

## **Statement for 2002 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee Meeting British American Security Information Council (BASIC), February 2002**

Since 1970, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has been the crux of the nuclear arms control regime worldwide. With 187 States Parties to the treaty, opportunities to re-evaluate, strengthen, and take account of governmental commitments to its tenets are critical in order to reinforce the NPT's integrity and authority.

Unfortunately, the global nuclear non-proliferation regime currently is reeling in a climate hostile to arms control. Several important developments since the 2000 Review Conference must be confronted as States Parties examine the implementation of that meeting's final document and tally the progress made prior to the 2005 Review Conference.

The events that have shaken the foundation of the non-proliferation regime should be addressed by the 2002 Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) as a continuing concern for global nuclear arms control efforts. The following are several of the challenges to the regime that have emerged since the 2000 Review Conference that the PrepCom should address:

### **Arsenal reductions proposed by the United States**

President George W. Bush promised in late 2001 to cut the U.S. nuclear arsenal to between 1,700 and 2,200 warheads within ten years. However, the January 2002 Nuclear Posture Review by the Department of Defense indicates that the "reductions" in warheads would amount to moving them into the active and inactive reserves. No warhead destruction has been promised by the Bush administration to date, and reallocating them into different categories leaves the warheads available for redeployment and re-alerting.

To his credit, Russian President Vladimir Putin has engaged Bush in dialogue about reciprocating these proposed reductions. Russia also expressed interest in codifying these cuts in writing. Washington has shifted from its initial stance of refusing to document these cuts to agreeing that the two countries aim to produce a written agreement in time for the May 2002 summit in Moscow.

***RECOMMENDATION:** The PrepCom report should offer support for the ongoing efforts of the United States and Russia to reduce their arsenals, and promote continuing dialogue on codifying those cuts in a written agreement that provides for transparency of arsenals, verification of the reductions and the destruction of warheads.*

### **New nuclear weapons development and deployment**

The United States' Nuclear Posture Review, issued in January 2002, reveals the controversial thinking that drives nuclear policy decision-making in the Bush administration. Among the most contentious issues, and most difficult in terms of preserving the commitment to "an unequivocal undertaking... to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament," is the intention to develop new nuclear weapon systems. This act will ensure a U.S. nuclear weapons capability far into the future.

According to testimony by administration officials, the Nuclear Weapons Council (made up of officials from the Departments of Defense and Energy) has authorized a three-year study into the development of a low-yield, earth-penetrating nuclear warhead. The Council also has outlined plans for the deployment of new missile systems, submarines, and bombers as early as 2020. Finally, the acceleration of U.S. plutonium pit production shows the current administration's ambition to continue, and possibly increase, its reliance on nuclear weapons well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Other nuclear weapon states also are taking steps to upgrade or expand their nuclear arsenals. In an attempt to counteract the development of a U.S. missile defense system, China is seeking to modernize and increase its nuclear weapons while Russia has hinted that it may rearm its missiles with multiple warheads. In addition, the United Kingdom participated with the United States in a sub-critical nuclear test for the first time in mid-February. Britain must make a decision on the future of its nuclear deterrent in the next several years, which points to the possibility of developing a new sea-based nuclear system. Considering the close cooperation between these two countries on nuclear weapon research, development and maintenance, British participation in the sub-critical test raises questions about possible collaboration on a new warhead.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** *The PrepCom's report should reaffirm States Parties' support for steps toward the total elimination of nuclear arsenals, as well as "a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies." None of the above actions show those nuclear weapon states striving to "minimize the risk that these weapons will ever be used." Non-nuclear weapon states should push for restated commitments to these elements of the 2000 final document.*

### **Renewed interest in nuclear testing**

The 2000 Review Conference document upheld the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), calling for States Parties to take steps to facilitate its early entry into force, and urged a continued moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions. However, several events since the Review Conference bode ill for the hoped-for abolition of nuclear weapons testing. The Bush administration has stated that it will not seek the ratification of the CTBT and went so far as to boycott the CTBT's Conference on Entry into Force in November 2001.

Not only has the United States refused to participate in test ban discussions, but it has left the door open for future testing. While upholding the self-imposed testing moratorium, enacted in 1991, administration officials have indicated that future testing may be necessary to maintain the integrity and safety of the U.S. arsenal. Added to that, the United States also sanctioned extended research into the development of a new nuclear warhead, and anticipates a new generation of nuclear weapons (air-, land- and sea-based systems) to be deployed starting in 2020 (see above). Development of new weapons will necessitate renewed testing, with the administration claiming that new designs will not follow the models derived from previous testing.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** *The final report from the PrepCom should urge States Parties to continue the moratorium on nuclear testing, pending the entry into force of the CTBT. The report should also push States Parties to continue dialogue on these issues.*

The tenuous nature of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime in the current climate cannot tolerate failure by nuclear weapon states to live up to the spirit and letter of the NPT and related arms control treaties. States Parties to the NPT should reiterate their commitment, in the strongest language possible, to the principles that advance nuclear weapons control on the path to disarmament. The 2000 Review Conference's final document provides the critical framework that should govern progress in this area. Only through reaffirmation, monitoring, and action by NPT States Parties can these steps to reinforce and strengthen the non-proliferation regime be made.