



2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Processes and Outcomes

Report written for the United Nations Association of the UK

Dr Owen Greene, Centre for International Cooperation
and Security, Bradford University

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About the author

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Dr. Greene has directed and co-directed numerous international research projects relevant to these fields, and is an internationally recognised expert who has worked as a consultant or special advisor on such issues for the United Nations, OSCE, the EU and national governments. In addition, Dr. Greene has been heavily involved in multilateral policy processes, negotiations and implementation programmes, and works closely with NGOs. He is currently Chair of Saferworld and co-chair of VERTIC.

In May 2010 he headed UNA-UK's delegation to the 2010 NPT Conference, which also consisted of James Kearney (Peace and Security Programme Coordinator, UNA-UK) and Dr. Gari Donn (Lecturer in International Education at Edinburgh University and Convenor of UNA Edinburgh).

About UNA-UK

The United Nations Association of the UK (UNA-UK) is the UK's leading source of independent analysis on the UN and a grassroots membership organisation. UNA-UK seeks to increase knowledge of the UN and stimulate thought and debate about how to make it stronger, more credible and more effective.

One of UNA-UK's key programmes – *Towards Zero* – builds on UNA-UK's historic role as a leading campaigner for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The five strands of the programme are: influencing decision-makers and decision-formers in the UK; convening experts in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; increasing the 'buy-in' of other Nuclear Weapons States; stimulating grassroots campaigning within the UK; and re-establishing nuclear disarmament as a central issue for young people.

For more information, visit www.una.org.uk/towardszero or contact James Kearney, UNA-UK Peace and Security Programme Coordinator, on kearney@una.org.uk or 020 7766 3446.

Cover Photo:

'Good Defeats Evil'. UN Photo/Milton Grant
United Nations, New York, 16 October 1990

The Soviet Union presented a sculpture to the United Nations on the occasion of the organization's 45th anniversary. Created by Zurab Tsereteli, a native of Georgia, the sculpture titled "Good Defeats Evil", is 39 feet high and weighs 40 tons, depicting St. George slaying the dragon. As the dragon is created from fragments of Soviet SS-20 and United States Pershing nuclear missiles that were destroyed under the terms of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty of 1987, it is a vivid symbol of the post-Cold War period.

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“Let us remember that you are here not simply to avoid a nuclear nightmare, but to build a safer world for all. Many countries have shown great leadership – those that have abolished nuclear weapons, those that have established nuclear-weapon-free zones, and those that have reduced arsenals. I challenge you to go further still.

I challenge you to take the steps, today, that will set the stage for a break-through tomorrow.

We need more examples of what can be achieved – not more excuses for why it is not possible. Now is our time to deliver on one of the deepest aspirations of humankind, and one of the founding resolutions of this Organization.

It is in your hands. I count on your leadership and commitment.”

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General

Address to the 2010 Review Conference of the States Parties
to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
3 May 2010

Introduction

UNA-UK's delegation travelled to the United Nations in New York at the end of May to participate in the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The conference, which takes place every five years, is organised with the aim of strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, with the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at its heart. On the back of the Review Conference of 2005 – widely regarded as being unsuccessful – the expectation surrounding the 2010 conference was high, particularly given the political attention and support it received from US President Obama and his new administration.

The four-week NPT conference, attended by 189 countries, was based around the Treaty's three main areas, or *pillars*: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Each pillar was debated concurrently by sub-committees composed of country delegations aiming to strengthen the NPT regime while defending their own state interests. In this report, Dr Owen Greene, head of the UNA-UK delegation, provides his analysis of the conference, highlighting key areas for focus during and after the Review Conference.

UNA-UK would like to express its appreciation to the two funders of our Towards Zero project for their support. Generous funding has been received from the award of a five-year Special Peace Grant administered by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, and the John Bright MP Peace and Security Endowment Fund administered by the UNA Trust.

James Kearney

Peace and Security Programme Coordinator
United Nations Association of the UK

1. Observations on the Review Conference process

(a) Wide determination to achieve an agreed Final Document

This is a brief report on the processes and outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference (RevCon), and therefore does not aim to be comprehensive, but rather focuses on some key points about the process, outcomes and implications of the RevCon, and assumes the reader to have a reasonable understanding of the NPT regime.¹ The report is broadly divided into two main sections, with chapter one focusing on the dynamics of the Review Conference. Chapters two, three and four look at some of the outcomes of the conference, and assess what future challenges may lie ahead.

This Review Conference (RevCon) was haunted by the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. Virtually all groupings of participating states arrived determined at least to achieve a respectable final agreed document, while protecting their established positions on the NPT regime. There were several early indicators of this wide determination, including:

- *The Preparatory Committee* (PrepCom) process during the previous 18 months, during which it became clear that all significant groups of states believed that a positive outcome to the 2010 RevCon was very much in their interests.
- *Rapid (by NPT standards) agreement on RevCon procedural matters* – this was achieved by the third day, leaving many delegations scrambling to be ready for the early start of substantive committee and subsidiary body sessions.
- *Generally positive ('glass half-full') responses to recent steps relevant to nuclear disarmament taken by some P5 Nuclear Weapon States (NWS)*, particularly the new US-Russia Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and the set of moves by the Obama Administration (some newly declared in Hillary Clinton's opening statement) indicating detailed US re-engagement with established NPT regime concerns (including the US Nuclear Posture Review, nuclear weapons transparency initiative, decision to work for Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) ratification and re-engagement with guarantees for Nuclear Weapon Free Zones).
- *Careful collective management of the 'Iran factor'*: during the preparatory process in the two years before the RevCon began, Iran determinedly blocked the development of even quite basic, previously agreed preparatory documents, signalling its intentions during the PrepComs. As UN Security Council (SC) deliberations on strengthened sanctions against Iran coincided with the RevCon, the sanctions issue hung over the conference process. President Ahmadinejad's opening statement (and reactions to it) dominated the first day and, given the challenges to reaching a meaningful consensus RevCon document even without the Iran factor, this issue clearly had strong potential to derail the conference

¹ NPT Review Conference documents, and other relevant official documentation, are available at the UN website www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2010/

as a whole. During the course of the RevCon, however, it appeared that most state delegations (from all UN major blocs) had concluded that such derailment was in fact Iran's intention, and it gradually became clear that all 'key' developing, as well as industrialised states, were determined to contain its efforts to prevent agreement. In this context, even Iran's recent customary diplomatic allies in UN security-related conferences (such as Syria, Cuba and Venezuela) were heavily constrained.

- *Support for the Chair:* overall the RevCon process was skilfully chaired by the President and Vice-Presidents of the conference, and the states/ambassadors acting as 'friends of the chair' on key issues also proved determined and effective. This reflected not only their personal diplomatic skills, but also the high awareness among participating states of the need to allow them to work and to facilitate the process as far as possible. To take one of several possible examples, Egypt occupied a highly strategic position at this RevCon, as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement ('G77') and the 'New Agenda Coalition' of states as well as being a leading member of the Arab League. Having identified its own key national goals, particularly relating to establishing a conference process to progress towards a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, Egypt very effectively combined pursuit of these specific goals with helping to achieve a positive outcome overall.

It is interesting to note that Iran's successful blocking of agreement on any substantial working or draft documents ultimately backfired. It meant that by the beginning of the last week of the RevCon, no committee or subsidiary body documents were available on which to base final detailed negotiations. In consequence, the President could legitimately decide to prepare a draft document under his own authority. On the basis of this draft, intense negotiations proceeded mid-week between all relevant groups of states, resulting in a revised draft President's document on 27 May which participating states had to consider on a 'take it or leave it' basis.

(b) High constraints on substantial progress at the Review Conference

Anyone familiar with the NPT regime will be aware of the great constraints on achieving substantial progress at its RevCons. The participating states hold well-entrenched divergent positions on many substantive issues. Specific regional and bilateral sensitivities prevent agreement on important issues on which the great majority of states could agree. There is a political need for delicate preservation of 'balance' in simultaneous progress on each of the three so-called 'pillars' of the NPT (disarmament, non-proliferation, and promotion of access to civil uses of nuclear energy or materials). Decisions are made by consensus.

In this context, a pattern has become established where substantial work to tighten or strengthen safeguards against nuclear proliferation takes place in practice in forums other than the RevCon, including through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Nuclear Suppliers Group and 'coalition of the willing' initiatives (such as the Washington Nuclear Security Summit of April 2010) – just as the main actions on nuclear disarmament-related talks and on the spread of civilian nuclear facilities take place outside the specific NPT RevCon framework.

The de facto priorities for the NPT RevCons are to reinforce the core norms of the NPT; promote and consolidate the international legitimacy of relevant progress in related organisations and initiatives; and enable detailed global consultations and agenda-setting amongst NPT member states as part of the wider regime process. In practice, most Non-Nuclear Weapon States (the great majority of states) use the RevCons as an opportunity to press for greater action on disarmament and access to civilian nuclear resources, to counterbalance the P5 (US, UK, France, China and Russia) states' non-proliferation priorities. These RevCon roles are very important. But they imply that the criteria for its success do not solely focus on the 'new' commitments in an agreed Final Document.

Therefore, while all states brought both traditional and new concerns and priorities to the RevCon negotiations in 2010, in reality most concerned governments had rather limited goals

and expectations. Above all, they wanted – as noted previously – to avoid the disasters of the 2005 RevCon, and to achieve an agreed Final Document which at minimum consolidated the agreements in the 2000 RevCon and where possible updated or extended them in useful ways.

(c) Foci for negotiation

A wide array of substantive issues were the subject of sustained debate and negotiation at the RevCon, including:

- Progress towards full recognition of, and guarantees for, Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZs) by Nuclear Weapon States
- Whether and how to agree to hold a conference to establish a process aimed at establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction
- Security Assurances by NWS for Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS)
- Priorities and challenges of bringing Israel, India and Pakistan into the NPT regime (as NNWS)
- Promoting transparency and further reductions of nuclear stocks of NWS
- Promoting progress towards reducing and eliminating ‘tactical’ nuclear weapons
- Downgrading the roles of nuclear weapons in the defence and security policies and postures of NWS
- Reducing the state of alert of nuclear forces of NWS
- Promoting progress towards extending ratification of the CTBT and bring the new START into legal force
- Starting multilateral negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament towards treaties, including the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) and Outer Space Treaty
- Developing multilateral P5 initiatives (including joint technical or confidence-building processes) to at least prepare for co-ordinated progress towards the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons by all five recognised NWS
- Whether, when and how to launch multilateral negotiations for a convention on the elimination of nuclear weapons
- Strengthening security and controls on sensitive fissile materials and technologies, including reduction, removal and responsible disposal of Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) and plutonium stocks, and conversion of HEU-fuel research reactors to use Low Enriched Uranium (LEU)
- Whether and how to promote multilateral mechanisms for management and control of civilian nuclear fuel cycles
- Progress on commitments to support and promote access to civil nuclear materials and facilities for peaceful uses (subject to safeguards)
- Encouragement of universal adoption by NPT states of the Additional Protocol to strengthen and extend the effectiveness of IAEA safeguards; with possible linkages between adoption of the Additional Protocol and assured access to supply of fissile materials and associated nuclear technologies

- Confirmation of the central role of the IAEA in the NPT safeguards regime
- Review of Article 10 of the NPT (relating to provisions for withdrawal by states from the NPT), aimed at increasing legal constraints and sanctions against ‘break-out’ from the NPT by states that have not been compliant with their obligations as NNWS (following North Korea’s withdrawal and relating to Iran concerns).

Every one of these issues is sensitive and contentious within the NPT, and several are in tension with each other. Each had the potential to prevent agreement on a Final Document. In many cases, experienced negotiators recognised where and how compromises would be necessary. Probably the most sensitive and difficult issue related to the formulation of statements to establish a conference to progress towards a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. During the PrepCom process it became clear not only that progress on this issue was essential for an agreed RevCon Final Document, but also that addressing it would be very difficult and contentious.

(d) NPT RevCon outcomes and implications

After brinkmanship and wide anxiety on the final day of the RevCon, the Conference agreed by consensus a substantial Final Document (UN Document NPT/CONF.2010/L.2). During that final day, all eyes and diplomatic pressure were on Iran’s delegation, which was under instruction to continue to object to much of the document. Once it became clear that all other states, including the US, had decided to accept the Document, the diplomacy moved to a high political level to persuade Iran not to block the agreement, and to threaten it with embarrassing political isolation – with ultimate success.

The Final Document is divided into two parts. The first part is the ‘Review of the Operation of the Treaty’ and is the RevCon President’s summary and ‘reflects to the best of his knowledge what transpired at the Review Conference with regard to matters under review’. Making this first section a President’s statement not only avoided the need for line-by-line negotiation and approval of the text (although it was revised to achieve wide endorsement), but also set a potentially useful RevCon precedent by including positions on which states remained divided (‘some states stated... in contrast, other states stated...’).

The second section of the Document was fully and explicitly agreed by consensus at the RevCon. This second section, entitled ‘Conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions’, contains some framing principles followed by the negotiated agreements and 64 specific actions. Many of these agreements and recommended actions are very similar to the actions agreed at the 2000 RevCon, but with a number of highly-negotiated incremental but significant revisions and developments.

Interestingly, the Final Document reflects a real balance between the so-called three pillars of the NPT (the 64 follow-on actions roughly divide into 22 disarmament-related; 24 on non-proliferation and 18 on peaceful uses). This contrasts with the 2000 RevCon Document, which was relatively heavily weighted towards disarmament-related actions. It is also noteworthy that not all of the significant actions and recommendations are contained in the second section. Whether by accident or judgement, one or two remained in the first ‘review’ section; including follow-up dialogues between P5 states and NWFZs, and initiatives to address technical challenges of verified disarmament.

The next sections of this report highlight some of the outcomes from, and implications of, the 2010 NPT RevCon, as a contribution to UNA-UK’s reflections on future priorities and activities. As noted above, they do not aim to be comprehensive. Moreover, some of these significant outcomes are not directly tied to substantial new agreements in the Final Document, but rather emerge from the ways in which the issues were addressed during the conference process.

2. Disarmament-related outcomes

(a) NWS commitments to implement steps towards nuclear disarmament

The five recognised NWS reaffirmed their commitments to implement the steps towards nuclear arms control and disarmament contained in the 2000 RevCon Final Document, and ultimately to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear arsenals leading to complete nuclear disarmament. In this context, the agreed Document not only repeats commitments to the '13 steps towards disarmament' of the 2000 RevCon, but also includes strengthened language (in Action 5) recommending actions to:

- address and reduce *all* types of nuclear weapons (ie. including so-called tactical as well as strategic nuclear weapons)
- further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies
- discuss policies that could contribute towards disarmament or prevent use of nuclear weapons
- 'consider the legitimate interest of NNWS in further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapon systems in ways that promote international stability and security' (i.e. a carefully negotiated commitment to 'de-alerting')
- reduce the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons
- further enhance transparency and increase mutual confidence.

Each of these agendas provides an important focus for future policy work. Significantly, the (highly negotiated) language focuses more on a commitment by P5 states to seriously engage with the specified issues rather than on specified outcomes. Thus all NPT stakeholders will be legitimately looking to P5 states to have embarked on substantial processes to address these matters in the next three years.

(b) Establish nuclear disarmament-related treaty negotiations at the UN Conference on Disarmament.

In addition to strong statements on bringing the CTBT regime into fuller operation (Actions 10-14), Action 6 says that 'all states agree that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) should immediately establish a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament within the context of an agreed comprehensive and balanced programme of work'. Since the CD has long

been blocked, and has become essentially moribund, this is a challenging task. It will require cooperation of non-NPT states not present at the RevCon, including Pakistan, India and Israel. Indeed, CD discussions shortly after the RevCon ended have demonstrated that Pakistan continues to raise the same concerns as before. The RevCon Final Document recognises that if this situation continues, the negotiation options outside the CD framework will need to be actively considered. One possibility is to introduce resolutions at the General Assembly to launch nuclear weapons-related negotiations from that forum.

(c) The need for P5 NWS collective initiatives towards nuclear disarmament

In practice, the P5 states did not collectively manage to develop a substantial agenda for progress in this respect, beyond reconfirming older commitments. In the lead-up to the RevCon:

- the Obama Administration focused on developing the US's own policy adjustments and initiatives
- Russia and the US focused on agreeing the new START
- the UK continued with its own enhanced transparency and nuclear policy review initiatives, including its project with Norway (and the NGO 'VERTIC') to examine technical issues of verifying nuclear warhead dismantlement.

The only direct effort towards collective P5 processes was a workshop convened by the UK in autumn 2009 for senior P5 government officials to discuss options for possible future joint work, and this was purely exploratory. At the RevCon, each P5 state brought various 'red lines' to the negotiations which obstructed clear P5 initiatives during the meeting. By the end of the RevCon, however, there was a clear understanding that the NNWS expected real progress from the P5 in these areas from now on. The obvious next step is to develop, at minimum, a standardised reporting framework for NWS for the next RevCon (Action 21), and also to follow up last autumn's informal meeting of NWS in London with a series of follow-on meetings and consultations.

(d) Implications for NATO and Russian nuclear weapons policy reviews

Reduction and withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons was a major issue at the RevCon. The Final Document contained no clear recommendations for this (contested) category of nuclear weapon, in large part because Russia strongly rejected any statement that implied reductions in tactical nuclear weapons on its own territory. However, the discussions associated with Action 3 of the Final Document reflected clear expectations that the matter would be properly addressed in the forthcoming NATO nuclear policy review and also by Russia in its own nuclear posture assessments. As is well known, discussions within NATO on these questions have become highly charged, with several 'new' NATO members resisting pressures from others (such as the Netherlands) for the withdrawal of remaining US tactical nuclear weapons from mainland Europe.

(e) Bringing India, Pakistan and Israel into the NPT regime as Non-Nuclear Weapons States

As always, concerns about NWS outside the NPT regime were prominent. All delegations would prefer these three states, and also North Korea, to join the NPT as NNWS; but the prospects of achieving this in the near future are small. So the Final Document primarily focuses on calling for steps towards bringing such states into the NPT as NNWS, and in the meantime to restrict transfers of nuclear materials or technologies to states lacking

comprehensive IAEA safeguards. Clearly, Israel was central to debates relating to a possible Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Diplomatically, much of the debate revolved around whether and how to highlight the states concerned.

(f) Emerging support for a multilateral Nuclear Weapons Convention

Proposals to establish a nuclear weapons convention to negotiate the abolition of nuclear weapons have been pursued for over a decade by an NGO coalition including groups such as International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility, and the Nuclear Abolition Caucus. In recent years, these proposals have received increasing support from governments of NNWS. During the 2010 RevCon, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) statement referred positively to this proposal as did many national delegations from virtually every region. There is still strong resistance to such proposals, not least from NWS. However, this emerging agenda at least helps to concentrate governments' attention on achieving serious progress towards nuclear disarmament-related treaties through other frameworks.

(g) Security assurances and NWFZs

The RevCon reflected renewed international energy and interest in strengthening NWS' security assurances to NNWS and in reinforcing and extending Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZs). The US statement that it would engage with NWFZ Secretariats and members to find ways to strengthen US security assurances was not only significant in itself, but also promises to develop into a process in which other NWS could participate. This is politically important, and may also provide opportunities for technical strengthening of NWFZ operation.

(h) Launching a process with the aim of negotiating a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction

As noted, this was one of the most politically complex issues negotiated at the RevCon and the results are presented in Section IV of the 'conclusions and recommendations' part of the Final Document. It is drafted with exquisite care and essentially agrees that the UN Secretary-General and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Middle East resolution (the US, the EU and Russia) will launch consultations with states in the Middle East with the aim of establishing a conference by 2012 involving all interested regional parties towards establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Obviously, one key challenge is to persuade Israel to participate in such a conference. But the hope is that Israel will recognise that measures to abolish chemical and biological weapons in the region and to increase constraints on Iran would be in its overall interests. Progress on this aspect of the RevCon recommendations by 2012 is clearly going to be both immensely tortuous and important.

3. Recommendations relating to safeguards against proliferation

(a) Introduction

Issues relating to international safeguards against proliferation of nuclear weapons were, as always, intensely debated at the RevCon. As noted, however, in practice it is rare for substantial advances in safeguards to be agreed through the RevCon framework, which instead tends to legitimise or reinforce steps taken through the IAEA or by coalitions of the willing. Key elements of the debates are reflected in the Review section of the 2010 Final Document, while Section II of the 'conclusions and recommendations' part of the Document recommends 24 Actions. These mainly take the form of encouraging all states to adopt and act according to established good safeguards practices. The central role of the IAEA in all safeguards arrangements associated with the NPT regime was also strongly reinforced.

(b) Encouraging universal adoption by NPT States Parties of the IAEA Additional Protocol

All experts agree that the basic IAEA 'INFCIRC/153 comprehensive safeguards' regime does not provide reliable assurance of States Parties' compliance with NPT commitments because it only monitors officially declared nuclear facilities and materials. For this reason, a new IAEA Additional Protocol was established in the 1990s, designed to safeguard against undeclared nuclear facilities or activities. However, there are still dozens of states which have not yet concluded or brought into force an Additional Protocol with the IAEA, including several countries of concern such as Iran. The RevCon Final Document 'encourages' all States Parties to do so (Action 28). Similarly, it encourages adoption of the 'Amended Small Quantities Protocol' (Action 31), which enhances safeguards of small quantities of highly sensitive fissile materials held, for example, in medical or research reactors around the world. As in previous RevCons, it was not possible to agree stronger language, not least because it would have been opposed by NPT members that have not yet accepted such additional safeguards for themselves. Nevertheless, the RevCon provided an important forum to promote adoption of improved safeguards.

(c) Nuclear exports to states without comprehensive IAEA safeguards

The NPT regime has long implied that there should be strict restrictions on transfers of sensitive nuclear facilities or materials to countries that do not have comprehensive IAEA safeguards. Until recently, this was reinforced by co-ordinated restrictions by members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). The US-India nuclear co-operation agreement concluded under the Bush Administration and, subsequently endorsed 'under duress' by other NSG members, raised wide anxieties and debates which continued to reverberate during 2010 RevCon. The question is 'where to go from here?' since the US-India deal looks as if it is here

to stay. The RevCon could not answer this question, except to reinforce the importance of restrictions and restraint in such transfers (see, for example, Action 37).

(d) Multilateral mechanisms for controlling nuclear fuel cycles

The development of multilateral nuclear fuel cycle management and control arrangements is a hot topic within the NPT regime. This is particularly reflected in a number of recent initiatives designed to offer Iran reasonable assurance of supply of enriched uranium fuel for its declared civil nuclear programmes as an alternative to developing its own uranium enrichment facilities. The 2010 RevCon included numerous informal side meetings on this issue, and the issue was raised and debated at length. But virtually every delegation knew that the time was not ripe for any specific actions on this to be agreed at the RevCon, beyond noting useful initiatives.

(e) Resolving questions about compliance with IAEA safeguards

Concerns about non-compliance with IAEA safeguards were widely shared by RevCon delegations. The IAEA Director General, for example, made strong statements about Iran's non-compliance with important aspects of its safeguards commitments. As discussed above, most NPT parties worked hard to avoid 'Iran issues' dominating the RevCon and an intrinsic aspect of this is that Iran would not be singled out. Focused action would be left to the UN Security Council. However, Actions 26 and 27 address the issue generically. For example, the latter states that 'the Conference underscores the importance of resolving all cases of non-compliance with safeguards obligations in full conformity with the IAEA Statute and member states' respective legal obligations. In this regard, the Conference calls upon Member States to extend their co-operation with the Agency.'

(f) 'Article 10' issues relating to withdrawal from the NPT

Sustained and detailed attention was devoted to the question of whether and how to strengthen arrangements when a state decides to withdraw from the NPT, as North Korea did recently, and as many fear Iran might do if it develops nuclear weapons covertly. Article 10 of the NPT makes it clear that States Parties have the right to withdraw if they choose to do so, and without any penalties or residual safeguards arrangements. In this context, there were proposals to amend Article 10, or alternatively to develop residual obligations and restrictions that would continue to apply after withdrawal. Virtually every delegation recognised this to be an important issue but many were unwilling to open up possibilities of amending the NPT itself – questioning where this could lead. Alternative approaches were discussed, which can be expected to continue to be a focus for discussion in future years.

4. Peaceful uses of nuclear energy

(a) Promoting civilian uses of nuclear energy

The third so-called 'pillar' of the NPT regime is the promotion of and assistance to states for peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this respect, the 2010 RevCon debates were a virtual heaven for fierce supporters of civil nuclear energy and technologies, and purgatory for sceptics or critics. It is becoming almost an iron rule of NPT RevCon diplomacy to avoid any stated reservations about commitments to promote and assist access of all developing-country NPT parties to the full range of nuclear facilities for peaceful purposes, provided that they are under IAEA safeguards. There were lots of statements about the centrality of civil nuclear technologies to poverty alleviation, medical treatments and development, with virtually no contradiction. In this context, the Final Document recommends 18 Actions on promoting and assisting peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including encouragements for additional financial contributions for this purpose.

(b) Encouraging reductions in civilian uses of Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU)

Action 61 'encourages States concerned, on a voluntary basis, to further minimise highly enriched uranium in civilian stocks and use, where technically and economically feasible'. Although this recommendation is 'doubly voluntary', it reflects an important sea-change in key states' approaches to uses of HEU in nuclear reactors. Even in the 1990s, such a recommendation would have been fiercely resisted by many powerful states, including the US. Now there are major programmes, actively endorsed and funded by Russia, the US and other members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to replace or convert civil reactors using HEU and withdraw small (and often insecure) stocks of HEU that are presently scattered widely to secure central stocks, including to the US and Russia.

Conclusions

The outcomes of the 2010 NPT RevCon were in many respects quite modest. Nevertheless, it should be regarded as a significant success. The fact that under the present wider international circumstances a reasonably substantial and balanced Final Document was agreed by consensus is testimony to the value placed on the NPT regime by the great majority of states.

In many respects, the NPT regime is now 'back on track'. The fundamental measure of success, however, will be how the disarmament and non-proliferation-related actions agreed at this RevCon are followed up during the next three years.

“I look to member states to step up to the challenge of disarmament and non-proliferation. Weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, are inherently indiscriminate. They make no distinction between citizen and soldier, man and woman, the old and the young, plant and animal – indeed, no distinction among any living things.”

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General

Speech to UNA-UK at the Royal Geographical Society, London
13 June 2008

The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which takes place every five years, is organised with the aim of strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, with the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty at its heart. On the back of the Review Conference of 2005 – widely regarded as being unsuccessful – the expectation surrounding the 2010 conference was high, particularly given the political attention and support it received from US President Obama and his new administration.

The four-week Review Conference, attended by delegations from 189 countries, was based around the three main areas, or pillars, of the Non-Proliferation Treaty:

- nuclear disarmament
- non-proliferation
- the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy

Each pillar was debated concurrently by sub-committees composed of country delegations aiming to strengthen the NPT regime while defending their own state interests. In this report, Professor Owen Greene, head of the UNA-UK delegation, provides his analysis of the conference, highlighting key areas for focus during and after the Review Conference, including observations on the NPT Review Conference process, Review Conference outcomes and implications, disarmament-related outcomes, recommendations relating to safeguards against proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He concludes by stating that the conference, though successful, will have to be measured against follow-up actions taken over the next three years.



For more information visit www.una.org.uk