

*Conference Presentation Notes (Presentation delivered on 14 November 2013; Amman, Jordan)*

**Conference Title:** WMD and Security Forum: WMDFZ in the Middle East – Impact on Global Non-Proliferation Efforts

**Presentation Title:** *The 'humanitarian initiative' on disarmament and the 2015 NPT review process*

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## **Introduction**

Since the 2010 NPT Review Conference the 'humanitarian dimension' initiative addressing the disarmament pillar of the NPT is gaining strength and momentum within the non-proliferation regime, including within the NPT review process. The initiative is supported by states whom are deeply concerned by the consequences of use of nuclear weapons and who wish to highlight and address the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Stressing the 'unacceptable humanitarian consequences caused by the immense, uncontrollable destructive capability and indiscriminate nature of these weapons', the states supporting and engaging in this initiative are re-focusing attention for progress towards the goal of nuclear disarmament on this dimension. The initiative aims to refocus the urgency of renewed attention on disarmament on the basis of the catastrophic and indiscriminate effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design, which cannot be adequately addressed. In doing so, the initiative stresses the immediate and long-term implications for 'the environment, socio-economic development, economies and health of future generations'. Instead of focusing on military security issues and calculations which dominate strategic deterrence assessments, the initiative highlights the consequences of detonation on human security issues including, food, water and resource security.

## **Growing Momentum of the 'Initiative'**

Since the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the humanitarian dimension initiative on nuclear disarmament has gained a broad range of state support and/or engagement in relevant activities, including: NPT NNWS (across various regions/NPT groupings); 4 NPT NATO member states; and 2 non-NPT nuclear weapons states (via participation in the 2013 Oslo conference). The 2010 NPT Review Conference Final Document affirmed its states parties consensus on the "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons". At the 2012 NPT PrepCom, a statement echoing the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament, led by Switzerland, gained the support of 16 states. The 2012 UNGA 67<sup>th</sup> Session First Committee statement, also led by Switzerland, gained the support of 35 states. On 4-5 March 2013, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hosted an international conference in Oslo on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, at which 128 states participated, including two non-NPT states (India and Pakistan). At the 2013 NPT PrepCom, a statement, led by South Africa, gained support from 80 states parties. Most recently, at the 2013 UNGA 68<sup>th</sup> Session First Committee, a statement, led by New Zealand was supported by 125 states of the UNGA. The 2013 First Committee statement co-sponsored by 125 UN states, stressed that 'the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again is through their total elimination. All states share the responsibility to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, to prevent their vertical and horizontal proliferation & to achieve nuclear disarmament, including through fulfilling the objectives of the NPT and achieving its universality.' A group of 17 states, led by Australia, submitted a separate joint statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons to the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNGA's First Committee. Welcoming the humanitarian dimension initiative's statement led by New

Zealand, this smaller group of states also highlighted the 'devastating immediate and long-term humanitarian impacts of a nuclear weapon detonation' but stressed that 'banning nuclear weapons by itself will not guarantee their elimination without engaging substantively and constructively those states with nuclear weapons, and recognising both the security and humanitarian dimensions of the nuclear weapons debate'. Of note, Japan—who earlier this year received public criticism for not supporting the joint statement to the 2013 NPT PrepCom—formally supported both statements on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons at the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNGA First Committee.

The March 2013 Oslo Conference was fact-based discussion on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, attended by 128 states, ICRC, UN humanitarian organizations and members of civil society. Its stated aim was to 'deepen collective understanding of consequences' and concluded that 'no state or international body could address the immediate humanitarian emergency caused by a nuclear weapon detonation or provide adequate assistance to victims'. The 5 NPT nuclear weapons states, the P5, boycotted the Oslo conference. As indicated by UK FCO e-mails, disclosed via a FOI request by an NGO, the P5 consulted amongst each other and took a collective decision not to participate in the Oslo conference. The stated rationale by the P5 for not participating was concern that the conference 'will divert discussion away from practical steps to create conditions for further nuclear reductions' (i.e. the step-by-step P5 process). Furthermore, the P5 explained they already 'understand the consequences' of nuclear detonation.

Beyond the P5 declaratory statement, one could argue that the dismissive approach to the humanitarian initiative (as well as the Open-Ended Working Group), but the Oslo conference in particular, is that the P5 are concerned that the initiative will gain further momentum and is the start of process to delegitimize and ban nuclear weapons. The P5 want to manage the direction and focus of the discourse on disarmament within the P5 process. The dismissive discourse by the P5 in regards to the humanitarian initiative is already having lamentable implications for the NPT review process as such a dismissive approach detrimentally affects 'atmospherics' in an already delicate multilateral diplomatic process. The P5 cartel/bloc behaviour and solidarity exhibited and evidenced in respect to their collective decision not to participate in the Oslo conference and their dismissive posture towards the initiative is lamentable and unconstructive to setting a positive tone for multilateral diplomacy. It particularly leads to criticism by some already frustrated NNWS of the NPT review process and adds fuel to arguments promoted by civil society.

### **Nuanced support for the 'humanitarian initiative': two tracks**

Nuanced and distinct support exists within the 'humanitarian initiative'. There goals or ends of those distinctly nuanced supporters are at this time very different. The support base for the initiative could be described as two tracks or camps of support. One track of the support base aims at raising awareness of consequences, and wish to promote the reduction of salience of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. This includes those NATO states which are supporting the initiative. These "salience-reduction promoters" argue that the initiative does not undermine existing multilateral or bilateral disarmament mechanisms. The second track of supporters are comprised of some NPT non-nuclear weapons states (and civil society) who reaffirm their abhorrence of nuclear weapons and whose ultimate aim is to delegitimize nuclear weapons on par with CBW & other weapons deemed to be unacceptable. This track of supporters comprise those states (and civil society groups) who see the humanitarian initiative as the pathway to delegitimizing nuclear weapons with an end-state of a ban on nuclear weapons.

Although some civil society groups may be already branding the humanitarian initiative as a defacto paradigm shift of the social construct on nuclear weapons policy and specifically nuclear deterrence, the

extent to which this has replaced the dominant paradigm on how states view nuclear weapons remains very much divided. Four NATO states, Iceland, Denmark, Luxembourg and Norway, co-sponsored statement at 2013 NPT PrepCom. Japan & Australia did not support 2013 PrepCom statement reportedly due to their sensitivities about extended nuclear deterrence arrangements. The extent to which NATO and nuclear umbrella states can reconcile their support for the 'humanitarian initiative' with their continued dependency on extended nuclear deterrence is an interesting aspect to assess. Are these postures fundamentally compatible?

### **Benefits for the non-proliferation and disarmament regime**

Given the cross-regional and cross-grouping support for the humanitarian initiative within both the NPT review process and the broader non-proliferation and disarmament regime, the initiative can induce positive benefits for the regime. As evidenced by India and Pakistan's participation in the March 2013 Oslo conference, such conferences, separate from the NPT review process, can include engagement of non-NPT states on issues and dialogue relating to nuclear weapons in the broader non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Given the deadlock at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva, such processes as external conferences of the humanitarian initiative, hosted by the Norwegian and Mexican governments, can circumvent the current stalemate at CD and facilitate dialogue on these salient issues.

The humanitarian initiative is not a competing process or diversion from the existing disarmament (multilateral P5 process) and arms control (bilateral US-Russia strategic reduction process). The humanitarian initiative can co-exist as a layered approach to complement progress on the disarmament pillar of the NPT and the broader regime. Similar to the multi-layered approach to the non-proliferation pillar and its aims, which include the Nuclear Security Summit process, Proliferation Security Initiative and UNSCR 1540, UN sanctions amongst other unilateral efforts, the regime's disarmament goal can similarly be complemented by a layered approach of complementary efforts.

One clear benefit from the initiative and the dimensions it highlights is the 'unwrapping' of the strategic construct and discourse that surrounds deterrence policy and doctrines on the nuclear weapons security discourse. Such unpicking of language may deconstruct the social construct surrounding nuclear weapons policy and may lead to a more honest dialogue on these weapons and their catastrophic power. The reaffirmations of abhorrence and concern with the catastrophic consequences of nuclear use are similarly a positive benefit as commitments to disarmament and non-proliferation. These formal declarations and affirmations by states parties in the NPT review process and in the UN General Assembly can serve as confidence-building measures. Such declaratory statements could be construed to be similar to the Iranian fatwa against the development of nuclear weapons, but formal statements in multilateral diplomatic fora could indeed serve to build confidence as they confirm the declaratory views of states in regards to nuclear weapons.

### **Future engagement in 'humanitarian dimension' initiative?**

The Mexican government is hosting the follow-up international conference on humanitarian consequences on nuclear weapons, scheduled for 13-14 February 2014. Whether any of the nuclear weapons states will participate in the Nayarit conference is yet to be determined. Similarly, what NPT states parties formally support and co-sponsor the 'humanitarian initiative' statement at the 2014 NPT PrepCom, and the 2014 69th Session of the UNGA First Committee remains unknown. Analysts and regime watchers will be keen to

follow how this initiative will develop and potentially have implications for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. This will largely depend on the direction and focus which the initiative will evolve into.

#### **Middle East regional engagement with the 'humanitarian dimension' initiative**

Given the theme of this conference, I thought it would be prudent to highlight the regional engagement with the humanitarian dimension initiative on nuclear disarmament. Engagement by the states of the Middle East with the initiative, including via formal support of the joint statements at the UNGA's First Committee or the NPT PrepComs (as well as participation in the initiative's Oslo conference) has increased since the 2012 NPT PrepCom. The regional engagement with the initiative's statements and Oslo conference is highlighted in yellow in the table (*refer to attached PDF*) providing an overview of state engagement in the initiative's activities. (The Middle East region for these purposes was defined as members of the League of Arab States, Iran and Israel.) The 2013 UNGA First Committee joint statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons which was supported by 125 states, included support from 13 Middle East states (Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen). The joint statement to the 2013 NPT PrepCom which was supported by 80 NPT states parties, included 11 Middle East states (Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia, Yemen). The March 2013 Oslo conference was attended by 15 states from the Middle East (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen). In 2012, the joint statement to the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the UNGA's First Committee, which was supported by 35 states, included the support from two states from the Middle East (Algeria and Egypt). Earlier in 2012, the joint statement to the 2012 NPT PrepCom, which was supported by 16 NPT states parties, included support from one state from the Middle East (Egypt).

Given that the Middle East region has in its own neighbourhood an undeclared nuclear weapons possessor—Israel—who is not party to the NPT, the humanitarian dimension initiative could prove a positive channel for states of the region to highlight their concern with the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons detonation, whether intentional or accidental. Furthermore, by supporting joint statements at the UNGA and the NPT meetings on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, regional states would be affirming their non-proliferation pledge and commitments. Such formal affirmation of regional concern with the appalling humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons would in turn be a confidence-building measure which could lend to ameliorate concerns about any nuclear ambitions by states in the region. The initiative's associated conferences, such as the Oslo one earlier this year and the upcoming conference in Mexico in 2014, may be possible fora to engage the non-NPT states in dialogue on nuclear weapons, away from the formal confines and political stage of the CD and the UNGA. Whilst India and Pakistan participated in the initiative's conference in Oslo, Israel did not. Given Israel's deliberate opaque nuclear status, however, it would be unlikely to participate in such conferences at an official level.

#### **Conclusion**

The initiative has been described as a 'train the P5 are not on-board'. To take this analogy further, this 'train' could be described to be a train currently comprised of two carriages. Those carriages include the two broad yet distinctly nuanced tracks of supporters of the initiative. The broad cross-grouping and cross-regional support and growing momentum for the humanitarian dimension initiative is one of its key strengths. If this initiative is not carefully managed, the carriages will separate and this dividing train will lose a significant set of passengers. If the humanitarian initiative is to sustain its broad base of support, particularly those more 'moderate' supporters, including NATO members and those states under extended nuclear deterrence

arrangements, and continued momentum, careful management of the initiative is required prevent its 'derailing'. One could argue that by failing to engage the initiative, the P5, the NWS, are missing an opportunity to engage, influence and gently steer the initiative in a direction or pace they may feel most comfortable with. The P5 could readily engage and contribute to the humanitarian impact discussions at the initiative's conferences by sharing their research and showcase insight on emergency and disaster response preparedness and capacity. Then again, the P5 may find it difficult to participate in conferences which may lead to 'uncomfortable' conclusions about the inability of states or any institution to address the consequences of nuclear use and the associated risks of such use.



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Overview of State Engagement in 'Humanitarian Dimension' Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament

Color coding= Middle East state

NATO state

non-NPT state

17 states	125 states	80 states	128 states	35 states	16 states
21 October 2013	21 October 2013	24 April 2013	4-5 March 2013	22 October 2012	02 May 2012
UNGA 68th session	UNGA 68th session	NPT PrepCom 2013	Oslo conf	UNGA 67th session	NPT PrepCom 2012
Amb Peter Woolcott	Amb Dell Higgie	Amb Abdul S. Minty		Amb Benno Laggner	Amb Benno Laggner
Australia	New Zealand	South Africa	Norway MFA	Switzerland	Switzerland
<a href="#">First Committee 2013</a>	<a href="#">First Committee 2013</a>	<a href="#">NPT PrepCom 2013</a>	<a href="#">Oslo March 2013 conf</a>	<a href="#">First Committee 2012</a>	<a href="#">NPT PrepCom 2012</a>
	Afghanistan		Afghanistan		
			Albania		
	Algeria	Algeria	Algeria	Algeria	
	Angola		Angola		
	Antigua and Barbuda				
	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	
			Armenia		
Australia			Australia		
	Austria	Austria	Austria	Austria	Austria
	Bahamas				
	Bahrain		Bahrain		
	Bangladesh	Bangladesh	Bangladesh	Bangladesh	
	Barbados				
	Belarus	Belarus	Belarus	Belarus	
<a href="#">Belgium</a>			<a href="#">Belgium</a>		
	Belize				
	Benin				
			Bhutan		
	Bolivia				
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina		
	Botswana	Botswana			
	Brazil	Brazil	Brazil	Brazil	



	Georgia			Georgia		Gambia		
Germany				Georgia		Georgia		
	Ghana			Ghana		Germany		
						Ghana		
	Grenada			Grenada		Greece		
	Guatemala			Guatemala				
	Guinea					Guatemala		
	Guinea Bissau					Guinea Bissau		
	Haiti							
	Holy See (observer state)			Holy See		Holy See	Holy See (observer state)	Holy See
	Honduras			Honduras		Honduras		
						Hungary		
	Iceland			Iceland		Iceland	Iceland	
						India		
	Indonesia			Indonesia		Indonesia	Indonesia	Indonesia
				Iran		Iran		
	Iraq					Iraq		
	Ireland			Ireland		Ireland	Ireland	Ireland
Italy						Italy		
	Jamaica			Jamaica		Jamaica		
Japan	Japan					Japan		
	Jordan			Jordan		Jordan		
	Kazakhstan			Kazakhstan		Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan	
	Kenya			Kenya				
	Kiribati							
				Kuwait		Kuwait		
						Kyrgyzstan		
	Lao PDR					Lao PDR		
Latvia						Latvia		
	Lebanon			Lebanon				
	Lesotho			Lesotho				
	Liberia					Liberia		
	Libya					Libya		



Lithuania	Liechtenstein	Liechtenstein	Lithuania	Liechtenstein
Luxembourg		Luxembourg	Luxembourg	
	Macedonia		Macedonia	
	Madagascar		Madagascar	
	Malawi			
	Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysia
	Maldives	Maldives		
	Mali		Mali	
	Malta	Malta		Malta
	Marshall Islands			Marshall Islands
	Mauritius	Mauritius	Mauritius	
	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico
	Mongolia		Mongolia	
	Montenegro		Montenegro	
	Morocco	Morocco	Morocco	
	Mozambique	Mozambique	Mozambique	
	Myanmar		Myanmar	
	Namibia	Namibia		
	Nauru			
	Nepal	Nepal	Nepal	
Netherlands			Netherlands	
	New Zealand	New Zealand	New Zealand	New Zealand
	Nicaragua	Nicaragua	Nicaragua	
	Niger	Niger		
	Nigeria	Nigeria	Nigeria	Nigeria
	Norway	Norway	Norway	Norway
			Pakistan	
	Palau	Palau		
	Panama	Panama		
	Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea		
	Paraguay	Paraguay	Paraguay	
	Peru	Peru	Peru	Peru
	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines

Poland				Poland		
Portugal				Portugal		
	Qatar	Qatar		Qatar		
				Republic of Korea		
				Republic of Moldova		
				Romania		
	Rwanda					
	Samoa	Samoa		Samoa		
				Sao Tome and Principe		
	San Marino					
				Saudi Arabia		
	Senegal			Senegal		
	Serbia	Serbia		Serbia		
	Seychelles					
	Sierra Leone			Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone	
	Singapore	Singapore				
Slovakia				Slovakia		
				Slovenia		
	Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands				
	South Africa	South Africa		South Africa	South Africa	South Africa
	South Sudan			South Sudan		
Spain				Spain		
				Sri Lanka		
				Sudan		
	Suriname					
	Swaziland	Swaziland		Swaziland	Swaziland	
Sweden				Sweden		
	Switzerland	Switzerland		Switzerland	Switzerland	Switzerland
				Tajikistan		

	Tanzania	Tanzania	Tanzania	Tanzania	
	Thailand	Thailand	Thailand	Thailand	
	Timor-Leste				
	Togo			Togo	
	Tonga		Tonga		
	Trinidad and Tobago		Trinidad and Tobago	Trinidad and Tobago	
	Tunisia		Tunisia	Tunisia	
Turkey				Turkey	
	Tuvalu			Tuvalu	
	Uganda		Uganda	Uganda	
	Ukraine		Ukraine	Ukraine	
	United Arab Emirates			United Arab Emirates	
	Uruguay		Uruguay		Uruguay
	Vanuatu			Vanuatu	
				Venezuela	
	Viet Nam			Viet Nam	
	Yemen		Yemen	Yemen	
	Zambia		Zambia	Zambia	Zambia
				Zimbabwe	