



News In Review

A collection of NGO views on the NPT Review 2000

24 April 2000



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Taking Opportunities

While spirits have lifted thanks to Russian ratification of START II and the CTBT, the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference starting today will still be tough. The road to the May 19 consensus text assessing the progress of the past five year period and outlining a forward looking action plan for the next five years will be hampered by tension between the Nuclear Weapon States over NATO expansion and war-waging, as well as plans for a National Missile Defence system in the US. Tension between the 5 nuclear weapon states and the 182 non-nuclear weapon states is also high due to widespread disappointment in the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament since 1995.

But it's not all bad news, as the Canadians point out in their position paper of Feb 1, 2000. Since the last Review Conference, the CTBT was negotiated and 51 countries have ratified, reductions in nuclear weapons has occurred under START I, the UK and France have reduced warhead quantities, types and the number of deployment locations, there has been progress in the establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones, the IAEA safeguards have been strengthened as have the Zangger Committees export control mechanisms.

Increased Public Awareness

Other good news relates to increased public awareness of the dangers posed by the Cold War hangover of 36,000 nuclear weapons. A recent 60 Minutes show reached millions of people in the United States and featured an incredulous reporter claiming that "most people don't know this" when presented with the fact that the nuclear wall did not fall with the Berlin Wall. The 60 Minutes programme presented top military

personnel from the United States and Russia expressing concern in very strong terms. The former head of the U.S. Strategic Command, General Eugene Habiger said "... the fact that we have not been able to get down to lower and lower levels of nuclear weapons is troubling to me, and it should be troubling to you." (Anyone wanting to view the programme will find the tape and facilities in Conference Room C).

Stars are shining more brightly in the direction of the disarmament cause, with Michael Douglas appearing in capitals and on the cover of magazines and Paul Newman recording a message directed at this Review Conference which will be launched on Chernobyl Day, April 26. Seattle-type actions are not about to happen again on nuclear weapons issues (we did that in the 80's – 1983 - biggest gathering of people on earth) opinion polls over and over again reveal huge majorities in nuclear weapon and non-nuclear weapon states wanting disarmament. What is in the way of democracy?

More than 500 representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) will join the 187 states party to the treaty at the United Nations in New York to try to answer this question.

The NGOs are focused on the spectrum of issues the NPT covers: disarmament, safeguarding fissile materials, Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and the so-called peaceful

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Standard disclaimer

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News In Review is funded by Ploughshares Fund, the Samuel Rubin Foundation & Ford Foundation

uses of nuclear energy. In particular, NGOs are eager to see what the nuclear weapons states will deliver and how much they can support 182 governments in asserting their majority in the quest for what Article VI of the treaty promises: Disarmament.

The last Review Conference in 1995 was extremely controversial. The decision to make this temporary treaty regime a permanent body in 1995 was a difficult decision that caused fierce splits in both the NGO and governmental communities. Some lament the decision taken in 1995, declaring the treaty an "irrelevant and stillborn" disarmament tool. Others feel that the arms control and disarmament regime was strengthened by the permanence of the treaty.

Whatever your position in 1995, this is 2000, and what lies before us is an opportunity to assess the current political environment, set goals for the future and for the world community to ask what President Nelson Mandela asked in his 1998 General Assembly speech referring to the nuclear weapon states: "Why do they need them anyway?"

Increased Pressure on the Nuclear Weapon States

Let's keep in mind that this is the first Review Conference (RevCon) of the NPT where those who made such a strong case for its indefinite extension in 1995 have an opportunity to show us why, how, and what they will do to illustrate the NPT's usefulness. This is also the first RevCon since the legally and historically significant ICJ decision on the illegality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons was brought down. The authoritative legal interpretation of the NPT's sixth article was: "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." Despite the ICJ insistence in 1996 that negotiations should be concluded, getting them off the ground is causing trouble in 2000

NGOs see this RevCon as an opportunity - a once in five year opportunity - not only for discussion but also for decisions. While reductions in numbers are positive signs, we still wait for nuclear weapon states to make the decision to remove nuclear weapons from their strategies and policies. Indeed, we see opposite trends, with dozens of policy statements from the US describing nuclear weapons as "essential" for the "foreseeable future" (see the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy listing of dozens of such quotes and their sources), and similar

sentiments expressed by Moscow in their recent draft policy.

Subsidiary Bodies

The Non-Aligned Movement has asserted the necessity for a Subsidiary Body off Main Committee 1 for a focused debate on nuclear disarmament, and another off Main Committee 2 on the Middle East Resolution. Some delegations are making this simple procedural issue, debated and clarified at each PrepCom, unnecessarily complicated.

In addition to speech making, there is a need to get down to the business of formulating text which is too often left to the last minute. The Committee of the Whole and the Main Committees are useful venues for the exchange of views, but need to direct a smaller working group or subsidiary body to craft consensus language. NGOs see obvious benefits in the idea of Subsidiary Bodies and hope for a first draft of the most controversial texts to emerge from the conference, on disarmament and the Middle East.

The speeches in the General Assembly in the coming days by Foreign Ministers and groups such as the Non-Aligned Movement, the European Union and the New Agenda Coalition will give a sense of the terms of the debate to follow. Daily reflection on the governmental meeting as well as news and views from the NGOs will be provided in this daily News In Review which will also be available on the Reaching Critical Will website <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org>

Felicity Hill

Director, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom UN Office New York

in every
war there is
a Nagasaki
or Hiroshima
waiting to
happen



Averting a New Nuclear Arms Race

Last week's approval by the Russian Duma of the 1993 START II pact is a long-overdue and welcome step toward implementing reductions of Cold War-era nuclear bomb stockpiles. Now the burden of leadership is on President Clinton and the U.S. Senate to deliver on START and avoid an historic blunder on missile defenses. If they fail, they risk another CTBT-like political meltdown and a severe international nuclear security crisis.

Several hurdles remain in the way of implementing START II: the Senate, which approved an earlier version of START II, must agree to a 1997 protocol to extend the deadline for START II and agreements related to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. President Clinton and the Senate should work cooperatively to approve the 1997 agreements that would allow for implementation of the START II nuclear arms reductions. But, the early signs are not good.

While there is near universal praise for the Duma's support for START II, some Senators are taking the extreme position of opposing verifiable arms reductions with Russia if it means limiting U.S. missile defense options by approving all of the 1997 START/ABM agreements. If there is not enough support for Senate approval of the 1997 agreements, they should not be considered by the Senate at this time. To do so would further delay START II implementation, but would avoid a messy confrontation that would likely derail chances for progress with Russia on nuclear risk reduction and missile defenses.

Compounding the problem, the Republican-led Congress has unwisely enacted legislation that bars reductions in the U.S. nuclear arsenal below START I levels (approximately 6000 strategic warheads) and changes in the alert posture of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, until and unless START II is implemented. This policy makes no sense given that Russia's deployed strategic nuclear arsenal is already below 6,000 ~ and is shrinking ~ as a consequence of economic hardship. This restriction should be repealed so as to allow President Clinton or his successor the flexibility to match anticipated Russian nuclear reductions.

Even after START II, both countries will retain thousands of nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert, poised for mass attack, with decision-makers having just minutes to decide whether to launch thousands of nuclear-armed missiles. The U.S. will arsenal will include about 1000 tactical nuclear weapons, the 3,500 strategic weapons allowed under START II, plus 500 strategic spares, and another 2,500 nuclear weapons held in "reserve" as a hedge against a renewed nuclear arms race. As a result, START II ratification is helpful, but the Cold War nuclear doomsday machine will still be on-line long after its scheduled completion date of 2007.

What is most significant about START II approval by the Duma, is that it provides an historic opportunity to conclude a START III deal to secure deeper verifiable and irreversible reductions of each nations' long- and short-range nuclear

bombs. START III could have and should have been pursued by the Clinton administration years ago, but it foolishly conditioned START III talks on START II approval by the Duma. Nevertheless, this agreement could, if properly structured, help bypass the START II logjam and bring U.S. and Russian arsenals closer in line with present day political and military realities.

Each side has exchanged proposals and several issues divide the two sides. But perhaps no issue as pivotal as the overall target for strategic nuclear reductions. Russia has said it is prepared to verifiably reduce to 1,000-1,500 long-range weapons, but sadly, the Clinton-Gore Administration insists that we should not go below 2,500. If President Clinton expects to reach a meaningful agreement with Russia on START III and a new understanding on the ABM Treaty that will allow limited national missile defenses, he should agree to lock-in the lowest level of nuclear weapons that Russia will accept and verify.

It is dangerous to continue to believe that deterring Russia, which is poor and no longer a Cold War enemy, requires threatening to drop 2,500 nuclear bombs on Russian soil. Each of these 2,500 weapons can destroy an area much greater than Hiroshima or Nagasaki and kill hundreds of thousands of innocent people.

Clinton should also be prepared to decide not to deploy the limited missile defense system under development. At present, the first phase of the proposed system is technologically unproven and will not work against simple counter measures. The cost is estimated to be \$30 billion and rising. Deployment will only lead Russia and China to increase their strategic nuclear forces, increasing, not decreasing the missile threat to the U.S.

If Presidents Clinton and Putin reach agreement on START III and modifications to the ABM Treaty, Senate support is necessary but uncertain. Strong statements are coming from the leader of the "Dr. Strangelove" caucus in the Senate, Jon Kyl (R-AZ), who says he and others will oppose such an agreement if it only permits the modest, land-based national missile defense system. In essence, they propose killing agreements that would achieve verifiable elimination of real missile threats from Russia in the vain hope of no-holds barred pursuit of unproven, extremely costly, land-, sea- and space-based missile defense systems to address the potential threat of a few North Korean missiles within the next decade.

Without greater consensus between the President and Congress and between Washington and Moscow, we will get the worst of both worlds ~ unacceptably large and dangerous long-range nuclear arsenals on hair-trigger alert with technologically doubtful defenses that heighten instability and tension with our allies and nuclear rivals.

Daryl G. Kimball

Executive Director, Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers

BNFL's road to industrial meltdown in 2000

The future of nuclear reprocessing at British Nuclear Fuels' (BNFL) Sellafield site in the UK is in doubt.

Pete Roche of Greenpeace London has provided the following chronology of BNFL in crisis, since the start of this year through to the end of March 2000.

19 January - Kansai Electric Power, Japan's second-largest power company, bans BNFL from bidding for contracts to supply plutonium-uranium mixed oxide (MOX) fuel because of falsified quality control records.

21 January - BNFL's nuclear fuel manufacturing plant at Sellafield, in west Cumbria, will remain closed for weeks while managers fight to avoid the loss of vital quality assurance accreditation, the company said.

17 February - UK ministers were set to call for a management shake-up at BNFL. The aim was to restore confidence in the company after Japan, the company's biggest customer for MOX fuel and spent fuel reprocessing contracts, banned BNFL imports.

18 February - The UK Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, the industry safety watchdog, accused BNFL of "systematic management failures" and of lacking an adequate safety management system. The government gave BNFL two months to suggest improvements to management and safety processes at its Sellafield site or face the possibility of some operations being shut down.

20 February - The damning report by Britain's nuclear industry watchdog on BNFL sparked renewed calls in Japan for a shipment of plutonium-based nuclear fuel to be returned to the UK. Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry and Kansai Electric Power Company have demanded that Britain take back nuclear pellets that were allocated falsified quality data by BNFL staff.

21 February - Germany threw into doubt the future of contracts with British Nuclear Fuels in a move seen further endangering government plans to partially privatise the company. Ten atomic power stations in Germany are licensed to use Mox fuel.

29 February - It is reported British Nuclear Fuels, in an attempt to rescue the timetable for part-privatisation, is to cull senior and middle managers suspected of turning a blind eye to safety practices at the Sellafield plant. The clear-out of senior and middle managers was set to follow the departure of John Taylor, the former Exxon Chemicals executive brought in four years ago to prepare BNFL for partial privatisation. BNFL is understood to be furious with the government for mishandling Mr Taylor's departure.

1 March - Norman Askew, the man recruited to rescue British Nuclear Fuels from its worst ever crisis, pledged to take a more pro-active approach to managing the company. Mr Askew was appointed chief executive of BNFL following the departure of John Taylor.

3 March - Denmark threatens political action to force Britain to halt radioactive discharges into the North sea from Sellafield plant. The Danish Environment Ministry said it might put forward a legally-binding commitment to end radioactive discharges at a meeting of north-east Atlantic countries in Copenhagen in June.

6 March - BNFL was embroiled in a new controversy after it admitted that it had suspended fuel deliveries to the country's biggest nuclear generator. Deliveries to British Energy were halted after BNFL discovered that a welding machine used to manufacture uranium fuel had "moved out of normal tolerances".

8 March - UK government plans to sell a part of its stake in BNFL received

another setback when Germany joined Japan in banning shipments of mixed-oxide (MOX) fuel from the company. Jürgen Trittin, Germany's environment minister, said safety doubts meant resumption of German nuclear waste shipments to the company's Sellafield plant in Cumbria was also "completely open to question".

20 March - The UK Ministry of Defense said it would decide in the next few days whether safety concerns would prevent BNFL from having a role in the management of the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston.

21 March - Privatisation plans were dealt another blow as Peter Hollins, chief executive of British Energy, told MPs that the electricity generator would not be using mixed-oxide (MOX) fuel manufactured by BNFL in the foreseeable future.

22 March - Bill Richardson, US Energy Secretary, orders immediate "top to bottom" review of billions of dollars of work being performed by BNFL for the US government.

24 March - Denmark calls for a halt to all nuclear fuel reprocessing in northern Europe following international concerns over safety at Sellafield.

26 March - Details of a sabotage attack at Sellafield revealed. Remote control cables connected to maintenance equipment were found damaged at the end of the previous month.

27 March - The UK government appears to acknowledge that the future of nuclear reprocessing at Sellafield was in doubt. Insiders said BNFL would struggle to cover its costs on reprocessing if its difficulties continued.



What is standing in the way of democracy?

Disagree 11% Undecided 2% **UNITED KINGDOM**



Agree 87%

UNITED KINGDOM
Do you want your government to negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention?

Disagree 9% Undecided 4% **GERMANY**



Agree 87%

GERMANY
Do you think that any country with nuclear weapons should abolish them?

Disagree 7% Undecided 1% **CANADA**



Agree 92%

CANADA
Do you want your governments to lead negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Convention?

Undecided 8% **RUSSIA**



Abolish 61%

RUSSIA
Do you think that any country with nuclear weapons should abolish them, or are they necessary in order to protect the country?

Disagree 7% Undecided 1% **AUSTRALIA**



Agree 92%

AUSTRALIA
Do you want your government to help negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention?

Disagree 10% Undecided 3% **UNITED STATES**



Agree 87%

UNITED STATES
Do you want your government to negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention?

Are Necessary 18% Undecided 4% **JAPAN**



Abolish 78%

JAPAN
Do you think that any country with nuclear weapons should abolish them, or are they necessary in order to protect the country?

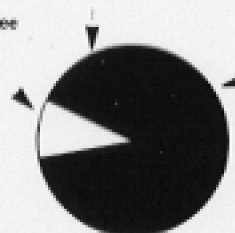
Disagree 5% Undecided 3% **NORWAY**



Agree 92%

NORWAY
Do you think Norway should work actively for a ban on nuclear weapons?

Undecided 18% **BELGIUM**



Agree 72%

BELGIUM
Do you agree that Belgium should work actively for a ban on nuclear weapons?

Vox Populis

Recently in the UK Parliament Mr. Hammond MP put this question to the Secretary of State for Defense:

“...what recent assessment has been made by his Department of the threat to the United Kingdom from (a) nuclear, (b) biological and (c) chemical weapon attack.”

The reply Mr Hoon made on the 17 Apr 2000 was:

“As of today, our assessment is that there is no current significant threat to the UK from weapons of mass destruction. Obviously, however, we continue to monitor developments closely in conjunction with our Allies.”

Competitions throughout the NPT

News In Review will be running competitions throughout the NPT Review Conference which you are all invited to enter.

Competition winners will be announced at the end of the Conference and prizes will be given if we can find the winners (so be sure to write your contact details on any entries)

Competitions are running from now on for the:

Best acronym for the meaning of ‘NPT’

Best One-Liner at the NPT

Best Circumlocution (that’s a blah blah sentence)

Best nuclear rewrite or atomic adaptation of a popular song

Best and Worst dressed (photos happily accepted)

You can enter in all categories as many times as you wish - there will be a Competition Entry Box in the Conference Room C.

Good luck to all of you!

What's On Monday 24 April

event:

Student Seminar: “Deciding on Disarmament”, an overview of the NPT for young people

place & time:

777 UN Plaza, New York @ 9.30 - 5.30pm

event:

Press Event: Independent briefing Luncheon with Leading Nuclear Experts

place & time:

Regal UN Plaza Hotel Ballroom - 1 United Nations Plaza, 41st St at First Avenue @ 12.30 - 3pm

event:

Roundtable discussion on the Trident Resolution

place & time:

UN Headquarters @ 4 -6 pm

event:

“Rule of Law”
Seminar: the first of three days of this event being organised by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research

place & time:

UN Headquarters @ 6 -9 pm

NGO’s are welcome to give us details of any events they are organising to include in our “What’s On” daily listings.