



Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty PrepCom, April 2004

PROLIFERATION CONTROL NO EXCUSE TO AVOID DISARMAMENT

Controlling who may or may not have access to nuclear materials, technology and information clearly has a key role to play in controlling the proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, this should not be seen as a replacement for solid quantitative and qualitative steps towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Sadly, the US Administration's recently announced non-proliferation policies do not support this view. Rather it views its current nuclear non-proliferation policies as of paramount importance and has little inclination to actively meet NPT disarmament obligations.

In a keynote speech in February 2004 President Bush announced to the world that "*America will not permit terrorists and dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most deadly weapons*". He then made seven proposals that, in his opinion, "*would strengthen the world's efforts to stop the spread of deadly weapons*".¹ His proposals and the truth behind them are set out below²:

1. An expanded Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)³;

PSI does not fit into the existing multilateral nuclear non-proliferation framework and could result in weakening existing arms control regimes such as the NPT. Most nations already have national or regional anti-proliferation laws and regulations that would result in most, if not all, of the measures proposed in the PSI; the PSI simply provides an alternative. Additionally, western countries that engage in proliferation of plutonium and nuclear technologies are excluded from any action being taken under the PSI, revealing the double standard underlying the initiative.

2. Criminalisation of proliferation by the UN Security Council, enforced through national laws;

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is technically supposed to do part of this but should be amended to ban pursuit of nuclear weapons and not just possession of completed weapons. What is actually required to is a universally accepted treaty that strengthens the sentiments and Articles of the NPT with inspection, verification and enforcement regimes

¹ Remarks by the President on Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation, Fort Lesley J McNair, National Defense University, Washington, DC, February 11, 2004

² See also our separate briefing paper on the G8 Global Partnership.

³ US led and supported by Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, and the United Kingdom

that adhere to existing international laws and norms. Likewise, a treaty banning all production of weapons-useable fissile materials is essential to controlling proliferation, yet the US refuses to call for a halt to reprocessing by western allies.

3. Expanded aid to Russia and states of the former Soviet Union to help secure their nuclear materials, weapons and waste;

While aid to the former Soviet Union to secure nuclear materials is called for, it must not be provided under the present international nuclear aid program. The current reality is that Russia's nuclear mafia has secured, with support from western nuclear industry and governments, a program that will expand the nuclear threat from Russia. Nuclear materials, in particular plutonium, will begin to enter commercial circulation in the future instead of being securely stored. Russia's aim is to expand reprocessing, begin large-scale use of plutonium fuel, and build fast breeder reactors. At the same time, the Russian Government is seeking to import tens of thousands of tons of nuclear reactor spent fuel for reprocessing and disposal⁴. The concept of an international nuclear dumpsite is supported by the IAEA and western nuclear industries – so clearly the problem is even bigger than just disarmament.

4. Renunciation of enrichment and reprocessing by States in return for cheaper nuclear fuel;

Cheaper nuclear fuel is neither a solution to effective non-proliferation or sustainable energy. All states need to renounce the production, possession and use of all weapons-useable fissile material and place all stocks under international control⁵. Unlike the U.S. initiative this would need to be applied universally, and without discrimination. An example of the immediate failure of the US proposal is the inaction by the US or IAEA over the start-up of Japan's massive new Rokkasho reprocessing facility, for which no need has been shown.

5. Access to technology for civil nuclear programmes limited to those States who have signed the IAEA Additional Protocol;

The additional Protocol is not a panacea that eliminates the risk posed by the proliferation of nuclear technology. Sanctioning nuclear trade provided states sign international conventions ignores the fundamental proliferation, security, safety and public health hazards posed by nuclear energy. The IAEA Additional Protocol is concerned it has been signed by less than half of NPT member States, has only entered into force in 39 countries as of the end of March 2004 and key states like Israel, India and Pakistan are outside of any international regime. An outright ban on certain technologies would be easier to enforce than controls over technologies easily shipped clandestinely.

6. A special committee of the IAEA Board to focus on the areas of safeguards and verification; and,

Safeguards as currently applied by the IAEA, especially at large nuclear facilities processing fissile material are incapable of meeting the Agency's own detection criteria (including timeliness goal). Asking the IAEA to assess safeguards and verification is equivalent to the fox being asked to guard the chicken coop.

7. Exclusion from the IAEA Board of Governors for countries who are under IAEA

⁴ "Russia's Nuclear Power Industry: Secrets of the Well known", by Gennadiy M Denisovskyi, Vladimir M Lupandin and Polina V Malysheva, Moscow, 2003, ISBN: 5-94442-006-5

⁵ See also separate Fissile Material Treaty briefing

investigation for potential breaches.

Rather than focusing on a few states that fall into the 'axis of evil' category, the international community, through the NPT and other institutions, need to address fundamental issues. Not least, is the dual purpose of the IAEA – to both promote nuclear technology, including the production and processing of weapons usable fissile material, and the proliferation of nuclear reactor technology against its safeguards role of seeking to detect diversion of the same materials from peaceful to military application. The contradictions were known at the dawn of the nuclear age and remain true today.

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