

Taking stock after 2005: Understanding the challenges and finding common ground-perspectives of the Monterey Non-proliferation Strategy Group.

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*The salvation of
mankind lies only in making
everything the concern of all*

Alexander Solzhenitsyn
Nobel Lecture 1970

I. Introduction

The 2005 NPT Review Conference - failure or missed opportunity? The need for a forward looking approach

II. Does the outcome of the 2005 Review Conference testify to an absence of common ground?

- the “undisputed NPT” (common interest in maintaining the NPT);
- the NPT as an / the essential foundation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime (indication of differences regarding the role/significance of the NPT?);
- lack of a joint vision regarding the NPT, the role of Review Conferences as well as the outcome of the 2005 Conference;
- differences in the relative emphasis to be given to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, peaceful use;
- disagreements regarding the challenges facing the Treaty regime;
- sense of frustration in the face of a perceived lack of adherence to existing commitments / progress in the implementation of the Treaty and subsequent agreements/understandings;

- obliviousness to the risks of erosion that the NPT faces (“procedural games” as a sign of carelessness?).

III. What does it take to strengthen / re-establish common ground?

- acknowledgement that the NPT is in a state of crisis and that it faces the risk of erosion (with the risk being essentially two-fold: violations of the non-proliferation obligation; perception of a “renaissance” of nuclear weapons);
- acknowledgement that the maintenance of the integrity and authority of the NPT can only be achieved through joint efforts and the re-establishment of the credibility of the NPT (respect for the fundamental bargain underlying the Treaty; i.e. the firm relationship that the Treaty establishes between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; the NPT does not provide a licence to the NWS to maintain their nuclear weapons indefinitely, nor does the Treaty allow for the build-up of a nuclear weapons option under cover of civil nuclear programmes);
- acknowledgement that the NPT provides for the indispensable normative basis for all nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts;
- acknowledgement of the interdependence between non-proliferation and disarmament: proliferation threats reduce the prospect for progress on disarmament; lack of a disarmament momentum liable to boost proliferation risks;
- development of a joint vision (commitment to the ultimate goal of a nuclear weapon free world; acceptance of realistic goals and the principle of reciprocity; agreement on the role and purpose of review conferences and their outcome; adoption of a balanced approach reflecting the fundamental bargains underpinning the NPT);
- setting the right signals for the forthcoming review cycle through
 - rapid agreement on procedural arrangements (on the basis of the template provided by the previous review cycle); organizational aspects of the review process could be reviewed, however, on the understanding that changes would only take effect for the next review cycle,
 - unambiguous acceptance of the results of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences as benchmarks for the forthcoming review process (no negation of past achievements; readiness to discuss those against the backdrop of developments since then)
 - move from ideological posturing to openness and constructive engagement (accepting that security perceptions and interests might differ),
 - a P5 statement in particular on nuclear disarmament, security assurances and universality.

IV. Elements of a double track approach

With a view to achieving a successful outcome of the forthcoming review process, a comprehensive but at the same time realistic double track approach should be adopted. Such an approach should reflect the fundamental bargain underpinning the NPT and thus be geared towards, on the one hand, strengthening the non-proliferation commitment of the NPT and, on the other hand, instilling a new momentum in the process of nuclear disarmament.

The non-proliferation track should include the following tasks and objectives:

- a clear commitment to compliance and determined support for the diplomatic efforts aimed at solving the pressing regional proliferation risks, in particular Iran and North Korea;
- improvement of verification, in particular through making the IAEA Additional Protocol the new verification standard of the NPT;
- effective prevention of any misuse of civilian nuclear programmes for military ends, in particular through a solution to the risks posed by the nuclear fuel cycle (support for a multilateral solution to be elaborated in the IAEA, which should not create dividing lines among NPT parties);
- development of a joint understanding on “withdrawal”;
- enhancing the security of nuclear weapons and fissile materials with a view to preventing terrorists from gaining access to them;
- strengthening the role of the UN Security Council as the final arbiter on the consequences of non-compliance.

The second track regarding nuclear disarmament should in particular include endeavours to

- overcome the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament and restart substantial work on various items on its agenda (including negotiations on an FMCT; a stepping stone towards the commencement of FMCT negotiations could consist of a political declaration of all NWS, de facto NWS and important NNWS, which have the capacity to produce weapons usable materials; such a declaration would include a fissile material cut-off commitment and a commitment to enter into negotiations on a treaty);
- provide an impetus for the continuation of the dialogue between Russia and the United States on strategic nuclear weapons and a follow-up to the START I and SORT treaties;

- promote and establish an incremental arms control approach to non-strategic nuclear weapons;
- promote the early entry into force of the CTBT and reaffirm the maintenance of a complete moratorium of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions, pending the achievement of the entry into force of the CTBT (realistically interim solutions should be explored like a commitment by all NPT partners to sign the CTBT and a formal endorsement of the CTBTO verification system).
- recommit to existing security assurances and explore ways for formalizing them; pursue determined efforts to bringing all existing NWFZ into force.