can-in-canister (plutonium in synroc encapsulated encased in vitrified high level waste) would be effective. There are concerns that this form does not meet the technical requirements of making the packages meet the spent fuel standard, that is radioactive enough to deter those who might want to re-use the plutonium for weapons. There are also experiments using (explosives or laser cutting) which are testing the integrity of the can-in-canister.

Even if all of these seeming insuperable problems are answered one other vexing issue remains to be resolved where to put the final product. Should it be left with the weapons states? Can they be trusted not to attempt to recover fissile materials? If not, where will it go. That, thankfully, is a question for another day.

Jean McSorley
Greenpeace

Where are the Women?

After examining the official NPT "Provisional List of Participants" printed 4 May 2000, there appears to be an acute gender crisis in the majority of the delegations to the NPT.

From the 865 participants listed, both from countries represented at the NPT and from observer or other official bodies such as the IAEA, OECD, Red Cross etc., 725 are men - 140 are women.

This is a breakdown of 84% men to 16% women.

Less than a dozen women appear as heads of delegation.

The NPT boasts the most signatories of any in the UN system - why therefore are women not included on most of the official delegations in significant numbers? Many countries (too numerous to mention here unfortunately - you know who you are) have no women listed at all.

Many women participating in the Review Conference from the NGO community have been commenting on this gender disparity for the past three weeks.

While gender alone does not decide disarmament debates, women are still half of the world's population and should therefore be present and active at the table when these important international negotiations are happening. Indeed, the President of the Security Council, Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, recently noted in a Presidential statement made on International Women's Day,

"...members of the Security Council recognize that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men. They affirm that the equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. In this context, members welcome the review of the Fourth World Conference on Women as an essential element in achieving this goal."

Two weeks after the NPT Conference ends this year, another major international conference begins in the UN - this conference is titled "Women 2000: Gender Equity, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century." This conference will reflect the excellent work women around the world have been involved in, particularly around issues of peace and gender equity. But even as we enter a new millenium and celebrate over fifty years of the United Nations, it seems that when discussing nuclear disarmament, many states parties still have a long way to go in terms of allowing for active participation of their fellow country-women.

Dimity Hawkins

What's On

15 May 2000

event:

Seminar "Health, Environment, Science and Society"; sponsored by IPPNW, PSR and INESAP

place & time:

777 UN Plaza, 2nd Floor @ 7pm

event:

Russian NGOs speak out on nuclear weapons, nuclear power and nuclear waste

place & time:

Conference Room C @ 2-5pm

Subsidiary Body 1:

Sessions begin @ 10am
&

Sessions begin @ 3pm

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

TONIGHT:

an evening of discussion on

**Health, Environment, Science & Society:
Professional Responsibility in the
NuclearAge.**

~ discussion on the legacy of the Cold War and the continuing risks posed by nuclear weapons, particularly in relation to the responsibility of professions to prevent nuclear war and to promote efforts at accountability and demilitarization.

Speakers include:

Mary-Wynne Ashford, MD; MV Ramana, PhD; David Rush, MD; Victor Sidel, MD; Barbara Birkett, MD; Merav Datan, JD.

refreshments served - suggested donation \$5-

COMING UP:

**Annual Meeting of the
NGO Committee on Disarmament**

THURSDAY, MAY 18 - 1:30pm

at the UN in the

**Dag Hammarskjold Library
Auditorium**