



# News In Review

A collection of NGO views on the NPT Review 2000

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## Getting Down to Disarmament

The General Debate continued at the NPT Review Conference (RevCon) this morning, hearing from Syria, Maldives, Luxembourg, Poland, Korea, Myanmar, Venezuela and Kuwait, Norway, Mongolia, Turkey, Macedonia, Indonesia, Qatar, Azerbaijan and Argentina. Two decisions were taken, one to allow Cuba to distribute documents and second to add another Vice Chair to the Credentials Committee. Indonesia's statement was particularly worth hearing, referring to the modernisation of weapons. (For copies of the speeches: [www.basicint.org](http://www.basicint.org) for detailed analysis: [www.acronym.org.uk](http://www.acronym.org.uk))

The first meeting of Main Committee I on nuclear disarmament opened today with statements by Japan, Mexico on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, New Zealand, Portugal on behalf of the European Union, France and the Czech Republic. In terms of substance, the most promising and forward looking of statements was that of Mexico on behalf of the NAC. Ambassador Reyes of Colombia closed the meeting with almost an hour to spare because delegations were not ready to begin discussion. The Committee will meet again on Thursday afternoon, 3-6 and we hope the giving of statements will end and the discussion will begin. Japan referred to "several avenues" that must be taken to arrive at the goal of nuclear disarmament, including "efforts at the unilateral, bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral levels." Noting that the first three of these involve only the nuclear weapon states, Japan stated that "no one in the disarmament community denies that they have done immensely important work" but that nuclear disarmament is "a more public affair, which involves and affects all the members of the NPT community." Japan referred to the question of pace as "particularly contentious" and stated that because concrete steps require the agreement of all, "the only way we can proceed is step by step." In this context, Japan referred to the working paper it had submitted together with the Australian delegation, relying extensively on the 1995

Principles and Objectives (P&O). Expressing a desire to see a reference to the South Asian nuclear tests in the final outcome, Japan concluded by saying that implementation of the 1995 measures can heal any "injury the NPT may have suffered."

The Japanese/Australian paper (NPT/.CONF.2000.WP.1) contains 8 paragraphs that call for:

1. the early entry into force of the CTBT; 2. immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material treaty;
3. immediate entry into force of START II and early commencement of negotiations on START III; 4. further efforts by the nuclear-weapon states to reduce arsenals, and the commencement of negotiations involving the nuclear-weapon states for the reduction of nuclear weapons at an appropriate stage; 5. multilateral discussions in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on possible future steps on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; 6. early completion of negotiations on a NWFZ in Central Asia; 7. universalisation of IAEA safeguards and establishment of Integrated Safeguards for strengthening the effectiveness of the safeguards system; 8. placement of fissile materials no longer required for defence purposes under safeguards.

While many of these points are necessary steps in the path towards disarmament, this bland offering contains vague language such as "further efforts" (who defines efforts?) and "possible future steps" (why can't we identify some of these steps here and now in a more representative forum to help the frozen 66 member CD thaw a little?). The paper does not maximise the possibilities offered by this conference. Nor does it address the lack of success experienced by this very programme over the past five year period.

Mexico's statement on behalf of the NAC introduced its working paper on nuclear disarmament "as the identification of areas in which and the means through which further progress should be sought in the future regarding the obligations under Articles I, II and VI" of the NPT. Stating that the NPT regime is at a crisis, Mexico allowed that following the hopes for

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nuclear disarmament in 1995 and the 1996 ICJ Advisory Opinion, events have not been encouraging, noting lack of progress on the CTBT and FMCT. Specifically, "We have not witnessed the necessary political will on the part of some States parties to fulfil their obligations" under the NPT and "indefinite extension of the Treaty does not legitimize the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons."

Mexico then reiterated points made in the Working Document for Nuclear Disarmament presented on April 24. Although this forward looking action plan does not go as far as many in the NGO community may when advocating abolition, the ideas contained in the New Agenda Coalition's Working Document are something that we can all agree are the obvious first steps to the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. NGOs think of it as a platform of consensus rather than a compromise. NGOs are calling on all states to identify what specific points they could possibly object to in the achievable, practical, reasonable and realistic platform put forward by the New Agenda Coalition.

New Zealand began with an expression of support for a "substantive outcome" noting that the "fundamental bargain of non-proliferation and disarmament" central to the NPT may be "discriminatory" but, explicit in it "was the expectation that this discrimination would end with the elimination of nuclear weapons." In this context, New Zealand sees the RevCon as crucial and the achievements as "instrumental in determining that international confidence in the NPT can be sustained." New Zealand stressed accountability of states, and the right and responsibility of non-nuclear weapon states to pursue nuclear disarmament. Moreover, the indefinite extension in 1995 "did not in any way sanction the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons.... Enhanced accountability, yes; permanence in possession, no."

New Zealand further noted that "progress on nuclear disarmament is not contingent on progress with general and complete disarmament" and that "no one group of states can determine independently the pace with which the obligations of a treaty are implemented." New Zealand does not accept "that it is business as usual on nuclear disarmament" over the last five years, citing nuclear strategies that re-rationalise use and possession and protect nuclear monopolies. In this context, "nuclear weapons must not become an inevitable fact of life. The longer we retain them, the greater the temptation of others to acquire them." New Zealand also expressed concern about the South Asian tests and "another non-State party that operates unsafeguarded nuclear facilities." Listing a series of steps along the lines of the NAC working document, New Zealand called for "a determined and accelerated process of negotiations" stating that "we are not questioning anyone's commitment to Article VI" but seeking "a new undertaking, consistent with, but building upon, that given in the 1995 Principles and Objectives."

Portugal spoke on behalf of the European Union, expressing strong commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, to the "ultimate goal" of complete elimination of nuclear weapons and to general and complete disarmament. Calling the 1995

RevCon a "milestone" in non-proliferation and disarmament, Portugal turned to an assessment of the current situation, expressing "deep concern" over the South Asian nuclear tests and calling for signature and ratification by all States of the CTBT (welcoming Russia's recent announcement of ratification) and suggesting that the RevCon consider "what more can be done by States Parties to accelerate ratifications, prevent a resumption of nuclear testing, and facilitate the Treaty's entry into force at the earliest possible time."

Portugal further expressed "deep regret" over lack of progress on concrete FMCT negotiations and "real concern" over "annual haggling" at the CD on the adoption of a work programme, where the "EU countries stand ready and eager to commence negotiations" on the basis of the Shannon mandate. In this context Portugal stated that NPT States Parties should reaffirm their commitment to the goal of negotiating a fissile material ban. Regarding the third part of the P&O Programme of Action dealing with "systematic and progressive efforts" towards nuclear disarmament Portugal welcomed progress on START and by the UK and France, progress on transparency, management and disposition of fissile materials, and placing excess material under safeguards, but went on to express deep EU regret over "negative developments" including lack of progress on entry into force of agreements that would fulfil Article VI obligations. The EU also "underlines the importance of addressing non-strategic nuclear weapons" and urges the RevCon to encourage the nuclear-weapon states, in particular the US and Russia, "to explore ways to bring these weapons within future nuclear reduction and disarmament arrangements." Support for the ABM Treaty was unequivocal: "The EU wishes that Treaty preserved." On nuclear disarmament, there was acknowledgement that "for the time being the *primary responsibility rests with the five nuclear-weapon States*" (emphasis added) but "it is also an obligation of all States Parties to further the implementation of Article VI" and therefore the EU supports an Ad Hoc Working Group in the CD on nuclear disarmament.

France stated that it has "committed itself unequivocally to nuclear disarmament" (using the language of the New Agenda Coalition), and reiterated support for the CTBT and fissile material treaty asking, "Should the 2000 NPT Review Conference not provide decisive momentum to this (FMCT) negotiation?" France stated the obvious in saying that the review conference should "arrive at a common assessment of the key elements of this review, or at least bring our views closer together." Choosing to focus strictly on the action plan outlined in 1995, NGOs fear that France will seek to limit the actions open to the 2000 Review Conference until the CTBT enters into force and the FMCT negotiation begins. While the 1995 decisions, principles and actions identified must be preserved, NGOs would not want that moment to be frozen in time, especially in this fast changing world.

**Felicity Hill**  
**Director WILPF UN Office**  
**Merav Datan**  
**Program Director, IPPNW**

# PANTEX - USA

The Pantex Plant near Amarillo, Texas began operations in 1942. During the Second World War, its main function was to load conventional ordnance bombs and shells with explosive materials. This factory was decommissioned in 1945. In 1949, the government sold the plant to Texas Technological College (now Texas Tech University) for one dollar. The army required the site in 1951 at the request of the Atomic Energy Commission, so that the AEC could build a facility to assemble and disassemble nuclear weapons. Procter and Gamble was the operating contractor. The Mason and Hanger-Silas Mason Company, contracted to rehabilitate the facility, took over operating the plant in 1956 when Procter and Gamble declined to renew its five-year contract. In 1963, the AEC assumed full control of the site. In 1984, and again in 1989, several thousand additional acres were leased from Texas Tech as a security buffer.

Pantex has been the main facility to put together nuclear weapons components into the final product, having assembled almost all of the over 60,000 nuclear weapons produced in the United States. It has also been responsible for disassembling nuclear weapons, but the exact number involved is not clear because the lines between assembly and disassembly are blurred. The US Department of Energy has implied that some 50,000 nuclear weapons were permanently disassembled between 1945 and 1992 at Pantex, but in 1993, the DOE admitted that *probably only 10,000 to 15,000 were actually permanently disassembled* (emphasis added).

Pantex has facilities for fabricating the non-nuclear high explosives that compress the plutonium trigger of a nuclear weapon. When a weapon is disassembled, the high explosive is removed to avoid an accidental detonation. The high explosives are burned in the open air in an area known as the burning ground.

Pantex has released both radioactive and non-radioactive hazardous materials into the environment. DOE reports only 134 cubic meters of low-level radioactive waste is buried at Pantex. This relatively small volume is explained by the fact that the plant ships most of its waste to other facilities in the US.

One of the main environmental concerns arising from Pantex is the potential contamination of the Ogallala Aquifer which is about 150 meters deep in the area of Pantex. To date, no contamination has been detected in the aquifer. However, a number of crucial water systems at Pantex *have been contaminated*, (emphasis added) and some evidence points to possible future contamination of the Ogallala.

Pantex has on-site, a continuous system of 'perched' aquifers, comprising shallow, local zones of water. In 1993, the DOE

reported that ground water sampling in one of the perched aquifers indicated the presence of various solvents, heavy metals, and high explosives, but the Department maintained that perched aquifers are "distinctly separate" from the Ogallala. However, a 1993 study found that "all recharging ground water that is perched" will eventually migrate "downward to the Ogallala aquifer"; and residents near the plant use this aquifer for drinking water and agriculture, although it is not used for these purposes on-site. Furthermore, a 1988 DOE study found that the release of waste chemicals to unlined waste pits from 1954 to 1980 posed a risk of migration into ground water, which would contaminate aquifers used for local water supplies. The study ranked this chemical contamination risk at Pantex among the greatest hazards in the overall US nuclear weapons complex. The chemicals involved include toluene, acetone, tetrahydrofurane, methanol, dimethylformamide, methyl ethyl ketone, and ethanol.

There is also evidence of uranium releases into the environment at Pantex. According to a 1985 DOE report, uranium in vegetation samples at Pantex exceed background by 70 times, and uranium concentrations in the kidneys of jackrabbits on the site were four to six times greater than background.

Pantex officially stopped assembling nuclear weapons in the early 1990s. However, it continues to maintain existing weapons systems, and also dismantles them. In some cases, disassembled weapons may be refurbished and reassembled for subsequent deployment. Currently, activity at Pantex is centered on the dismantlement of nuclear weapons and the storage of plutonium pits.

Plutonium pits from dismantled warheads are accumulating rapidly at Pantex. In times past these pits were sent to the DOE's Rocky Flats Plant near Denver Colorado for reworking into new warheads. Now that the mission at the Rocky Flats site has changed from production to clean-up, the pits are being stored at Pantex for what the DOE has called an "interim period". Since the long-term disposition of plutonium has yet to be firmly decided, the interim storage of thousands of plutonium pits at Pantex could stretch into the decades. As Pantex has not been designed as a plutonium storage facility, this practice as mandated by the DOE is highly dubious.

**excerpts from *Nuclear Wastelands:  
A Global Guide to Nuclear Weapons Production and  
It's Health and Environmental Effects***

**Arjun Makhijani et al (eds.)**

**The MIT Press, 1995**

# Deadly Work

Increasing exposure to ionizing radiation boosts the risk of multiple myeloma, a rare but often fatal cancer of blood-forming tissues, especially among people exposed later in life, according to a new study of workers at four U.S. Department of Energy Plants.

The study, conducted by University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill researchers, analyzed radiation exposures among plant employees and compared them to health records. Older workers with cumulative radiation doses of five rem or more were almost three-and-a-half times more likely to die from multiple myeloma than workers at the same plants whose cumulative exposures were less than one rem.

The current occupational limit for radiation workers is five rem per year. Average background radiation is between a tenth and a third of a rem per year depending on what is being counted, such as radon.

A report on the findings appears in the April issue of *Annals of Epidemiology*, a scientific journal. UNC-CH School of Public Health authors are Dr. Steve Wing, associate professor; Dr. David Richardson, postdoctoral fellow; Suzanne Wolf, research associate; and programmer Joy L. Wolf, all of epidemiology, and Drs. Douglas J. Crawford-Brown, professor, and Gary Mihlan, research assistant, both of environmental sciences and engineering.

"Workers exposed to ionizing radiation at older ages appeared to be more sensitive than younger workers," Wing said. "However, that does not mean that it is safe for young workers to be exposed to radiation. Exposures during the child-bearing ages might lead to genetic mutations that could affect children and future generations."

UNC-CH researchers identified 98 workers who died of multiple myeloma and 391 age-matched controls from a combined roster of 115,143 people hired before 1979 at the Hanford (Washington), Los Alamos National Laboratory (New Mexico), Oak Ridge National Laboratory (Tennessee) and the Savannah River (South Carolina) nuclear facilities. Information on work history, smoking, medical X-rays and exposure to physical and chemical agents came from personnel, medical, industrial hygiene and health physics records, including readings from radiation badges known as dosimeters.

The study included workers who died through 1990 or, among Hanford employees, through 1986. Male workers and those hired before 1948 died of multiple myeloma at about twice the rate of women and workers hired after 1948, the scientists found. Blacks were almost five times

as likely as whites to have developed the illness, although only five cases were found among blacks.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health requested and paid for the study because of previous reports suggesting a link between exposure to ionizing radiation and cases of the cancer at the Hanford site, Wing said.

"Our study, which was the largest ever done on this question in U.S. nuclear workers, was intended to include more cases of the disease, better evaluation of radiation doses and measurement of other occupational exposures not available in the Hanford studies".

Investigators also tried to determine whether workers exposed to solvents, metals, welding fumes asbestos and other agents faced increased risks of multiple myeloma, Wing said. Records of such exposures, however, were inadequate to enable the scientists to calculate increased risks accurately.

Because exposures to ionizing radiation were almost entirely below what government regulations currently allow, the findings could affect federal occupational exposure standards, the scientist said. He and his colleagues initially hoped to extend their research to other cancers of the blood-forming organs but were required by their contract to limit the study to multiple myeloma.

According to Wing, "one important element of this work is that it comes at a time when the U.S. Department of Energy is expressing greater concern for workers' health and the history of radiation exposures in the nuclear weapons complex".

**David Williamson**

**News Services - University of North Carolina**

**Editors Note:** African American workers have experienced disproportionate exposures to radiation at the Savannah River nuclear weapons complex in South Carolina. For example, black workers have seen white co-workers systematically removed from radiation and plutonium jobs after becoming contaminated, while African American employees have been returned to face the same risk.

As a means of combating this issue, yesterday, April 26th, a hearing took place in a South Carolina court where 99 African American plaintiffs described their experience of unfair labour practices and discrimination by their employer, Westinghouse, a primary contractor for the US Department of Energy at the Savannah River Site. They are seeking to have these problems redressed through the legal system. The decision will be given in 30 days. For more information contact: [www.euldfinc.org](http://www.euldfinc.org)

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TOKAIMURA WORKER**

## USA policy contradictions with the Article VI requirement to bring to a conclusion negotiations on nuclear disarmament

“We can achieve a lot in terms of reductions, we can achieve a lot in terms of improving security, we can limit the nuclear danger by going down to a level of 2,000 to 2,500 *without jeopardizing...our interests* with respect to nuclear deterrence” (emphasis added).

**State Department spokesman James P. Rubin, January 27, 2000, as quoted by Steven Mufson, "Russia: Cut Arsenals to 1,500 Warheads, US Prefers 2,000 to 2,500 Units," Washington Post, January 28, 2000, p. 17**

“Nuclear forces are an *essential element* of U.S. security that serve as a hedge against an uncertain future and as a guarantee of U.S. commitments to allies. Accordingly, the United States must maintain survivable strategic nuclear forces of sufficient size and diversity to deter potentially hostile foreign leaders with access to nuclear weapons” (emphasis added).

**William S. Cohen, 1999 Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense, at Chap. 6, Strategic Nuclear Forces and Missile Defenses, <http://www.dtic.mil/execsec/>**

“We simply do not need to test nuclear weapons to protect our security. On the other hand, would-be proliferators and modernizers must test if they are to develop the kind of advanced nuclear designs that are most threatening. Thus, *the CTBT would go far to lock in a technological status quo that is highly favorable to us*” (emphasis added).

**Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, Remarks at Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, November 10, 1999, Chicago, Illinois, as released by the Office of the Spokesman, U.S. Department of State**

“Nuclear deterrence remains key to the nation’s defense and will *for the foreseeable future*” (emphasis added).

**Testimony of John C. Browne, Director, Los Alamos National Laboratory, to the Senate Armed Service Committee, October 7, 1999**

“Our nuclear deterrent posture is one of the most visible and important examples of how U.S. military capabilities can be used effectively to deter aggression and coercion, as reaffirmed in a Presidential Decision directive signed by President Clinton in November 1997”.

**President William J. Clinton, A National Security Strategy for a New Century (The White House, October 1998) 12**

“[Presidential Decision Directive 60, adopted in November 1997, affirms] that the U.S. will continue to rely on nuclear arms *as a cornerstone* of its national security for the *‘indefinite future’*” (emphasis added).

**R. Jeffrey Smith, "Clinton Directive Changes Strategy on Nuclear Weapons," Washington Post, 7 December 1997, based on interview with Robert Bell, Special National Security Assistant to the President**

“Anyone who considers using a weapon of mass destruction against the United States or its allies must first consider the consequences. ...We would not specify in advance what our response would be, but it would be both overwhelming and devastating”.

**Secretary of Defense William Perry, 18 April 1996**

**Quotes collected by  
the Lawyers’ Committee on Nuclear Policy**

### Vox Populis

**“During my medical training I was present when the doctors had to tell the parents their child had leukemia...every single child is one child too many. ...I can tell you this was one of my most terrible experiences working as a medical person.”**

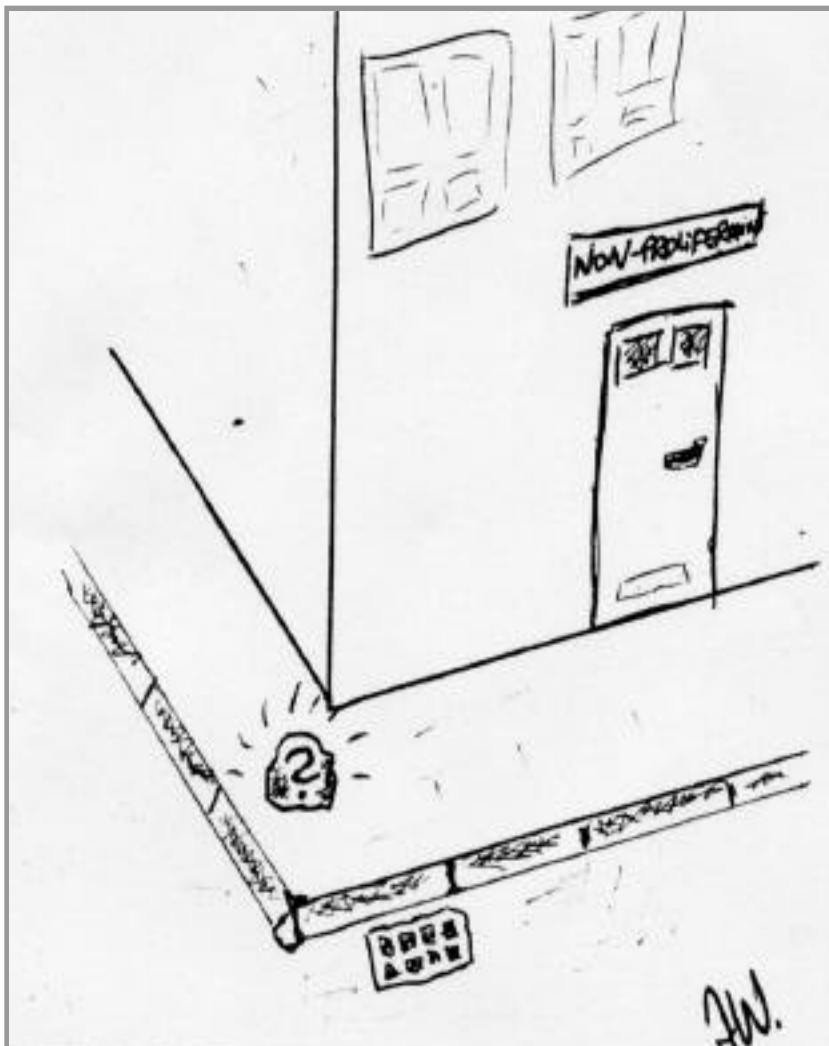
**Dr. Lars Pohlmeier  
IPPNW - Germany  
from his speech on 26 April 2000**

**A second Tokaimura worker involved in the October, 1999 accident died this morning from multiple organ failure.**

**Another worker involved in the accident died in December, also of multiple organ failure caused by exposure to high doses of radiation.**

## art in action

### What's that?



**A: NPT - the cornerstone of the global Non-Proliferation regime!**

**Cartoon by: Association for  
an All-american Individual  
Missile Defence (AAIMD)**

## What's On

**27 April 2000**

### event:

Presentation of Abolition 2000  
Progress Report Card - Special  
Edition for 2000 NPT Review  
Conference - The Atomic Mirror

### place & time:

UN Conference Room C @  
10.30am - 12noon

### event:

Panel discussion: Nuclear  
Weapons "Stockpile Stewardship"

### place & time:

UN Conference Room C @ 1.30 -  
3.30pm

### event:

Day Two: 9th International Health  
and Environment Conference  
"Solutions for the Millennium" -  
second of a 3 day conference -  
pre-registration required for  
admission

### place & time:

UN Headquarters @ all day

### Plenary Meeting:

Sessions begin @ 10am and 3pm  
General Assembly

### Main Committee 1:

Sessions begin @ 3pm  
Conference Room 4

### Main Committee 2:

Sessions begin @ 10am  
Conference Room 4

### Main Committee 3:

Sessions begin @ 10am  
Conference Room 6