



**THE NPT REVCON 2015: TIME TO BE MORE AMBITIOUS**  
**White Paper “Towards Nuclear Disarmament: NPT Article VI and**  
**Implementation of the 2010 Review Conference Decisions,” ed.**  
**by Alexander Kolbin and Maxim Starchak, PIR Center, Moscow,**  
**5 LLC “CPU “Raduga”, 2014**  
*Reviewed by Tariq Rauf*

The non-governmental White Paper prepared by the PIR Center was the focus of a discussion organized at the margins of the 2014 NPT PrepCom in New York in May 2014.

The objective of the White Paper as it appears from its text is to remind the NPT States Parties of their collective and individual obligations pursuant to Article VI of the NPT. Over the years, a universal consensus among NPT States has emerged that the Treaty is the cornerstone of the nuclear arms control and disarmament system. At the 2000 NPT Review Conference the States Parties agreed on “practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI” and paragraphs 3 and 4(c) of the 1995 Decision on Principles and Objectives (the 13 Steps), including an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon states (NWS) to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all states parties are committed under Article VI.

In 2010, the States Parties agreed to “Conclusions and Recommendations for Follow-on Actions” to the Treaty, taking into account the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference decisions and resolution—64 actions in all. However, many of those actions are not really “actions” per se, including an “action plan on nuclear disarmament which includes concrete steps for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.”<sup>1</sup>

Though noble in intent, as the Mexican delegate recalled, citing the UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld, the 2010 Action Plan “does not take us to heaven, but distances us from hell—the hell of nuclear catastrophe.” There are 64 actions in all across the three pillars of the Treaty, but there is no discrete cohesive “Action Plan on Disarmament.” Indeed, there are some 22 “actions” listed under Section I on Nuclear Disarmament—a mix of “principles”, “objectives”, exhortations, and “actions”—which reflects the confusion prevailing at the 2010 Review Conference and the hasty cobbling together of the excellent reports of the Chairs on the Subsidiary Bodies to the Main Committees into the Final Document.

Thus, it is no surprise that the non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS) are deeply disappointed at the lack of implementation of the actions agreed in 2010. Just as the 1995 “Principles and Objectives” were not fully implemented, nor were the “practical steps” agreed in 2000, the 2010 “actions” have fallen by the wayside—unfortunately.

What lessons can be learned? First, and most important of all, it should be abundantly clear that the NWS simply would not implement the agreements reached at NPT Review Conferences. Their strategic dynamics and calculus are different; the NWS have shown already that they will negotiate and implement nuclear reductions in forums other than the NPT. They will agree to seemingly far-reaching steps, undertakings, or actions at the NPT Conferences, with difficulty, albeit to secure commitments from the NNWS on the non-proliferation and verification pillar, and on nuclear safety and nuclear security.

Hence, once again, at the next NPT Review Conference, the NNWS will berate the NWS on their failings and will strive to push the nuclear disarmament benchmarks even further. In 2015, the Humanitarian Initiative on the Consequences of Nuclear Weapon Detonations will dominate on the agenda, alongside Middle East nuclear/WMD-free zone issues and the new



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tensions between the West and Russia. It is unlikely that much progress could be achieved in 2015 or that the NWS will undertake to fulfill their existing commitments, let alone take on new ones.

The PIR Center's White Paper, benefiting from the views of well-known experts, provides a mixed score card on the implementation of the 2000 and 2010 commitments on nuclear disarmament. The report includes a useful tally of the actions implemented in part or in full, or not implemented, by the NWS and the four other nuclear-weapon possessor states.

The White Paper attempts to provide a good news picture of The P5 and NPT Article VI. It seems that it really should be retitled "The NWS and NPT Article VI," since P5 is not a term recognized or sanctioned by the NPT. This assessment shows that the NWS have signed up to some global treaties, including the CTBT and the Outer Space Treaty, but does not include other global treaties such as the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) of 1963, the Seabed Arms Control Treaty of 1971, and the Moon Treaty of 1979. It includes the bilateral Russian–U.S. treaties and the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives (PNIs), as well as the unilateral reductions by France and the UK. All this is quite useful. What would be also useful for the 2015 Review Conference is a detailed accounting of the reductions between 2010 and 2015, and 1995 and 2010. While the NWS finally agreed to a common reporting framework and submitted reports at the 2014 NPT PrepCom, the data provided in the reports are insufficient and not clearly presented. A hypothetical update of the PIR Center's White Paper for 2015 should take these issues into account, as well as the meager results of the work of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on launching multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, as well as of the Group of Governmental Experts on a Fissile Material Treaty (FMT).

The White Paper concludes with an ambitious list of "12 Steps Towards Launching Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament." Among the four steps to be taken by 2015, only the first one—on recommitment to the NPT—could be done at the 2015 Review Conference. Under the present circumstances, the remaining four steps are unlikely to be concluded. This has spillover effects on the four steps slated for 2016–2018, unless Russia's relations with the United States and the West improve and return to normalcy quite soon.

It is also clear that the USA will be unable to move on ratification of the CTBT until at least 2018. By that time there will be no complete clarity on whether the CTBT will still be viable if the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and other nuclear-weapon possessor states carry out additional nuclear tests. Postponing discussion on a common strategic language or terminology on nuclear weapons to 2025 is likely to push the goal of multilateral nuclear disarmament to beyond the middle of this century—thus indirectly enabling the continuation of nuclear weapon systems to at least the end of the twenty-first century. Such a scenario rather lends truth to President Obama's lament of "not in my lifetime."

The PIR Center could be more ambitious in its revision and update of the White Paper for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. It might usefully examine somewhat shorter timelines even though the dark clouds of a new Cold war might be gathering on the distant horizon. But it is the responsibility of civil society to show hope and light the beacon to strengthen weakening diplomacy. 

## NOTE

<sup>1</sup> See: "2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons," Final Document, Volume II, General Assembly of the United Nations, p. 616, Recommendation 56, < [<http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=NPT/CONF.2010/50%20\(VOL.%20II\)>](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=NPT/CONF.2010/50%20(VOL.%20II)), last accessed August 26, 2014.