

**”Reaching Nuclear Disarmament – from Visions to Reality”
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Nine years ago, in early November 2000, two things coincided for me while working in New York in the First Committee and as temporary New Agenda coordinator: first, the New Agenda resolution, with the thirteen steps, got an overwhelming UN majority and a yes vote from the United States; and second, we did not know for many weeks whether Al Gore or George Bush had won the presidential election days before. The first was a display of United States leadership together with forward-looking middle power countries; the second (which we couldn't know at the time) was the start of eight years of retrogression in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Things are different now. US leadership is back, starting in Prague this April with President Obama's speech. But the spark may have been lit two years earlier in the Wall Street Journal by the four elder statesmen. Let's assess this situation, before discussing the enormously important Review Conference in May next year. But first I want to make my own view of vision and reality clear.

Self-proclaimed “realists” maintain that a nuclear weapons-free world is a visionary dream, impossible in reality. Of their many incorrect arguments to support this, I will counter only the two most common: that nuclear weapons cannot be un-invented, and that a world government is needed before nuclear weapons can be eliminated. Both arguments are beside the point. Of course the scientific knowledge itself cannot be undone, but the weapons can be controlled and prohibited, and after that, breakout capacity can also be controlled – not easy, but possible. And the weapons will not be eliminated by a utopian all-powerful world government, but by key states with responsible leaders, once they recognize, in their self-interest, that continued deterrence, including new threats and new nuclear-armed states, is much riskier for themselves than it is to leave reliance on nuclear weapons behind. This process has already started, first informally by retired leaders in several countries, and recently formally by Presidents Obama, Medvedev and others.

Governments have created instruments in order to control the only invention that can destroy mankind itself instantly. The most important, by far, of these instruments is the NPT. Therefore, one tends to think of the NPT as being in perpetual crisis – which is partly true. Still, the Treaty hangs on, decade after decade, and has refused to disintegrate, as predictions have sometimes said.

Before all Review Conferences, there are pessimistic forecasts. Sometimes they have been met, as in 2005. Sometimes they have not, as in 2000. There are opportunities and challenges every time, and they are taken or missed, met or frustrated. Circumstances differ. We tend to forget what the specific circumstances were. We can take a birds-eye view by looking at the situation about a dozen years ago, between the important reviews in 1995 and 2000.

There were some bright signs globally at that time: the NPT had been extended indefinitely and seemed to hold up fairly well. No nuclear tests had taken place for a while. An entry-into-force of the nuclear test-ban seemed possible. And the fissile material negotiations in Geneva were almost starting. – But soon Indian and Pakistani tests overturned this; the nuclear test-ban treaty was defeated in the United States' senate, and the fissile negotiations drowned in the quagmire in Geneva. It became again clear how unbalanced multilateral negotiations between nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear states are, with the status quo leaning in favour of the NWS, and the burden of proof resting with the NNWS.

Then again the situation changed unexpectedly: the Review in 2000 ended in a consensus agreement, containing the thirteen practical steps towards fulfilling Article VI. This was one of the few occasions in later decades where the nuclear haves and have-nots did not speak in monologues but actually tried to create mutual benefit via a dialogue. The success turned out to be short-lived, but this soon-to-be ten years old agreement is still valid.

What do the monologues say? The NWS regard non-proliferation as the decisive element, while the NNWS view disarmament as the neglected part of the bargain, generally speaking. The NWS' rhetoric does normally not admit this stance, of course, while the NNWS point to the double standards of the NWS.

Things would be clearer if NNWS were speaking in a single voice, but they aren't. Some of them take very principled positions, others more pragmatic. Some are NATO members, or US allies outside NATO; many others non-aligned. Some are in regional conflicts. Some are very big and influential, like Indonesia, Germany, Egypt, Brazil, South Africa; many are small. A few of them might want nuclear weapons. Almost all do not. But most of them are frustrated, even those that do not feel directly threatened by nuclear weapons.

This frustration got its strongest expression so far in 1995, when the indefinite extension of the NPT would not have taken place without specific pledges from the NWS, regarding the road to fulfilling Article VI, and the Middle East. Pledges were given by the nuclear five both on fissile material non-production and a comprehensive test-ban, plus on systematic and progressive efforts towards meeting Article VI. In 2000, again concessions were made, but after

that nothing much has happened to make good on the promises. The first two of them have yielded nothing, literally nothing, whereas progress on the third is debatable. Cuts in numbers have certainly been made, but for most NNWS it doesn't matter much whether the nuclear five have 6000, 2000 or 200 warheads each, as long as the role of nuclear weapons in security policies remains the same, or worse.

On these three parts, some agreements will be necessary next year, making it clearer than today what kind of multilateral process the nuclear five are willing to undertake. If FMCT negotiations are not started, and progress not made on CTBT entry-into-force, this amounts to continued breaking of political pledges made fifteen years ago in a legal document – an unusually important document, because of the very controversial indefinite extension of the treaty.

Therefore, it is not promising that there are active efforts in the US to tie test-ban treaty ratification to commitments to new warheads and production facilities, based on the rationale of maintaining reliable weapons without testing. It is also worrying that the fissile material negotiations may take a narrow approach to a treaty, and that the CD is in danger of being inactive again.

NPT parties have lived with the Middle East issue constantly since 1995. In 2000, the fragile consensus almost broke, on Iraq more than Israel, while in 2005 Egypt, helped along by both the United States and Iran, refused all efforts to reach agreement because of principled Middle East stances, revolving around Israel's nuclear capability. It goes without saying that looming over next year's deliberations will be the development regarding Iran's nuclear programme.

Surprisingly, in this year's PrepCom, some language on the Middle East managed to stay alive. It included ideas like a special coordinator, a subsidiary body and/or a future special conference. Ambitious efforts, like steps towards a NWFZ, are of course very difficult at present, but there are intermediate stages that could be discussed, like the Blix Commission's proposal to freeze proliferation-sensitive fuel-cycle activities in the region. It is very clear, anyhow, that there will be no successful outcome in the NPT review 2010 without agreed language specifically on the Middle East. But it is equally clear that the NPT review conferences will not be the forum where the solution to the enormous problems in the region will be found.

The so-called systematic efforts were reawakened in 2000 and resulted in another important heritage, the thirteen steps. How to treat them next year is a challenge with many unknowns – not only how much the Obama administration's actual positions are changed when it comes down to the detail, but also how much Russia, France and China will try to hold back regarding

new – and old – Article VI-related recommendations, guidelines and decisions. Signs in the PrepCom were not promising, but everything starts anew in May.

A few of the thirteen steps are a bit dated or overtaken by events, quite naturally, but they cannot be rolled back or thrown away. A credible way of renewing and updating them must be found. This will be much up to the NWS, which will be put in a corner if they themselves do not propose reformulations of some of the commitments and pledges, making them relevant for today.

But equally important, and in a sense new since 95 and 2000, is the diminishing role of weapons, an issue that will be crucial. In 2000 this requirement became only a sub-step, guarded by the catch-all formulas of “international stability” and “undiminished security for all”. This time, some clear expression is needed of what the ambitions are of the NWS to downgrade their reliance on nuclear weapons. In the case of the United States and the Obama administration, this will make the forthcoming Nuclear Posture Review a decisive reference point, and that’s why it is so important that the cynical doctrine concepts of counterforce and counter-value are not kept in it, as parts of nuclear doctrine.

Let me make a parenthesis here on the challenge of the negotiating format. An organized and representative structure for the production of an agreement will be needed. In the latest successful NPT review, in 2000, the outcome was determined by a direct negotiation between the nuclear five and the seven-country New Agenda coalition, in the final few nights. This will not happen again, for the simple reason that other countries will not allow themselves to be standing outside locked doors, without any possibility to affect the outcome. In 2000, the nuclear five needed a credible and representative counterpart, and the NAC was the only one there. This is no longer the case.

In 2000, this may even have been a kind of mistake on the part of the NWS. If they had invited all countries that wanted to take part – and there were many – they would have had a less coherent counterpart. In fact, the cohesion and discipline of the NAC was surprising. The seven delegations knew each other’s limits in great detail. This made it possible for them to support each other rather than compete for goods in the eventual outcome. So a real question before May will be whether other countries, outside of NAC, and the seven themselves, will be equally coordinated as ten years ago. The N5 will definitely look for a counterpart, perhaps hoping that it is not as well prepared as in 2000. With a large and uncoordinated counterpart group, the nuclear five will be able to divide and rule, as has happened before.

I will refrain from discussing Iran and North Korea here, because although these issues may create problems in the NPT review, the solutions to them do not lie within NPT negotiations directly.

“From visions to reality” – how can we integrate the vision of a NFWF with the steps towards it? Steps are tedious, necessary but not sufficient – boring but important. Vision is much more inspiring, and not undergoing the same reality test as the steps. But the two are equally important. Without the steps, the vision will not be seen as possible – and without the vision, the steps will not be seen as fair or urgent, as the four statesmen explained so clearly in their WSJ articles.

As I said, we now have what we asked for: US leadership. We asked for it because it’s clear to most of us that only United States’ leadership can create the conditions for starting on the road to zero. And President Obama has made that clear. He even recognized the moral responsibility of the US to act and lead, as the only power to have used a nuclear weapon. This is a great statement, generating hope and promise. The next test of it will come in only a few weeks, when the Nuclear Posture Review will be published in Washington. That review and its successors must recognize the new situation and make a new calculus of the balance between status quo risks and the difficulties of the road to zero.

We must understand that the countering forces to the President’s vision will be strong and very sophisticated, both in the US and in other states. And these forces have inertia and inactivity on their side. In both governments and civil society, therefore, we must sharpen our arguments and our activities.

After the Prague speech and the Security Council Summit, there’s the beginning of a more widespread realization that nuclear weapons create insecurity rather than security and that reliance on them has to be phased out. This must be done through a number of steps, which will be the future building blocks of a NFWF. These blocks have been known for years and proposed by almost every commission, observer and analyst. The first three are: verified deep reductions by US and Russia, including stored weapons, with legally binding instruments, and planning for further cuts; a negotiated fissile material production stop; and getting the test-ban into force. These can be described as consensus steps – agreed but not realized by NPT parties, since fourteen years.

There are a number of other steps that are equally necessary but also not sufficient, and which do not yet meet with consensus. Like the first three, they have been analyzed by the MPI in our briefing papers, and identified as priorities in our Article VI Forums. Examples are: negative security assurances – multilateral regulation of the fuel cycle – de-alerting of launch-ready weapons – no-first use pledges – and improved governance of the NPT itself, as a process

and a treaty. These too, as you know, have been around for decades. They are variations of what has been proposed in UN resolutions, in the thirteen steps, by the Canberra Commission and the Blix Commission, the Global Zero project, the Model Convention, in the Wall Street Journal articles, by the UN Secretary-General one year ago, and by President Obama in Prague.

Why are all these proposals and packages so similar? Because they are the natural first steps for securing confidence and restoring the bargain between nuclear possessors and non-possessors. However, the package outlined by the UN Secretary-General in five points differs somewhat from the others. He went further than governments, holding up the possibility of a strongly verified nuclear weapons convention, or a framework of interlocking instruments. He lifted the debate and at the same time elevated the convention from a slightly utopian idea to a logical instrument for strengthening the security of nations.

I'll return to this in a minute. When we talk in broad strokes like now, things tend to sound easy. But of course they're not. Governments, both nuclear and non-possessors, have difficult analyses and decisions in front of them. One of our aims in the MPI is to point to options for those decisions, especially for influential non-nuclear weapon states. We are doing that just now, in a paper published recently on the web, called "Making Good on the Promises – from the Security Council Summit to the 2010 NPT Review", which I'm bringing in hard copies too. We discuss in it how US-Russia negotiations should facilitate future multilateral negotiations, and why the US CTBT ratification must not be coupled with modernisation of warheads or infrastructure. In particular, we advise middle powers to say clearly that "extended deterrence" can't justify an expansive role of nuclear weapons, or disregard commitments to a diminished role and security assurances. NATO non-nuclear members also have a big task, updating the NATO nuclear doctrine and reconciling it with disarmament goals.

What else can NNWS do? Not only can they do a lot, they must do a lot, and to some extent they have. Before the CTBT, for example, some of them did technical work on verification long before the CD had a negotiating mandate. This was led by Sweden, whereas Norway, today, is working with the UK on verification of nuclear disarmament, and Canada has established the Centre for Treaty Compliance; while other middle powers drive resolutions through the UN's normative processes, which should not be underestimated as a preparatory phase. There are many other possibilities to explore and develop various aspects of a regime for zero, even before the NWS are ready to start full negotiations.

This leads me to **civil society engagement** – to which we will return more thoroughly on Sunday – because one could also speculate about more unconventional processes, new vehicles for civil society to channel energies

into. Could, for example, ideas from the landmine and cluster munitions processes be borrowed and used in nuclear disarmament, developing momentum by preparatory conferences, urging on later government talks? I can myself see arguments against that being realistic for the time being. But perhaps it should not be dismissed without civil society thinking thoroughly about it.

It has been proven since decades back that civil society can play a deeply influential role in nuclear weapons issues. It was confirmed recently in the big NGO conference in Mexico City which made an input to Security Council members before the Summit. The Secretary-General has lent his authority to this approach, as has parliamentarians, legislatures and also governments – for example, Swedish NPT delegations always contain a civil society representative. The organisation I am chairing, the Middle Powers Initiative, is but one example of those diverse roles, in that it is sponsored by and works with eight global NGO:s active in nuclear disarmament and with very public roles, but itself working more behind the scenes with diplomats and governments.

Let me give just one example of NGO's influence and productive work: the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention. Three of MPI's sponsoring organisations have collaborated on the most detailed investigation so far into what's required by a nuclear weapons convention, in "Securing Our Survival", which tackles all the crucial problems: enforcement – the international security system – the problem of breakouts – deterrence – verification – nuclear knowledge and reversibility – and economic aspects.

The tendency is strong among negotiators and diplomats to think of a convention as something that takes away focus from more immediate steps. It's understandable, since even the first steps will require years of negotiations. But the draft convention has a role already today. It jumpstarts analysis, leads directly to the central issues, and helps to focus our thinking about the steps after the packages that governments agree upon. I am deeply grateful to the MPI partners, the International Physicians, the Association of Lawyers, and the Network of Engineers and Scientists, and to Rebecca Johnson who was active in an earlier version, for their enormous work, which will be of permanent value.

Civil society is our "hot line" to the neglected part of the nuclear weapons dilemma: the ethical dimension. Mankind must reach enough moral maturity to rid itself of the self-invented means of destroying itself. The nuclear weapons era must be a parenthesis in the history of mankind. So civil society has a lot to do, and the remaining part of the work starts today.

Thank you.

