

**The Role of the United States
in Nuclear Disarmament**

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I approach the subject of the United States' performance in the nuclear disarmament debate with great respect for the country and a dedication to the facts of nuclear weapons.

For eight years I lived in this great country and, in fact, three of my children were born here. I have had the opportunity in my professional life of travelling through or visiting all 50 states, and I understand well the energy and creativity of the American people in the arts and sciences, commerce, and outreach to the world. The aspirations for freedom and liberty have been a beacon for the world.

There are many wonderful things I could say about the United States. But regrettably that is not my task tonight. I have been asked to speak on the United States and nuclear weapons. Here it is not easy to be complimentary.

Twenty years ago, I was appointed Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament, a job which brought me into close contact with my diplomatic counterparts in many countries, including, of course, a lengthy list of American officials. At various times I chaired the meetings of all Western ambassadors and the U.N. Disarmament Committee. I have written extensively on the 1995 indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the general illegality of nuclear weapons, and the 2000 Review of the NPT, in which all States gave an "unequivocal undertaking"

towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons through a program of 13 Practical Steps. I have attended all three meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review of the NPT, the last one concluding six days ago.

It is clear to me that the Non-Proliferation Treaty, that is to say the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, is in crisis. To examine how the crisis came about and what to do about it, we must look at the role of the U.S. While the other declared Nuclear Weapons States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China are all also in contravention of their responsibilities to the NPT, it is the U.S. that sets the pace. The U.S. is the leading military power in the world by far, the lynchpin of NATO, and the dominant voice at the United Nations. With 31 members, the U.S. delegation was the largest at the recent NPT PrepComm. U.S. views deeply affect the policies of all Western nations and Russia.

The U.S. astounded many delegations at the PrepComm by disowning its own participation in the 2000 consensus that produced the “unequivocal undertaking.” It refused to allow the 2000 Review to be used as a reference point for the 2005 Review. The result was turmoil and a collapse of the PrepComm.

The Treaty can certainly survive one bad meeting, but that is not the point. What delegates from around the world are deeply concerned about is the U.S. attempt to change the rules of the game. At least before, there was a recognition that the NPT was obtained in 1970 through a bargain, with the Nuclear Weapons

States agreeing to negotiate the elimination of their nuclear weapons in return for the non-nuclear states shunning the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Adherence to that bargain enabled the indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995 and the 13 Practical Steps of 2000. Now the U.S. is rejecting the commitments of 2000 and premising its aggressive diplomacy on the assertion that the problem of the NPT lies not in the actions of the Nuclear Weapons States but in the lack of compliance by states such as North Korea and Iran.

The whole international community, nuclear and non-nuclear alike, is concerned about proliferation, but the new attempt by the Nuclear Weapon States to gloss over the discriminatory aspects of the NPT, which are now becoming permanent, has caused the patience of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement to snap. They see a two-class world of nuclear haves and have-nots becoming a permanent feature of the global landscape. In such chaos, the NPT is eroding and the prospect of multiple nuclear weapons states, a fear that caused nations to produce the NPT in the first place, is looming once more.

That is the real point of the NPT crisis today. The crisis has been building through the two previous PrepComms, in 2002 and 2003, but a weak façade of harmony was maintained. Now the fuse has blown.

Brazil bluntly warned:

“The fulfillment of the 13 Steps on nuclear disarmament agreed during the 2000 Review Conference have been significantly – one could even say systematically – challenged by action and omission, and various reservations and selective interpretation by Nuclear Weapon States. Disregard for the provisions of Article VI may ultimately affect the nature of the fundamental bargain on which the Treaty’s legitimacy rests.”

But the U.S. vigorously defended its policies, giving no ground to its critics. From the opening speech by John R. Bolton, Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, U.S. representatives insisted that attention not be diverted from the violations of the NPT by would-be nuclear powers “by focusing on Article VI issues that do not exist.” In fact, Assistant Secretary of State Stephen G. Rademaker stated, “there can be no doubt that the United States is in full compliance with its Article VI obligations.” Over the past 15 years, he said, the U.S. has:

- Reduced over 10,000 deployed strategic warheads to less than 6,000 by December 5, 2001 as required by the START Treaty.

- Eliminated nearly 90 percent of U.S. non-strategic nuclear weapons and reduced the number of types of nuclear systems in Europe from nine in 1991 to just one today.
- Dismantled more than 13,000 nuclear weapons since 1988.
- Not produced highly enriched uranium for nuclear weapons since 1964 and halted the production of plutonium for nuclear weapons in 1988.
- Not conducted a nuclear explosive test since 1992.
- Removed more than 200 tons of fissile material from the military stockpile, enough material for at least 8,000 nuclear weapons.

These reductions notwithstanding, the U.S. has made clear that nuclear weapons will be maintained to meet “the changing circumstances” in today’s security environment. The Administration is moving ahead with plans to try to convince Congress to approve funding for the development of a new Low-Yield Warhead.

A March 2004 Report to Congress reveals that the U.S. is employing a double standard concerning compliance with the NPT. Whereas the U.S. wants to

move forward into a new generation of nuclear weaponry, it adamantly rejects the attempt of any other state to acquire any sort of nuclear weapon. The U.S. clearly wants to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons; of that there can be no doubt. But it does not want to be questioned on what it regards as its right to maintain enormous stocks (despite numerical reductions) and to keep nuclear weapons as a cornerstone of its military doctrine.

The U.S. is widely criticized around the world for this double standard. For example, Brazil said at the PrepComm: “One cannot worship at the altar of nuclear weapons and raise heresy charges against those who want to join the sect.” The New Agenda protested imbalanced statements assailing proliferation while remaining mute on the equal responsibility for disarmament by the nuclear powers. South Africa said: “One cannot undermine one part of an agreement and hope that other parts will continue to have the same force, or that others will not in turn attempt to follow the same practice.” New Zealand scorned the present diminishment of the Treaty as a whole and urged the U.S. to at least review its opposition to a nuclear test ban treaty.

Criticism of U.S. nuclear weapons policies also emanates from important observers within the U.S. A briefing for PrepComm delegates and NGOs was convened by the Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers), which stated that, as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, many in

Congress “are now so consumed by fear of terrorism that they support policies that would have been unfathomable five years ago.” For example, policies of preemptive nuclear strikes, new “usable” nuclear weapons, and resumption of nuclear testing are now openly discussed in Washington. “The United States finds itself at a crossroads; it stands at the point between re-nuclearization and disarmament.” Daryl Kimball, Executive Director of the Arms Control Association, told the briefing that the crisis of the NPT can be attributed to the expanding role of nuclear weapons in U.S. military policy. He said that if Congress does not rein in the Administration, present trend lines will lead to testing of new weapons and re-deployment of 2,400 strategic nuclear weapons after the Moscow Treaty expires in 2012. It was “troubling” that the U.S. contemplated the use of a nuclear weapon in response to a biological or chemical attack.

A detailed critique of the stand taken by the U.S. at the PrepComm was published in *News in Review*, a daily record of the PrepComm published by “Reaching Critical Will,” of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. Written by Andrew Lichterman and Jacqueline Cabasso of the Western States Legal Foundation, the document gave several examples to show that the U.S. is not in compliance with the NPT: more than 2,000 U.S. strategic nuclear warheads remain on hair-trigger alert, and U.S. Trident submarines continue to

patrol the seas at Cold War levels, ready to fire hundreds of the most destructive and precise weapons ever conceived on 15 minutes' notice. Answering the U.S. claim that it is not developing any new nuclear weapons, the document said:

“Fact: The 2005 budget provides for upgrades to every nuclear weapon in the U.S. stockpile, requests \$336 million to manufacture and certify new plutonium pits, the first stage in a nuclear weapon, requests \$28 million for 2005 and \$485 million over five years to design a “Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator,” and requests \$30 million for Enhanced Test Readiness to reduce the time needed to prepare for and conduct a full-scale underground nuclear test to 18 months.”

There is no way to reconcile this resurgence of nuclear weapons development (Germany called it a nuclear “renaissance”) with disarmament. Even as it says it is adhering to the NPT, the U.S. is flouting it. I have come to the conclusion that only a change in attitude by the U.S. Administration can now save the Treaty.

Many delegations indicated privately that they are waiting to see the future direction of U.S. policy inasmuch as a Presidential election will occur before the 2005 Review. The positions of John Kerry, the presumptive Democratic nominee are being examined. An analysis of his comments shows that Kerry is opposed to

the Bush Administration's plans to develop new nuclear weapons, which Kerry believes "will make America less secure by setting back our country's longstanding efforts to lead an international non-proliferation regime. It could set off a dangerous new nuclear arms race, while seriously undermining our ability to work with the international community to address nuclear proliferation threats in places like North Korea and Iran." Instead, Kerry believes the United States should work for the creation of "a new international accord on nuclear proliferation to make the world itself safer for human survival."

In terms of concrete measures to advance non-proliferation and disarmament, Kerry supports the CTBT (having opposed Bush's decision to withdraw), and advocates greater emphasis on securing nuclear stockpiles around the world by extending ongoing American efforts in the former Soviet Union to other countries to ensure fissile materials do not fall into the hands of terrorists. Kerry recognizes the importance of international cooperation in achieving results in non-proliferation, and promotes a multilateral approach, pointing to the shared global interest in preventing terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons. This approach should extend to U.S. Missile Defence programs, which Kerry supports, but believes should be developed in accordance with American treaty obligations, ensuring that American foreign relations are not damaged in the process.

The election of the U.S. President is not my business. I must direct my efforts and the policies of the Middle Powers Initiative toward dealing with the governments that are in place around the world. Thus the MPI advocates the formation of a new coalition of States determined to save the NPT in 2005. A working partnership of important non-nuclear States must occupy the centre of the nuclear weapons debate and exert its strength in 2005. The beginning of such a partnership exists in the New Agenda Coalition, which was largely responsible for the success of the 2000 Review Conference. The leading non-nuclear States of NATO, such as Canada, Germany, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy, must now work closely with the New Agenda to lead the international community toward a positive, if still modest, success in 2005.

They must stop being cowed by the all-powerful NWS; they must speak up forcefully, in the name of humanity, to the United States, a country that has done much good for the world in other contexts but whose nuclear weapons doctrine is a threat to civilizations everywhere.

Speaking up takes courage and leadership. The middle power States, which by and large stayed out of the U.S.-led Iraq war, are not lacking in either. They have to make prudential judgments on when to give voice to their concerns.

It is paradoxical that just when the voice of the public is most needed to move governments on nuclear disarmament, it is most difficult to awaken the

public. The public is by no means uncaring about war; they just do not see the connection between retention of nuclear weapons and the likelihood of mass destruction ahead.

An awakening of the public is, of course, a profound concern of the NGOs, stalwart in the dedication they showed to the issue, many traveling to the PrepComm at their own expense and continually deprived of funding by foundations which have turned their attention elsewhere.

An awakening of the public is precisely the strategy of Mayor Akiba of Hiroshima in his Emergency Campaign for Mayors For Peace. If the people in the municipalities around the world make their voices heard, the national politicians and diplomats will be quick to get the message.

The recent comments by Mikhail Gorbachev are especially practical in this instance. Gorbachev says, referring to the panoply of human security issues besetting the world, that he is convinced the citizens of the world need a reformulated “glasnost” to invigorate, inform and inspire them to put the staggering resources of our planet and our knowledge to use for the benefit of all.

The empowerment of peoples is needed to address the dominance of short-term interests and lack of transparency where the planet’s fate is being decided by what to do about nuclear weapons.

Gorbachev says he has faith in humankind. “It is this faith that has allowed me to remain an active optimist.”