

Bush Policy, Not Proliferation Threatens World Security

by Marsha Freeman

During the first week in May, the 188 nations that are party to the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), began deliberations at the United Nations, to review the status of the Treaty over the past five years. After a year of trying to hash out an agenda for the three-week conference, the participants could not agree on what to discuss, and were no closer to agreement after a week of consultations.

This is because the United States insists that the major threat of nuclear war to the world, is the activity of “rogue states” such as Iran and North Korea, and non-state terrorists who could gain access to nuclear materials. In fact, it is the policies of the Bush Administration itself that are the greatest threat to international peace and stability, which was pointed out in numerous conference presentations.

It is the height of hypocrisy that the U.S. Administration has tried to bully the UN into imposing sanctions on countries that it “suspects” may be developing nuclear weapons, and that it now proposes denying civilian nuclear energy technology, allowed in the Treaty, to the rest of the world.

The facts show that the threat of nuclear war is not from Iran or North Korea, but right here at home. Since it came into office, this Administration has unilaterally withdrawn from the bilateral Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, making more unstable this country’s key strategic relationship with Russia, a nuclear power.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, speaking for the Cheney apparatus in the White House, proposes to develop new classes of nuclear weapons, such as “bunker busters” and battlefield “mini-nukes,” under the guise of fighting terrorism. These new weapons would lower the threshold of nuclear war.

And this Administration has repudiated the no-first-use doctrine, adhered to by every other nation in the world, to allow the U.S. to use nuclear weapons against *non-nuclear-weapons states* that “threaten” the United States with so-called weapons of mass destruction. Such WMDs now include human beings!

An article in the *Washington Times* on May 1 reports that a March 15 draft of a “Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations,” sets conditions under which “Geographic combatant commanders may request presidential approval for use of nuclear weapons” against rogue states and terrorists. Possible targets listed include “potentially overwhelming adversary conven-

tional forces.”

The Bush Administration is proposing that non-nuclear weapons states be denied access to uranium enrichment technologies to produce fuel for civilian nuclear power plants, because they could be used to produce weapons-grade material. Rather, these states should rely on some internationally controlled consortium to provide the fuel. Does the White House really believe that developing nations will allow their critical energy supplies to be held hostage to a regime that could shut down their nuclear plants by denying them fuel, if they do something the U.S. does not like?

History teaches that it is not the development of new weapons that causes wars, and concomitantly, that it is not treaties that prevent them. If the *intention* of a nation is its own economic development, within a family of nations which sees its progress based on the Treaty of Westphalia’s principle of the “advantage of the other,” nations will have no need to develop, much less use, nuclear weapons.

The response at the conference indicates there will be nothing of substance that will result from the NPT review, because there will be no consensus to go along with the mad provocations by the United States.

Provoking Iran

In his speech on the first day, May 2, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control Stephen Rademaker, who replaced discredited bully John Bolton in that position, laid out the Bush Administration’s new non-negotiable demand concerning Iran’s uranium enrichment program. While Great Britain, France, and Germany have worked to reach some kind of accommodation with Iran, Rademaker said that the only solution to “the Iranian nuclear problem . . . must include *permanent* cessation of Iran’s enrichment and reprocessing efforts, as well as *dismantlement of equipment and facilities related to such activity*” (emphasis added).

Rademaker also stated that countries that do not sign the Additional Protocol to the NPT, which allows the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to make intrusive and unannounced inspections, should be denied access to civilian nuclear technology, even though under the Treaty, every nation is entitled to all technologies for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including uranium enrichment to produce fuel.

The NPT: A Faustian Bargain

The 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), stands on three principles that apply to the five nuclear weapons states (NWS), and the non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS).

The Treaty states: "Believing that the proliferation of nuclear weapons would seriously enhance the danger of nuclear war," NNWS will not undertake to receive or develop nuclear explosive devices, and will accept safeguards and standards enforced by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA will have the authority to inspect installations that have been declared as nuclear sites by each nation, and track all fissionable material.

In return, "all Parties to the Treaty are entitled to participate . . . in the applications of atomic energy for peaceful purposes," and that "nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all of the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production, and use

of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity" with the non-proliferation statutes of the Treaty.

Third, the five NWS declare "their intention to achieve at the earliest possible date the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to undertake effective measures in the direction of nuclear disarmament."

The Bush Administration proposes to change the Treaty, to hold access to peaceful nuclear technology hostage to the agreement of NNWS to the highly intrusive, recently formulated Additional Protocol.

The Administration proposes that NNWS are *not* entitled to access to uranium enrichment and spent fuel-reprocessing technologies, no matter what non-proliferation regime they agree to, but should instead rely on an international consortium to provide these services. This is a challenge to national sovereignty, and violates the Treaty.

And rather than engage with the other NWS toward disarmament, the Administration is proposing the development of new classes of nuclear weapons.

The following day, Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Kamal Kharrazi stated his nation's position: "The inalienable right of the States to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes emanates from the universally accepted proposition that scientific and technological achievements are the common heritage of mankind. . . . It is unacceptable that some tend to limit the access to peaceful nuclear technology to an exclusive club of technologically advanced States under the pretext of non-proliferation."

"Let me be absolutely clear," he continued, "that arbitrary and self-serving criteria and thresholds regarding proliferation-proof and proliferation-prone technologies and countries, can and will only undermine the Treaty. Iran, for its part, is determined to pursue all legal areas of nuclear technology, including enrichment, exclusively for peaceful purposes, and has been eager to offer assurances and guarantees." More effective than negotiating "objective guarantees," he stated, is for Iran to continue its legal pursuit of technologies, "under the fullest and most intrusive IAEA supervision." On May 8, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Assefi confirmed that Iran is preparing a bill to submit to Parliament to ratify the Additional Protocol.

Kharrazi zeroed in on the "one non-party to the NPT" in the Middle East which has been given "unrestricted access, at least by acquiescence," to nuclear technology and equipment. "Israel has continuously rejected calls by the international community" to accede to the NPT. Instead, it has developed one of the largest stockpiles of nuclear weapons, "which has endangered regional global peace and security," he said.

The U.S. Threat

When the NPT was formulated, it promised that in return for foregoing the development of nuclear weapons, non-nuclear weapons states would have full access to civilian technology, that the five declared weapons states would work toward disarmament, and that non-nuclear states would be given "Negative Security Assurance" that they would not be subject to attack by the nuclear weapons states. Now, the United States proposes to renege on that agreement.

Malaysian Minister of Foreign Affairs Syed Hamid Albar, representing the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that it is the nuclear-weapons states that threaten international peace and security, and that the "doctrine of nuclear deterrence" must be "rejected." The Non-Aligned states "reaffirm the inalienable rights of [parties to the NPT] to engage in research, production, and use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes without discrimination. Nothing in the treaty should be interpreted as affecting this right."

Ambassador Ronaldo Sardenberg from Brazil countered the U.S. proposal that signing the Additional Protocol be prerequisite to nuclear technology access. He stated that the NPT "does not qualify, restrict, or reinterpret" the "inalienable right to the development and use of nuclear energy for peaceful ends." Sardenberg also stressed that it is "the introduction of new weapon types and the announcement of strategic doctrines that tend to lower the threshold for the utilization of nuclear weapons," not the peaceful use by developing countries. Brazil has been in a tussle with the IAEA for the past

year over the development of its own uranium enrichment facilities, even though no one accused that nation of having the intention of developing a weapons capability. Brazil has refused to back down.

China's representative to the conference, Zhang Yan, outlined the threats that China, a nuclear weapons state, sees to international security. He said that "negative developments" such as "sticking to the Cold War mentality, pursuing unilateralism, advocating a pre-emptive strategy, listing other countries as targets of a nuclear strike, [thus] lowering the threshold of using nuclear weapons, and researching and developing new types of nuclear weapons for specific purposes, add new destabilizing factors to international security."

Zhang proposed that concerns should be addressed "through dialogue and cooperation on an equal basis, rather than confrontation and exerting pressure." China has joined every non-proliferation regime, he stated, and was the first of the five nuclear weapons states to complete the "domestic legal procedures necessary for the entry into force of the Additional Protocol."

Indonesia's representative to the UN, Rezlan Jenia, stated that the challenges to the NPT are "attributable to its contradictions and imbalances." There has been "an uneven and selective implementation of its provisions." Disarmament and technology development have been superseded "by an exclusive focus on non-proliferation." "Regrettably, collective punishment seems to have been in place, thus denying benefits for non-nuclear weapons states that have adhered to the Treaty."

In addition, Jenia said, there has been the "reassertion of discredited strategic doctrines which has created a pervasive sense of global insecurity," notably "the policies of some states that envision the use of nuclear weapons for deterring, pre-empting, and punishing adversaries." This leaves non-nuclear weapons states "potential targets of a nuclear attack."

Iranian Foreign Minister Kharrazi had observed that "measures have been adopted" which include "the research and development of new non-strategic and low-yield nuclear weapons." He proposed that there should be a revision of "nuclear doctrine, policies, and postures" to lower the operational status of nuclear weapons, make the removal of nuclear warheads irreversible, and stop the development of missile defense systems, which "would instigate a new arms race in outer space."

The Iranian Minister recalled that as part of the non-nuclear states' agreement to forego developing nuclear weapons, they were to be given a Negative Security Assurance by the five nuclear powers, in which they would not threaten or use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states. "It is abhorrent," he stated, that "the dangerous doctrine of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states, and threats, were officially proclaimed by the United States and NATO."