

## **Seminar: A Nordic Initiative for Nuclear Abolition**

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To start with the past: NATO's nuclear doctrine has evolved from the notion of massive retaliation in the 1950s to the emergence of flexible response a decade later. In the 1970s, this so-called flexibility reached a peak with the discussion of the concept of "limited nuclear war". What was most disturbing about "limited nuclear war" was that it could imply a lowering of the nuclear threshold.

The perception of a weakening of the nuclear taboo to a large extent motivated the public outcry and demonstrations against the NATO double track decision in 1979 that paved the way for the deployment of US inter-mediate nuclear missiles in Western Europe as a response to the Soviet SS-20 weapons.

There were heated discussions in Norway and Denmark in the 1970s and 1980s on the role of nuclear weapons in our defence policies. During those years, the concept of setting up a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Nordic region gained a new momentum.

In many ways a Nordic zone would have made sense. Although being members of NATO, Norway and Denmark pursued a policy which differed from other Western European allies. We did not allow deployment of US nuclear weapons on our soil. We were de facto a nuclear weapons free zone.

Eventually, these deliberations on a possible zone were overtaken by the end of the Cold War.

The INF Treaty of 1987 and the subsequent START treaty took off much of the political steam. The nuclear danger increasingly became to be seen as something of the past. The 1995 NPT Review and Extension consolidated the impression that we were heading towards full nuclear disarmament. So did the NPT 2000 Review Conference, where nuclear weapons states committed themselves for the unequivocal undertaking to work towards full elimination of nuclear arms.

While we rejoiced over the adoption of the 13 steps, there were already clear signs that we faced severe set-backs in our efforts to rid the world of the nuclear threat. In 1998 we had the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests. The US Senate refused to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) the following year.

Since 2001 we have seen a fundamental erosion of the international consensus on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which was a precondition for the 1995 decision to extend the NPT indefinitely.

You are all familiar with the failed NPT 2005 Review Conference and what happened at the World Summit the same year. You all know well that the prospects for an entry into force of the CTBT looked very bleak just a few months ago. You all know that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has not been able to produce any substantive document for more than ten years. You have seen the lack of implementation of the 13 steps from NPT 2000. And finally, you are all aware of the challenges posed by new and potential proliferators such as DPRK and Iran. In addition we also have the lack of progress on reaching a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East, and not least uncertainties about Israel, which are clearly complicating factors.

If this seminar had been held a couple of years ago there would probably have been a strong sense of frustration and discouragement. Today, prospects seem a bit more hopeful. With the new US Administration there is a momentum to move the disarmament process forward. It is not often to see a US President calling for steps to reach a world free of nuclear weapons. We are not used to hear an American president pledging to take a lead towards such a goal.

The current financial crisis may facilitate the disarmament process. The public may start questioning the spending of billions of dollars to maintain a fleet of weapons which is envisioned never to be used. The mere existence of these weapons, represent in themselves severe security challenges. One cannot distinguish between good or bad nuclear weapons.

Despite some hopeful signs, we must not become complacent and think that by a new strategic agreement between the US and the Russian Federation to replace START, everything will be back on track. We know by experience that the political winds will change in the capitals of the nuclear weapons states. We know that the nuclear lobby is still strong in key countries. We must also recognise that there are other actors than the US in this game.

We should avoid the public complacency of the 1990s. If we are to achieve tangible results we need the political pressure from voters, Civil Society and Academia. That was the case with the Mine Ban Convention in 1997 and the Convention on Cluster Munitions last year.

Then how do we move forward?

**Firstly**, we should get our priorities right. We must focus on what is feasible and do-able. Now our attention should be devoted to NPT. We consider this treaty, despite its misleading name, to be as much a disarmament treaty as a non-proliferation treaty.

**Secondly**, when talking about disarmament we should take into account both the quantitative and qualitative aspects.

Quantitative steps would imply new and significant cuts in existing arsenals. A new START should set ceiling below 1000 strategic weapons on each side. That would send a strong

message. A new treaty should be followed by new steps on tactical nuclear weapons. Other nuclear weapons states would also have to be brought to the negotiation table. It goes without saying that these reductions must be based on the principles on irreversibility, transparency and verifiability. Norway, UK and Vertic are exploring ways to involve non-nuclear weapons states on the verification side.

Qualitative steps would to a much larger extent involve non-nuclear states. We must move forward on both CTBT and FMCT and by so capping any possible arms race. Then we need to identify tangible ways to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in security policies. Here I am thinking of moving weapons away from their high alert status, and by removing the geographical scope of nuclear arms by supporting regional nuclear weapons free zones.

**Thirdly**, if we are to achieve positive results in the NPT, we must also do our homework within NATO. Nearly two years ago, Norway and Germany took an initiative within NATO to raise disarmament on the Alliance's agenda. This initiative was supported by both Iceland and Denmark. We have already achieved some results, such as more emphasis on disarmament on NATO Summit declarations and that NATO will consider disarmament on a more regular basis.

Yet, the real test is ahead of us. We will now be embarking on a revision of NATO's strategic concept. Our objective will be that the Alliance in a concrete manner will take steps to reduce its reliance on nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence. We hope that NATO's nuclear deterrence will be limited to deter the use of nuclear weapons by others. This will not be easy, but we will make a case that unless NATO demonstrates in concrete terms readiness to meet NPT's disarmament obligations, it will in the long run be hard to sustain the global non-proliferation regime. We must demonstrate that we are serious about disarmament.

**Fourthly**, if we are to move forward on nuclear disarmament agenda, we must work in more innovative ways. We have much to learn from experiences gained from the landmines and cluster munitions issues. We all understand that the nuclear issue is very different from landmines and cluster munitions, but still there seem to be useful elements to draw from. We must forge new kinds of partnerships. For instance, within the Mine Ban Convention there is no Western Group or NAM and civil society is included. The same partnership applies for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We must overcome the present sterile division lines within the NPT.

Through the Seven Nation Initiative, Norway has sought to explore ways to develop international consensus on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The New Agenda Coalition serves in many ways the same purpose. What is essential is that we continue efforts to work across traditional geographical and political groups.

The Nordic countries should bring forward their tradition of inclusiveness and transparency. Future negotiations on either FMCT or other topics should be open for all interested nations. The exclusiveness of the 65 members CD is counter-productive and belongs to the past.

Transparency would imply enhanced role for parliamentarians, academia and civil society. We need the contribution by Sokka Gakkai International, Pugwash, Mayors for Peace, the Middle Power Initiative and No to Nuclear Weapons/Nei til atomvåpen. These organisations and networks represent extensive expertise and knowledge and they play an important watch dog function.

**My fifth point** is that nuclear disarmament cannot be accomplished unless there is an enabling international environment. If the differences remain between the US and Russia on missiles defence, it is less likely reach deep cuts in existing strategic arsenals.

The same logic applies for the conventional sphere. If we do not resolve the outstanding questions on the CFE, Russia would probably not be ready to be more accommodating with respect to the sub-strategic weapons.

**And finally;** if you allow me some personal observations: If we really want to move towards a nuclear weapons free world, we need to acknowledge how nuclear disarmament is dealt with today. The main track now is the NPT process and the Review Conference next year. This process has largely been confined to the closed quarters of bureaucrats and academics engaging in technical discussions and diplomatic games. These games have turned into a process which is not necessarily conducive to achieving real results, but rather to keep itself going.

We have to bring back the realities of the issue. Nuclear weapons are the most inhumane, non-discriminatory and out-of-proportion weapons we have ever seen. We should question their *military* utility and desirability, and question their *political* utility and purpose. We need to mobilise broader public attention and interest to the issue and turn the vision of a nuclear weapons free world into adequate *political action*. I therefore thank the Soka Gakkai International, PRIO and NUPI for organising this event which is one contribution to this end.

As our Foreign Minister said earlier today; we are at a crossroads. On the one hand the disarmament needs are pressing as the non-proliferation challenges are urgent. On the other hand the opportunities and possibilities are perhaps greater than they have been for a decade.