



# Assessing the “nuclear spring”

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## The US Nuclear Posture Review

- // The NPR was a slight disappointment: While it uphold the goal and vision of a nuclear weapons free world, it is rather conservative on the US nuclear posture:
  - // It re-emphasized the need for deterrence and a robust nuclear weapons complex as long as nuclear weapons exist;
  - // it continued with a first use option;
  - // it maintained the strategic triad and the need for substrategic nuclear weapons.
- // On the plus side, it showed some moderate changes:
  - // It constrains the possibility of nuclear use to nuclear weapon states and NPT non-nuclear weapon states in breach of their treaty obligations;
  - // it envisages the inclusion of sub-strategic nuclear weapons in arms control, reduction and elimination talks with Russia;
  - // It indicates the possibility to grant extended deterrence by nuclear strategic or even conventional means;
  - // it recognizes the security concerns by Russia and China and seeks a cooperative strategic relationship to those countries.

## The NSTART Treaty

- // The new strategic nuclear arms treaty has been criticized for all too moderate reductions: These reductions are less than meets the eye.
- // This criticism is factually correct, but misses the point about the agreement: The main thing is that it is there, and less so what is in it.
- // The treaty restarts a stalemated process. It replaces the Moscow Treaty which was a travesty of arms control. It upholds the START I verification system with some simplification and facilitation.
- // The recognition by the parties that there is a stability-relevant relation between strategic *defense* and *offense*, and between strategic *conventional* and strategic *nuclear* capabilities may open space for strategic dialogue aiming at bridging the vast differences.
- // ICBMs converted to conventional missions are counted against NSTART limits.
- // The parties have agreed to move forward to the next step, including further substantial reductions
- // The US ratification process revealed both the potential to win over centrist Republicans and the cost of such compromise: 80 bn US \$ for the nuclear weapons complex.

## The 2010 NPT Review I

- // The Conference did not fail – after the 2005 disaster, this is (almost) the main thing.
- // Getting a consensus final document was the pivotal objective of the Obama Administration.
- // The final document is a compromise at the lowest common denominator – with the exception of the „practical steps“ towards a Middle East NWFZ.
- // With the mentioning of the results of the 2000 REVCON, the main bone of contention of 2005 was removed.
- // In disarmament, the only new thing is the passing mentioning of a nuclear weapon convention and an indirect call on the NWS to refrain from qualitative improvements in nuclear weapons and from new warhead designs.
- // There is little new for the non-proliferation toolbox. The Additional Protocol was mentioned, and compliance was emphasized, but this was virtually all.
- // Attempts to move the NWS towards time-bound disarmament steps failed. In non-proliferation, Western efforts to persuade the NAM to accept the Additional protocol as verification standard, to agree to new procedures in case of a withdrawal from the Treaty, and to emphasize the role of the UNSC in enforcement all failed.

## The 2010 NPT Review II

- // The Conference once more proved incapable to deal appropriately with non-compliance cases. Iran was not even mentioned as that would have provoked an Iranian veto against the final declaration, and as Iran also enjoyed a degree of NAM solidarity.
- // The NWS were not willing to make concessions in disarmament for the sake of strengthening non-proliferation, the NAM were not willing to strengthen the non-proliferation toolbox in order to get more on nuclear disarmament. This indicates that for either side, the NPT is not the high priority it should be.
- // Egypt, the master of the game, pursued one issue single-mindedly: getting something on the Middle East. When this was achieved, Egypt delivered the NAM despite meagre results on disarmament and negative security assurances.
- // The Conference betrayed the skillful diplomatic manouevering of the NAM leaders, Egypt and Brazil, a rather subdued US acting more behind than on the scene, an impotent EU with France pushing for its national interests as an „eternal“ nuclear weapon state, and an increasingly isolated Iran which was eventually boxed into compromise by Egypt and Brazil.

## Risks to the future disarmament process

- // Anti-disarmament political forces in the United States
- // Nuclear nationalism in Russia and France, India and Pakistan
- // Intransparency and great power ambitions by China
- // Israeli security obsessions and domestic politics
- // Iran's radical government's brute anti-Israelism and nuclear ambitions
- // North Korean incalculability
- // Vested interests of nuclear bureaucracies in all nuclear weapon states
- // Insistence on nuclear deterrence and first use by NATO
- // Stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament
- // Lack of public and media interest

## What is needed

- // New political coalitions
  - // coalitions of governments across established groups (NATO/non-NATO; North/South)
  - // coalitions across fixated political formations (pacifists with security establishments; media with activists; foundations with disarmament-willing businesspeople, interreligious coalitions, NGOs with governments etc.).
- // Sustainable campaigns, carried by these coalitions
- // Visible, salient actions in the Greenpeace style
- // Blaming, shaming and, if needed, calls for economic boycotts against countries most resistant to nuclear disarmament steps
- // Material transnational support in the next US election campaign for reasonable candidates
- // Diplomatic campaigns by likeminded governments