



News In Review

A collection of NGO views on the NPT Review 2000

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Disarmament: A Problem of Semantics

Nuclear disarmament of conviction vs. nuclear disarmament of convenience

The single largest and enduring challenge to the NPT and the non-proliferation regime is the use of the word 'disarmament'. This term encompasses two completely different meanings and creates much confusion, often intentional. While the word itself appears several times in the NPT setting, the context in which it exists is rife with contradictions and double-entendres. Clarifying this mixed terminology would go a long way in addressing some of the misunderstandings that currently exist.

On the one hand, nuclear-weapon states (NWS) and their supporters consider cuts and reductions as marked progress on eradicating excessive numbers of warheads. They claim that as we are down from the insanely high levels from the Cold War, disarmament is indeed taking place. There is 'unarming' and there is 'elimination'. It is painfully clear in statements too numerous to mention here that the goal of elimination is not the intention of these cuts. Cuts are good, yes. Cuts are necessary to get to zero, yes. Cuts, however, are not enough.

In the grand tradition of arms control, those who give up their weapons generally are no longer in need of them. But these reductions are presented as verifiable evidence that 'disarmament' is actually taking place. One hand distributes the flash brochures at NPT meetings, while the other is raised in protest over language in the Chairman's paper that one should not mention too frequently, if at all, the call for nuclear disarmament. The message? *"Accept what we are willing to give, but do not ask for more"*. Since the item under question is a weapon that, with one push of a button, could reduce an entire region to ashes and send poison across tens of borders, and not a bomb that would merely take out an airport hangar, they do ask for more. And will continue to. It will not go away, only become stronger and a more

arduous battle for those that fight for the right to possess them. This very well could be the string that eventually unravels the safety net of non-proliferation.

Non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS), on the other hand, have used the term to mean 'total elimination' of nuclear weapons. When debates over Article VI commitments resurge, as they do with regularity, NNWS want a pledge that these welcome, oft-quoted reductions are actually leading somewhere useful. The message? *"Thanks for the progress report, but what about those recent statements on maintaining robust nuclear strategies?"* Getting rid of excesses does not nuclear disarmament make. There seems to be a distinct and frequent disparity between actions and words, which understandably concerns those states seeking the fulfilment of the Article VI promise.

Perhaps the debate would be more clear and effective if the proper terms were required for the intended meaning NWS would be forced to only use the word 'reductions', except when speaking of their 'ultimate goal' sometime in the distant future, which is 'disarmament'. NNWS would then say 'disarmament' to mean 'total elimination of nuclear weapons'. Or they could swap around – but they could not use the same word to mean different things. Eliminating this persistent problem would allow the dialogue to move forward with intentions clearly outlined. While perhaps more problematic, it would certainly be a more candid way to deal with one of the most important challenges facing the world community today. But clarity of intent is rarely a sought-after commodity in an international negotiating environment. Setting aside misleading vocabulary would allow a more honest and productive discussion on the core items of concern to the majority of NPT states parties, most especially nuclear disarmament.

Sharon Riggle
Director
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Brussels

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Edith Ballantyne - WILPF

Edith Ballantyne of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom has attended each Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. News in Review took the opportunity to learn from her experience.

In your opinion, how did the NGO community feel about the NPT in 1970 when it entered into force?

Many of us felt the NPT was a useful treaty, of course, hoping and believing that before the 25 years deadline it would be fulfilled. I think many of us were concerned about Article IV because by that time it was quite clear that the "Atoms for Peace" programme and the whole provision for the transfer of nuclear technology was not what we had really wanted. On the other hand, it seemed the only possibility of getting agreement by a large group of developing countries that did not want to be excluded from this kind of technology. Since we believed that there would be serious efforts made to reach disarmament, we just felt that it was important to start to move ahead with non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament negotiations.

As an organisation working for nuclear disarmament WILPF always saw the NPT as a treaty that could advance nuclear disarmament. In the earlier Review Conference, this was highly contested and actually denied by the nuclear powers, who wanted the treaty to be restricted to non-proliferation matters and nothing more. Since the adoption of the P & Os in 1995, the NWS can't deny the disarmament function of the treaty, but they do try to ignore it. It seems some non-nuclear weapons states are not going to let them. The continuation of this struggle seems to be taking place around paragraph 17 of the Subsidiary Body I text. Basically Article VI really means disarmament and it's time that the non-nuclear weapon states insisted on that.

Was the first Review Conference a success in your opinion?

I think there was disappointment at the time of the first review conference in 1975 because so little had been done. Between 1970 and 1975 the US arsenal had increased from 26,600 to 28,100 and the USSR had gone from 12,700 to 23,500. France, the UK and China had also increased their arsenals so that the total amount of nuclear weapons in the world increased from 39,691 to 52,323 in that five year period - in complete disregard of the treaty aims and obligations.

It took Inga Thorsson a lot of effort and determination to reach a final document in 1975. I would never really talk about a Review Conference of that kind being a success. I would say that no Review Conference was ever a success because they have all simply stated the fact that nothing has advanced. The nuclear weapon states have never altered their policies with regard to nuclear weapons, which have remained at the center of their security policies. And we are still at that point today. A kind of a scepticism has developed about whether these documents lead to more activity in the following five year period. I think there was certainly a strong belief by NGOs in 1975, and has there has been all along, that the people have to take it into their hands.

How would you say that NGO activity around the NPT has changed over the years?

I would say not very much has changed in the conference itself. Certainly in all the earlier Review Conferences, NGOs could be there as observers and listen at the plenaries but everything else was closed to them. Until 1997, there was no possibility for NGOs to make statements to the delegates. That is a significant change. I also think more informal contact is taking place between NGOs and governmental delegations. For example, delegates seemed to appreciate and attend the NGO events, and have indicated that they would appreciate NGO papers and expertise before the sessions. So there seems to be more of an understanding and trust in the expertise of NGOs on the part of those governments that want the treaty to be fulfilled. They seem happier to develop a relationship with NGOs. I think that is certainly new and much more recent. I think that is probably true because NGOs have proven that they can produce very valuable expert and technical information. While NGOs should not be merely rhetorical, we also need to express our views that we want some results, we want this treaty to be fulfilled and we want disarmament.

Penelope Simons

The Simons Foundation and Lawyers For Social Responsibility

1. What are your hopes or expectations for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation 2000 Review Conference?

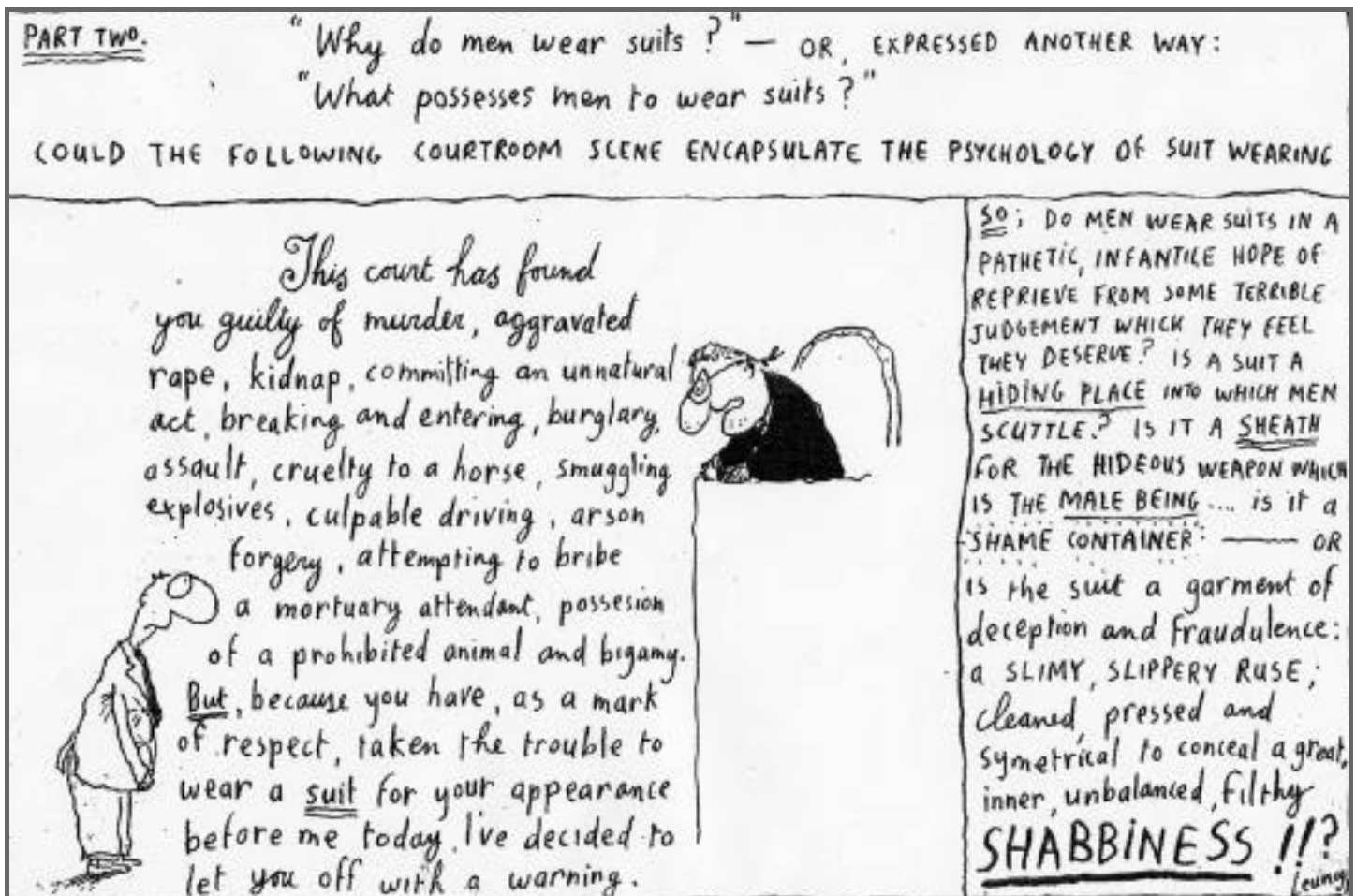
My hopes are unfortunately different from my expectations. I would like to see the nuclear weapon states show a real willingness to live up to their legal commitments under Article VI. We all know the importance of this conference for the future of the NPT. However, I am not sure that the P5 delegates realize the damage they will do to the NPT regime and global security if they don't take some serious steps to live up to their obligations in the near future. As a citizen, I find it very frustrating that five nations (three of which consider democracy to be a fundamental value) can essentially hold the rest of the world hostage to a future of nuclear risk.

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

I mainly work on the legal issues with respect to nuclear disarmament but I am also very interested in the problems caused by Article IV of the NPT. The nuclear weapon and power industry has had a terrible impact on the environment and on the lives of many people. As a Canadian, I am ashamed that while we are advocating nuclear disarmament on the one hand, we are, at the same time pushing the sales of CANDU reactors around the world and also mining and selling uranium.

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

I grew up in a family that was very conscious of individual and corporate social responsibility. I have always been very interested in world order and the political and legal relations between states as well as environmental issues. When I finished my degree in international law, I began practicing as a corporate solicitor. I realized in a short time that I wanted to do something more responsible.



Leunig cartoon - from the Suit Series

Next Steps

from the *Nuclear Weapons Convention Monitor*

Three cardinal arms control treaties are currently in danger of unravelling: the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The impression not only among researchers and NGOs, but also among officials of the P5 nations, is that we are going backwards, that Cold War thinking has re-asserted itself, and that a new arms race is beginning.

This is a time when it is tempting for officials and policy makers to become fatalistic, and to be overwhelmed by the rhetoric of other nations, the perceived negativity of erstwhile allies, even the cynical attitudes of colleagues. Public opinion is quiet, generally uninformed, and therefore no spur to proaction.

This is a time when it is essential to work with officials and to offer them support. This support can take many different forms: it can simply be attentive listening, it can be re-examination of what the root problems are, it can be the making of connections and communications with counterparts who can act, it can take the form of imaginative proposals to break a stalemate or overcome objection. Such proposals could include:

- Taking the lead in negotiations for a treaty to ban the production worldwide of the fissile materials used to make nuclear weapons. This would reduce the risks of proliferation and increase the transparency necessary for multilateral disarmament.

- Convening a conference of all the nuclear weapon states to define how nuclear weapons worldwide can be taken off hair-trigger alert. This would immediately reduce the risk of nuclear holocaust happening by accident, making the world a much safer place.
- Promoting negotiations to multilateralise the ABM Treaty. This would prevent the collapse of this fundamental global safety measure.
- Within NATO, Britain could take the lead in the current re-consideration of NATO's nuclear policy, in the direction of reducing reliance on nuclear weapons in the international system.
- In the United Nations the P5 could cease to veto Resolution No. 54/54G "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free-world: the need for a new agenda," put forward by the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sweden) in 1998 and 1999.

We may have to come very close to losing a vital treaty like the NPT before we wake up to the starkness of the choice facing us, namely nuclear anarchy or nuclear abolition.

Paradoxically, it is in this kind of moment that real change can come.

Scilla Elworthy
Oxford Research Group

Negotiations and Unreality

There is a reason I am sitting in a stuffy conference room at the United Nations, while negotiations on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty drag on. The reason is that I am a doctor - one of a hundred thousand doctors who know that the danger of nuclear war is still the greatest threat to public health in the world today. Doctors are here from Europe, Canada, the US and Russia taking part as non-governmental participants in the process of trying to advance nuclear disarmament.

The diplomats are getting tired and frustrated as they try to force language to be the bridge across an impossible chasm. The states that have nuclear weapons are determined to keep them forever, and the states that agreed not to acquire them are fed up with decades of unkept promises. Three more days and nights of bargaining may bring a consensus paper at the end of the conference, but whether it will bring real progress in nuclear disarmament remains to be seen.

Meanwhile, in the real world, there are some 5000 American and Russian nuclear weapons kept on hair trigger alert, ready to launch on warning. The risk of an accidental launch has never been so high because Russian command and control is deteriorating as their economy struggles to survive. If one missile were launched from one side, the other side would respond by launching hundreds or thousands of missiles in response. Both sides have refused to step back from the brink.

It is the real world that bears down on me more than the world of diplomatic language. My city is on the West Coast of Canada. In the event of a nuclear war, our naval base would be a target because it hosts US nuclear weapons capable ships and subs in its

harbor. Our two hospitals would be destroyed in the first few seconds of the explosion, but if I happened to be at the airport I might survive. As a doctor, a mother and grandmother, I would have to face the nightmare of a nuclear holocaust.

In the trunk of my car I carry a medical bag with enough morphine to treat one cancer patient for four hours, enough anti-nauseant to keep one person from vomiting for six hours, and enough antibiotics to treat one child with an ear infection. My car would likely not start because of the electromagnetic pulse which would come with the blast. I could walk toward the rural hospital a few miles away, under the radioactive cloud, knowing that by the time I got there it would be overwhelmed with people fleeing the flames, their skin hanging from them in sheets, crying for water. There would be no running water and no electricity; the IV solutions and antibiotics in the hospital would quickly be exhausted.

It is estimated that each doctor surviving a nuclear attack on a city would have 1800 severely injured and burned patients to see. If I saw each one for ten minutes and worked 20 hours a day it would take two weeks to see each person for the first time - without being able to do anything for them. That would be assuming that I did not succumb to radiation sickness. But I wonder if I would be capable of such service to strangers? Or would I carry the morphine and walk into the city to search for my small grandchildren?

Dr. Mary-Wynne Ashford
Co-President
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War

Rocky Flats - USA

Rocky Flats, the plutonium warhead production plant near Denver, Colorado, which halted further fabrication of warhead pits in November 1989, presently holds up to 25% of the surplus weapons plutonium destined for management at Pantex or Savannah River. Operated by Kaiser-Hill for the US Department of Energy (DOE), the plant has a long history of plutonium mismanagement problems, including more than one ton of plutonium that, according to the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center in Boulder, cannot be accounted for. Details of three major plutonium accidents at the plant, a fire in 1957, leaks from waste stored outdoors between 1954 and 1966, and another fire in 1969 became known only decades later as part of a dose reconstruction study for Rocky Flats begun in 1989 and completed in 1999. An analysis of the longer term implications of these accidents was published in the summer of 1999 by the Washington, DC-based Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS). (For details visit: www.isis-online.org).

Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site, as it has been renamed, is now focused on the cleanup of radioactive and toxic contamination. According to DOE plans, cleanup operations are contingent on removal of the large quantity of plutonium remaining at Rocky Flats. A decision by the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board in August 1999 means transuranic (TRU) plutonium contaminated wastes previously destined to be shipped to Savannah River will now go to Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) located near Carlsbad, New Mexico. The decision states: "An estimated 30% of the cans (containing 10% of plutonium or 200 grams of plutonium, much of it in the form of plutonium oxide powder) will require material repackaging in a glovebox to get below WIPP limits prior to packaging in the pipe component. Kaiser-Hill is preparing a report to justify the reclassification of this material from high risk to low risk so it can be sent to WIPP without further stabilization".

In the middle of June 1999, after several delays, the first shipment of an estimated 2,000 55-gallon barrels of TRU wastes left under the gaze of protestors. The shipping of some 315 kgs of plutonium fluoride residues (containing approximately 140 kgs of plutonium), from Rocky Flats has been at issue for some years, but especially since the DOE plans were published for comment in November 1997. The shipment plans were announced in November 1998.

The DOE says that for "plutonium metal or oxide that would result from processing technologies involving plutonium separation, disposition would be by immobilization in glass or ceramic material for disposal in a monitored geologic repository pursuant to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (consistent with decisions to be made under the department's Surplus Plutonium Disposition EIS)". DOE plans to complete the removal of surplus plutonium from Rocky Flats by 2003. If all transportation permissions are received, the DOE hopes to complete "clean-up" of the site by 2006, as detailed in an agreement between DOE, EPA and the State of Colorado. According to the Plutonium Investigation, Rocky Flats currently houses 12.9 metric tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium.

David Lowry and Mycle Schneider
WISE-Paris Plutonium Investigation

Pakistan Ready to Test Again?

Pakistan is believed to have made all preparations to carry out its seventh nuclear test in Chagai.

Islamabad-based English daily, The Pakistan Observer said that the preparations come in the wake of Intelligence reports that "India is all set for [a] hydrogen bomb explosion in Pokhran very soon".

According to the paper, Pakistan will then sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). By signing it, Pakistan will neutralise the world reaction over the bomb explosion, the paper said.

Quoting diplomatic sources in Islamabad, the paper said, "some spy satellites operating in the region had also picked up pictures showing both India and Pakistan's preparations in this regard".

Pakistan's seventh nuclear test will be plutonium-based instead of enriched uranium. The 1998 Chagai blast was based on uranium. About 20 kg of uranium is required for one device whereas only 6 kg of plutonium is needed for preparing the device, the paper said.

News Update from 'The Hindu'
"Pak. Ready for Another N-Test at Chagai:
Newspaper" - 15 May 2000

A Few Figures on India

India, which has concealed the development of its nuclear arsenal, has of course not published any figures concerning its inventory of separated plutonium. Furthermore, because of this concealment, it is quite sure that parts of the civil program (technology, materials as well as human resources) have been used for the weapons program.

Different estimates have however been published of the inventory of Indian plutonium. US non proliferation expert, L. S. Spector, who published a yearly evaluation of the evolution of the nuclear arsenals worldwide, gives as a conservative and realistic estimate the capability of producing 15 nuclear devices annually — but only about ten had been produced by 1990. Spector estimates that, as of mid-1990, India had enough plutonium for 40 and possibly for 60 nuclear devices — that is between 320 and 480 kg of weapons grade plutonium. This estimate agrees with reported US official data based on intelligence information.

A recent estimate by W.P.S. Siddhu, published in an international intelligence review, is that India has between 20 and 60 nuclear weapons and a potential to build 390 to 450 weapons.

Mycle Schneider
WISE-Paris Plutonium Investigation

Israel, India & Pakistan on Candid Camera

At a news conference at the United Nations on Tuesday, photographs from military and commercial satellites were displayed showing nuclear weapons facilities in Israel, India and Pakistan, the three nuclear nations which remain outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT.) Speakers at the news briefing, hosted by United Nations Correspondents Association (UNCA) said that the pictures reveal a pattern of continuing expansion.

Tim Brown of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) the group that acquired the space photos, said that the greatest value of having access to such pictures was the way in which growth and movement over time could be studied. "If a picture is worth a thousand words, then two pictures are worth ten thousand", he explained. He contrasted declassified Soviet spy camera pictures of nuclear facilities in India and Pakistan taken in 1990 with commercial photographs taken in March 2000 by SpaceImaging Corp. In both countries substantial expansion was obvious. Brown predicted greater use of space pictures for nuclear monitoring, although the cost was still "between two and four thousand dollars a picture".

The reason there were no recent pictures of Israel's desert nuclear facility at Dimona he explained, was because the US government has put restrictions on commercial satellite imaging of Israel. The only pictures of Dimona were declassified Russian photos from 1969. (These and all other pictures displayed at the UN news briefing are now available on the FAS website at: www.fas.org)

Michael Kraig, a FAS consultant, told reporters the photos underlined the failure of other nations to take seriously Indian and Pakistani determination to establish and expand their nuclear capacities, and a naive belief that they will eventually give them up. Unlike South Africa, Brazil or the Soviet Block nations, who have all given up nuclear weapons, Kraig said "India, Pakistan and Israel all face serious and continuing threats to their security". He added that they are unlikely to undergo major political changes and have committed their militaries to full deployment of a working nuclear arsenal. "If you look at the pictures of their facilities, you will see they are laying a lot of concrete and that usually means they have long-term plans and serious intent". Clearly Kraig said, the rest of the world "will have to find a way to deal these nations as part of a regional framework within the NPT".

In analysing the layout of the various buildings in the photographs, Kraig deduced that both India and Pakistan are working on preparations to develop smaller bombs and to couple them to missiles. Most immediately, Kraig suggested security arrangements could be enhanced if the US and other big space powers were to share satellite data with Asian and Mid-East nations to ensure there were no mistaken nuclear attacks or responses.

Dan Plesch of the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) complained that the major nuclear weapons states still "have no plan to deal with the problem of nuclear nations who are outside the NPT". If the present NPT Review fails to come up with a coherent statement on the problem, then Plesch said "there will be nobody at the helm for the next five years".

Plesch also warned that all nuclear weapons facilities were vulnerable to Chernobyl-like catastrophes through accident or attack. In such cases he said,

What's On

17 May 2000

event:

Seminar: "What's Next? Strategies for nuclear disarmament after the NPT Review Conference"

place & time:

Conference Room C @ 1.30 - 4.30pm

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



the US would discover that even with Star Wars "there would be no way to shoot down fallout or radiation."

Felicity Hill of Womens International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) - who together with BASIC, co-sponsored the news event -- presented the conference with an update on the NPT, including a recent report that both India and Pakistan are preparing for another round of nuclear tests.

Speaking of the status of NPT Review, now in its fourth and final week at the UN, she discussed several continuing points of disagreement that have all but stalled proceedings.

Hill also predicted that the conference could spill over into the early hours of Saturday morning before it ended in "consensus, hopelessly stalled or a walkout".

Kevin Sanders