



Middle Powers Initiative

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“Towards 2010”: The MPI Panel at the Vienna NPT PrepCom

The Middle Powers Initiative (MPI) prepared a position paper for the NPT PrepCom entitled “Towards 2010: Priorities for NPT Consensus,” with the aim of presenting to states parties and NGOs a focused agenda of seven priorities issues that MPI “believes are sufficiently mature and general to be usefully emphasized now within the NPT review process.” The position paper distills the deliberations and recommendations from the four Article VI Forum consultations that MPI has convened since October 2005.

On May 2, MPI sponsored a panel at the PrepCom to present this paper and to host a dialogue on the issues. The Hon. Douglas Roche, O.C., the Chairman of MPI, said the initiative is designed to focus on two needs: first to ensure that the 2010 Review Conference ends with a substantive final document and, second, to help “set a course for the achievement of a nuclear weapons free world.”

Dr. John Burroughs, the Executive Director of the Lawyers’ Committee on Nuclear Policy, detailed the values and difficulties of each of the priorities. The **verified reduction of nuclear forces** and the **standing down of nuclear forces** are stalled because “the US and Russia remain stuck in a Cold War balance” thus “the landscape must be changed” in order to bring the other NWS in so as to make any movement towards a nuclear weapon free world. The reasoning behind **bringing the CTBT into force** has been elaborated upon for years and **negotiation of an FMCT** is “about the materials you use to make weapons ... one of the most essential things we have to work with.” He noted that **strengthening negative security assurances** date back to the inception of the NPT and thus may seem anachronistic; however, not only do “non-nuclear weapon states deserve the assurance that nuclear weapons will not be used against them,” but there is a need to place the issues in the larger context that “under no circumstance is the use of nuclear weapons proper.” Burroughs said common views on the **regulation of nuclear fuel production and supply** are still being formed and would be “a hard one for some governments,” nevertheless it is clear the better course “would be less reliance on nuclear energy and the establishment of a sustainable energy agency.” Numerous states have promoted structures for dealing with **improved NPT governance**, including “at a minimum” establishing a secretariat and mechanism through which States Parties could address issues of compliance and withdrawal.

Ambassador Sergio De Queiroz Duarte, the President of the 2005 NPT Review Conference and the Head of the Brazilian delegation to this PrepCom session said that while each proposal is “worthwhile in itself,” there would be difficulties in paths of each of the seven measures, largely based on the “false argument” over whether the priority should be disarmament or non-proliferation. “We need parallel progress,” he said, “We much have clear commitments on the part of nuclear weapon states and their allies to proceed to nuclear disarmament” as well as strengthening non-proliferation. He said the situation since the 2000 Review Conference has been characterized “a lack of transparency, credibility and trust” and that he hoped NGOs action to bring “lucid views” to the debate would help “reverse that trend.”

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