

## ***Reaching Nuclear Disarmament: The Role of Civil Society in Strengthening the NPT*** **Panel: “Reaching Critical Will for Disarmament”**

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**Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will**

I’ve been tasked with outlining recommendations for civil society for the Review Conference. I won’t try to summarise all the suggestions I’ve heard during this conference but I do want to focus on an action plan. Everyone seems to agree that we need to act now, before the Review Conference. This is critical. We agree that we have to act any levels—we need education campaigns for people in the streets and for politicians and decision-makers. We need direct actions, protests, coordinated visibility. We need to engage parliamentarians, mayors, and other elected individuals. Everyone seems to agree we need coordinated strategy among all these elements. But how do we link all these efforts? Do we have a unifying message?

We have heard a great many suggestions during this conference on what to push for at the Review Conference, ranging from those contained in the 13 practical steps, to a prohibition on us, to eliminating the nuclear umbrella, to a Nuclear Weapons Convention, and more.

I’d like to offer just a couple of recommendations that I see as being possible unifying points to tie all this together. They are points to educate on, points to demonstrate about, points to mobilise around, and points to lobby on, in the lead up to the Review Conference and beyond.

### **1. A decision to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines**

**To reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security postures, the value of nuclear weapons has to be diminished.**

The situation is bleaker on this. As many of you know, Russia is considering preemptive strike for its nuclear posture. The US is still behind its own rhetoric when it comes to this. During First Committee, the US delegation continued to maintain that states “acquired nuclear weapons in order to promote what they saw as their national security” and argued, “If they are to give them up, they must be convinced that doing so will not harm their security and that of their friends and allies.”

Here, many non-nuclear weapon states also have a role to play. Thirty non-nuclear weapon states shelter under the US nuclear umbrella. Many proponents of retaining nuclear weapons in the United States espouse “extended deterrence” as their justification. **Public statements from governments under the US nuclear umbrella stating that they believe their security commitments will still be viable without nuclear weapons would thus remove a key obstacle to deeper reductions in the US nuclear arsenal.**

Citizens in NATO countries, Australia, South Korea, and Japan have long advocated for their countries to let go of the cold war nuclear umbrellas and forge more independent and balanced relationships for national, regional, and international security. Now key legislators from all these countries are joining the call. **We need to support these efforts and draw attention around the world to the movements against nuclear weapons in these countries.**

**Furthermore, removing nuclear sharing from NATO’s Strategic Concept, combined with removal of nuclear weapons from Europe, would be an important confidence-building measure**

**and would likely facilitate bilateral dialogue that could lead to much deeper cuts in the US and Russian nuclear arsenals.**

Very briefly, and very specifically, civil society should call for the following commitments to be undertaken by nuclear weapon states at the Review Conference:

- **agreeing to legally-binding security assurances not to attack non-nuclear weapon states with nuclear weapons;**
- **committing not to use nuclear weapons as a tool for “pre-emptive strike”;**
- **rejecting counterforce and countervalue doctrines;**
- **excluding “extended deterrence” arrangements in their doctrines; and**
- **declaring that as a matter of national policy they will not design, develop, or produce new design nuclear warheads or modernise existing warheads.**

We also need to pay attention to the discourse around nuclear weapons, which is fundamental to public perception—and thus fundamental for our advocacy on reducing the value of nuclear weapons.

**The best way for civil society to advocate for this is to first dismantle the traditional national security discourse**

This is a fundamental element to eliminating nuclear weapons. We’re going to have to shift the discourse away from national security to global security, of course. But even more importantly, perhaps the first step, is that we have to really assess what national security actually means. Because right now, what it means is security for the elite, technologically-proficient classes in the state. The “national interest,” as it is typically invoked in this sense, does not refer to the well-being of the general population but of those managing the military-industrial-academic complex. It is in its interest to keep money pumping into its nuclear weapon programmes. The nuclear weapons establishment constitutes a formidable set of institutions that see their interests as being well served by a mode of global military dominance ultimately underwritten by nuclear weapons.

**The recommendation here is one for civil society to question the meaning of “national security”.** For concrete nuclear disarmament to actually happen, the discourse of “national security” needs to be dismantled. This is unlikely to happen by the Review Conference. So what we can do is at least identify who benefits from the maintenance of nuclear weapons, what their interests are and what their role is in sustaining high-tech militarism. And while this analysis is unlikely to enter into the mainstream dialogue at the Review Conference, these ideas can guide our advocacy in the lead-up, as a way to have citizens increase the pressure on their governments. This idea that nuclear weapons do not protect anyone except the elite is a really powerful argument for their elimination.

**At the Review Conference itself, any action plan for disarmament must include an unequivocal commitment by the nuclear weapons states to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines.** Without this, the achievement of the next recommendation will be very difficult, which is:

## **2. A decision to cease the modernization and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapon systems**

Unfortunately, a few weeks ago, US Secretary of State Clinton said, “until we reach that point of the horizon where the last nuclear weapon has been eliminated, we need to reinforce the domestic

consensus that America will maintain the nuclear infrastructure needed to sustain a safe and effective deterrent.” She explained that this means “in addition to supporting a robust nuclear complex budget in 2011, we will also support a new Stockpile Management Program that would focus on sustaining capabilities.”

Taken together, these policy statements make clear that the US under President Obama is committed to sustaining and modernizing its nuclear weapons complex for the indefinite future. This modernization will go hand in hand with reductions in the nuclear arsenal as part of the current arms control talks with Russia and will likely be one of the conditions attached to the US ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The US is by no means alone in wanting to maintain and modernize its nuclear arsenal. Britain has already made this clear. As proof of its commitment to nuclear disarmament in some far off future, it has offered a plan to build only three new nuclear-armed submarines instead of four. China, France, and Russia are also modernizing their nuclear arsenals, as are India and Pakistan, and Israel. None will choose to be left behind.

If the nuclear-armed states are committed to maintaining and modernizing their nuclear weapon complexes, how are these states going to agree to give up their nuclear weapons?

Trading some arms control agreements or arsenal reduction for modernised nuclear weapons research and production facilities capable of building the nuclear threat anew is not disarmament. If the danger of nuclear war is to be eliminated, ceasing to plan and build for an eternal nuclear threat must come early, not late, in the process.

**And so this has to be one of the key things that civil society and other governments really advocate strongly against. Modernisation is not acceptable, for any reason. Nuclear weapon states cannot be allowed to get away with espousing their dream for a nuclear weapon free world while upgrading their weapon systems.**

Which brings me to another recommendation, which will help discriminate between the rhetoric and reality in precise ways:

### **3. Developing a standardized mechanism for the reporting of nuclear weapon holdings**

This has been suggested by several governments in the NPT context, and is one of the 13 practical steps. I’ll elaborate on this in the seminar but briefly, it would increase transparency, which increases trust, and helps diminish the possibility of an arms race because everyone knows what everyone else has. It would also help governments and civil society to identify when actions are not living up to commitments, which is instrumental to our advocacy.

### **4. Consideration of the ways and means to start negotiations on an international framework to achieve a nuclear weapon free world**

Many of you here are experts on the Nuclear Weapon Convention so I don’t want to spend too much time here, but **civil society should encourage all states parties to the NPT to commit to the negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention in their statements to the NPT and push for it to be**

**included in any final document.** We should also ask for formal responses from governments to the model NWC, in order to give us an opportunity to engage in direct dialogue on its substance with as many delegations as possible.

During First Committee, more governments than ever before referenced the Nuclear Weapons Convention—including Morocco, Cameroon, and the Philippines, which is the President of the Review Conference!—and these countries should be encouraged to continue their support and lobby others as well.

## **5. Concrete Measures to implement the 1995 Middle East resolution**

Toward implementing the 1995 resolution, many governments are beginning to express support for concrete measures the 2010 Review Conference can take, including:

- **convening a conference after 2011 to begin negotiations on a framework or treaty to achieve a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction; and**
- **appointing a standing NPT body to follow-up intercessionally and support efforts toward these ends.**

These are fairly simple steps that can be taken. They were proposed by Egypt during this cycle's PrepComs and the Russian, US, and UK delegations appeared interested—which is good. However, the Egyptians are saying that the US interest is superficial at best. Indeed, apparently it was the US that strongly objected to any reference to the Middle East in UN Security Council Resolution 1887.

This spells danger, because the Middle East is a very important issue for this Review Conference, as we heard from the panel on this issue earlier at this conference. We really need to advocate for serious commitment to the proposals I just mentioned.

**In addition, governments need to avoid employing double-standards in the region. For example, outside powers cannot call for Israel to join the NPT while arming its neighbours; neither can they sanction Iran's nuclear fuel cycle programme or call for a WMD free zone while enabling Israel's nuclear programme.**

## **6. Strengthening the Review Process and NPT Institutional Reform**

As has been noted by many observers, the NPT is the weakest of the treaties governing weapons of mass destruction in terms of its institutional support. Moreover, further steps toward disarmament will eventually necessitate an institutional framework comparable to other treaty regimes governing weapons of mass destruction. As it is presently constituted, the strengthened review process involves a considerable waste of time, energy, and money, which could be better spent facilitating agreement on complex issues and responding to current developments.

In 2010, NPT states should give serious consideration to Canada's proposals for institutional reform, which could increase the quality of NPT deliberations and enable treaty's institutions to focus on specific issues and respond to developments. These proposals include:

- **a decision to hold annual general meetings in lieu of the PrepCom meetings, empowered with decision-making authority;**
- **a decision to establish a standing bureau, mandated to coordinate intercessionally and to convene extraordinary sessions of NPT parties; and**

- **a decision to establish an NPT Support Unit to provide full-time institutional support and memory to the NPT and its meetings.**