

EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Conference First Plenary Session- Strengthening the NPT

Chair Harald Mueller, Executive Director of the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, began the session with a tribute to Dr Therese Delpech, who passed away two weeks previously. Participants offered a moment's silence in her honour and memory. Noting that the review cycle for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was restarting this year, Mueller posited the need for new ideas. Not all the ideas subsequently discussed were novel, and some, such as arguments about deterrence, were only indirectly related to the NPT. Nevertheless, the two-hour session crystallised the key challenges faced by the treaty and pointed to useful paths forward. [Boguslaw Winid](#), Under Secretary of State for Poland, which just ended its EU Presidency, emphasised the need for a permanent role of the EU in non-proliferation process, and said the conference itself was a good sign.

Tactical nuclear weapons

In the nuclear disarmament field, Winid argued for giving priority to non-strategic (tactical) nuclear weapons, which no legally binding arms control agreement covers. Such weapons also constitute a challenge in terms of nuclear security, because they are more prone to proliferation by non-state actors than are strategic arms. From Poland's perspective, the problem was not 200-3,000 US tactical nuclear weapons in Europe but the 2,000-3,000 Russian weapons presumed to be similarly stationed on the continent. Asked why some Americans seem to believe that tactical nuclear weapons must stay in Europe to reassure allies such as Poland about US security guarantees, Winid said the way to resolve the disparity between US and Russian tactical nuclear weapons on the continent was to negotiate mutual and reciprocal steps to remove them. [David Hannay](#), Co-Convenor of the UK House of Lords All-Party Group on Global Security and Non-Proliferation, said that NATO should be ready by the time of its Chicago summit in May to put on the table a credible approach to removing tactical nuclear weapons from Europe. Mueller noted that Russian security concerns relevant to the size of Russia's sub-strategic arsenal would have to be addressed.

NPT review process

Frederic Journes, from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, urged countries to address procedural issues early in the upcoming NPT review process so that arms control discussions could commence in earnest in a step-by-step fashion. In this regard, he lauded the work the EU had done in promoting the 2012 Middle East Conference, and he encouraged further thinking on what the EU can do before the 2014 preparatory committee (PrepCom) to ensure that procedural issues are disposed of quickly before they could hijack the entire process.

Disarmament transparency

The 2010 Review Conference final document called on nuclear-weapon states to report on their implementation of disarmament steps to the PrepCom. Winid said that, in addition to providing data on numbers, types and locations of nuclear warheads, it was necessary to conduct discussions on the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines, politics and concepts. Noting the differences among some nuclear-weapon states on the degree of transparency, he suggested exploiting these differences to create a positive competition in openness and transparency among these states. Journes agreed that reporting by the nuclear weapons states would be key to a successful NPT review cycle, and suggested that the EU push for ensuring that all five recognised nuclear weapons states followed through with this reporting in 2014. He said France had questions about 'some movements that might be more ambitious and that may induce some of the five not to report or to remove themselves from that commitment'. Mueller suggested that the wisest path might be to agree on a phased system, starting with already publicised data, and then moving on to reports with greater depth. India and Pakistan should also be approached to share this sort of reporting.

Connection between non-proliferation and disarmament

All speakers recognised that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were mutually reinforcing. Winid said that progress on nuclear disarmament was not possible without strengthening nuclear non-proliferation politics and improving verification mechanisms. [George Perkovich](#), Senior Vice President for Studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Director of its Nuclear Policy Program, said the opposite was also true – especially in the eyes of a number of emerging powers, such as Brazil and Turkey. He warned that emerging powers were especially desirous of fair bargains between the haves and the have-nots, including in the nuclear sphere. They did not want to accept double standards regarding who could have and not have technologies such as uranium enrichment. Mueller contended that for non-proliferation steps to be accepted, a *quid pro quo* was needed in a literal sense in terms of what disarmament steps would be required. In a separate but related question and answer, he said the EU treatment of Turkey and the impact this had on general sensibilities in that country could affect whether Ankara believed in future that it needed an independent ‘hard-balancing’ capability.

Additional Protocol – NPT withdrawal clause

Several speakers said the IAEA must be strengthened, including by making the safeguards Additional Protocol universal, and that compliance of states with their non-proliferation obligations must be a high priority. Winid said that especially in light of the current Iranian situation, the NPT withdrawal clause should be tightened in the case of a country that sought to withdraw after being found to be in non-compliance with treaty provisions. Perkovich lamented that the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action plan omitted mention of this issue. Rogelio Pflirter, former Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, called the Additional Protocol indispensable, but cautioned that it will not become universal unless hold-outs are engaged as partners, rather than as latecomers to policies that are designed without their involvement.

MEWMDFZ

Although it would be the central topic of another conference plenary session, the subject of a Middle Eastern zone free of weapons of mass destruction (MEWMDFZ) was also discussed, because it will dominate the upcoming NPT review cycle. Winid cautioned that the conference on this matter scheduled for later this year would not bring instant results. Nevertheless, it was important to start the process. He noted that the seminar organised by the EU in July 2011 and the IAEA forum on a MEWMDFZ in November did their job in terms of bringing interested parties together and allowing them, for the first time, to have an informal exchange of views. Hannay agreed that preparations for the 2012 conference should be pursued with determination and realism, and that it needed to be seen as the start of a process which would last well beyond 2012, not as a make-or-break meeting or just as a venue for confrontation. He urged that the EU take substantial positions at the 2012 conference and other NPT-related events. Sameh Aboul-Enein from the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the American University of Cairo also encouraged a proactive EU role in the 2012 Conference, including further contributions by the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium. As an example of expectations for a strong EU stance, he noted the common perception in Egypt that the work of the Finnish facilitator, Ambassador Laajava, was part of the EU role. Mueller said the Consortium was ready to help, including by organising another event along the lines of the July EU seminar, if called upon to do so.

Impact of financial crisis

Hannay spoke of the difficult prospects for nuclear disarmament and the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, especially because of the tendency for countries to turn inwards and away from global challenges in the wake of the 2008 financial and economic crisis. The problem was not one of a lack of resources, but rather that countries’ attention was diverted and there was a danger that economic pressure might force them to take stances that ‘undermine the rules’. However, he noted that the euro-scepticism that had accelerated in the UK, fanned by the Euro crisis on the

continent, had not diminished London's proactive promotion of strong non-proliferation policies in the EU and disarmament measures in its national policies.

FMCT

Hannay said ways should be found to overcome the deadlock over opening negotiations for a FMCT, and noted that in the case of a similar problem over the CTBT a way was found of using the procedures of the UN General Assembly. Additionally, the five recognised nuclear-weapon states could begin consultations over the content of a cut-off treaty. Not everyone agreed, but he emphasised that something had to be done to get negotiations started.

Facilitating non-proliferation expertise

Perkovich noted the scarcity in the emerging powers of nuclear-policy experts in civil societies and media circles; he suggested that the EU and other states should encourage the development of nuclear expertise in those countries through the creation of networks of co-education. One idea would be to invite young talented scholars and officials from emerging powers into the international networks such as the EU Non-Proliferation Conference. Afterwards, Consortium members immediately took up this suggestion in planning for the next conference.