

Short Paper for ICNND

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The Political Landscape

During the Cold War, there was a real and ever present danger of nuclear war and “Mutually Assured Destruction” (MAD). The dangerous situation led to direct negotiations and agreements between the US and the Soviet Union on arms control and reductions in existing stockpiles.

This positive trend continued well into the 1990s. In 1993 the Convention against Chemical Weapons was concluded – after some 20 years of negotiation; in 1995, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was extended indefinitely; in 1996 the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted; and from a Cold War peak of some 55 000 nuclear warheads, the number has gone down very significantly.

Since the second half of the 1990s, until 2009, however, movement has been in the reverse. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva, the principal international forum for disarmament negotiations, has been plagued by distrust, tactics, and blocked negotiations. For over ten years the Conference has not even been able to adopt a work program. Its latest achievement, the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), has yet to enter into force. At the NPT Review Conference in May 2005, delegates could not even agree on a final document and at the UN Summit later the same year the whole section on disarmament and non-proliferation was taken out of the final document, as member states could not agree on the text.

For a long time, we seem to have been sliding backwards, into a new cold war of distrust and political positioning. Greater importance has been attached to weapons systems and military power. The Bush administration proposed that the US should develop a new standard nuclear weapon (*Reliable Replacement Warhead*) and it remains to be seen what position the Obama administration will take on this matter; China is continuously modernizing its armed forces and has demonstrated its capacity for warfare in space; Russia, noticeably offended by what is has been perceived as arrogance of the West, has sharpened its rhetoric and resumed routine long distance flights with nuclear armed planes; and the UK has decided to keep open the option of continuing the nuclear Trident submarine program. We have also witnessed North Korea dismiss international doubts over the country’s nuclear capabilities by detonating a nuclear device with at least partial success; and Iran continuing its development of a uranium enrichment capability that could in the future be used to produce material for nuclear weapons, destabilizing an already fragile region. The US-India nuclear agreement pushed through despite widespread unease, risks triggering a nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan and China if the latter two states suspect India to increase its stock of nuclear weapons thanks to greater access to uranium fuel.

It is time we wake up to these realities and revive international disarmament efforts. There are however, also a number of positive signs that we may be moving towards a period of opportunity and hope for international disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The number of international initiatives, articles and seminars during the last year is very inspiring. There is also hope that the Obama administration in Washington will enable international negotiations on a number of important issues to move forward. Renewed

American leadership would be immensely important to push the multilateral non-proliferation and arms control agenda forward.

With new leadership in Washington, Moscow and elsewhere – a new generation of international leaders – the window of opportunity could once again open to redefine relationships and reconsider positions. It is time to turn away from Cold War military strategies to collectively meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The major transformation of the international scene during the last decades, not least the development towards increasing global interdependence and the revolutionary technological progress, has fundamentally changed the threats to our security and the means needed for defence against these threats. Nuclear weapons have no meaningful role in the fight against international terrorism or in efforts to stop atrocities in ethnic conflicts. Today, there is no conceivable use for nuclear weapons and their deterrent effect is losing in relevance. In regions where deterrence might provide a real basis for security, other measures such as integration into the fabric of the international community, is likely to be more effective.

The NPT Review Conference in 2010 presents an opportunity for world leaders to revive their commitment to the vision of a world free from nuclear weapons and revert to the fundamental bargain of the treaty. There is a need to restore credibility and confidence in the regime that has seen setback through violations in the shape of proliferation and in the form of lack on nuclear disarmament.

The NPT

The basis of the international non-proliferation regime is strong, but it is under considerable strain. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the fundamental pillar of this regime, designed to rid the world of all nuclear weapons. The treaty committed the non-nuclear weapon states parties not to acquire nuclear weapons, while the then five nuclear weapon states bound themselves to negotiate in good faith toward nuclear disarmament.

Evidently, since there are now four more nuclear weapon states than in 1970 and still tens of thousands of nuclear weapons, the treaty has not yet achieved its aims. Some even warn about a possible collapse of the treaty and a 'cascade' of states developing nuclear weapons. However, in several respects the NPT has been a great success. Only three states, India, Israel and Pakistan, refrained from joining the treaty. Further, it is only these three and – perhaps – North Korea that are today new *de facto* nuclear weapon states. Iraq and Libya tried but were stopped. Iran is under suspicion. The good news is that the world is not milling with would-be nuclear weapon states.

It should also be noted that Byelorussia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, that had nuclear weapons on their territories, transferred them to Russia and joined the NPT. South Africa, too, walked back from a nuclear weapon status. Others, including my own country Sweden, renounced nuclear weapons, and espoused the idea of a world free of such weapons.

But there is a lack of confidence in the NPT today. States that have renounced nuclear weapons find it is not enough that the numbers of nuclear weapons has gone down since the Cold War. They see it as objectionable that the nuclear weapon states parties, that would be expected to draw up timetables for the phasing out of their arsenals, are in fact doing the opposite.

Other key issues

To strengthen the regime further, and bring countries currently outside the NPT into the international non-proliferation framework, no measure could be more important than bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force. The entry into force of the CTBT is important to prevent the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons, and to help reduce reliance on nuclear deterrence in security policies. It would also reset the stage for global nuclear disarmament, signaling to the world that leading states stand firmly behind their commitments to disarmament. The absence of ratification by nine states, out of the 44 enumerated in annex two of the treaty, bar the treaty from entering into force - China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the United States.

Despite the reluctance of some key states to ratify the CTBT, there is a strong political barrier against testing. Since the conclusion of the CTBT in 1996, only India, Pakistan and – last year – North Korea, have conducted tests. The reaction from the international community has been almost unanimous condemnation. The North Korean test was explicitly held by the Security Council to constitute a threat to international peace and security and sanctions were imposed.

The second most urgent issue is to reach agreement on a verified treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for weapons. Combined with a continued reduction in the number of existing nuclear weapons, a verified closing of the tap for more weapon-usable fissile material would contribute to reducing the world inventory of bombs.

Steps could further be taken by all nuclear-weapon states to reduce strategic nuclear arsenals. The United States and Russia, which have the most weapons, should take the lead. All states that have nuclear weapons should commit themselves categorically to a policy of no first use, and the United States and Russia should reciprocally take their nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert. With increasing cooperation between Russia and the European Union, Russian nuclear weapons should be withdrawn from forward deployment to central storage, and all US nuclear weapons should be withdrawn to American territory.

If reliance on nuclear power increases, as is expected, the need for a greater production of low-enriched uranium fuel and for the disposal of spent fuel can be anticipated. This must occur in a manner that does not increase the risks of proliferation and the diversion of nuclear materials. Various proposals are on the table, and the possibilities should be explored for international arrangements to ensure the availability of nuclear fuel for civilian reactors while minimizing the risk of weapon proliferation. The IAEA, where these matters are currently discussed, is the most suitable forum for such exploration.

Regional approaches should be pursued, especially in areas of tension. It would be desirable to obtain commitments from the states in the Middle East (including Iran and Israel) to accept a verified suspension of the production of enriched uranium and plutonium for a prolonged period of time, while obtaining international assurances of the supply of fuel for civilian nuclear power. Similar arrangements are foreseen for the Korean peninsula.

Lastly, international professional inspections, as have been practiced by the United Nations, the IAEA, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), remain an important and effective tool for verification, and should be utilized and developed. Such inspections do not conflict with national means of verification. Rather, these two fact-finding methods can supplement each other. Many states have no national means that they can use and should not have to be dependent upon the intelligence gathering of other states. States that

do operate such intelligence resources may, in one-way-traffic arrangements, provide information to the international verification systems. International reports can also offer governments a chance for a quality check on their national systems and corroboration of their conclusions.

Parliamentary action

One of the main challenges of this generation of political leaders is to deal with the heritage of huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons, and anachronistic security policies shaped during decades of Cold War. We need cool headed analysis of the real challenges ahead, and modern responses to counter the threats.

We do not need a new roadmap or a groundbreaking political formula. The blueprints for progress are on the table. But concerted action is needed and a new international consensus needs to be formed. Alliances across borders and continents – in the form of NGO-networks, International Commissions of Experts, and inter-Parliamentary groups – are indispensable in shaping a common agenda for the 2010 NPT Review Conference and beyond.