

Concerted Action Needed on Nonproliferation

By Roland Timerbaev and Vladimir Orlov

On Monday, a conference on the review of the implementation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty opens in New York. This is the first conference since the May 1995 decision on indefinite extension of the NPT.

In the last five years, a regression in the course of nonproliferation has taken place. Some decisions of the 1995 conference have not been fulfilled. This is why many leading experts think the best outcome for the upcoming NPT conference would be an absence of outcome, i.e., getting through the heated debates and many delegations' confrontational sentiments during the forum; not making any final decisions; preserving the status quo; and postponing practical nonproliferation steps for the future.

Russia and the United States were among the key authors of the decisions made at the 1995 NPT conference. Major expectations regarding progress in implementation of conference decisions have rested on them. Key decisions to be fulfilled relate to the universality of the treaty and to compliance with provisions concerning disarmament.

On the universality issue, one can hardly expect any significant progress. Although the NPT is the most representative among all effective international treaties, four states — India, Pakistan, Israel and Cuba — remain beyond the scope of the treaty. One can't expect a miracle to occur in the few days before the conference: Neither the Asian nations nor Israel have made any step, or will make even half a step, toward the NPT. They are free from NPT commitments and pursue their own national interests, sometimes very successfully.

The second group of issues at the conference involves commitments by nuclear-weapon states concerning nuclear arms reduction.

Even with last week's START II ratification, the situation here appears gloomy. START II will probably not enter into force soon because the U.S. Senate has refused to approve the protocols to the treaty. START III talks have not yet begun. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty hasn't entered into

force: The U.S. Senate failed to ratify the treaty, and the Russian State Duma has yet to consider it. Negotiations on the Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty have been blocked. Finally, the risk of problems with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty exists, since the United States plans to deploy a national missile defense system.

Paradoxically, we not have come to a dead end, but to a crossroads. A breakthrough in disarmament is possible; this may be the time for seeking new solutions to nonproliferation problems. And Russia may play a key part in this breakthrough.

Russia has a core interest in preserving and strengthening NPT and the nuclear nonproliferation

mutually acceptable transparency to prevent the use of reverse potential.

- The ABM Treaty remains effective and preserves the current ban on deploying ABM systems for the defense of territory and providing a base for such a defense. At the same time, the parties may agree to designate two areas of limited missile defense deployment with the same number of interceptor missiles, as provided in the original ABM text. Hence, the amendments would deal with ABM deployment sites, which may be chosen by the parties but not necessarily in or near the capitals or in silo intercontinental ballistic missile-launcher deployment sites as provided for by the treaty. This could be

tion of China and some other states on creating a subsidiary body on preventing the proliferation of the arms race into outer space.

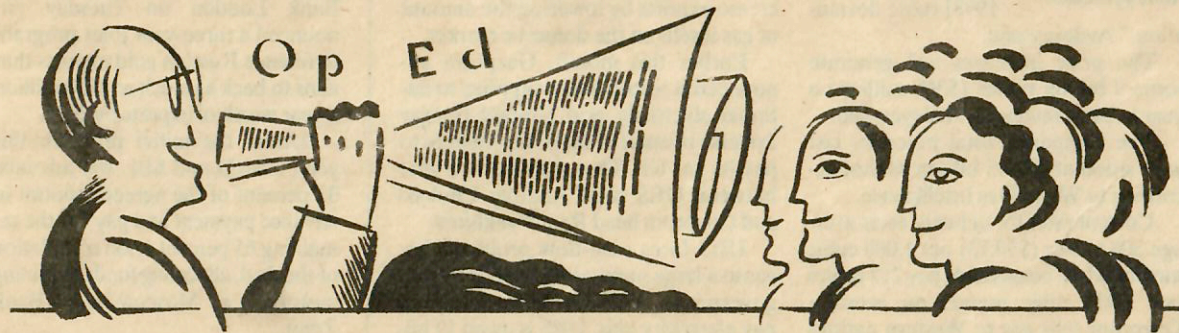
- Russia ratifies CTBT during the Duma's spring session.
- The United States abandons the policy of imposing sanctions against Russian enterprises and companies accused of breaching export controls and existing sanctions are lifted.
- Russia demonstrates more transparency in biological-weapons elimination and the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention.
- The United States significantly increases the amount of assistance to Russia under the Cooperative Threat Reduction programs.

- Russia delineates state policy on weapons of mass destruction nonproliferation, which would put an end to attempts of certain ministries to pursue their own interests. An appropriate interagency body or presidential authority is established.

Implementation of these measures does not depend on Russia alone. But Russia should put forward the complex nonproliferation initiative. A favorable atmosphere in the Duma in the wake of START II ratification would make this initiative even more convincing.

Some wonder why Russia should cooperate with other nuclear-weapon states at the upcoming NPT conference. True, with START II ratified and a plan for further radical cuts ready, the temptation to attend the conference with a holier-than-thou attitude and to become estranged from the United States is nearly irresistible. But Russian diplomats should demonstrate self-control and ward off this temptation. The refusal to participate in concerted efforts with other nuclear "haves" would transform a tactical gain into a strategic loss, since the essence of the NPT would be undermined, something that eventually runs counter to Russian interests.

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regime. According to results of an all-Russian opinion poll conducted at the request of the PIR Center, 78 percent of Russians support continued nuclear nonproliferation endeavors. Even throughout terrible economic difficulties, Russia has never violated the NPT and has not transferred nuclear weapons or their components to other states. Russia has managed to resist this temptation and is now vitally interested in maintaining productive, continuous dialogue with the United States on key nonproliferation issues.

For that purpose, the following concerted (and sometimes unilateral) efforts could be implemented:

- Initiated at the Putin-Clinton summit, official START III talks lead to a treaty signing this year. START III envisages the reduction of strategic offensive arms to 1,500 warheads for each state, with subsequent elimination of nuclear warheads under

achieved by making amendments to the ABM protocol reducing the number of sites from two to one.

- Russia and the United States sum up in public the provisional results of the 1991-92 unilateral initiatives on tactical nuclear weapons and make further unilateral statements confirming prior intentions and perhaps forming an implementation schedule.
- All nuclear-weapon states make unilateral declarations on nondeployment of nuclear weapons outside their national territory, in the spirit of NPT.
- Efforts intensify to implement the 1996 Trilateral Initiative to verify weapons-usable fissile material.
- Obstacles to FMCT negotiations in Geneva should be removed. Nuclear-weapon states should be flexible in setting up the corresponding committee at the conference if non-nuclear weapon states insist on a parallel establishment of other subsidiary bodies on nuclear disarmament issues. It would be reasonable to take into account the posi-

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