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AFTER THE NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE

As one enters the new (that is temporary) UN building in New York, it is impossible to miss the humongous statue of St. George poking an American *Pershing* missile with a spear. The style is unmistakable, like a diagnosis. It is Tsereteli, of course, the imagination behind the oversized sculptures springing up all over Russia. Even in Manhattan you can't seem to get away from his handiwork. Desperate attempts were made to put that "gift" somewhere out of sight, in the back yard—but it ended up instead right at the delegates' entrance.

The symbols of the struggle for peace are everywhere in this UN enclave. And it appears that the 172 delegations did not waste the four weeks they spent in New York last May. They too did their bit for peace for a change, after 10 years of stagnation. The Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference somehow contrived to produce a consensus and voted unanimously for the Final Document.

That in itself is a worthy result. That is a success. And there are two explanations for it.

On the one hand, a dozen hyperactive delegations had been working frantically behind the scenes. Each for their own special reasons, they were determined not to leave the conference without securing something tangible. In the closing days of the event, they would gather for late dinners hosted by the Conference Chair (Filipino Ambassador Libran Cabactulan)—and there strive to find some ingenious way out of the deadlock that the main committees of the conference had driven themselves into. Sometimes those efforts were in the best traditions of the 1995 Conference, which managed to deliver the indefinite extension of the NPT by hook or crook, and with a fair bit of arm-twisting.

On the other hand, that success would not have been possible without the will of all the delegations—even if that will was sometimes camouflaged with mumbling and grumbling. All the delegations came to New York clearly determined to get somewhere—meaning that they were already halfway there. They also managed to identify fairly accurately where the limits of the possible compromise lay. In the words of the South Africans', the Final Document represented a "delicate balance" between the interests of all the major players: the nuclear powers, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Arabs, and the Iranians.

To summarize, the successful outcome was achieved thanks to every delegation's determination to succeed, multiplied by the titanic efforts by the "activists" to sketch the shape of a possible compromise.

A detailed week-by-week account of how the drama of the conference unfolded is available online, on blog pages and twitter.¹ As a member of the Russian delegation, I had an insider's view of the events. But, in keeping with the PIR Center's non-governmental and independent outlook, I was also able to state my views and assessments freely and publicly.

Almost six months on, let us take a more careful look at the actual details of the compromise, rather than the triumphant headlines.



The Conference produced 64 recommended steps that should be undertaken by the NPT members over the next five years. The binding nature of these recommendations was somewhat compromised by a footnote in Part I of the Final Document saying that this review “is the responsibility of the President and reflects to the best of his knowledge what transpired with regard to matters of review.” In other words, address all complaints to the president. That was the price of the compromise.

As for the key plot points of the NPT conference drama, there were two: nuclear disarmament, and the Middle East.

On *disarmament*, a few things stand out:

- ❑ The nuclear-weapon states (NWS) commit to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed (Action 3).
- ❑ The Russian Federation and the United States commit to seek the early entry into force and full implementation of the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (see the commentary by the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance, and Implementation Rose Gottemoeller who was the head of the U.S. delegation to the START negotiations) and are encouraged to continue discussions on follow-on measures in order to achieve deeper reductions in their nuclear arsenals (Action 4).
- ❑ The NWS commit to: rapidly moving towards an overall reduction in the global stockpile of all types of nuclear weapons; further diminishing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies; considering the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon states in further reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons systems in ways that promote international stability and security (Action 5).
- ❑ All NWS undertake to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty with all expediency (Action 10).
- ❑ All NWS are encouraged to agree as soon as possible on a standard reporting form and to determine appropriate reporting intervals for the purpose of voluntarily providing standard information without prejudice to national security. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is invited to establish a publicly accessible repository, which shall include the information provided by the NWS (Action 21).

It has to be recognized that on the disarmament front, not much progress was made compared to the outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Several nations, not least Russia, were not prepared to add to the list of actions some sensitive issues such as tactical nuclear weapons. They were also unwilling to take more specific steps on improving transparency. Sadly, some of the important proposals made during the conference, including a ban on increasing the numerical size of nuclear arsenals and on stationing nuclear weapons outside national territory, fell off the back of the wagon. No tangible progress was made towards a convention on banning nuclear weapons. The formulations in all these areas were vague—but that does not mean that all of these issues were lost in the verbiage. I have no doubt, for example, that this was the last NPT Review Conference not to have adopted a step-by-step plan of action on nuclear disarmament. Transparency and specific steps towards the *nuclear zero* are also certain to be discussed more actively in the coming years during the preparatory committees ahead of the next review conferences and at many other venues.

The *Middle East* section of the Final Document was a hard slog for everyone involved. With only two days left before the end of the conference, the Americans were refusing to accept any mention of Israel in the text. But first Joe Biden had a dinner with the Arab ambassadors in Washington; and then, on the eve of the final day, Barak Obama himself became involved. Only then was the political decision made to allow a mention of Israel (only one, and very cautious to that). The end result had “designed by committee” stamped all over it: “The Conference recalls the reaffirmation by the 2000 Review Conference of the importance of Israel’s accession to the Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards.”

But that awkward phrase was enough to clear the path towards a crucial compromise. The participants agreed to convene a conference in 2012, to be attended by all states of the Middle

East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, “on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region.” The Final Document goes on to say that the 2012 conference “shall take as its terms of reference the 1995 Resolution.” The ungrateful task of preparing the event—which could potentially become a milestone but is more likely to be a flop—has been entrusted to the UN Secretary-General, as well as the U.S., Britain and Russia, the co-sponsors of the 1995 Middle East resolution. The practical work in the run-up to the conference will be carried out by a specially appointed “mediator.” It is quite likely that a Russian representative will be chosen for that role because Russia proposed a set of initiatives on the Middle East back in 2009, which have now been reflected and augmented in the 2010 document.

Meanwhile, Israel continues to ignore the invitations of the NPT members. It is not taking any part in the preparations for the 2012 conference. To the best of my knowledge, Iran has also taken a wait-and-see attitude. Apart from their big plans on nuclear energy, both countries already have active nuclear programs. Israel’s program is military; the county has a nuclear arsenal of 60 or more deployed warheads. Iran’s is predominantly peaceful, but it appears to have a significant military component. Without the participation of these two countries, the 2012 conference will be a waste of time.

But it is important not to admit defeat before the fight has even begun. The task of building peace in the Middle East was never going to be easy. A lot of useful experience has already been accumulated, especially in the early 1990s, on the proposal to declare a WMD-free zone in the region. So there is no need now to reinvent the wheel. Many of the constructive and still relevant ideas from the documents signed at the time (and there is Israel’s signature too on many of those documents) should be updated and put on the agenda of the 2012 conference. And let us not forget about the importance of political will: without it, the participation of “all States of the Middle East,” as the 2010 Final Document stipulates, will not be possible.

“The seeds of hope have been sown.” That is how the head of the Canadian delegation described the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. I concur. No monumental breakthroughs were achieved—but then again, none were expected. A more positive atmosphere on the treaty, a confirmation of its viability which I’m sure all the participants can agree on—these positive outcomes alone are sufficient to start working, without any great fanfare, on all the problems accumulated over the years. The one thing that should not be allowed is a repeat of the mistake made in 1995, when after the NPT was extended indefinitely, everyone relaxed into doing nothing.

“You have actually adopted a Final Document? I don’t believe it!” The senior official on the other end of the line was truly perplexed, as if he actually thought he had somehow misheard me. But that was true—the conference really had passed the Final Document. And by doing so, it had overcome skepticism. It had cleared the path for slow but steady progress.

* * *

Our readers are quite used to discussions about the ways forward on nuclear disarmament. But the article “The Great Nuclear Game of the 21st Century: Disarmament or War?” by Col. Alexander Radchuk, a member of the PIR Center Advisory Board and Advisor to the Chief of General Staff in the Russian armed forces, offers a new angle on that debate. In his detailed road map for universal nuclear disarmament, he also outlines every possible pitfall along the way. And as the list of those pitfalls grows, the reader might be excused for asking whether nuclear disarmament is possible at all. And I don’t mean now—we are realists, after all, and we fully subscribe to what Obama said: “not in our lifetime.” But is it actually possible even in the very long term?

* * *

In this issue of the *Security Index* we continue developing the topic of the future European security architecture, started with the articles by Vladimir Voronkov,² Kseniya Smertina,³ and Nadezhda Arbatova⁴ in the previous issues of the journal. Now Dmitry Danilov offers an analysis of the prospects for the signing of the European Security Treaty in his article “The European Security



Treaty within the EU–United States–NATO Triangle”. He looks at the core interests which Russia and the EU share, and offers ways of reducing the list of the remaining differences. Put all together, these pieces of analysis produce the impression that the year 2010 has a good chance of bridging the gap between Russia and the EU, and—to no lesser extent—between Russia and NATO. Another key issue that is becoming as important as the Russian initiative is the efforts being made by our two key allies on European security in the post-Soviet space, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Working together with our partners in Ukraine and allies in Kazakhstan rather than pressing ahead with competing initiatives—that is one of the new and very important goals for Russian diplomacy in Europe and Eurasia. 

Vladimir Orlov

NOTES

¹ See the blog page of PIR Center’s President Vladimir Orlov (in Russian only) at: <http://pircenter.org/blog>.

² Vladimir Voronkov, “The European Security Treaty after Corfu,” *Security Index* 1(90) (Winter 2010), pp. 61–64.

³ Kseniya Smertina, “Reform of the European Security Architecture: Russian Proposals and the European Context,” *Security Index* 2(91) (Spring 2010), pp. 61–76.

⁴ Nadezhda Arbatova, “Frozen Conflicts and European Security,” *Security Index* 3(92) (Summer 2010), pp. 51–60.