

## **NPT Review Conference Finds Consensus, Issues Document**

- [Arms Control Today](#)

June 2000

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Defying predictions of gridlock, the states party to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) achieved consensus May 19 on a final document for the 2000 NPT review conference, reflecting broad compromise on the issues of disarmament and universal adherence to the treaty. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan hailed the agreement as "a significant step forward in humanity's pursuit of a more peaceful world...free of nuclear dangers."

A consensus document was a "hope" rather than an expectation, as U.S. representative Ambassador Norman Wulf stated April 21. The conference opened with widespread criticism of the slow pace of disarmament measures, including the U.S. Senate's October 1999 rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the UN Conference on Disarmament's (CD) inability to begin negotiations on a fissile material ban, and the failure of START II to enter into force. Non-nuclear-weapon states, joining Russia and China, also expressed great concern over the fate of arms control in the wake of a presumed U.S. decision to deploy a national missile defense system at the expense of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty.

Russian ratification of START II and the CTBT on the eve of the conference did not dull the criticism by non-nuclear-weapon states. The members of the New Agenda Coalition, a group of states demanding faster progress toward disarmament, argued that "the total elimination of nuclear weapons is an obligation and a priority and not an ultimate goal."

While only two of five previous review conferences have produced consensus documents, many observers placed particular importance on reaching a successful conclusion to this conference, which was the first since the treaty's indefinite extension in 1995. Through a long final week of negotiation, the states-parties reached compromise, producing a document that includes stronger language on both disarmament and the Middle East than ever before. (See p. 28.)

### **Disarmament**

While the final document made no commitment to a time frame or specific disarmament measures, the New Agenda Coalition did secure stronger language on disarmament. The five nuclear powers, eager to allay other states-parties' frustration, committed to an "unequivocal undertaking...to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals" and acknowledged a "principle of irreversibility."

This was a much stronger formulation than had been accepted at the 1995 conference, at which the nuclear powers agreed to "reaffirm their commitment...to pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament." At the 2000 conference, the nuclear-weapon states also committed to reductions in tactical nuclear weapons, "concrete agreed measures to further reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems," and a "diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies."

The conference urged, as it did in 1995, the completion of negotiations on a fissile material cut off treaty in the CD within five years. Progress toward this goal has been stymied by the CD's failure to agree on a program of work, primarily because of U.S.-Chinese disagreement over negotiations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. (See p. 27.)

The final document also made brief reference to the ABM Treaty, calling for the preservation and strengthening of the ABM Treaty as a "cornerstone of strategic stability." That the United States, Russia, and China were able to agree appeared to defuse harsh criticism by non-nuclear-weapon states.

## Universality

As was the case at the 1995 conference, probably the most divisive issue was the question of how the conference would address Israel, which is widely presumed to have a nuclear weapons capability but is not a treaty party. Recalling the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which was a key factor in securing Egyptian accession to the treaty's indefinite extension, the states-parties reiterated their call for Israel to join the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The 2000 document mentions Israel by name for the first time, but the conference did not sanction further action to encourage Israel's NPT membership, including an Egyptian proposal to appoint an NPT special representative to seek Israeli accession.

The conference also placed special emphasis on the 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, lamenting the tests and urging the two states to join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon states as soon as possible. It also called on India and Pakistan to sign and ratify the CTBT and to sign the fissile material cutoff treaty once it has been completed.

India, which did not attend the conference, rejected such calls in a statement issued to the Indian parliament May 9 by Minister of External Affairs Jaswant Singh. "The NPT community needs to understand that India cannot join the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon state. Statements by NPT states-parties about India rolling back its nuclear program are mere diversions to prevent focused attention on the basic goals of the NPT," he said. Pakistan also did not attend the conference.

More than any other issue, a dispute between the United States and Iraq threatened consensus in the waning hours of the conference. The United States demanded that the final document note Iraq's non-compliance with the NPT in the early 1990s along with calls for Israeli, Indian, and Pakistani accession to the NPT. Iraq objected to the U.S.-proposed language, citing recent cooperation with IAEA inspection teams. Only a last-minute compromise softening the language prevented the conference from ending in disarray.

U.S. Ambassador Robert Grey expressed satisfaction May 25 that the document "reaffirmed clearly and strongly that the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is essential now, tomorrow, and always in promoting international peace and security." But even with compromises by the nuclear-weapon states, the document did not go nearly as far as many non-nuclear-weapon states had hoped in terms of a commitment toward further disarmament measures by the nuclear powers.

However, the result was a far cry from many observers' pessimistic predictions at the outset of the meeting. Abdallah Baali, president of the conference, said May 20 that while "the final outcome of this review conference...may be seen as inadequate in view of the challenges before us...it is in my view the best outcome we could have reached under the prevailing conditions."

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Published on Arms Control Association (<https://www.armscontrol.org>)

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