

Multilateral negotiations: the role of non-nuclear weapon states
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I'll start by saying that we are living in exciting times for nuclear disarmament, the best times in nine and a half years, but – time may be very scarce for non-nuclear weapon states to influence the international agenda. The countering forces will be strong and loud. We must use the present window of opportunity to advance our agenda and use the dramatic changes, the almost revolutionary positive changes in the last half year to our advantage.

However, our starting point is, unfortunately, that multilateral negotiations between nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear states are unbalanced and unequal. The status quo is leaning in favour of the NWS, and the burden of proof always seems to be resting on the have-nots, the NNWS.

Historically, and not least in the first eight years of this century, nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states have most often used monologues, not dialogue. They have talked past one another, except at some few occasions when common efforts have yielded results (the latest being the NPT review in 2000).

Generally speaking, the two views, of the haves and have-nots respectively, are still starkly different, in that NWS regard non-proliferation as the decisive element, while NNWS believe that disarmament is the neglected part of the bargain. The NWS' rhetoric would not admit their stance, of course, but is paying lip service to disarmament. At the same time, NNWS point to the double standards of the NWS.

We should remember that among NNWS, there are significant differences. Some take very principled and ideological stances, others more pragmatic and practical. Some are NATO members, or US allies outside NATO. Some have the protection of the US nuclear umbrella; many are non-aligned members; some are in regional conflicts. Some are very big, like Indonesia, Germany, Egypt, Brazil, South Africa and others, some are small like Morocco, Ireland, Chile, Botswana, Switzerland and Sweden.

There is no shortage of voices from individual NNWS – but there is a shortage of concerted action, by clusters or coalitions of NNWS, which can articulate those countries' demands, and which can pressure the NWS. This was what my predecessor Douglas Roche tried to help create about a dozen years ago, when he founded the MPI, and what then happened independently in the form of the New Agenda Coalition. That group of countries became, I think is fair to say, the most successful example that far, and even today the most successful so far, of a common effort by NNWS in multilateral negotiations, culminating in the direct negotiations between the coalition

and the N5 during four days and nights in the NPT Review Conference in 2000, resulting primarily in the thirteen steps, negotiated to be an action plan towards fulfilment of Article VI.

Today, the New Agenda Coalition can not, for several reasons, fulfil the same role. It could not rally the same support in the 2005 conference as in 2000, because of internal differences and divided loyalties. And in next year's review conference other influential non-nuclear countries, many of them active in the MPI, will not allow themselves to be left standing on the sidelines. The question is whether there are other countries, outside of the NAC, determined enough to take up a coordinating role when the N5 come looking for a negotiating counterpart, which they will do, if not earlier, in the RC next year.

What I say does not mean that the New Agenda countries will step back or be passive. They will continue to be active – what I'm saying is that they as a coalition can not be as dramatically influential as in 2000.

So far I have talked about process and politics. But what about substance in multilateral nuclear weapons negotiations?

Many prescriptions exist, for our governments to be inspired by and to borrow from, when it comes to exactly what to demand from the NWS, other than generalities. Many of us here have personally taken part in formulating such agreements, recommendations and ideas, and some of them have been decided upon by governments, but not realized. Just a few examples are: the thirteen steps; the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention; the 30 nuclear recommendations from the so-called Blix Commission; and probably similar demands to be expected from the Japanese/Australian Commission, by the Global Zero project, and, perhaps, by the governments themselves in the NPT Review Conference in May.

The most authoritative voice has been the UN Secretary-General, when one year ago he called for the urgent pursuit of what is a “global public good of the highest order”. And, interestingly, he went further than us diplomats and politicians had done in most of the packages and commission proposals, when he proposed that states should either negotiate a framework of interlocking treaties and instruments, or consider negotiating a strongly verified nuclear weapons convention. He lifted the debate, and paved the way for the NNWS.

The MPI, as a vehicle rather than an actor, has also contributed to this growing number of roadmaps. The first four Article VI forums generated a condensed set of measures that were deemed to be especially urgent, and which do not diminish the security of any state. They have been described and analysed in several MPI briefing papers by now, and they are, as you may know, verified force reductions; de-alerting of nuclear

forces; start of the FMCT negotiation; entry-into-force of the CTBT; improved security assurances; fuel cycle control, and improved handling of, and structure for, NPT matters.

You immediately realize that these proposals are partly the same as have been around for years or decades now; four of them, to be sure, are the same as in the thirteen steps. That doesn't mean that they are less valid, or old and tired, in fact they are more valid than ever. But they haven't so far been accompanied by the political environment necessary for them to be realized.

Now that external circumstances are much improved, especially after President Obama's Prague speech, NNWS must use the opportunity and step up the political pressure, articulate expectations and orchestrate their demands in a better way. If this doesn't happen, the NWS will continue to be able to divide and rule, to cash in agreements and concessions from non-nuclear states, while at the same time sitting on their monopoly. And this regardless of how genuine President Obama's will is.

In NPT 2005, for example, there existed good proposals on paper but no strategies for how to realize them; no coordination among NNWS, neither non-aligned, New Agenda or others, and on the NWS side passivity or even destructive diplomacy – whereas in both 1995 and 2000, there were active delegations, bridge-building efforts, and win-win situations sought, and to some extent created.

Today, after the unique SC meeting two weeks ago, middle powers and non-nuclear states have an opportunity. The resolution reaffirms Article VI and states the goal of creating the conditions for a NFWF. And please note that several Summit statements went further than the resolution, in calling for a convention.

In MPI, we are just now working on an analytical paper which will discuss forward-looking positions that non-nuclear states can take, from now up to the NPT review conference, and of course thereafter too, depending on the outcome. We will state that the bilateral US-Russia negotiations must lead in the direction of facilitating multilateral negotiations, and that the present stage is only a first step. We will also emphasize that the important CTBT ratifications must not be coupled with conditions for modernization of warheads, delivery systems and weapons complexes. And, regarding the reduced role for nuclear weapons, we will press for a US Nuclear Posture Review that clearly abandons counterforce and counter-value doctrines. And in particular, we will stress that middle power countries themselves, including Japan, must communicate that the so-called “extended deterrence” is not a justification for an expansive role of nuclear weapons, or for disregarding NPT commitments to the diminishing role and to the negative security assurances reaffirmed by the SC. NATO non-nuclear countries also have a big job in front of them, updating the NATO nuclear doctrine and reconciling it with disarmament goals.

We will also discuss constructive steps for the Middle East nuclear issue within the NPT, and not least, we will press for middle power states to work vigorously for a commitment towards, and a process for, a NFWF to be part of the review conference outcome.

It is often automatically assumed that the road to a NFWF must be travelled by the NWS alone. That is not correct. Not only can the NNWS do a lot, but they must do a lot, and to some extent they have. Before the CTBT, for example, some of them did technical work on verification even 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, and several middle powers drive resolutions through the UN normative process, which should not be underestimated. There are other examples, and in the future there are possibilities to explore and develop various aspects of a nuclear-weapons-free regime (perhaps using the Model Convention as a start) even before the NWS are ready to start full negotiations.

One could also speculate about more unconventional processes. Could, for example, ideas from the landmine and cluster munitions processes be borrowed, developing momentum by preparatory conferences, urging on later negotiations? I can see arguments against that being realistic, but perhaps we shouldn't dismiss it without thinking thoroughly about it.

The desk is full. Let's start.

Thank you for listening.