



## Centre for Air Power Studies

### IN-BETWEEN THE PREPCOMS & REVCONS

#### EXPECTATIONS FROM THE UPCOMING NPT REVCON 2015

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In only a few months from now, the NPT will hold its fourth review conference (RevCon) since its indefinite extension in 1995.

The last RevCon's (2010) final document had concluded with a promising set of recommendations on non-proliferation and disarmament. These included reaffirmations on actualizing CTBT's entry into force, promotion of NPT's universal adherence, and other measures to promote nuclear non-proliferation, '*...without hampering the peaceful uses by the NPT members...*'<sup>1</sup>. It also reiterated the NWS commitment to not directly or indirectly transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons...''<sup>2</sup>. IAEA once again, was reiterated as the competent authority for verification and assurances of nuclear non-proliferation, and hence obligations under IAEA safeguards, including the universalization of the Additional Protocol was referred to as significant in preventing the diversion of the dual use technology.

Before the 2015 RevCon, a deeper understanding on current proliferation problems must be achieved. The past three RevCons and PrepComs have gathered enough follow up tasks on their agenda that demand urgent attention. Hence to prevent NPT-2015 from being doomed, it is necessary that a roadmap to address a number of issues must be charted. The recent three continuous PrepComs from 2011-2014 have deliberated upon a number of issues.

During the 2011 PrepCom, P-5 planned to work on the glossary of definitions relating to nuclear terms through the creation of a working group. China took the lead on this. The Conference also raised the issue of IAEA's additional protocol. The follow up in 2012 Prepcom

aimed at adopting a provisional agenda by adopting a final report and recommendation for the upcoming RevCon in 2015. Three significant areas of concern were highlighted in 2012 -- nuclear disarmament, peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the goal of nuclear weapons free zone in the Mideast. The 2012 PrepCom also vehemently opposed DPRK's ballistic missile testing and a general consensus prevailed on prevention of the DPRK from acquiring nuclear weapons. While most state parties remained supportive of the NWFZ in the Middle East in 2012, one year later due to the lack of progress, Egypt boycotted the 2013 PrepCom in order to express its displeasure.

Newer approaches to disarmament were added in the 2013 PrepCom. As many as 80 countries, including the Vienna group of 10, supported South Africa's call on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons that emphasized an approach to negate the indiscriminate, unacceptable harm caused by nuclear weapons to socio-economic development.

Participation of the civil society in the official delegate meeting was also witnessed in the 2013 PrepCom. Many state parties including Japan affirmed the significant role government and civil societies' partnership can play in promoting the disarmament and non-proliferation education. The idea of contribution from the civil society was received positively by the US, Ireland, Germany and Netherlands.

The 2013 PrepCom revealed the US, Russia, China, Japan's preference for a step by step approach to disarmament. However the continuous weapons modernization programmes and the stalemate in FMCT reflect unfulfilled disarmament obligations. While the New START is a step towards the objective of disarmament by the most nuclear loaded P-5, it is also inadequate as it allows modernization and still provides scope for undeployed strategic or tactical nuclear weapons. This hinders a universal and unconditional progress of disarmament.

The final NPT PrepCom concluded in May 2014. It did not reach a consensus on final recommendations but released a working paper of sorts. The working paper was prepared by the Ambassador Enrique Roman-Morey of Peru, highlights of which included previous year's PrepComs's rhetoric on the Article-VI of the NPT. The recommendations mentioned in the working paper would be conveyed and would form significant deliberations in the NPT 2015 RevCon.

The agenda for the NPT-2015 RevCon is almost set. Based on the last three sessions of the PrepComs and the recent evolving developments one can anticipate a repeat of the trend. The disarmament debate would likely remain tied to vertical non-proliferation commitments by the P-5 just like previous years. The progress of Iran's nuclear deal and resumption of the North Korean talks would add greatly to 2015-RevCon's final document since the new deadline (November 2014) for the Iran deal has already been set. Recently a senior North-Korean envoy called for the resumption of the nuclear talks.<sup>3</sup>

Specific addition of issues such as the proliferation of missiles especially cruise missiles can be specifically dealt with. RevCon 2015 must address the issue of the failing of the INF treaty as this would directly impact the Article-VI commitments of the NWS. Since effective implementation of the IAEA safeguards was reiterated in the PrepComs, pressure on Pakistan towards the negotiation of such an agreement with IAEA could be made. It must be reckoned that recently the IAEA also concluded its 58<sup>th</sup> General Conference that successfully passed the safeguard resolution. Hence, such an agreement stands justified in the light of Pakistan's current quest of nuclear energy cooperation with China.

### **ARTICLES BY SAME AUTHOR**

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The mood of the NPT RevCon 2015 has already been decided by recent developments. One such development also includes the lack of progress on the nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East that had been in limbo for four years now. The clock to RevCon 2015 is already ticking and previous commitments especially with regard to finalizing of the Iranian deal and nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East have not been met. On an optimistic note other than few issues relating to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and civil society's engagement

with the government on promoting disarmament, concrete gains may not be expected out of the upcoming RevCon.

*(Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Centre for Air Power Studies [CAPS])*

### References:

2014 NPT PrepCom: Day 10, Recommendations to the 2015 NPT Review Conference, Available at <http://www.sipri.org/research/disarmament/2014-npt-prepcom/day-10>, Accessed on 29 September 2014.

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### End Notes

<sup>1</sup> 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I), Available at <http://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2010/>, Accessed on 27 September 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> North Korea Ready to Start Nuclear Talks, (2014) New York Times, Available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/03/world/asia/north-korea-ready-to-start-nuclear-talks.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/03/world/asia/north-korea-ready-to-start-nuclear-talks.html?_r=0), Accessed on 02 October 2014.

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