



BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition
Act to make it a reality



Number 02 | 2010

A Monthly Newsletter for Strengthening Awareness of Nuclear Abolition.

This page includes independent news coverage which is part of a project supported by Soka Gakkai International

This newsletter brings you independent news by IPS correspondents, in-depth reports and analyses by partners as well as columns by experts, news from international NGOs and a review of the global media for a glimpse of what is happening on the ground. Join us in helping strengthen awareness about the abolition of nuclear weapons – and encourage your friends and colleagues to subscribe to this free monthly newsletter.

U.N. Nuke Meet Ends with Good Intentions and Empty Promises

The road to a nuclear weapons-free world is apparently paved with good intentions - but littered with plenty of platitudes and empty promises. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51634>

Nukes-Free Future May Depend on Citizen Campaigns

Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, a former U.N. under-secretary-general, offered a piece of advice to anti-nuclear activists campaigning for the abolition of nuclear weapons: "Don't depend on governments - and don't depend on the United Nations." <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51548>

How to Overcome the Key Obstacles to Nuclear Disarmament

There are three major issues concerning nuclear weapons, all very difficult: disarmament-nonproliferation, military use, and theological significance. But there is a universal remedy: solve the underlying conflicts. writes Johan Galtung. http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=101:how-to-overcome-the-key-obstacles-to-nuclear-disarmament&catid=1:news

Treaty Aimed at Banning Nukes Remains Grounded

The world's anti-war activists, including parliamentarians, civil society groups and diplomats, have succeeded in creating international treaties to ban a wide array of deadly weapons: anti-personnel landmines, blinding laser weapons, cluster munitions, dum-dum bullets and chemical and biological weapons. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51430>

"I Feel Duty-Bound to Push for a Nuclear-Free World"

Emerging from a U.N. conference addressing the role that the world's mayors can play on nuclear issues, Hiroshima's Mayor Tadoshi Akiba continues to call for a rapid end to nuclear weapons. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51341>

Will Mideast Tug-Of-War Wreck Anti-Nuke Meet?

When the last review conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) ended inconclusively - after four long weeks of protracted negotiations - the meeting was described as having accomplished "very little" with no substantive agreement. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51326>

Israel, Iran Targeted at Nuke Non-Proliferation Meet

A month-long Review Conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) began Monday with a predictable target: Israel. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51300>

NPT Meet Draws Thousands of Anti-Nukes Activists

Japanese women in kimonos carrying signs urging "No More Hiroshima", an 80-year-old grandmother, and 18 mayors from around the world were just some of the almost 15,000 people who marched in New York City to rally for the abolition of nuclear weapons. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=51297>

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U.N. Nuke Meet Ends with Good Intentions and Empty Promises

By Thalif Deen

UNITED NATIONS, May 29, 2010 (IPS) - The road to a nuclear weapons-free world is apparently paved with good intentions - but littered with plenty of platitudes and empty promises.

A month-long nuclear non-proliferation review conference concluded late Friday "with more of a whimper than a bang", said John Burroughs, executive director of the Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy.

"The result was disappointing without being surprising," he said.

However, said Burroughs, one concrete achievement was on a make-or-break issue: a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East.

The final document, he pointed out, calls for a conference on this controversial subject in 2012, and the appointment of a facilitator to make it happen. The next nuclear review conference is due three years later, in 2015. "The road ahead is not easy," said Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the 118-nation Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), "but it's the only way forward."

He singled out the reaffirmation by the conference of the importance of Israel's accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna.

But whether Israel - a country pursuing a "don't ask, don't tell" policy on its nuclear weapons - will accede to these requests remains to be seen.

Ambassador Abdelaziz said that NAM, the largest single political coalition at the United Nations, is aiming at the total elimination of nuclear weapons by 2025.

After four weeks of intense debate, the review conference adopted a 28-page document spelling out three "forward-looking action plans" on the most politically divisive issues: nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the right to nuclear energy. But the conference's best efforts were still not good enough - judging by the mixed and negative reactions to the outcome.

"This is an action plan for treading water," said Jackie Cabasso, executive director of the Western States Legal Foundation, which monitors U.S. nuclear weapons programmes and policies.

Rather than being held to time-bound or otherwise measurable commitments, the nuclear-armed states are encouraged or called upon to take action on items such as security assurances and nuclear weapon-free zones, she said.

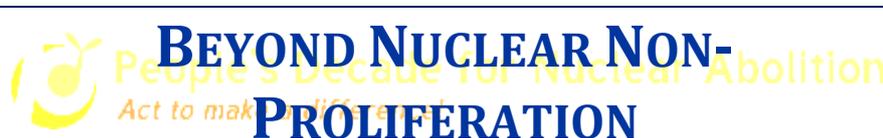
The final document that was adopted Friday was progressively watered down in order to achieve consensus, according to several NGOs.

The United States, Russia, Britain and France, four of the five declared nuclear weapons states, were largely successful in removing from the document anything requiring them to take meaningful short-term steps to advance disarmament.

Many of the disarmament actions were eventually phrased as vague aspirations.

On nuclear testing, a reference to closing the test sites was removed from an earlier version of the document, Cabasso told IPS.

Similarly, a call for cessation of development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons was removed. Curiously, said Cabasso, new language was added to include the use of new nuclear weapons technologies in the action item calling on all states to refrain from nuclear weapon test explosions pending entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). >>>



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This would appear to refer to the laboratory-based testing programmes underway in the U.S. and other nuclear-armed states, she added.

Jonathan Granoff, president of the Global Security Institute, told IPS the nuclear weapon states failed to make tangible and specific commitments in the final document. However, he noted, they clearly legitimised the principle that the world will be more secure and better off with the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, they set forth principles and policies to which they have unanimously committed themselves that will help us get to a nuclear weapons-free world, he said.

"The significance of this achievement must not be underestimated," said Granoff, pointing out that naysayers will try to undermine this achievement, claiming the final document "is just words".

This would be akin to claiming that a blueprint for a building is "just lines" on a page, he said.

First, the image and goal must be stated. Second, the principle for policies must be articulated, and third, the political forces mobilised to achieve them.

"It is the responsibility of all of us to mobilise those political forces," he added.

Dr. Rebecca Johnson, vice-chair of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), told IPS the process and outcome of the NPT Review Conference have made two things very clear: reaffirmations of commitments made 10 or 15 years ago are not enough, especially as these undertakings were not honoured and implemented.

And as the final document underlines, getting rid of nuclear threats requires not only concrete disarmament steps but the establishment of the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

"The action plan on nuclear disarmament as well as the inability of the NPT machinery to deal with non-compliance and to strengthen its own safeguards agreements, as illustrated in what was left out of the final document, make it now clear to everyone the need to initiate a process leading to negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention," she said.

Such a convention will also do away with the NPT distinction between nuclear haves and have-nots and comprehensively ban nuclear weapons for all, she added.

Cabasso said the review exercise revealed the huge gulf between the determination of the vast majority of non-nuclear weapon states to accomplish the disarmament objectives of the treaty and the intransigence of the nuclear weapon states.

The disarmament action plan clarified the differences among states parties once again and reaffirmed past though still unfulfilled commitments to the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency.

"There is nothing really significant or new here, but the process also clarified the need for new approaches to nuclear disarmament, such as a Nuclear Weapons Convention," she noted.

Granoff said Academy Awards are given for excellence in acting. The world recognises athletic talent at the Olympics. Too little credit, however, is given to diplomats who were able to forge common ground for a passage to a safer, more secure future where countries with divergent interests and attitudes, such as the U.S. and Iran, could find common ground and commit themselves.

In no small measure, success was achieved at the NPT review conference because of the uplifting inspiration provided by Russia and the United States in their collective efforts to advance disarmament, he declared. ■



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Nukes-Free Future May Depend on Citizen Campaigns

By Thalif Deen

UNITED NATIONS, May 23, 2010 (IPS) - Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, a former U.N. under-secretary-general, offered a piece of advice to anti-nuclear activists campaigning for the abolition of nuclear weapons: "Don't depend on governments - and don't depend on the United Nations."

Chowdhury's scepticism of the world body was implicitly aimed at the five veto-wielding big powers in the Security Council - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia - who are also the world's five declared nuclear powers.

Speaking at a seminar on the sidelines of the month-long Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) talks here, the former Bangladeshi envoy urged non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to emulate the monumental success of the global campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines.

"I am confident civil society can bring a sea change in the minds of people (as it did in the campaign to ban landmines) in its current efforts to abolish nuclear weapons," he told a gathering of NGOs, including youth members of the Japan-based Soka Gakkai International (SGI), last week.

Kenji Shiratsuchi, chair of the Soka Gakkai Youth Peace Conference who is leading a youth movement actively involved in a global campaign to ban nuclear weapons by 2020, told IPS that a six-nation survey conducted by his organisation concluded most people believe the world would be safer without the destructive weapons.

The survey involved interviews with 4,362 people, ranging from teens to those in their thirties, in Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, New Zealand, the United States and Britain,

According to the findings, over 67 percent said the use of nuclear weapons was not acceptable under any circumstances, with only 17.5 percent seeing it as acceptable as a last resort if a country's survival was threatened, and 6.1 percent saying they could be used to prevent international terrorism or genocide.

Between January and March 2010, Soka Gakkai youth members collected over 2.3 million signatures in Japan alone for a petition calling for the adoption of an international convention banning the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of nuclear weapons.

Asked what role the Japanese government is playing at the current NPT talks, Shiratsuchi told IPS: "As a nation, Japan has a special responsibility to universalise the experience of nuclear devastation, elevating it into the shared commitment of all humankind to assure that this tragedy is never repeated."

The Japanese government, he said, should be keenly aware of this responsibility and should be guided by it in its actions. "It is clear that Japan can play an important and proactive role in the debate at the NPT Review Conference in order to open the way to nuclear abolition," Shiratsuchi said.

One important way it can do this is by clearly expressing support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC), as endorsed in 2008 by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his five-point plan for nuclear disarmament.

The NPT Review Conference, which is expected to conclude May 28, is being attended by more than 1,500 representatives from 121 NGOs, besides government delegates. When the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) was formally launched in October 1992, it was dismissed as "utopian" by most of the world's governments and militaries. But there was such an overwhelming groundswell of support for the campaign that within five years, the international community began negotiating a treaty banning antipersonnel landmines. >>>



SGI representatives submit anti-nukes signatures at the United Nations.
Credit: Courtesy of SGI



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"The process that brought about the Mine Ban Treaty has added a new dimension to diplomacy and hope for its wider applicability," says Jody Williams, one of the leaders of that highly successful campaign.

When ICBL was awarded the 1997 Nobel Prize for Peace, the Nobel Committee recognised not only the achievement of the ban, but also the promise of the model created with the ban movement, she said.

Chowdhury told IPS: "I continue to strongly believe that nuclear weapons can be totally abolished only through a global movement of NGOs and civil society."

He said people of the world, by raising their voices and by pressuring their governments to support the abolition, can achieve the results that are otherwise not possible in an intergovernmental forum.

There is a need, he pointed out, to create a sustainable foundation for a peaceful and secure world by building a "culture of peace", as called for by the United Nations.

Japan, as the only country which experienced a nuclear holocaust, has the real moral authority to lead the campaign.

"I am encouraged by the fervent calls for nuclear abolition made by the Hibakusha (surviving victims of nuclear bombings in Japan) at the U.N.'s current NPT review conference, as well as by many Japanese civil society and spiritual leaders, like President Daisaku Ikeda (of SGI), who have energised millions around the world," Chowdhury said.

Of course, the Japanese government needs to come out more categorically in support of the abolition to establish its leadership of the global movement, as the Canadian government did in support of banning landmines, along with civil society, Chowdhury added.

SGI, which has been leading a major anti-nuclear campaign in Japan, initiating the 2007 launch of the People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition, is a Buddhist association with over 12 million members in 192 countries.

Asked about the influence of the youth movement, Shiratsuchi said that young people have a special responsibility in this regard, "if for no other reason than that we will have to live with the consequences of any further failure or delay in abolishing nuclear weapons".

"It has always been young people who have driven efforts for change. We want to awaken our friends and peers not only to their responsibility in this regard, but also to the positive potential they possess to transform the world," he declared. ■



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How to Overcome the Key Obstacles to Nuclear Disarmament

By Johan Galtung *

BRUSSELS (IPS) There are three major issues concerning nuclear weapons, all very difficult: disarmament-nonproliferation, military use, and theological significance. But there is a universal remedy: solve the underlying conflicts. Achieving disarmament through peace is much easier than achieving peace through disarmament.

The first issue involves a possible US-Russia treaty to eliminate some of the estimated 23,000 aging "strategic" (genocide) nuclear bombs; the "nuclear summit" of 46 countries in Washington convened by Obama to secure fissionable material; the nuclear disarmament conference of 60 countries convened in Tehran by Iranian president Ahmadinejad, demanding the destruction of all atomic weapons, starting with the US arsenal; and the NATO meeting in Estonia on the 240 "tactical" bombs stationed in Europe.

The US nuclear triad (land, submarine, and air-based delivery) has not been touched, nor have those tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, nor, most importantly, the use of depleted radioactive uranium in weapons by the US which cause slow, agonising death. To call the recycling of some monstrous old weapons 'disarmament' is pure public relations. Storing uranium in the US -the fox in the hen house- not even under supervision of the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), sounds like a bad joke. This is a rerun of the Cold War, just as Afghanistan is a rerun of Vietnam.

The second nuclear issue is catastrophic. In 1967 I published an essay for the Pugwash organisation, warning of suitcase bombs that could be hidden near crucial targets, for example on a sail boat, operated by remote control, and used for blackmail to obtain particular demands. (in "Peace, War, and Defense", www.transcend.org/tup). This method is far simpler than delivery by missile, where the sender can easily be identified. An unsigned letter making threats is far harder to deal with, particularly if non-state actors are among the suspects. Dismissing the letter as a bluff would carry heavy risks. Determining the culprit after a nuclear explosion though analysis of the fallout would be impossible if laboratories were no longer functional.

The 15th anniversary of the Oklahoma bombing reminds us of how the "experts" perceived clear indications of involvement of the Middle East, though without specifying which country. But the origin was the US Midwest, not the Middle East. Timothy McVeigh learned extreme violence as a US soldier in the 1991 Gulf War massacre, and was upset about the Waco massacre two years earlier. He was executed in 2001. But death is no deterrent to suicide bombers, and there are many of them around.

The third nuclear issue, which presents an obstacle to disarmament, is the "divinity problem". God uses extreme force to punish pagans, such as the plagues He sent to Egypt to force it to let the Jews go. Similarly the US used nuclear bombs to punish the Japanese (who had already capitulated), telling them whose God was mightier. Nuclear weapons confer divinity on their owners - civilisations, not states and certainly not non-states. Giving such divine power to "savages" is worse than proliferation: it is profanation. For the US, the ideal scenario is that the US alone would have nuclear bombs; second best, certain allied Christian countries would as well. A hyphenated Judeo- bomb -as in Judeo-Christian- is also acceptable. And with Bolshevism gone, even an Orthodox Christian bomb might be tolerable, if tamed by a treaty and some shield.

But what about a Confucian bomb? Suspect. A Hindu bomb (1998, code-named "The Buddha has smiled")? Controversial. A "buddhist bomb" is an oxymoron, but a Shinto bomb? Also problematic -could they seek revenge? But the real problem in a West unable to respect Islam is an Islamic bomb. What if Iran saw itself as the Persian civilisation? Indeed, it does, being older than most others. An even worse possibility would be an Islamic non-state, one claiming to be as close to the divine as anybody else, Al Qaeda ("the base"), bent on protecting the sacred in Mecca-Medina-Jerusalem and on punishing the unfaithful intruders, for example by destroying some buildings on 9/11.

Giving up nuclear status is seen as giving up divinity. For the inner club, this seems unreasonable. Is there a way out? English women played a significant role in opposing and ultimately abolishing slavery and colonialism. Some English unilateralism might lead the way. Ladies of England, join forces with that great gift, the liberal Nicholas Clegg, who even doubts the usefulness of the UK's Trident nuclear programme! Please, do it again! (END/May 2010/Copyright IPS) ■

* Johan Galtung, a professor of Peace Studies, is founder of TRANSCEND, a peace-development-environment network. His most recent book is "The Fall of the US Empire--And Then What?" (www.transcend.org/tup).



IPS Articles

Treaty Aimed at Banning Nukes Remains Grounded

By Thalif Deen

UNITED NATIONS, May 13, 2010 (IPS) - The world's anti-war activists, including parliamentarians, civil society groups and diplomats, have succeeded in creating international treaties to ban a wide array of deadly weapons: anti-personnel landmines, blinding laser weapons, cluster munitions, dum-dum bullets and chemical and biological weapons.

But "the most iniquitous weapon of all" - the nuclear weapon - has continued to escape a treaty aimed at eliminating its use, spread and production.

Asked why a proposed nuclear weapons convention (NWC) has failed to get off the ground, Alyn Ware, global coordinator for Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), told IPS: "The nuclear weapon is both a military and a political weapon."

"It projects power," he said, singling out the world's five most powerful, and by definition, permanent members of the Security Council - the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China - who are also the five declared nuclear powers.

Ware says it is also one of the primary reasons why the four undeclared nuclear powers - India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea - are holding onto their weapons of mass destruction.

Still, the longstanding proposal for a convention to ban nuclear weapons has gathered increased momentum at the current month-long Review Conference on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which concludes May 28.

Jayantha Dhanapala, a former U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, told delegates last week: "We do need a radical change."

"In the same manner as we have outlawed biological and chemical weapons among weapons of mass destruction, and anti-personnel landmines and cluster weapons as inhumane conventional weapons, we need to begin the process of outlawing nuclear weapons," said Dhanapala, president of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

The negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention, he said, "must begin immediately".

The abolitionists, led largely by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), also include scores of anti-war and anti-nuclear activists worldwide: the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, Nobel Women's Initiative, Federation of American Scientists, Mayors for Peace and Soka Gakkai International of Japan.

A Model NWC, drafted by an international consortium of lawyers, scientists and disarmament experts, has been in circulation since 1997 as a United Nations document, and subsequently revised in 2007.

The proposed Convention calls for "the adoption of legally binding, verifiable and enforceable instruments, culminating in a comprehensive prohibition and destruction of all nuclear weapons under effective controls."

Dr. Rebecca Johnson, vice chair of ICAN, told IPS the model NWC is valid as a resource, with many useful ideas for how the technical and legal challenges might be addressed in a nuclear abolition treaty.

She said it was offered as a collection of ideas to demonstrate that a comprehensive treaty is feasible, not a "take-it-or-leave-it" draft for immediate adoption.

"When negotiations begin, they will start on their own terms, but we are confident the diplomats will find our discussions, and even some of our draft text, useful as they seek their own negotiated solutions," Johnson added. >>>



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Asked if the proposal will come up before the current session of the NPT, she said the 118-member group of Non-Aligned States, who are parties to the NPT, and several individual European countries, as well as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, have openly called for some kind of comprehensive treaty.

The call is for a treaty or framework for the total prohibition of the use and deployment of nuclear weapons and to provide for the phased elimination of nuclear weapons - in other words, a Nuclear Weapons Convention, she added. "This is most heavily supported by a new call from the non-nuclear countries at this 2010 NPT Conference," she said.

Because of opposition from some, if not all the nuclear-weapon states, it will be a tough challenge to get this support for negotiating a nuclear weapons convention into the final document, Johnson declared.

Still, she noted, there will be some commitment to pursue a comprehensive, treaty-based approach, which is feasible and clearly complements calls for reaffirming the 13 practical disarmament steps adopted by the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

Ware said a majority of governments have supported U.N. resolutions calling for the immediate commencement of NWC negotiations. These include some of the countries that possess nuclear weapons - China, India, Pakistan and North Korea.

On the other hand, he pointed out, there are key countries - most notably the other nuclear weapons states and many of the countries in extended nuclear deterrence relationships with the United States - that express opposition to such negotiations.

They claim there are initial steps and fundamental security issues that must be addressed before such negotiations could start, Ware said.

Still, many analysts argue that these initial steps and security issues would be best dealt with in the context of comprehensive negotiations.

A more feasible aim for the NPT Review Conference is to persuade states parties to agree to a preparatory process of a NWC, Ware added.

A working paper submitted to the 2005 NPT Review Conference by Costa Rica and Malaysia calls for the exploration of legal, technical, institutional and political elements required to achieve and maintain a nuclear weapons-free world.

Dr. Natalie J. Goldring, senior fellow at the Centre for Peace and Security Studies at Georgetown University, told IPS: "A nuclear weapons convention is an ambitious goal." But with U.S. President Barack Obama's leadership, it could become a reality, she added.

Goldring pointed out that a nuclear weapons convention is a logical means of implementing President Obama's commitment to nuclear disarmament. "The Obama administration is moving in the right direction, but needs a greater sense of urgency on these issues," she said.

She said the NPT Review Conference, currently underway, is a chance to reinforce the interlocking commitments of disarmament and nonproliferation. A Nuclear Weapons Convention would help establish the path toward nuclear disarmament.

"It would break the cycle of governments making rhetorical commitments to nuclear disarmament while continuing to develop new nuclear weapons," she said, noting that said even committing to negotiation of a convention would be a significant step forward.

Goldring said that important components of a nuclear weapons convention would include bans on the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, and use of nuclear weapons.

The staged approach included in model nuclear weapons conventions makes sense, as does the focus on U.S. and Russian arsenals in the early stages, Goldring said. U.S. and Russian arsenals are by far the largest. Until the U.S. and Russia make significant cuts in their nuclear weapons, there is little incentive for other countries to follow suit, she added. ■



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Q&A

"I Feel Duty-Bound to Push for a Nuclear-Free World"

Anna Shen interviews TADATOSHI AKIBA, Mayor of Hiroshima

UNITED NATIONS, May 6, 2010 (IPS) - Emerging from a U.N. conference addressing the role that the world's mayors can play on nuclear issues, Hiroshima's Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba continues to call for a rapid end to nuclear weapons.

He juggles his roles running a city 65 years after nuclear holocaust, and another as president of Mayors for Peace, which counts almost 4,000 cities around the world.

Akiba spoke to IPS correspondent Anna Shen about Hiroshima's development, his personal duty on the nuclear issue, and the ongoing Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review taking place this month at the U.N.



Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba
Credit: Courtesy of Mayor's Office

Q: Hiroshima is completely modern and rebuilt. Can you tell me how the city was formed after the bombing?

A: Those who came as part of the occupation army were really good city planners. And the city plan reflects the frontier at the time of urban planning, and for instance they brought Kenzo Tange to create the Peace Park.

But there were historical factors, because the destruction was so complete and many citizens had to continue living, and burial rituals were not followed. So all over the city there were people in a sense walking over corpses and that kind of consideration made city planning more delicate.

For example, there was a flower shop and many people died near there. So there is a memorial there. There are thousands of memorials all over the city. For people to build a beautiful city is to create sacredness.

Q: Can you tell us about the Hibakusha, the surviving victims of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

A: The Hibakusha have to live their pain and suffering when they tell their stories to the outside world. And there are many who cannot tell their stories, as so many who are victims of war and tragedies cannot, and many are lucky enough to have told their stories.

There was one man, Mr. Tanabe, who never told his stories until he became 60 years old, which is the time of renewal of a cycle in Japan. His parents died and his aunt and uncle brought him up. He did not want to cause any emotional trouble to them. How could he bear to go through all those years and have no feelings of retaliation or remorse? All he wanted to do was create a film of the stories of those who used to live in that area and show them what the atom bomb destroyed and how precious those lives were and that it should never happen again.

Q: How do you see your role as a mayor?

A: As mayors we have to be the (people's) voices wherever we can and talk to the government so that they will listen to the voices and when we come to the U.N. to talk so others can understand the experiences.

One thing that proved the point was that two weeks ago, we had the 28th plenary meeting of the InterAction Council, which consists of former heads of states and government. Members came to Hiroshima, including Malcolm Fraser, former prime minister of Australia. After seeing the museum and talking to survivors, they really understood what it means to suffer from nuclear weapons and there was a sense of urgency gained there that compelled them to recommend that all heads of states should come to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They were so moved by their visits. These are not ordinary people, these are those who are sympathetic and humanitarian statesmen, and coming to Hiroshima gave them this great impact. >>>



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I really invite all the heads of nuclear weapons states to come to Hiroshima this year on the 65th anniversary of the bombing.

The role of the mayor is to represent the Hibakusha and to have a nuclear-free world and they would like to see it with their own eyes, so that they can tell the deceased when they get there that, "Your death was not in vain. There is a nuclear-free world." I feel duty-bound to make their wish come true.

Q: What do you want to see come out of this Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review?

A: This is a great opportunity to mobilise world public opinion and to use it for humanity. Several of the opening statements reflected much of what Mayors for Peace has been trying to accomplish. ■

Will Mideast Tug-Of-War Wreck Anti-Nuke Meet?

By Thalif Deen

UNITED NATIONS, May 5, 2010 (IPS) - When the last review conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) ended inconclusively - after four long weeks of protracted negotiations - the meeting was described as having accomplished "very little" with no substantive agreement.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon last week described the beleaguered 2005 Review Conference as "an acknowledged failure".

But will the 2010 Review Conference, which opened Monday and runs through May 28, follow the same beaten track?

Perhaps one of the most controversial issues jeopardising the conference is a longstanding proposal for the creation of a nuclear-weapons-free zone (NWFZ) in the militarily-volatile Middle East.

Asked whether this is a possibility, Joseph Gerson, disarmament director at the American Friends Service Committee, told IPS: "The struggle for a NWFZ in the Middle East could derail the NPT Review Conference."

In an article published last week in the International Herald Tribune, Ban reiterated the call for a NWFZ, Gerson noted. "Egypt will be making it a major issue, as will Iran," he added.

"But in crisis, there is always opportunity, so let's see what we can do in this regard," said Gerson, author of the 'Empire and the Bomb: How the U.S. Uses Nuclear Weapons to Dominate the World'.

Anne Penketh, programme director of the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) in Washington DC, told IPS: "There are some fears this issue could wreck the conference, but I think that Egypt is more flexible than might be apparent, and that serious negotiations are now under way between the United States and Egypt."

A good faith attempt to agree on practical steps could produce a breakthrough, but at this point it's too early to say which way things will go, she added.

The United States, which has been supportive of Israel, the only Middle Eastern country with nuclear weapons, has continued to link the creation of a NWFZ with progress on Middle East talks.

But as Penketh points out in a paper titled 'Peeling the Onion: Towards a Middle East NWFZ', "If this Catch-22 situation is allowed to continue at the Review Conference, it would be tantamount to handing Israel, a non-NPT member, a veto over the future of the entire NPT treaty."

She said the main obstacle to negotiations stems from the lack of political will. >>>



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But there is concern over the officially unacknowledged Israeli nuclear weapons and the deep sense of injustice among Arab states, which accuse the nuclear weapons states of "double standards", she noted.

"They are accused of shielding Israel while sanctioning states like Iran, which continues to insist on its treaty right to pursue civilian nuclear energy," Penketh added.

Asked about double standards, Gerson told IPS that "in terms of Iran, double standards have always applied in what is termed 'realpolitik'.

Ever since the first world war - a war fought for control of the dying Ottoman Empire and what Churchill understood to be "the prize" of Middle East oil - the great powers of the West have done what they have thought necessary to control what Eqbal Ahmad (author and anti-war activist) once termed the "geopolitical centre of the struggle for world power", he pointed out.

Gerson said Iran is seen as a threat to U.S. domination of the oil-rich Middle East, and thus when it seems to be challenging the order, efforts are made to keep it in its place.

"To be clear, I believe that no nation should have nuclear weapons or even nuclear power plants," he stressed.

"The use of nuclear weapons is genocidal or omnicidal, and nuclear power plants are inherently dangerous, not only because of the possibility of meltdowns, but because humans have yet to learn how to safely dispose of their radioactive waste, which poisons the earth and threatens life for tens of thousands of years," he declared.

Regarding the double standard versus India, Pakistan and Israel, Gerson pointed out the U.S. is in a tacit alliance with India as it attempts to encircle China, and Pakistan is a key ally for the U.S. in its Central Asian war.

"So, they won't be challenged, as we saw" in President Barack Obama's nuclear security summit last month.

Regarding Israel, it was long seen as the hammer for the U.S. in the Middle East, helping to reinforce U.S. hegemony, and there is the political power of the Zionist lobby in Washington, he said. "This might get a little more interesting in the coming days, given current U.S.-Israeli tensions and the fact that Egypt plans to make Israel's nuclear weapons a major issue in the NPT Review."

Gerson also said that little noticed was the recent denial of visas to enter the U.S. to several Israeli nuclear scientists and engineers, who wanted to come to the U.S. for further studies.

Addressing the Review Conference on Monday, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton showed some flexibility when she said: "We support efforts to realise the goal of a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East, in accordance with the 1995 Middle East resolution."

She said the Middle East may present the greatest threat of nuclear proliferation in the world today.

"But in spite of these difficulties, we want to reaffirm our commitment to the objective of a Middle East free of these weapons of mass destruction, and we are prepared to support practical measures that will move us toward achieving that objective."

Currently, there are several treaties establishing NWFZs in Africa, Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in Mongolia.

These include the Treaty of Tlatelolco for Latin America and the Caribbean; the Treaty of Rarotonga for the South Pacific; the Treaty of Bangkok for South East Asia; the Treaty of Pelindaba for Africa; the Treaty of Semipalatinsk for Central Asia; and the Antarctic treaty which covers the uninhabited area of Antarctica.

But two of the regions not covered so far include the Middle East (Israel being the nuclear power) and South Asia (India and Pakistan being nuclear powers). >>>



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Clinton also announced that the Obama administration will submit protocols to the U.S. Senate to ratify participation in the nuclear-weapon-free zones that have been established in Africa and the South Pacific.

Upon ratification, parties to those agreements will have a legally binding assurance that the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them, and will fully respect the nuclear-weapons-free status of the zones, she declared.

"And we are prepared to consult with the parties to the nuclear-weapons-free zones in Central and Southeast Asia, in an effort to reach agreement that would allow us to sign those protocols as well," Clinton said. ■

Israel, Iran Targeted at Nuke Non-Proliferation Meet

By Thalif Deen

UNITED NATIONS, May 3, 2010 (IPS) - A month-long Review Conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) began Monday with a predictable target: Israel.

As the only Middle Eastern country armed with nuclear weapons, Israel has been treated as a political sacred cow, one whose weapons programmes have not been publicly challenged either by the United States or Western powers.

But on Monday an overwhelming majority of U.N. member states - 118 out of 192 - wanted the defiant Jewish state to come clean with its nuclear weapons programme and sign the NPT, which is aimed at halting the spread of these devastating armaments.



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad addresses the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Credit:UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Speaking on behalf of the 118-member Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa said the fact that Israel has refused to sign and ratify the NPT has resulted in the continued exposure of non-nuclear weapon states of the region to nuclear threats by the only country possessing these weapons of mass destruction.

Israel, he warned, has also unleashed risks associated with the operation of "unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and activities of unknown safety standards".

Worse still, Israel has also implicitly triggered the threat of a nuclear arms race of "a catastrophic regional and international potential" thereby jeopardising the NPT regime in its entirety, said Natalegawa, echoing the views of the largest single political coalition at the United Nations.

"This situation is unsustainable," as it also jeopardises the implementation of the 1995 resolution calling for the creation of a nuclear-weapons-free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East, Natalegawa warned.

The month-long conference, which runs through May 28, will take stock of the successes and failures of an international treaty aimed at halting the spread of nuclear weapons - and perhaps ultimately eliminating all nuclear weapons from the world's military arsenals.

The treaty, which was opened for signature back in July 1968, has come under review every five years.

Today, 189 countries have acceded to the treaty, including the five declared nuclear powers, which are also the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council: the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia.

The three undeclared nuclear powers are India, Pakistan and Israel, which are not parties to the NPT. North Korea acceded to the treaty, violated it, and later withdrew. The 2000 NPT Review Conference reaffirmed the necessity of Israel's accession to the NPT, and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive safeguards by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

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But so far, Israel has refused to accede to that request.

Speaking at the opening session Monday, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who declared that disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are among his "top priorities", singled out only two countries by name: Iran and North Korea.

He urged Tehran "to comply fully with Security Council resolutions and cooperate fully with the IAEA" and called upon North Korea to help achieve a "verifiable denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula".

But he stopped short of making any references to Israel, India or Pakistan.

Still, he said, "I urge those countries that are currently outside the treaty regime to accede to it as soon as possible," without identifying the three countries by name.

Taking a righteous stand on nuclear weapons, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the only head of state at the conference, said the sole function of the nuclear weapon is to annihilate all living beings and destroy the environment.

The resulting radiation, he pointed out, would affect the coming generations and its negative impacts would continue for centuries.

"The nuclear bomb is a fire against humanity rather than a weapon for defence," he said.

"The possession of nuclear bombs is not a source of pride; it is rather disgusting and shameful," said Ahmadinejad, whose country is accused of trying to develop nuclear weapons: a charge he has flatly denied.

"And even more shameful is the threat to use or to use such weapons, which is not even comparable to any crime committed throughout the history," he declared.

Ahmadinejad did not spare Israel, accusing it of stockpiling hundreds of nuclear warheads. He accused the Jewish state of having waged many wars in the region and continuing to threaten the people and nations of the region "with terror and invasion".

But he also pointed out that Israel "enjoys the unconditional support of the U.S. government and its allies, and receives, as well, the necessary assistance to develop its nuclear weapons programme".

He criticised the IAEA because it has failed both on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

In response, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton charged that Iran was "do[ing] whatever it can to divert attention away from its own record and to attempt to evade accountability".

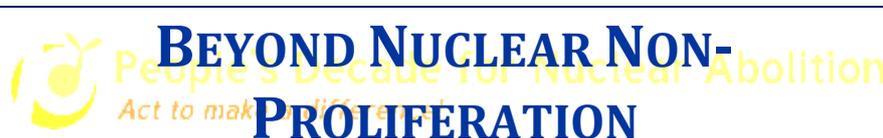
Tehran "has defied the Security Council and the IAEA and placed the future of the nonproliferation regime in jeopardy," Clinton said.

Meanwhile, at last month's nuclear security summit in Washington DC, U.S. President Barack Obama was asked about Israel's nuclear weapons programme.

But he diplomatically sidestepped the question when he pointedly told reporters: "As far as Israel goes, I'm not going to comment on their (nuclear weapons) programme".

"What I'm going to point to is the fact that consistently we have urged all countries to become members of the NPT. So there's no contradiction there," he said. "And so whether we're talking about Israel or any other country, we think that becoming part of the NPT is important."

"And that, by the way, is not a new position. That's been a consistent position of the United States government even prior to my administration," Obama added. ■



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NPT Meet Draws Thousands of Anti-Nukes Activists

By Anna Shen

UNITED NATIONS, May 3, 2010 (IPS) - Japanese women in kimonos carrying signs urging "No More Hiroshima", an 80-year-old grandmother, and 18 mayors from around the world were just some of the almost 15,000 people who marched in New York City Sunday to rally for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

The hot, humid weather did not deter the protesters, who walked from Times Square, passing the United Nations on their way to Dag Hammarskjold Plaza for a peace festival with music and heated discussion over the month-long review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which begins Monday at the U.N.

The crowd viewed the issue from different angles, but they were firmly united on one thing: the urgent need to end the nuclear arms race.

"It is now time to rid the world of all weapons of mass destruction. No more nukes, no more wars. Yes we can, yes we must," said Judith Le Blanc, an organiser with the group Peace Action.

Aug. 9 will mark the 65th anniversary of the atomic bombing of the Japanese city of Nagasaki, said its current mayor, Tomihisa Taue.

"We are all connected and must share the faith that we must protect citizens from nuclear weapons. If we are united we can make governments move forward and make the world change. Let's make Nagasaki the last city to have a nuclear attack," he said.

Isao Yoshida, who came from Nagasaki, was only four years old when he lost his grandmother and friends when the U.S. bombed the city in 1945. Coming to New York for the NPT review was a deeply personal visit for him.

"I hope this year's conference will be successful because a lot of people feel a longing. Last April, [U.S.] President [Barack] Obama said he looked forward to a world without nukes. I hope for success, for the world and for all the Hibakusha, which are survivors of the bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima," he said.

The human costs of nuclear weapons are not limited to their deployment, but also include the environmental and health impacts of their production, noted Nadine Padilla, a community organiser from the Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment.

She called for the shutdown of uranium mines and an end to radioactive waste, which causes cancer and miscarriages, among other problems. "We must fight to protect our lands," she said.

Stopping uranium mining in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo was also a high priority for Yaa-Lengi Ngemi, a Congolese professor based in New York.

"Uranium was used in Hiroshima. Now the Congolese president is selling it to Iran. I am marching because the president is supporting terrorists and he needs to be removed. He is killing the Congolese," Ngemi told IPS.

Others said that as world leaders come here for the review, the U.S. should come clean on its own record.

Tennessee has one of the three remaining nuclear weapons plants in the U.S., said Ralph Hutchinson from the Oakridge Peace Alliance, urging that the plant be shuttered.

"We have the most nuclear weapons and we are still building more. We have 1,500 in our active stockpile and have several more in reserve. Until we get honest, we won't rid the world of nukes," Hutchinson told IPS. "Why is it okay for the U.S. to have them but not others? What justifies that morally?" he asked. He added that the U.N. would have leverage this time around because there were hints that the General Assembly would take the U.S. and Russia to task over their nuclear weapons arsenals. >>>



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Dan Lombardo, a member of Peace Action of Detroit, agreed. He said he wanted to see the U.S. abide by the disarmament vision set out when the NPT was created in 1970.

"The NPT is low hanging fruit," he told IPS. "In addition, I'm here to support the NPT from a religious perspective, because war and the preparations of war are against the will of God."

Aaron Tovish, international director of the Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign, said it is time to complete the promise of the eliminating nuclear weapons - one that has been embraced, at least in theory, by President Obama.

"The facilities to assemble nuclear weapons are the same to disassemble them. By 2019, all of them could be dismantled. It is a political challenge and it is time to do so. Within 10 years, we could have a verification and monitoring system to oversee the elimination of weapons," he said, adding that the question remained whether this conference would bring about a more comprehensive approach to the nuclear threat.

Erika Bagnarello, a Costa Rican filmmaker who screened her film "Flashes of Hope: Hibakusha Traveling the World", at the U.N., noted that there are currently enough nuclear weapons to destroy every city in the world seven times over.

She hoped the conference would produce a specific document to advance the issue, one that was stronger than the last NPT review in 2005.

"There is an awareness worldwide of the 23,000 weapons, mostly in the U.S. and Russia, and we need to decrease that number," she said. ■

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The Challenge of Moving Fast toward a Nuke-Free World



By Ernest Corea

Dr. Jayantha Dhanapala, president of the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs.

WASHINGTON DC (IDN) – Gloom-and-doom headlines in the waning days of the 2010 review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) caused many observers to assume that negotiations would collapse in deadlock, but the Final Declaration of the conference was adopted without dissent. Consensus on potentially contentious issues was a significant milestone on the path toward nuclear disarmament.

A NPT review conference is held every five years and the previous conference ended in deadlock. At the time, many delegates blamed the collapse of the conference on the previous U.S. administration.

"The NPT could not have suffered another failed review conference after 2005 and it is a tribute to the 172 states parties present (out of a total of 190) that they agreed on a document strengthening all three pillars of the treaty – nonproliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy," said Dr. Jayantha Dhanapala, president of the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs and formerly president of the 1995 NPT review and extension conference. >>>



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Dhanapala added that “the newly adopted separation of the Final Declaration into a Review section which was ‘noted’ and a Conclusion and Recommendations part – including a 64-point Action Plan – which was adopted by consensus, augurs well for the future.”

The encouraging outcome of the conference, he said, “is a result of new political leadership in the world and a strong current of global public opinion channeled by civil society organisations. This synergy must grow despite obstacles that may arise so that the goal of a nuclear weapon free world is reached sooner rather than later.”

In Dhanapala’s assessment – an assessment shared by several delegates and observers – “the most significant achievement” of the conference “was the agreement on implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East – 15 years later – for which the Pugwash Conference had worked hard, convening a specially focused side event during the conference and lobbying many governments on this.

“The convening of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and the appointment of a facilitator to consult and prepare the conference with responsibilities after the conference are major steps forward.

The acknowledgement in the document of ‘the important role played by civil society in contributing to the implementation of the resolution’ is an encouragement to Pugwash to continue its efforts.”

DISARMAMENT

Dhanapala, who is a former UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, pointed out that “while an optimum result on nuclear disarmament was diluted by resistance from nuclear weapon states the action plan is, by common consent, an advance over the 2000 Review Conference document.

“All state parties are committed to pursue irreversible, verifiable and transparent policies with the objectives of achieving a world without nuclear weapons and nuclear weapon states will implement their unequivocal undertaking to eliminate their nuclear weapons totally.

“The conference noted the UN Secretary-General’s Five-Point Proposal for Nuclear Disarmament, which includes negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention while the nuclear weapon states committed themselves to accelerate nuclear disarmament engaging promptly on a number of specific issues.”

REAFFIRMED

In agreement on other key issues:

- the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was reaffirmed and the conference recognised that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;
- Russia and the U.S. were encouraged to implement the nuclear weapons reduction treaty they signed earlier this year;
- all states were reminded of the need to prevent nuclear proliferation, and “to detect, deter and disrupt trafficking.”
- states which have not yet signed a number of existing agreements that serve as a deterrent against trafficking that includes nuclear terrorism were urged to sign such agreements;
- the importance of Israel joining the NPT regime and placing all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards was reaffirmed.
- NPT member states were reminded of the obligation to resolve all unresolved issues in their dealing with the IAEA. >>>



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The eighth NPT review conference has ended and in whatever way the clean sheet of success might get ruffled in the future, there is no doubt that the outcome of the meeting was, as Dhanapala has pointed out, a tribute to the current political leadership.

Conference President Ambassador Libran Cabactulan (Philippines) worked indefatigably to craft reasonably robust documents on which consensus could be reached, without the sacrifice of guiding principles.

Also hard at work was the current leader of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at the UN, Egyptian Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz who provided his NAM colleagues with enlightened leadership.

Perhaps the strongest influence, however, was that of a leader who was not even present: President Barack Obama. His groundbreaking speech in Prague over a year ago when he shared with his audience a vision of a nuclear weapons free world has created a trend of public opinion that continues to influence public policy at international gatherings.

This might not last long. Indeed, in nut country there is already a backlash developing. Speed is vital, therefore, in following up the good intentions expressed at what was certainly a positive, even historic, meeting in New York. (29.05.2010)

The writer has served as Sri Lanka's ambassador to Canada, Cuba, Mexico, and the USA. He was Chairman of the Commonwealth Select Committee on the media and development, Editor of the Ceylon 'Daily News' and the Ceylon 'Observer', and was for a time Features Editor and Foreign Affairs columnist of the Singapore 'Straits Times'. ■

Youth Want Nukes Abolished – Push for New Convention

By Jamshed Baruah



← Takahisa Miyao

BERLIN/TOKYO (IDN) – As senior officials from around the world negotiate in New York an agreement aimed at curbing the spread of nuclear weapons, a close look at the attitudes of the youth in six countries offers a critical insight into the need for spreading word about the culture of peace.

Youth members of Soka Gakkai International, a Buddhist association with 12 million members around the world, asked their peers what they think about nuclear weapons and their abolition.

The survey was conducted between January and March 2010 in advance of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference. It involved 4,362 youth in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, New Zealand, the USA and the UK.

A perplexing aspect of the survey is that within the nuclear states, only 59.2 percent of the American youth – in their teens and up to 30s – were aware that the United States possesses atomic arsenals. And only 43.2 percent of the young people in Britain identified their country as a nuclear power state.

However, the survey also revealed an encouraging facet. Asked whether the presence of nuclear weapons contributes to global peace and stability, 59.6 percent of the youth interviewed, including those from the nuclear states, said 'no'. Also, 67.3 percent said the use of nuclear weapons was not acceptable under any circumstances.

Only 17.5 percent regarded deployment of atomic arsenals as acceptable as a last resort if a country's survival was threatened and 6.1 percent to prevent international terrorism or genocide. A total of 59.1 percent said they would feel safer if nuclear weapons were abolished.

Asked which countries possess nuclear weapons, 66.9 percent of those interviewed identified the USA, 48.7 percent Russia, 30 percent China, 19.8 percent the UK and 19.8 percent France. Fewer respondents were aware of the nuclear weapons possessed by India, Pakistan and Israel, while 40.7 percent thought North Korea had them. >>>



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Soka Gakkai student group leader Takahisa Miyao, who organised the survey, pointed out: "Almost 70 percent of respondents said the use of nuclear weapons was not acceptable under any circumstances. This is encouraging for us. Building on the widespread rejection of nuclear weapons by youth is the key to efforts toward their abolition."

In an E-Mail interview with IDN-InDepthNews, Takahisa Miyao commented on issues related to the survey:

IDN: What in your view is the most significant aspect emerging from the survey?

Takahisa Miyao (TM): For us the most important result was the fact that on the whole some 60 to 70 percent of respondents have a negative attitude toward nuclear weapons. It was also clear that more the people have a concrete and detailed awareness of the threat posed by nuclear weapons, the more strongly do they reject them. This speaks of the importance of informing people about the nature of nuclear weapons as a key to strengthening public opinion for their abolition.

At the same time, there is a segment of respondents who don't have a strong opinion one way or the other regarding nuclear weapons. Even then, however, if you look at the conditions under which people think nuclear weapons could be used, it is clear that a majority consider them to be in a class of their own, essentially different from conventional weapons. On the other hand, around 10 percent of respondents expressed unease at the prospect of eliminating nuclear weapons and about 30 percent of respondents didn't know if the abolition of nuclear weapons would be a good or a bad thing.

The results of this survey have deepened our confidence that, by working to raise awareness among the members of our own generation about the horrors of nuclear weapons deployment, we can build robust public support for their abolition.

IDN: What do you think should be done to sensitize youth about the need for abolition of nuclear weapons – in countries that have these and others which don't have these on their territories?

TM: Again, one key is to inform people about the real nature of nuclear weapons and the horrific consequences of their use. It is an undeniable fact that, with the passage of time, the collective memory of what happened at Hiroshima and Nagasaki has begun to fade. We have responded by creating a five-language DVD recording the testimonies of nuclear survivors as well as an exhibition on nuclear disarmament and human security, 'From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace: Transforming the Human Spirit' which has been viewed in over 170 cities in 23 countries and territories.

The responses have been very encouraging. People who have seen the exhibition have expressed a new awareness of the threat of nuclear weapons and a determination to see them eliminated. People have also expressed a sense of empowerment, confidence that a change in people's outlook will make nuclear abolition possible. Among the younger members of the Soka Gakkai in Japan are many descendants of hibakusha, nuclear survivors. We want to continue to convey these experiences into the future, building global solidarity among the world's youth.

Concrete goals are crucial, and we support calls for a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC), comprehensively banning all phases of nuclear weapons. Among other things, this is an effective vehicle for getting people to engage with the issue.

In parallel with the opinion survey, the Soka Gakkai youth members in Japan held a petition drive calling for the adoption of an NWC. There are precedents of the treaties banning landmines and cluster munitions, and this helps people develop clear goals and a shared vision of a path to nuclear abolition.

In calling for a similar treaty banning nuclear weapons, we are building the awareness that nuclear weapons should not exist and must be eliminated. Fostering this consciousness in individuals ultimately creates a strong normative consciousness against nuclear weapons in international society as a whole. In this regard, we are greatly encouraged by the statement made by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon just prior to the opening of the NPT Review Conference expressing his support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. >>>



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We feel strongly that young people have a key role to play in shaping history. The second president of our organization, Josei Toda (1900-58), said that the future is created by the power and passion of youth. As early as 1957 he called for the abolition of nuclear weapons, urging young people to take that as their special mission.

For most people, but again, perhaps especially for youth, nuclear weapons seem very distant, unrelated to their daily lives. We want to counter that through our efforts, working with fellow NGOs and relevant UN agencies, to promote a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

IDN: What have the youth leaders planned for the NPT Review Conference?

TM: As you know, nuclear disarmament is, along with nonproliferation, one of the pillars of the NPT. The nuclear-weapon states have an obligation to pursue good-faith negotiations toward that end. Encouraging this is, of course, one of the motivations behind our drive to collect signatures for an NWC, which we will be presenting to representatives of the NPT Review Conference and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs.

We hope that the Review Conference will mark the start of negotiations toward an NWC. To clear the way, we want to see the negative security assurances – the promise of nuclear-weapon states not to use these weapons against states that don't possess them – formalized into legally binding commitments.

We also urge the declaration of nuclear non-use regions where nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ) have yet to be established. We will be carefully following the progress of the conference, together with interested young people around the world.

The NPT Review Conference this year is just one milestone on the path to a world free of nuclear weapons. The threat of nuclear weapons proliferation will not be uprooted until the people of each society clearly and unequivocally voice their rejection of nuclear weapons.

As Buddhists, we will continue to focus on the importance of people's attitudes and awareness. Whatever the specific outcome of the NPT Review Conference, we will continue our efforts, through dialogue and education, to effect a positive change in people's consciousness, to spark the inner flame of hope. (12.05.2010) ■

Egypt Escalates 'War on Nuclear Weapons'

By Fareed Mahdy



IDN-InDepth NewsAnalysis

ISTANBUL (IDN) – Strongly backed by Arab countries and Turkey, Egypt has escalated its intensive diplomatic offensive for freeing the Middle East of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, starting with nuclear arms.

Only few days ahead of the May 3-28 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review conference in New York, Egyptian diplomacy has reiterated in different fora its nearly 40-year old claim that the long-troubled Middle East region must be free of atomic arsenal.

In a latest development, Egypt has submitted to all parties involved in the New York meeting, a working paper through which it calls on the conference to “regret that no progress has been achieved for the implementation of the 1995 (UN) resolution” that confirmed previous resolutions to free the region from nuclear weapons. The Egyptian document also calls for a conference to be held by 2011 with the participation of all countries in the region to work out a formal accord ensuring their effective commitment to free the Middle East from nuclear arms. >>>



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NUCLEAR ISRAEL

Israel is the sole Middle East country that reportedly possesses nuclear weapons, with over 200 warheads, equivalent to more than double of the atomic arsenals in India and Pakistan.

Israel insists on keeping its military nuclear programme under strict secretiveness, while systematically refusing to join the NPT.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu refused to participate in the Nuclear Security Summit organized by President Barack Obama in Washington on April 13-14. Netanyahu is also expected to desert the NPT Review conference.

The Egyptian paper to the delegations to the New York conference is reported to have the firm support of all Arab countries, a number of African, Asian and Latin American countries as well as Turkey and possibly also France and Scandinavian states.

While the U.S. may not support the Egyptian proposal for the immediate liberation of the Middle East from all weapons of mass destruction, it would not "veto" it.

NON-PROLIFERATION

As the NPT Review conference approached, the Egyptian Foreign Affairs ministry launched on April 26 a call on "all States to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty."

A Foreign ministry spokesperson said in a statement that, through its participation in the Review conference, "Egypt wants to ensure the accession of all States to this NPT."

The spokesperson underscored that the non-accession by Israel to the NPT not only jeopardizes security and peace in the region, but also makes them unviable.

The spokesperson stressed that the objective of freeing the Middle East from all weapons of mass destruction is not new, and that his country has been working for achieving it through international fora and groups of countries that "share our thinking, in particular Arab and African countries and also some European states."

IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

Commenting on the ongoing developments regarding the Iranian nuclear programme, the official spokesman said, "The Egyptian stance is that the Iranian nuclear dossier needs to be dealt out politically, not through military actions".

"We reject the military option; we encourage Western countries concerned with this issue to act politically. We reject any military action because of the consequences it may bring to security and stability in the region."

The Egyptian spokesperson underscored that "certainly all states have the right to benefit from the advantages that the NPT offers regarding the peaceful use of nuclear power. But, at the same time, NPT member states must stick to the Treaty's provisions."

THE EGYPTIAN STANCE

Meanwhile, another Egyptian official source -- the Egypt State Information Service (SIS) has disseminated one week ahead of the NPT Review conference, an official document briefing on Cairo's position.

In its introduction, it says that the "Egyptian vision for achieving peace and stability in the (Middle East) region is based on fundamentals and principals such as the fair, just solution of the Palestinian cause and the integral implementation of all resolutions based on international legitimacy." It also stresses the principle of "respect of states' independence and sovereignty, including keeping the region far away from arms races, in particular those of mass destruction, and liberating the region from all kinds of them." >>>



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The Egyptian stance in the New York conference will stress that, since 1961, all Egyptian governments have followed a "clear and totally transparent position" vis-à-vis nuclear weapons and in general all weapons of mass destruction (atomic, biological and chemicals).

It will insist on its plan "to free the Middle East of these weapons, starting with nuclear arms, and that all countries in the region join all international agreements that ban the possession, proliferation, production and use of these arms, as well as all related testing".

Cairo will also demand that all Middle East countries "be submitted to all international control and inspection systems, with no exception for any state or any weapon of mass destruction, under any circumstance."

KEY POINTS

The Egyptian position is based on the following key points:

- The possession of weapons of mass destruction does not guarantee security to any (Middle East) country; this will be ensured only through a just, comprehensive peace;
- The lack of "any positive step" from Israel regarding the nuclear weapons issue and the Middle East liberation of arms of mass destruction, as well as its position based on the 'military superiority doctrine', will only contribute to deepening regional security unbalance;
- In its call for the total elimination of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction in the region, Egypt rejects any sort of discrimination or 'partialization' that might be considered upon the will of any party in the Middle East;
- Egypt rejects any possible 'selectiveness' of any weapon or any country, and rejects any concession of any special status to any country in the region;
- The process of disarming the Middle East of all kind of weapons of mass destruction must be carried out under international-comprehensive supervision, in particular by the United Nations and its agencies.
- Egypt demands the implementation of the several UN resolutions calling for freeing the Middle East from nuclear weapons, in particular the UN Security Council resolution number 487 adopted in 1981.

'NO' TO U.S. NUCLEAR UMBRELLA

Cairo has rejected a U.S. offer last year to guarantee defence of the region against atomic weapons as part of a comprehensive Middle East peace plan.

Nuclear umbrella is usually used for the security alliances of the U.S. with non-nuclear states such as Japan, South Korea, much of Europe, Turkey, Canada, and Australia, originating with the Cold War with the then Soviet Union. For some countries it was an alternative to acquiring nuclear weapons themselves.

In fact, on August 18, 2009, during his first visit to Washington in five years, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak insisted with U.S. President Barack Obama that "what the Middle East needs is peace, security, stability and development", not nuclear weapons.

Mubarak reaffirmed Egypt's pledge underlying the country's commitment since 1974 for the establishment of a "nuclear free Middle East".

Pre-empting discussion on the issue, Mubarak said in an exclusive interview with the leading Egyptian daily Al Ahram on August 17, 2009: "Egypt will not be part of any American nuclear umbrella intended to protect the Gulf countries". >>>



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Such an umbrella, he said, "would imply accepting foreign troops and experts on our land -- and we do not accept that". Mubarak also emphasized that a U.S. nuclear umbrella "would imply an implicit acceptance that there is a regional nuclear power --we do not accept that either."

The Egyptian president asserted that "the Middle East does not need any nuclear powers, be they Iran or Israel -- what we need is peace, security, stability and development". In any case, "we have not received any official communication regarding such a proposal", he added.

On the same day, Ambassador Suleiman Awad, spokesperson of the Egyptian Presidency, also commented on a U.S. nuclear umbrella in the region. "This is not the first time the issue is raised; it is part of the U.S. defence policy," the presidential spokesperson said. "What is new is that it is raised now for the Middle East."

Commenting alleged U.S. nuclear plans in the Middle East, Awad said: "It is absolutely rejectable both in form and contents. Instead of talking about a nuclear umbrella, the Iranian nuclear file should be dealt with (in a spirit of) dialogue and flexibility from both sides, the West and Iran."

He added: "Iran has the right to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, like any other country signatory of the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty), provided that it proves that its programme is for peaceful uses."

Mubarak's spokesperson underlined: "At the same time, this must be accompanied, simultaneously, by a serious move vis-à-vis Israel's nuclear capacity, in order to avoid accusations of double standards."

These remarks are in continuity with Egypt's 36-year long campaign aiming at the establishment of a "nuclear free Middle East". In 1990, Mubarak revitalized the Egyptian initiative through a new, larger plan to declare the Middle East a "weapons of mass destruction free region", including nuclear weapons.

The Egyptian initiative has drawn support from Arab countries and has been recently reaffirmed by Amre Musa, Secretary General of the League of Arab States, representing all the 22 Arab countries.

Musa, who is member of the "Global Zero" world campaign that works for the elimination of all nuclear weapons from the face of Earth, has repeatedly declared: "It is a must to free the Middle East of nuclear weapons."

The Egyptian offensive relies on the support of Arab countries, 9 of which are located in Africa, a continent that was declared, also in 2009, a nuclear-free zone. Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Sudan, Chad, Djibouti and Somalia are all full members of the League Of Arab States.

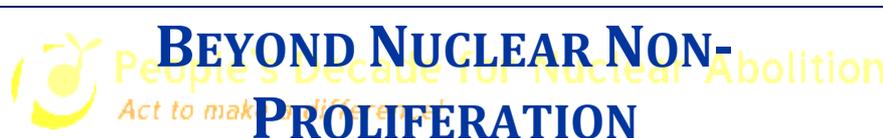
Turkey, a growing regional power with an increasing influence in the Middle East is expected to be among the key supporters to the Egyptian initiative to declare the region a nuclear-free zone.

In spite of massive regional and international support to freeing the Middle East from nuclear and other mass destruction weapons, UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon expressed strong doubts about the chances to achieve that goal.

In fact, on April 12, on the very eve of the Washington Nuclear Security Summit, Ban said that the proposal of freeing the Middle East from nuclear weapons has not achieved any progress until now for various reasons, including the political situation on the Middle East peace process.

"We have achieved (progress) in many areas including in Central Asia, where they have agreed and established a nuclear weapons-free zone," but the Middle East nuclear-free zone remains stalled, he said.

Obviously, Ban did not spell out the key reasons preventing that longstanding objective from being achieved—after all Israel is a full UN member-state. (29.04.2010) ■



Translations | Adaptations

Nukes-Free Future May Depend on Citizen Campaigns

Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, a former U.N. under-secretary-general, offered a piece of advice to anti-nuclear activists campaigning for the abolition of nuclear weapons: "Don't depend on governments - and don't depend on the United Nations."

JAPANESE

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/Japanese/Japanese_Nukes_Free_Future_May_Depend_on_Citizen_Campaigns.pdf

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=110:2010-06-05-15-20-46

How to Overcome the Key Obstacles to Nuclear Disarmament

There are three major issues concerning nuclear weapons, all very difficult: disarmament-nonproliferation, military use, and theological significance. But there is a universal remedy: solve the underlying conflicts. Achieving disarmament through peace is much easier than achieving peace through disarmament, writes Johan Galtung.

JAPANESE

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/Japanese/Japanese_How_to_Overcome_the_Key_Obstacles_to_Nuclear_Disarmament.pdf

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=109:2010-06-04-08-51-41&catid=1:news

Treaty Aimed at Banning Nukes Remains Grounded

The world's anti-war activists, including parliamentarians, civil society groups and diplomats, have succeeded in creating international treaties to ban a wide array of deadly weapons: anti-personnel landmines, blinding laser weapons, cluster munitions, dum-dum bullets and chemical and biological weapons.

ITALIAN <http://www.ipsnotizie.it/nota.php?idnews=1594>

JAPANESE

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/Japanese/Japanese_Treaty_Aimed_at_Banning_Nukes_Remains_Grounded.pdf

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=107:2010-05-29-09-05-32&catid=1:news

TURKISH <http://ipsinternational.org/tr/news.asp?idnews=125>

"I Feel Duty-Bound to Push for a Nuclear-Free World"

Emerging from a U.N. conference addressing the role that the world's mayors can play on nuclear issues, Hiroshima's Mayor Tadatashi Akiba continues to call for a rapid end to nuclear weapons.

He juggles his roles running a city 65 years after nuclear holocaust, and another as president of Mayors for Peace, which counts almost 4,000 cities around the world.

GERMAN http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/German_Interview_mit_Buergermeister_von_Hiroschima.pdf

JAPANESE

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/Japanese/Japanese_I_Feel_Duty_Bound_to_Push_for_a_Nuclear_Free_World.pdf

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=93:2010-05-21-07-13-29&catid=1:news

SPANISH <http://www.ipsnoticias.net/nota.asp?idnews=95349>

Will Mideast Tug-Of-War Wreck Anti-Nuke Meet?

When the last review conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) ended inconclusively - after four long weeks of protracted negotiations - the meeting was described as having accomplished "very little" with no substantive agreement.

ARABIC <http://www.ipsinternational.org/arabic/nota.asp?idnews=1850>

JAPANESE

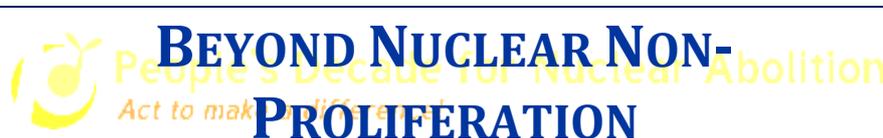
http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/Japanese/Japanese_Will_Mideast_Tug-Of-War_Wreck_Anti-Nuke_Meet.pdf

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=88:2010-05-15-14-50-04&catid=1:news

PORTUGUESE <http://www.mwglobal.org/ipsbrasil.net/nota.php?idnews=5851>

SPANISH <http://www.ipsnoticias.net/nota.asp?idnews=95344>

TURKISH <http://ipsinternational.org/tr/news.asp?idnews=124>



Translations | Adaptations

Israel, Iran Targeted at Nuke Non-Proliferation Meet

A month-long Review Conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) began Monday with a predictable target: Israel.

ARABIC <http://www.ipsinternational.org/arabic/nota.asp?idnews=1848>

JAPANESE

<http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/Japanese/Japanese Israel Iran Targeted at Nuke Non Proliferation Meet.pdf>

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=92:npt&catid=1:news

SPANISH <http://www.ipsnoticias.net/nota.asp?idnews=95344>

NPT Meet Draws Thousands of Anti-Nukes Activists

Japanese women in kimonos carrying signs urging "No More Hiroshima", an 80-year-old grandmother, and 18 mayors from around the world were just some of the almost 15,000 people who marched in New York City Sunday to rally for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

JAPANESE

<http://www.nuclearabolition.net/documents/Japanese/Japanese NPT Meet Draws Thousands of Anti.pdf>

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=94:npt&catid=1:news

Other Translations | Adaptations

Youth Want Nukes Abolished – Push for New Convention

As senior officials from around the world negotiate in New York an agreement aimed at curbing the spread of nuclear weapons, a close look at the attitudes of the youth in six countries offers a critical insight into the need for spreading word about the culture of peace.

ARABIC <http://www.polyglot.indepthnews.net/pdfs/Arabic-Youth Want Nukes Abolished.pdf>

HINDI <http://www.polyglot.indepthnews.net/pdfs/youth want nukes abolished-in Hindi.pdf>

JAPANESE

<http://www.polyglot.indepthnews.net/pdfs/Japanese-Youth Want Nukes Abolished Push for New Convention.pdf>

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=90:2010-05-18-23-07-56&catid=1:news

SPANISH

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=104:mayoria-de-jovenes-contra-armas-nucleares-

TURKISH

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=89:nuekleere-kar-gencler-yeni-bir-anlama-cin-bastryor&catid=1:news

Egypt Escalates 'War on Nuclear Weapons'

Strongly backed by Arab countries and Turkey, Egypt has escalated its intensive diplomatic offensive for freeing the Middle East of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, starting with nuclear arms.

ARABIC <http://www.polyglot.indepthnews.net/pdfs/Egypt Escalates %27War on Nuclear Weapons%27.pdf>

GERMAN

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=83:aegypten-willatomwaffenfreies-nahost&catid=1:news

JAPANESE

<http://www.polyglot.indepthnews.net/pdfs/Japanese Egypt Escalates%20 War on Nuclear Weapons.pdf>

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82:2010-05-11-14-03-00&catid=1:news

TURKISH

<http://www.polyglot.indepthnews.net/pdfs/Turkish Egypt Escalates %27War on Nuclear Weapons%27.pdf>

http://www.nuclearabolition.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=86:msr-nuekleere-kar-sava-yuekseltiyor



Civil Society's Perspective

Australian Local Governments Unite On Calls for A NWC

ICAN Media Release: 26 May 2010

As talks come to a close on nuclear disarmament at the United Nations in New York this week, actions by local governments from around Australia open. At least 17 councils around Australia have passed resolutions calling on Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to support a Nuclear Weapons Convention and reaffirm the Governments' commitment towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mayors for Peace National Convenor, Councillor Helen Relph said, "This action by Local Governments sends a clear message to the Federal Government that there is support for Australia to play a key role internationally in calling for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Local Government is taking the initiative on behalf of communities representing millions of Australians that this is an issue for us."

The resolution passed by local governments supported recommendations made in a government report of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT). Released in September 2009, the JSCOT report reviewed existing and emerging treaties involving Australia on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

While the Rudd Government supported many of the reports recommendations, it has not adopted the recommendations in relation to supporting a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

In September 2009 the Lowy Institute released a poll that concluded 75% of Australians believe that nuclear disarmament should be a top priority for the Australian Government.

Brad Pettitt, Mayor of Fremantle said, "It is unacceptable to hold cities in jeopardy any longer to the threat of nuclear weapons. The community expectation on this issue is very clear. It is time that Australia affirmed its commitment towards a Nuclear Weapons Convention. This is a necessary, achievable and urgent step to take."

This month at the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in New York, the majority of non-nuclear weapons states countries have called for a NWC.

"Support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention is now the strongest it's been since the model convention was first launched 13 years ago," said Cr Relph.

"The community and political expectation for a nuclear weapons free world is building. Australia has a wonderful opportunity to be a leading voice on this issue," concluded Cr Relph. ■

CND Welcomes UK Nuclear Warhead Count But Deplores Continued Failure To Review Trident

Wednesday, 26 May 2010

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament welcomed today's announcement by Foreign Secretary William Hague which put on record for the first time the upper limit of the UK's stockpile of nuclear weapons. Enhanced transparency is seen as boosting the chances of any future stockpile reductions being reciprocated by other states as part of a mutually-reinforcing process. CND also welcomed the review of the circumstances under which the UK might launch a nuclear attack – currently embracing 'first-use' - but strongly deplored the fact that Trident itself will not be reviewed in the forthcoming Strategic Security and Defence Review.

Kate Hudson, Chair of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, said "Publishing this number is a welcome step that can help build trust between states and open the way for disarmament, but Britain's commitment under the NPT is not to be transparent, but to disarm. This figure gives a baseline against which further disarmament can be measured, but it is the reduction and then elimination of the UK and other countries' nuclear weapons that will deliver real security, not simply counting them. >>>



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Civil Society's Perspective

"The figures reveal that Britain has almost half as many warheads again as the previously published number of 'operationally available' - higher than many had estimated. This very large number of 'spares' kept by Britain is similar to the supposed size of the entire nuclear arsenals of India or Pakistan.

"The review of the circumstances in which Britain might launch a nuclear strike is also a necessary step. At a very minimum, Britain must be categorical that it will never again threaten a nuclear attack on a state that doesn't possess nuclear weapons, as happened in the run-up to the Iraq war. Regardless of NATO policies, the UK should also rule out ever being the first to use nuclear weapons, however extreme the circumstances.

"It is however deplorable that the new Government will not be including Trident in the Strategic Security and Defence Review. Specifically excluding the biggest and most expensive defence project from the review is hardly representative of the 'new politics'. It looks as though Cold War dogma is being allowed to over-rule common sense. Alternative non-nuclear security and defence possibilities need to be considered, but despite Liberal Democrat opposition to a 'like for like' replacement, it looks as though no major rethink will occur. With billions being taken out of almost all government departments, one savage cut that would be most welcome would be saving billions by scrapping Trident." ■

Israeli Offer To Sell Nuclear Weapons Condemned, As Whistleblower Vanunu Is Jailed Again

CND | Monday, 24 May 2010

The revelation in today's Guardian that Israel offered to sell nuclear warheads and missiles to apartheid-era South Africa was roundly condemned by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The news comes a day after Mordechai Vanunu, who first exposed Israel's nuclear programme, was jailed for a further 3 months for speaking to foreigners.

Kate Hudson, Chair of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, said "This is yet further proof that despite its policy of ambiguity, Israel is not only an undeclared nuclear power, but an extremely irresponsible one.

"Offering to sell nuclear weapons is almost the worst thing a state possessing WMD can do, short of launching an attack. The clandestine transfer of nuclear technologies remains one of the greatest threats to world peace and underlines why tacit Western support for Israel's strengthening nuclear arsenal is not only hypocritical but hugely counter-productive. Whilst EU members ramp up pressure on Iran, German taxpayers are currently subsidising the production of new submarines for Israel, widely thought to be used to carry nuclear missiles.

"The Israel/South Africa deal may have been in the past, but Israel's current status as one of only four states outside the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty means its activities still remain immune from the rigorous inspections clearly needed. The promise of moves towards the creation of a WMD-free Middle East was integral to the extension of the treaty in 1995 yet leading world powers have so far done little to challenge Israel's status as the holder of the region's only nuclear arsenal. That this news should come out in the very week the NPT review conference, meeting at the UN, will be discussing how to achieve this underlines how this is a pressing and ongoing concern. The new British government must move from the previous rhetorical support for a WMD-free Middle East to a position of practical action, supporting the regional conference currently being proposed at the NPT.

"Israel continues its attempts at deception, rubbishing the South African documents whilst jailing the nuclear whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu yet again. It turns natural justice on its head that the man who exposed the truth of Israel's clandestine nuclear programme has just been returned to jail for 3 months, whilst the man who negotiated the arms transfer with the apartheid regime, Shimon Peres, is now President of Israel and feted by world leaders." ■



Civil Society's Perspective

NATO misses chance to remove US nukes from Europe

CND | Monday, 17 May 2010

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament regretted today's missed chance to remove US nuclear weapons from Europe after a key report on NATO's future failed to recommend their removal [see note 3]. The report by the 'group of experts' led by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is intended to lay the groundwork for NATO's new 'strategic concept', to be agreed later this year.

Several European parliaments have called for the removal of nuclear weapons from their territory, most notably in the unanimous vote in the German Bundestag this March [see note 4]. Earlier this month German minister Werner Hoyer told delegates at the review of the nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty at the UN that "they no longer serve a military purpose and do not create security."

Kate Hudson, Chair of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, said "Removing these dangerous left-overs from the Cold War is the logical next step in Obama's disarmament plan. European governments are echoing the overwhelming demand of public opinion which wants to see them gone, yet NATO is still talking about the need for "widely shared responsibility for deployment" of these awful weapons. They were designed for fighting a 'limited' nuclear war within the European 'theatre of war' - a scenario which is thankfully no longer credible. The fact that the aircraft assigned to carry these bombs can't even reach the borders of NATO illustrates their defensive irrelevance, yet they still represent a tempting target for terrorists and pose an ongoing risk from accidents.

"The 'nuclear weapons sharing' arrangement by which the US locates more than 200 bombs in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and Turkey is a terrible blight on the global non-proliferation regime and opens European nations to legitimate charges of hypocrisy when opposing nuclear developments in other countries. That these 'tactical' nuclear weapons were not included in the recent US/Russian deal mean it is even more vital that European governments take action now to ensure NATO as a whole accepts that these weapons play no role in defending Europe. This must be reflected in a change to NATO's new Strategic Concept when it is finalised at the Lisbon summit in November. There must be an agreement to return these bombs to the US, and for their decommissioning. We urge the new UK government to support this change, continuing the policy which saw US nukes removed from Britain around 2008. ■



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What Others Say

An Important Step toward Nuclear Abolition

By Jamshed Baruah | IDN-InDepth NewsAnalysis

While the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon sounds rather upbeat on the outcome of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference that wrapped up on May 28, official Washington's reaction is rather critical of some important parts of the 28-page final document.

In a statement issued by his spokesman, in which he called the month-long review conference a success, Ban particularly welcomed the agreement on a process leading to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

"A strong spirit of compromise and cooperation has delivered a significant agreement to build a safer and more secure world," it said, adding that the action plan lays a solid foundation to further strengthen the treaty and address the challenges that lie ahead.

"The agreement on concrete actions will advance all three pillars of the treaty – disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy," the statement declared.

The UN Secretary-General "welcomes the firm commitment of the nuclear weapon states to advance their efforts to eliminate all nuclear weapons", the spokesman said. "He also welcomes the strong commitment of the States Parties to prevent nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism."

The United States Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, Ellen Tauscher, agrees on that point.

A statement posted on the State Department's website www.state.gov said: "The Final Document of this Conference . . . reflects our collective commitment to uphold and strengthen this cornerstone of the international nonproliferation regime. It also demonstrates our unified resolve to strengthen the Treaty's three pillars – disarmament, nonproliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy – with the inclusion of recommendations for follow-on actions."

The statement takes note of the fact that the final document also includes an agreement to hold a regional conference in 2012 to discuss issues relevant to a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems.

U.S. DEEPLY REGRET . . .

"We have long-supported such a zone, but we recognize that essential precursors must be in place for its achievement," it adds and assures that the U.S. take seriously their commitments with respect to this regional conference, and will work with the countries in the region to create conditions for a successful conference.

"We note, however, that our ability to do so has been seriously jeopardized because the final document singles out Israel in the Middle East section, a fact that the United States deeply regrets," Tauscher said.

A UN media release stated: The final document of the five-yearly review forum calls on Ban and the co-sponsors of a 1995 resolution proposing a Middle East free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction to convene a conference to be attended by all States in the region.

The document specifically reaffirms "the importance of Israel's accession to the Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) safeguards", it said.

Israel is not a member of the NPT and does not admit to having nuclear weapons. Three other non-members, India, Pakistan and the North Korea, admit openly to their nuclear arsenals. >>>



What Others Say

The U.S. State Department said: "We note further that the final document calls on states to comply fully with the NPT in order to uphold the treaty's integrity and the authority of its safeguards system.

"In that regard, we recall Secretary (Hillary) Clinton's statement at the opening of this Review Conference, noting that 'Iran is the only country in this hall that has been found by the IAEA Board of Governors to be currently in noncompliance with its nuclear safeguards obligations.' We note that Iran has done nothing to enhance the international community's confidence in it by its performance in this Review Conference."

Against the backdrop of the existing tensions between North and South Korea, the U.S. State Department criticized North Korea: "The United States deplores North Korea's repeated defiance of international law and its international obligations and commitments." North Korea should understand, it added, that it will never achieve security or acceptance by the international community without the complete and verified abandonment of its nuclear weapons programs.

North Korea's behaviour, particularly its failure to implement its commitments under the Six Party Talks, to include its return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards at an early date, calls into question the utility of negotiations with North Korea, it said. "The Six Party Talks can be an effective mechanism only if North Korea takes early and irreversible steps to return to compliance with the NPT and its nonproliferation commitments and establishes through action its credibility as a negotiating partner."

The talks have involved People's Republic of China; the Republic of Korea (South Korea); the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea); the United States of America; the Russian Federation; and Japan. Expectedly, the UN media release does not mention Iran. But it urges North Korea to fulfil its commitments under the now-suspended six-party talks which sought to resolve the crisis over the country's nuclear programme.

"The Secretary-General encourages State Parties to translate all of their commitments into concrete action," Ban's spokesman said in the statement, welcoming "the successful outcome" of the conference. "He looks forward to working with the international community toward realizing the common goal of a world without nuclear weapons. As Secretary-General, he will spare no effort to assist the States Parties in implementing their agreement."

The final document, endorsed by 189 member nations of the treaty emerging from negotiations that started on May 3, is the first agreement in a decade on the 40-year-old NPT, which has set the global agenda for preventing countries from developing nuclear weapons.

The document says that the five recognized nuclear-weapon states – Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States – commit to "accelerate concrete progress on the steps leading to nuclear disarmament," take steps to "further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons" and report back on progress by 2014.

"In implementing the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, the nuclear-weapon states commit to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed" through various agreements, the document says.

The NPT conference chairman, Philippine Ambassador Libran Cabactulan said at the closing ceremony that the revised draft declaration was "carefully balanced" to reflect demands by all parties. According to Xinhua, he said adoption of the declaration would allow "all the seeds of hope planted throughout the conference would bear fruit."

Xinhua quoted Egyptian Ambassador to the UN Maged Abdelaziz saying on behalf of the 118-nation Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that the NAM considered the document "an important step forward towards the realization of the goals and objectives" of the treaty. On the issue of the Middle East nuclear-weapon free zone, he said the NAM countries intend to engage constructively with all concerned parties to implement the practical steps adopted in the final document.

"The road ahead is not easy but it's the only way forward," said Abdelaziz. (29.05.2010) ■



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What Others Say

U.S. Clogs Arab Nuclear-Free Middle East Plan

By Fareed Mahdy

IDN-InDepth NewsAnalysis

Arab delegates to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review conference in New York (May 3-28), are confronted with strong U.S. resistance to their demand for a nuclear weapons free Middle East.

The Arab demand, aimed at eliminating all kinds of weapons of mass destruction including biological and chemical, starting with atomic, is based on the resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT review conference.

An Arab diplomatic source told IDN that the U.S. administration is keen on diverting attention from the NPT negotiations towards its conflict with Iran.

At the same time, "Washington insists on subjecting the Arab demand for a nuclear-free region to the pre-condition that Arab countries declare peace with Israel and recognise the state of Israel, while spelling up only ambiguous words about what would the Arabs and in particular the Palestinians would get in exchange", said the retired diplomat who was active in Middle East negotiating process, on condition of anonymity.

In addition, the U.S. has also been blocking the Arab demand to convene a UN-sponsored conference by the year 2012, with the participation of all concerned parties, with a view to implementing the 1995 resolution to declare the Middle East a nuclear-free zone, the source added.

"Instead of a conference under the legitimacy of United Nations, Washington is proposing just an international meeting to discuss the Arab demand, the source explained. "This implies depriving at the very outset discussions and possible agreements of the required legitimacy and a binding nature."

In both cases, "it is more and more evident that the U.S. is determined to block the Arab plan, in a new effort to protect its military and political spearhead – Israel, the only country in the region that possess atomic arsenals."

U.S. UNFAIR PLAY

The U.S. position also puts in evidence its policy of double-standards in virtue of its own strategies, said the source.

"Washington knows very well that the Arab demand to free the Middle East from atomic weapons is the right solution to dismantle any potential intention from Iran to eventually development nuclear arms."

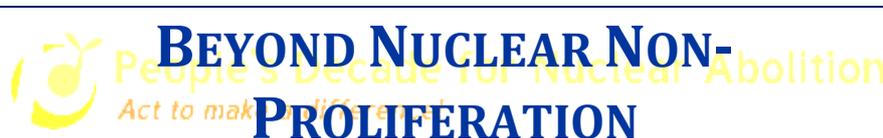
In spite of that, the U.S. administration appears to be much more interested in escalating its conflict with Tehran, said the source.

"This is becoming more and more obvious in view of Washington's tenacious plans to impose tougher sanctions on Iran, in spite of its agreement – sponsored by Turkey and Brazil – to exchange, abroad, its low-enriched uranium with fuel for its medicine plant, and place the process under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency."

PROTECTING ISRAEL

In contrast, Washington is eager to protect Israel, which refuses to reveal its secret nuclear programme; rejects demands to join the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and puts pressure on U.S., European Union (EU) and others, to sanction Iran –which is a NPT signatory – and eventually launch military attacks against it, said the source.

The decision of the U.S. to make approval of the Arab demand of freeing the region from atomic weapons conditional on a prior agreement on a meet Israeli demands "is as unfair as unrealistic," the source added. >>>



What Others Say

“They (U.S.) know that a definite solution is in their and Israeli hands. There would be nothing more to discuss or to negotiate – it would be enough to implement the relevant UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.”

IDN accessed a summary of the official draft that the Arab countries – with strong support from Turkey and the Non-Aligned – have submitted to Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference. The draft, which the Arabs want to included in the NPT review conference final document, says in its key points:

- 1.- That the (2010 NPT Review) Conference reaffirms the relevance of the 1995 resolution in relation to the Middle East and the necessity of fully implementing it;
- 2.- That the Conference recalls that the 1995 resolution is a fundamental part of that Conference and the base upon which the NPT was extended;
- 3- That the Parties (participating countries) reaffirm their unequivocal commitment to implement that resolution (Middle East nuclear free-zone);
- 4- That the Parties, building on the achievements of 2000 NPT Review conference, renew their determination to immediately implement the 1995 resolution;
- 5.- That (the 2010 NPT Review) Conference recalls that Paragraph 4 of the 1995 resolution calls on Middle East countries who has not done so, with no exception, to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, without delay;
- 6.- That all countries put all their nuclear facilities under the comprehensive guarantees agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency;
- 7.- That the Conference takes note that all Middle East countries, with the exception of Israel, have joined the NPT;
- 8.- That the Conference, in view of the above, affirms great concern that Israel has not joined the NPT, yet after 15 year since the 1995 NPT Review conference adopted the related resolution;
- 9.- That the Conference reiterates its call on Israel to immediately join the NPT as a State without nuclear weapons, and to consequently accept an internationally, legally binding commitment not to posses nuclear weapons nor nuclear explosive warheads, as well as accept the comprehensive guarantees agreement and its application on all its nuclear facilities and activities;
- 10.- That the Conference --on the basis of Article 7-- reiterates its affirmation that a nuclear free-zone in the Middle East would strengthen peace and regional and international security;
- 11.- That the Conference invites the UN secretary general to organise as soon as possible and not further to year 2012, a conference under the United Nations auspices, to start negotiations aimed at declaring a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, to be subjected to effective international verification;
- 12.- That the UN-auspiced conference constitutes an effective step toward the implementation of the 1995 resolution in relation to the Middle East, as well as the UN General Assembly resolution number 66/64, adopted on December 2, 2009, related to risks of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East;
- 13.- That all Middle east countries, the nuclear states and all concerned parties participate in the above UN-auspiced conference.

The draft that Arab countries insist be included in the 2010 NPT final document on May 28 also emphasizes the need that the Conference express its unwavering support to achieve the universality of the NPT.

The Arab document also calls on the Conference to affirm that the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East is an urgent need to achieve that universality. (24.05.2010) ■



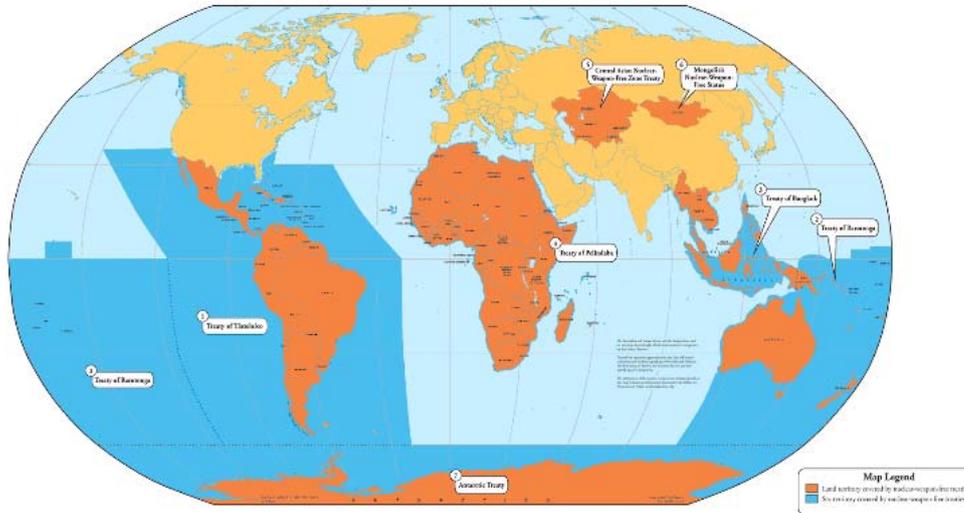
BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition
Act to make the world safe for people

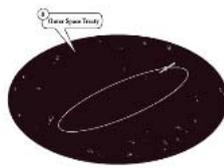


NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE AREAS

Demarcation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, nuclear-weapon-free status and nuclear-weapon-free geographical regions



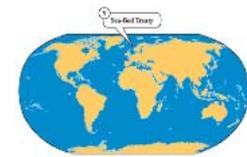
TREATIES ESTABLISHING NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE AREAS



- Nuclear-weapon-free zones**
- 1 The 1967 Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
 - 2 The 1985 South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty
 - 3 The 1995 Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone
 - 4 The 1996 African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
 - 5 The 2000 Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia
- The treaties establishing the nuclear-weapon-free zones, inter alia, ban nuclear weapons within the respective territories of the zones, including the acquisition, possession, placement, testing and use of such weapons.
- Nuclear-weapon-free status**
- 6 In 1992, Mongolia declared its nuclear-weapon-free status, which is internationally recognized and prohibits, inter alia, the acquisition, possession, placement, testing and use of nuclear weapons on its territory.

- Nuclear-weapon-free geographical regions**
- 7 The 1999 Antarctic Treaty, inter alia, prohibits any measures of military nature on the continent of Antarctica, including any testing of nuclear weapons.
 - 8 The 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, inter alia, prohibits placing nuclear weapons in orbit around Earth, on a celestial body or on any object in space, and that nuclear-weapon-free States as well as non-nuclear-weapon States shall not be allowed to do so.
 - 9 The 1971 Treaty on the Prohibition of the Employment of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof, inter alia, prohibits the employment of nuclear weapons on the bottom of the sea-bed and in the subsoil thereof.
- As of 2007, the above-mentioned treaties are at different stages with regard to their signature, ratification and entry into force, as well as with regard to the significance of ratifications of their studied protocols regarding assistance from the nuclear-weapon States.

Map Legend
Land territory covered by nuclear-weapon-free zones
Sea area covered by nuclear-weapon-free zones




2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

3-28 May 2010

NPT Text	UN & Disarmament	Disarmament Issues	Resources
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"A world free of nuclear weapons would be a global public good of the highest order."

*United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
in his address to the East-West Institute, 24 October 2008*

The 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be held in May 2010 at UN Headquarters in New York. The President-elect of the Review Conference is Ambassador Libran N. Cabactulan of the Philippines.

The NPT is a landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament. The NPT represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States.

Conferences to review the operation of the Treaty have been held at five-year intervals since the Treaty went into effect in 1970. Each conference has sought to find agreement on a final declaration that would assess the implementation of the Treaty's provisions and make recommendations on measures to further strengthen it.

The 2010 Review Conference is expected to consider a number of key issues, including: universality of the Treaty; nuclear disarmament, including specific practical measures; nuclear non-proliferation, including the promoting and strengthening of safeguards; measures to advance the peaceful use of nuclear energy, safety and security; regional disarmament and non-proliferation; implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East; measures to address withdrawal from the Treaty; measures to further strengthen the review process; and ways to promote engagement with civil society in strengthening NPT norms and in promoting disarmament education.

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