

**Speech to the National Consultative Committee on Disarmament
Monday 25th May**

Comments on the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, third session, 4 - 15 May 2009, UN Headquarters, New York

[Slide] *Intro slide*

Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. Firstly, I would like to thank for the opportunity to speak to you about my impressions of the NPT Prep Com 2009 and subsequent outcomes, and also to acknowledge the other speakers. My name is Natasha Barnes and I am currently writing my Masters thesis at the University of Canterbury. I am looking at the role of middle power states in promoting the emerging norm of nuclear disarmament. I was extremely fortunate to receive some funding for my studies, which meant that I could undertake a research trip to my case study states and attend the NPT Prep Com in New York.

I have been studying the NPT and nuclear related issues for 3 years, this was the first time I had attended a conference of this type before. So, I think probably, my comments will reflect this fact.

The Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference was tasked with addressing the procedural issues for next year's Rev Con, including setting the Agenda, and discussing substantive issues if not submitting recommendations to the Rev Con. I thought that I would address the Prep Com both as part of the NGO delegation and as a student observer, drawing on some of the conversations I had with the participants. I am hoping to do slightly more than repeat the summaries of the conference already circulating, and hopefully I can offer a fresh view or a different perspective? The Reaching Critical Will website and in particular the NPT News in Review provides a very comprehensive summary of the conference and side sessions.

To this end, I will cover:

- a. The outcomes of the Prep Com

And looking at the Prep Com in 2 parts

- b. Some of the more progressive state initiatives, and then
- c. The non governmental contribution to the Prep Com
- d. The challenges that have become clear-er
- e. And some areas for discussion and activity.

I will brief over the comments already made by other speakers, as I am weary of the time constraints

Outcomes:

In brief, an agenda was agreed upon on the fourth day, and a consensus document covering many of the procedural issues including finance issues and the chair was agreed on the last afternoon. Consensus could not be reached however on recommendations suggested by the chair which is an issue that I will come back to.

[Slide] *Prague Speech excerpts 1*

I think that the best place of departure, as Joan said, and in terms of an impression of the Prep Com, and the key point, I think, is the moment in which we live and the tangible effect of Barack Obama and the new US administration on the prospects for nuclear disarmament, the most notably reference is of course his 5th of April speech in Prague. A majority of the states referred to ‘Americas commitment to seek the peace and security of a world free of Nuclear weapons.’

[Slide] *Steps from Prague speech*

As I am sure you are all aware, beyond this vision Obama outlined a commitment to some of the steps needing to be taken. I hardly need to tell you that this is a very welcome change in US policy indeed. That was reflected in the opening statements of the states.

[Slide] *The Obama Moment and the ‘Obamajority’: does this constitute a critical mass?*

In fact Mayor Akiba coined a gorgeous catchphrase the ‘Obamajority,’ which is a reference to the majority of states that support disarmament initiatives, coupled with Obama’s support, making an ‘Obamajority.’ Now apparently for Japanese speakers there is little differentiation between the ‘b’ and ‘v’ sounds- so ‘Oba’ can easily become ‘Ova’- majority... Akiba’s suggestion here is that maybe this is the critical mass needed to push the disarmament agenda forward.

The renewed momentum, is not the result of Obama alone, but has been preceded by a number of statements and proposals in support of a nuclear weapons free world by other key players and world leaders. I won’t get into them here, but a substantial number of them are behind me.

There was a real and tangible sense that this time things will be different. Obviously I am referring to the disaster of the 2005 Rev Con. There was talk of the new atmosphere, a renewed commitment, a critical juncture a moment of hope, window of opportunity. The prompt adoption of the Agenda for 2010 is clear example of this new willingness to engage the issues.

As we are well aware of the challenges and problems we face I thought I would focus on the more progressive initiatives suggested by states. These are in general suggested by a group of the usual suspects, who are as a Marianne would call the missionary states...

The New Agenda Coalition

And talking about the usual suspects...

Those in support of the New Agenda Coalition, spoke of the group being reenergised under Swedish leadership- particularly in the last year or so. Which, is also welcome news, as the relationships within the NAC have been strained in the past. The states were quite clear on the limit the scope of the Agenda and seemed keen to keep away from those areas where there is disagreement. The New Agenda countries appeared mindful not to undermine the 2000 outcome and 13 Steps. Partly because even the appearance of a cohesive NAC group, reinforces the 2000 outcome. The NAC papers submitted to the Prep Com did not appear to garner the impressive support they once had.

What is clear is the 13 steps remain central to the debate- and whether they are reaffirmed, recognized and amended, or repackaged, or we have a new list of steps- I don't think it is yet clear. There are many differing opinions about the relevance of the steps, their political feasibility, and the priorities within the steps.

The debate at the moment appears to centre around these 'wonky laundry lists,' as Gareth Evans so nicely put. Whether it be 63 steps, 11, 5 or the 13 steps, many of the steps that need to be taken have been identified and are being discussed by the states, it is building consensus around a core group.

State initiatives:

NATO 7: Belgium, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain and Turkey working paper: essentially a statement of support for a number of initiatives and a balanced approach to the implantation of the NPT and calls for concrete commitments on the objectives. It doesn't really add anything, but it is a statement of support, to other initiatives and proposals. It is evidence of consensus more than anything else.

This consensus included a large number of states calling for the implementation of various steps and initiatives, particularly the CTBT, an FMCT, a fuel cycle. Most states called for the resolution of non compliance issues and the increase of various controls.

The more pro disarmament states called for negative security assurances, no first use/ de alert agreements, an end to NATO nuclear sharing, reductions of arms by the NWS, and the universalisation of the treaty, including the resolution of the Middle Eastern Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. Some, including Costa Rica and Malaysia called for a comprehensive disarmament framework.

Some states, like Canada and the NAC entered constructive proposals centering round stronger reporting mechanisms, strengthened institutional support, including regular state meetings, standing secretariat, subsidiary bodies and ad hoc committees and more stringent and universal safeguards. The 7NI was particularly impressive with its verifiable disarmament work. These progressive proposals, unfortunately meet with little support, as states continued to prefer political posturing to achieving real progress.

What needs to happen: action plan for 2010-2015

This Prep Com, whilst being a moment for hope, is however a moment for caution as well. We must not forget that this is a critical juncture- and whilst the vision of nuclear weapons free world is a welcome turnaround, how we get there requires much more than simply 'yes we can.'

[Slide] *not in my life time*

Particularly in light of Obama and Brown's statements. Now more than ever it is important to remember that this is not a time of complacency, as the divisions within the NPT still run very deep. And, not all states have responded to this new mood (Iran, North Korea).

The US challenge:

History teaches us that the US domestic political situation is not something to be underestimated. It brought down the league of Nations, and so the senate ratification is critical to the very first step towards a NWFV.

I spoke with a member of the US state department, who acknowledged the US delegation to the earlier Commission on Disarmament was unprepared. And that the Head of the US delegation to this Pre Com was in a difficult position, as her boss, and in fact the head of the state departments nomination had not been passed by Senate. I understand however that the US delegation did a good job, and it is both interesting and motivating to know that the new Administration is committed to outreach with the NGO community, the member of the state department that I spoke to attended a few of the NGO events, and consulted with many members of the NGO community. So whilst we may not have concrete policies from the US as yet, and given the huge turn around for the diplomats from the direction of the last decade, there is definitely cause for optimism.

This particular brand of caution and optimism was reflected in the debate over the chairs recommendations. These recommendations were I think very ambitious, particularly in the area of disarmament calling for an investigation into the ways and means to commence negotiations, in accordance with Article VI on a convention or framework of agreements to achieve global nuclear disarmament... Unfortunately, the draft was revised and many aspects were diluted on the aim of achieving consensus, which was never reached. Many states thought the language was too weak, others still felt it was too strong. Many but not all states recognised that the recommendations were not binding and did not prejudice the outcome of the RevCon, and would be more a demonstration of commitment than anything else. I think that the Chair was concerned that it was best not to ruin the spirit of cooperation.

A consensus document outlining recommendations would have been a first for a Prep Com, and a considerable achievement. However on the more positive side, it was felt by many that a document for this Prep Com will probably not make a big difference one way or the other, it

goes beyond the procedural purpose of the Prep Com but would only be an indication of what is to happen next year. A consensus document that is more of a 'lower common denominator' would draw expectations down and leave everybody feeling a little disappointed. It may in effect lock people into discussions that don't address the concerns.

No outcome suggests that whilst states are prepared to discuss the issues consensus on many of the issues is still a very long way off. If anything it draws attention to the deep divisions within the Treaty regime. There is still much work to be done for next year to reach agreement on many of the issues.

NGO contributions and initiatives:

I thought I would briefly go over the key and interesting points raised by the NO's in the side sessions. There were a number of brilliant side sessions run by the various NGO's. these included:

Middle Powers Initiative activity

- Celebrity sessions: panels included Michael Douglas and Christie Brinkley
- Towards a Nuclear Weapons Free World: Indian perspectives on Nuclear disarmament book launch

Peace Depot, Japan

- Discussion of the South East Asian NWFZ- Peace Depot draft treaty
- Comments made by Alyn Ware concerning the about high bar of admission, preventing Japanese and US governments from accepting provisions. This was regarding extended deterrence. Alyn Ware suggested to learn from other NWFZ treaty experiences (Rarotonga treaty and Australian extended deterrence)

ICCND (Japan and Australia)

- Comments made by Patricia Lewis, advisor to the Commission. She suggested we need to take the good ideas from the Commission, and run with those. This is despite some aspects which may not appeal to all including provisions for nuclear energy. An attempt to write a report by committee will always be fraught with differing opinions, she stated other parts of the Commission's recommendations should be undermined by this.

VERTIC (Norway and UK)

- VERTIC is assisting the Norwegian and UK governments on an initiative seeking verifiable nuclear disarmament. This initiative deals with the technical issues to create a verification solution to identify a radiological source that is robust, simple and cheap. The objective is to aid the creation of an international climate supportive of further reductions and eventually a nuclear weapons-free world. Whilst the technical and political issues surrounding disarmament may take some time to resolve- the developers of this project feel that it is possible to take steps in this direction now and they are aiming to be as

transparent as possible. This initiative is unique in that it involves verification of disarmament by a NNWS.

IRENA: International Renewable Energy Agency

- Renewable energy solutions that do not undermine human security and the environment

The environmental and medical consequences of nuclear war: IPPNW/ ICAN

- Comments that NWFZ commitments are rendered irrelevant given the global scope of even a limited nuclear war- suggest problem for all.
- Panel used latest data and technology from climate change research to demonstrate nuclear darkness, and climatic impact, resulting in an increased awareness of effects of nuclear war

Disarmament and Human Security: hosted by Soka Gakkai

- Disarmament must be linked to human security, as this is the key to gaining wider public and government support. An appeal to human security, framing disarmament as part of a wider value system of human security, a human first approach, will encourage a renewed pragmatism, that keeps in mind the necessary interconnectedness of progress on disarmament, climate change and environmental protection, sustainable development (millennium development goals), and financial security.
- Question: Why resurgence of conversation on disarmament- what has driven the momentum- this is key for understanding new climate of hope

Regarding the NWC:

- Statements of support from the UN SG, the Middle Powers Initiative, Douglas Roche, NGO Community.
- Within state community: statements of support by Costa and Malaysia

The Model NWC negotiations student simulation:

- 30 university students from the University of Darmstadt, Germany simulated negotiations on the NWC and the implementation of Article VI. This was a continuation of a simulation that began at the 2008 Prep Com. This was intended to show the feasibility of the negotiations, and maybe address some potential issues in the negotiating process. The simulation ended up focusing around time allowances for phases, and extensions. It was particularly interesting to meet a member of the (real) Russian delegation observe the negotiations for a while. Its served a good purpose in raising the profile of the NWC. I think that this is a really great format- particularly for including young people in the process- and for highlighting the possibilities and NGO commitment to the NWC. There was of course much room for improvement- better facilities, greater visibility, more in depth knowledge and perhaps more engagement by the students.

I would suggest this is definitely something to explore.

For the future: need to address the use of nuclear weapons

Comments From:

Patricia Lewis

- Use needs to be bought back as the central focus. She advocates a flexible approach, suggesting many initiatives may be able to be started right now, perhaps choosing a select part to start with. A global ban will need to at least start outside the UN and the traditional forums as the CD will be held up for some time with the FMCT. Regarding the problem of critical states being outside the treaty, She suggested both it would lower the bar to include them earlier, and would adversely affect norms of compliance. Regarding universality as a reason for not beginning negotiations, whilst an issue, NPT is an example of this approach anyway with the 2 NWS only signing up in 1992, this does not affect the core strength of the NPT now.

Gareth Evans

- Suggests a NWC is premature, but maybe a short treaty or statement on the illegality of the use as a step towards creating momentum.

What needs to happen: 2009 to 2010 plus.

1. Need an action plan
2. Address the problem of 'double think': an Orwellian Term coined by Patricia Lewis- a reference to the cognitive dissonance displayed by many nuclear supporting states and their conflicting and contradictory policies
3. Need to stop preaching to the converted: diplomats only talking to diplomats, NGO's only talking to NGO's, academics only talking to academics- not enough talk between stakeholders. Not only this but there is clearly not enough communication between government departments.
4. Greater attention to the issues: more public attention, diplomatic and political attention
5. Need to address conventional weapon superiority
6. Need to address security post nuclear weapons- North East Asia, Middle Eastern regional security, global collective security without nuclear weapons
7. Need to create irresistible political situation and enabling environment, Disarmament as is issue of political will

Disarmament education is key for outreach to problem areas Finally as a quick aside there was a documentary shown on the first night 'The Strangest Dream.' It is the story of Joseph Rotblat and the efforts of the Pugwash Conferences which he founded to halt nuclear proliferation. Rotblat worked on the Manhattan Project, and left opnly to be branded a spy and a traitor. With

Bertrand Russell he went on to help create the modern peace movement and eventually won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1955.

Rotblat signed the Russell- Einstein manifesto, so it seems fitting that I leave you with this nice quote from our dear friend Albert and a photo I took of some very appropriate street art in New York.

‘The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe. The solution to the problem lies in the heart of mankind’

Thank you.

Natasha Barnes

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