



**Statement on the
2015 NPT Review Conference**

25 May 2015

The 2015 NPT Review Conference has ended without an agreed document. Hundreds of hours spent by the world's leading diplomats could not yield progress on the treaty's core commitments: ridding the world of nuclear weapons and ensuring that sharing peaceful nuclear technology does not lead to further proliferation of the world's most dangerous weapons.

Differences over how to fulfil earlier agreed commitments, such as the convening of a conference on a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction were brewing for the past several years. The shielding by some states of the possession of nuclear weapons in the Middle East by a non-member of the treaty further complicated the dynamics of the treaty review process and is untenable. It was nominally on this basis that the US, UK and Canada blocked consensus on a final document.

Underneath such specific issues lies the broader conflict of narratives that is the biggest roadblock. Those states inside the NPT who possess nuclear weapons (the "P5") proceed as though the 1995 indefinite extension of the NPT was equivalent to indefinite possession. Their limited "step by step" approaches frustrate the vast majority of the world's nations who seek the elimination of nuclear weapons as promised in Article VI of the treaty. Meanwhile the P5 (with all the nuances and disagreements among them) remain frustrated that the progress they have made is not given credit, as they seek to revive the process of learning how to speak together on these issues, starting small for example with a glossary of common terms as a crumb from their table. This lack of significant disarmament at a time when most nuclear weapons states are modernizing arsenals smacks of complacency and it is dangerous given the revival of outdated Cold War thinking.

Recent moves forward to reframe the debate in humanitarian terms have resulted in 107 countries supporting a document developed by Austria known as the "Humanitarian Pledge," which calls on states "to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons." However, the varying paths preferred by NGOs and governments on how to attain a nuclear weapons free world became mired in controversy and competition rather than opening up the field for creative multifaceted approaches. All paths toward a nuclear weapons free world can and should all be explored, whether they are step-by-step, bilateral, unilateral, a ban, a convention, etc. Most importantly we need real dialogue on these topics.

Confronting the dangers of continued possession of nuclear weapons demands greater political will than was shown at the United Nations during the past month.

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