

Can nuclear weapons proliferation be avoided?

Presentation to Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

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What's gone wrong?

November 2008: President Obama elected.



April 2009: Obama declares his vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

November 2010: Non-Proliferation Treaty Review conference agrees action plan.

What's gone wrong?



January 2012: Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moves Doomsday Clock one minute closer to midnight because of 'inadequate progress on nuclear weapons reduction and proliferation'.

Roadmap for disarmament



- **New START and reduction in US- Russia warhead numbers.**
- **Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty into force.**
- **Fissile Materials treaty agreed.**
- **Nuclear Weapons Convention to ban nuclear weapons.**
 - **but progress has stalled.**

Obstruction 1: Nuclear modernisation



- All nuclear armed powers are modernising their arsenals.
- All appear to wish to keep nuclear weapons indefinitely despite Non Proliferation Treaty obligations.
- As yet there has been little progress in increasing transparency or softening nuclear postures.

Obstruction 2: US – Russia relations



- **US Ballistic Missile Defense proposals exacerbating tensions between US and Russia / China.**
- **Prompt Global Strike likely to add to differences in future.**
- **Deadlock over tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.**
- **Obama - “more flexibility” after 2012 Presidential election?**

Obstruction 3: Tensions in the Middle East



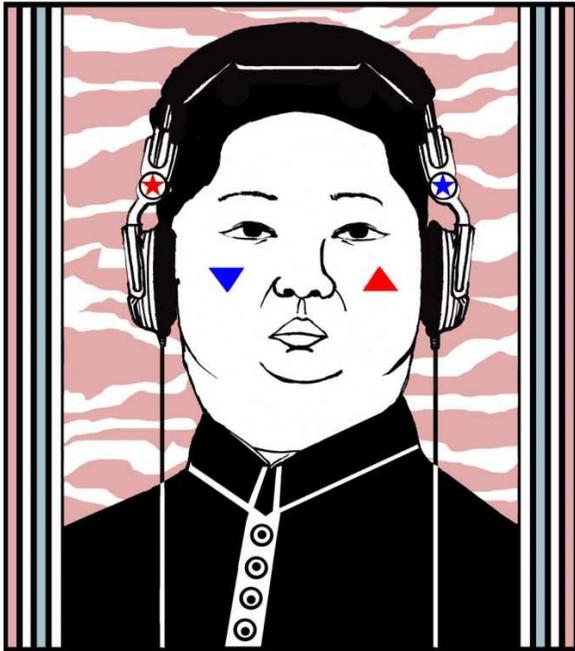
- **Iranian enrichment programme: US fears that Iran will 'break out' from the NPT regime.**
- **Israel's nuclear ambiguity and insecurity.**
- **Arab Spring: adds to uncertainty.**
- **Conference on a Middle East WMD Free Zone to take place in December in Finland – prospects uncertain.**

Obstruction 4: Deadlock at the Conference on Disarmament



- **Forum for negotiation on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.**
- **China, India, and Pakistan must be committed to the Treaty for it to succeed.**
- **Pakistan not yet content with the scale of its nuclear arsenal and is blocking movement at the Conference on Disarmament.**

Obstruction 5: North Korea



- North Korea announced withdrawal from the NPT in 2003 and conducted nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009.
- Threats of a further nuclear test in the near future.
- Role in proliferation of nuclear technology.
- Uncertainties over nuclear intentions of Syria and Burma.

Obstruction 6: Nuclear security



- Major concern for the Bush administration – but not globally shared.
- Lack of precedent makes it hard to understand the risks.
- Seen as a barrier by some non-nuclear weapon states to their “inalienable right” to nuclear power.

Summary of barriers



- **Foot dragging on disarmament by nuclear weapon powers and failure of 'P5' to push the issue up the international agenda.**
- **Regional security issues (especially Middle East and South and East Asia).**
- **International institutions unable to drive forward disarmament.**
- **Rogue actors provide an excuse for inaction.**

Ways forward: Road-maps



- **George Perkovich / James Acton: 'Abolishing Nuclear Weapons' – step-by-step approach, ease regional tensions.**
- **International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament: 'Eliminating Nuclear Threats' study.**
- **Friends of the NPT: concrete proposals from ten different nations.**
- **Ban Ki-Moon: UN Secretary General's Five Point Plan.**

Ways forward: A diplomat's view



- **Strengthen political processes [and political will].**
- **Involve all states – not just the big players.**
- **Spot and exploit opportunities.**
- **Link disarmament to issues of democracy and rights.**
- **Strengthen taboos against the use of nuclear weapons.**
- **Highlight the huge economic costs of nuclear weapons.**

Action NFLA members can take



- Nuclear Weapons Convention is a key goal.
- Political will required – need to get UK to give firm support.
- Party manifestos:
 - UK must actively support a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
 - Manifestos must not commit to replacing Trident.
- Highlight electoral unpopularity of Trident.

**Thank you friends ...
happy campaigning!**

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