

GLOBAL ZERO: A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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“The Significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them,” – Albert Einstein.

The Second World War came to an end when the U.S. exploded two atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively, in August 1945. Since then, the international community, realising the destructive nature of nuclear weapons, has taken many initiatives to control the spread of nuclear weapons technology and to promote its peaceful application. Along with these non-proliferation measures, the international community also engaged in discussions on moves towards general disarmament; a world free of nuclear weapons. However, some of these deliberations were productive while others failed to gather momentum, which brought the cause of international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation under stress.

Moreover, with the passage of time, especially after the end of the Cold War, the international security environment has changed dramatically. This changed security environment is mainly dominated by the fears that nuclear weapons and related technology would proliferate among terrorist organisations and non-State actors. This fear of nuclear terrorism has also raised the bar for the safety and security of nuclear weapons-related materials around the globe.

As a result, arms control and disarmament have once again become a top priority agenda for the major power of the world. In this regard, the U.S. wants to play a leading role for control and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide. In 2008, responding to an *Arms Control Today* set of questionnaires, the U.S. President, Barak Obama, stated that his country would set a new direction to eliminate nuclear weapons worldwide by making it a central element of American nuclear policy. However, the U.S. would not disarm unilaterally.¹ He further said that he would initiate a high-level dialogue among all the declared nuclear weapons States to first move towards reduction and eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons.²

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On April 5, 2009, President Obama in his Prague speech termed “the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons as a most dangerous legacy of the Cold War.”³ He said that the U.S. would “seek the peace and security of the world without nuclear weapons ... We will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, and urge other to do the same.”⁴ In this regard, he outlined many key steps in the field of arms control and disarmament which included signing of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) treaty with Russia; to pursue the U.S. Congress to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); to seek a new Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT); to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by strengthening international inspection regimes and building a new framework for civil nuclear cooperation.

He also announced the start of an international effort to secure vulnerable nuclear material around the world. President Obama also raised concerns over North Korean and Iranian nuclear developments; and pointed out that the U.S. would maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal, both to deter potential adversaries and to assure American allies and other security partners that they could count on his country’s security commitments.⁵

The international community appreciated this move and termed this initiative a right step towards disarmament. The Washington-based Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (WMDC), in its declaration adopted on April 30, 2009 stated, “It is encouraging that President Obama, President Medvedev and many other political leaders are coming out in support of the clear and vital goal of a nuclear weapon-free world. The Commission thought it is attainable and that world nuclear powers must begin now to think how they will design their countries’ future security without these weapons.”⁶

On June 29, 2009, this renewed optimism in nuclear arms control and disarmament resulted in an announcement of a “Global Zero Action Plan” by a group called “Global Zero”, for a phased, verified and proportionate reduction of all nuclear weapons to zero.⁷ The Global Zero Action Plan has projected 14 years (2010-2023) to reach a global zero accord and an additional seven years (2024-2030) to complete the dismantlement of all remaining nuclear warheads. The plan outlined following four phases:⁸

- **Phase 1: 2010-2013**, U.S. and Russia to cut 1,000 total warheads each; increase the rate of dismantling their nuclear warheads; prepare multilateral negotiations; encourage nuclear weapons States not to develop more nuclear weapons, sign and ratify CTBT,

FMCT; encourage de-alerting and no first use; and establishment of nuclear weapons-free zones.

- **Phase 2: 2014-2018**, negotiate and ratify multilateral accord; U.S. and Russia reduce to total 500 warheads each; other nuclear weapons States freeze their stockpiles; entry into force of the multilateral accord with a strong verification and enforcement system; civilian fuel cycle safeguards; full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards; adoption of Additional Protocol; establishment and management of international fuel bank and enrichment/reprocessing facilities.
- **Phase 3: 2019-2023**, phased and proportionate reduction of all nuclear arsenal to zero and continuous international monitoring and enforcement.
- **Phase 4: 2024-2030**, complete elimination of all remaining nuclear warheads and a continuous international monitoring and enforcement.

Obama's Prague speech was followed by many significant developments in the field of arms control and disarmament. These developments have also marked the possible emergence of a new nuclear world order. The following sections would briefly highlight these developments and their implications for nuclear disarmament and the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

US Nuclear Posture Review, April 6, 2010

On April 6, 2010, to reflect President Obama's approach to seek world peace without nuclear weapons, the U.S. administration released *The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR)*. The NPR focuses on five key objectives of the U.S. nuclear weapons policies and posture which would be realised in the next five to ten years.⁹

1. Preventing nuclear proliferation and terrorism

The top priority of the U.S. nuclear objectives and policies is to lead the expanded international effort to rebuild and strengthen the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and to prevent the immediate and extreme threats of nuclear terrorism. According to the NPR, Al Qaeda and their extremist allies are seeking nuclear weapons, and "vulnerability" of nuclear stocks around the world and "availability" of sensitive nuclear material in the

nuclear black market are the major causes of concern.¹⁰ To that end, the U.S. has allocated \$2.7b for the fiscal year 2011.

The U.S. has shown its commitment to accelerate the role of Global Threat Reduction Initiative, International Nuclear Material Protection and Cooperation Programme, UNSC resolution 1540, and many related initiatives to prevent nuclear terrorism. Furthermore, the U.S. has also renewed its commitment to hold fully accountable any State, terrorist group or other non-State actors that support or enable terrorists' efforts to obtain or use weapons of mass destruction, whether by facilitating, financing, or providing expertises or safe havens for such efforts.¹¹

The NPR specifically refers to North Korea and Iran which have allegedly violated international non-proliferation obligations, defied directives of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), pursued missile delivery capabilities and resisted the international efforts to resolve through diplomatic means the crises they have created.¹² It states that if the U.S. allies or partners feel threatened by these States, they might acquire a nuclear deterrence capability of their own which could undermine the NPT regime and international peace and security. Therefore, the U.S. would build broader international support to prevent these dangers of nuclear terrorism and emergence of new nuclear-armed States, and will provide security assurances to allies and partners.

The U.S. has also shown a strong commitment to strengthen the NPT, reversal of the nuclear ambitions of North Korea and Iran, strengthening of the IAEA safeguard, creating consequences for non-compliance, and promotion of peaceful use of nuclear energy.¹³ The U.S. has concluded the New START treaty with Russia, committed itself to pursue ratification of the CTBT, negotiate FMCT, and to work jointly with Russia to eliminate 68 tons of weapons-grade plutonium.

2. Reducing the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy

The NPR also highlights that the Cold War rivalries are no more there, and the fundamental role of the U.S. nuclear weapons would now be to deter nuclear attack on America, its allies and partners. Secondly, the U.S. has an unparalleled conventional capability, an improved missile defence system, and counter weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities which are enough to deter any conventional as well as chemical and biological attacks. As a result, the U.S. would continue to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in deterring non-nuclear attacks. It is also prepared to strengthen its long-standing "negative security assurance" by declaring

that America would not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons States that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.¹⁴

However, the U.S. reserves the right to make any adjustments in the assurance for those countries that possess nuclear weapons and are not in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Furthermore the U.S. would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend its vital interests, or of its allies and partners. Therefore, in a way, by reducing the role of nuclear weapons, America would meet its commitment under Article VI of the NPT to pursue nuclear disarmament, and would make demonstrable progress over the next five to ten years.

3. Maintaining strategic deterrence and stability at reduced nuclear force level

Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. and Russia have both reduced approximately 75 per cent of their respective deployed strategic nuclear weapons; however, both the countries still possess thousands of nuclear weapons which are enough for the destruction of entire human race. In the NPR, the U.S. has also committed to reduce its nuclear force level. The first step in this regard was the signing of the New START treaty. To go beyond the New START, the U.S. would find ways to further reduce its nuclear force level, and would negotiate to maintain strategic stability with Russia and China.

The NPR has also concluded that the U.S. would maintain a smaller triad of Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs), Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) and heavy bombers, would maintain its Sustaining Strategic Submarines (SSBMs), a DeMIRVed ICBM force (MIRVed ballistic missile carries, Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles. DeMIRVing would reduce each missile to a single warhead), would maximise its Presidential Decision Time with an “open ocean targeting”, and keep a limited number of non-strategic nuclear weapons as their future reduction would be decided after consultations with its allies and partners.¹⁵ The NPR also made it clear that the U.S. is committed to the long-term goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, while strategic stability with Russia and China and security assurance of American allies are essential for future reduction. The U.S. administration would implement the Stockpile Stewardship Programme and investment in nuclear infrastructure development for further reduction of its nuclear force level.

4. Strengthening regional deterrence and reassuring U.S. allies and partners

To maintain regional deterrence and to assure U.S. allies and partners, the NPR concluded that America would retain the capability of forward-deployment of its nuclear weapons, and would continue to maintain long-range strike capabilities. It would also ensure the credibility of its extended deterrence after consultation with its allies and partners, and the nuclear option would remain there as long as threats exist. The role of nuclear weapons would be discussed with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) this year at the revision of its Strategic Concept and any change in its nuclear posture should only be taken after a thorough review. The U.S. would pursue dialogue with its allies and partners in East Asia and the Middle East. According to the NPR, other key initiatives include the enhancement of non-nuclear capabilities, forward presence, joint exercises and training, bilateral and multilateral dialogue, deployment of effective missile defence, strengthening counter-WMD capabilities, non-nuclear prompt global strike capabilities, and real time intelligence and surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.

5. Sustaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal

The U.S. would maintain a safe, secure and effective nuclear stockpile. However, aging nuclear weapons stockpile requires a management plan and related life extension programmes. The NPR thus listed a number of recommendations and stockpile management decisions. The U.S. has decided not to conduct nuclear testing, and to pursue ratification and entry into force of the CTBT; it would not develop new nuclear warheads; would ensure its safety through Stockpile Management Programme; Life Extension Programme (LEP) would use only components based on previously tested designs, and would retain smallest possible nuclear stockpiles to hedge against technological and geographical surprise. It has also decided to fund different types of warheads, and investment in the critical infrastructure and human capital development, including the development of a new Uranium processing facility at the Y-12 plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

There was a mixed view even among the U.S. Congressmen on the NPR. The House Armed Services Chairman, Ike Skelton, and Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee Chairman, Jim Langevin, said that they were pleased that the report “balances the role of our nuclear deterrent forces with the goals of preventing nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism.”¹⁶ However, House Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee ranking member, Michael Turner, opposed it by stating that

“unilaterally taking nuclear responses off the table will decrease our options without getting anything in return and diminishing our ability to defend our nation from attack.”¹⁷

There are also news reports that Obama may lose support for his nuclear disarmament mission. According to a *Washington Post* report on April 19, 2010, Obama faces a polarised Congress and public focused on other issues, such as economy. The Senate would pass the New START treaty, but prospects are dim for the ratification of the CTBT.¹⁸ Overall, the NPR represents the long-term U.S. goal to make this world free of nuclear weapons. However, this goal can take a long time, provided that the American commitment to nuclear disarmament remains the same. The NPR represents a great deal of pressure for States that possess nuclear weapons but do not fulfil their non-proliferation obligations or remain outside the domain of the NPT. Nuclear terrorism is really a great danger for mankind; so preventing nuclear weapons technology from falling into the hands of terrorists should be a major concern of the entire international community.

New START

On April 8, 2010, in order to redress missed opportunities, the two Cold War rivals pushed the “reset button”.¹⁹ U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev met in Prague and signed the New START agreement. The signing of the New START agreement was the result of many rounds of active consultations of both the presidents and their administrations since they met on April 1, 2009 in London.²⁰ Initially, on July 6, 2009, during the Moscow Summit, Presidents Obama and Medvedev signed a “Joint Understanding” to work out to slash nuclear weapons.²¹

According to this new START agreement, the U.S. and Russia cannot have more than 1,550 deployed strategic warheads each. This limit is 74 per cent lower than the limit of the 1991 START, and 30 per cent lower than the deployed strategic warhead limit of the 2002 Moscow Treaty.²² The treaty has also set a combined limit of 800 deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments. Also, a separate limit of 700 deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs, and deployed heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments.²³ The treaty includes a streamlined and updated system of verification provisions to ensure each side that the other is complying with the treaty’s limits.

It is important to note that the 1991 START agreement was a major disarmament instrument which helped build confidence and stability by slashing each nation's strategic warhead deployment from about 10,000 to less than 6,000 each; and limited each country to no more than 1,600 strategic delivery systems.²⁴ However, after the START agreement, the leadership of the two States failed to reach any significant arms control and disarmament agreement. On January 3, 1993, U.S. President Bush and Russian President Yeltsin signed START II in Moscow and set a limit of 3,000-3,500 strategic nuclear warheads for each nation and banned the deployment of multiple warhead land-based missiles.

However, the subsequent events; the 1998 British air strikes against Iraq, 1999 NATO's bombing campaigns against Yugoslavia in 1999, and the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM treaty in 2002; compelled Russia to end its efforts to bring START II entry into force.²⁵ In the meantime, Russia and the U.S. failed to negotiate the START III framework agreement and also failed to materialise the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) which was signed on May 24, 2002, in Moscow. The SORT called for each country to deploy no more than 1,700-2,200 strategic warheads by the end of 2010.²⁶

In this perspective, if we analyse the current strategic force level of Russia and the U.S. it is quite clear that both the countries still possess enough nuclear arsenals to destroy the world many times over in a matter of minutes. According to their 2009 START declarations, the U.S. has 550 land-based ICBMs, 432 sea-based missiles on 14 submarines, and 216 bombers, which together can deliver 5,576 warheads. Russia possesses 469 nuclear-armed land-based ICBMs, 268 sea-based missiles on eight submarines, and 79 nuclear-capable bombers, which together can deliver 3,909 warheads.²⁷ The U.S. is believed to deploy at least 2,200 strategic nuclear warheads, with a comparable number of warheads in reserve. The exact number of deployed Russian strategic warheads is not available, but it is believed to be between 2,000 to 3,000. In addition, Russia has at least 2,000 additional non-strategic nuclear bombs available for use, and another 8,000 in reserve or awaiting dismantlement. The U.S. too has several hundred non-strategic nuclear bombs for possible "battlefield" use.²⁸

It is a fact that the Cold War confrontationist thinking still exists among Russian and American public and official circles. There is a deep mistrust in Russia of U.S. intentions, particularly on the enlargement of NATO; the U.S. withdrawal from the 1972 Anti Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty; the U.S. National Missile Defence System and its proposed deployment in Eastern Europe.

On the other hand, the U.S. is sceptical of the Russian use of force against Georgia in 2008 and Russia-Iran relations. During the Moscow Summit, although Russian President Medvedev said, "This is the first, but very important step in improving full-scale cooperation between our two countries which would go to the benefit of both states," he injected a note of caution by adding that the discussions so far, "cannot remove the burden of all the problems."²⁹ Similarly, on June 23, 2009, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that the plans for the deployment of a U.S. missile defence system in Central Europe would remain an impediment to U.S.-Russia relations.³⁰ According to Ambassador Richard Burt, who was the top U.S. negotiator for the START I talks, "There are a host of difficult issues that must be resolved in order to reach a new arms control agreement."³¹

By signing the New START agreement, the United States has initiated to mobilise broad international support to fulfil the obligations set under Article VI of the NPT to move towards nuclear disarmament. If the desired objective of the U.S. to maintain a strategic balance with Russia is achieved, that would be a positive step in the direction of a world free of nuclear weapons. The U.S. president, in the NPR, has also directed a review of a post-New START treaty to consider future reduction in nuclear weapons. Furthermore, a credible deterrence, strategic stability with Russia and China, and security assurance to the U.S. allies and partners would enable America to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in its national policies. Verification, transparency and trust would play a vital role in this regard.

According to the NPR, "Over time, we will also engage with other nuclear weapons States, including China, on ways to expand the nuclear reduction process in the future."³² However, it may be noted that even after the success of the New START agreement, both the countries would possess enough nuclear weapons to destroy everything. Therefore, any future dialogue on nuclear weapons reduction should cover all forms of nuclear weapons not just the deployed one, because a world free of nuclear weapons means 'global zero'.

If the two sides want to win the trust of each other for a lasting confidence to achieve success in their bilateral relations, they should do away with the Cold War thinking and start afresh. Both the States should focus on areas where there is a desire for cooperation among each other. With changing realities, the past nuclear doctrines are no longer valid. The two countries should initiate a new strategic dialogue with the objective of opening windows into each other's strategic thinking. In this regard, the

New START agreement would not only strengthen Russia-U.S. bilateral relations, such a plan would also fit best into their shifting strategic postures.

The U.S. is now increasingly relying on precision-guided conventional weapons, while Russia finds it cheaper to modernise its nuclear force by focusing more on short-range nuclear weapons to offset the conventional U.S. superiority.³³ Furthermore, the New START agreement would set a precedent for other nuclear powers to pursue a path of arms control and to achieve the broader goals of nuclear disarmament. This agreement should also help bring a positive outcome from the May 2010 NPT review conference. However, a real disarmament effort would require the support of other governments as well.

Nuclear Security Summit, Washington, April 12-13, 2010

Another significant step to prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear material or technology was the holding of a two-day Nuclear Security Summit in Washington on April 12-13, 2010. On the call of U.S. President Barak Obama, 47 States, including Pakistan, participated in the summit. In their joint communiqué, the participating States; by recognising their shared goal of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and peaceful use of nuclear energy; declared nuclear terrorism as one of the most challenging threats to international security.³⁴ The following are some brief points from that communiqué:³⁵

- A State is responsible for effective security of all nuclear material used in weapons and nuclear facilities under its control, to prevent non-State actors from obtaining the information or technology for malicious purposes.
- States should work for enhanced international cooperation in the field of advanced nuclear security.
- High-enriched uranium and separated plutonium require special precautions so it is encouraged to minimise the use of high-enriched uranium and to convert reactors from high-enriched uranium to low-enriched uranium fuel where technically and economically possible.
- Those States that have not yet joined should fully implement all existing nuclear security commitments.
- The summit supported the objectives of Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, the present and future role of the IAEA in international nuclear security framework, the role and contribution of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism,

the G-8 led Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Material of Mass Destruction, and full implementation of UNSCR 1540.

- Capacity-building for nuclear security and cooperation at bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels through technology, nuclear security culture, training and assistance.
- Protection and security of nuclear industry, including the private sector. Strong nuclear security practice and international cooperation to utilise nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.
- Cooperation among States to prevent and respond to incidents of illicit nuclear trafficking. It attached great importance to the safety of nuclear material and radioactive substances.

However, the communiqué clearly identified that, “maintaining effective nuclear security will require continuous national efforts facilitated by international cooperation and undertaken on a voluntary basis by States.”³⁶ The summit also issued a work plan which constituted a political commitment by the participating States. According to this work plan, States with respect to their national policies and international obligations would enhance the security of their nuclear assets in all aspects to prevent them from falling in the hands of non-State actors.

President Obama described the summit a real progress in building a safer world and agreed to strengthen U.S. nuclear facilities by inviting the IAEA to review security measures. America has also joined Canada’s appeal for the international community to commit \$10 billion to strengthening nuclear security around the world.³⁷ During the summit, Russia and the U.S. also declared to dispose of a combined 68 metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium under the 2000 Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement to fulfil their commitments under Article VI of the NPT.³⁸

Under the agreement, both the countries would get rid of 34 metric tons of plutonium each by consuming it as peaceful nuclear fuel. Similarly, on April 13, 2010, Mexico, Canada and the U.S. announced that they would work with the IAEA to convert the fuel in Mexico’s nuclear research reactor from high-enriched uranium (HEU) to low-enriched uranium (LEU).³⁹ Canada also agreed to return its HEU to America. Earlier, on April 12, 2010, Ukraine had announced to get rid of its HEU supply by the end of the current year.

Pakistan’s Prime Minister, Yusuf Raza Gilani, showed a strong commitment to the safety and security of his country’s nuclear assets and pointed out that a robust command and control system is in place in

Pakistan and its nuclear assets are safe against theft, diversion and accidental or unauthorised use.⁴⁰ He also highlighted different security measures taken by Pakistan and the country's strong commitment to its international obligations which also includes strict regulator regimes under the National Command Authority's secretariat, the Strategic Plan Division and the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority, export control regime under the guidelines of the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Australia Group and the European Union Guidelines, through its 2004 Nuclear Export control Act. Prime Minister Gilani also stated that Pakistan is in a position to provide nuclear fuel cycle services under IAEA safeguards, and to participate in any non-discriminatory nuclear fuel cycle assurance mechanism. Pakistan reiterated its proposal for a nuclear restraint regime in South Asia.

It is important to note that for Pakistan, participation in the summit was a landmark event. In recent years, there was a growing concern among Western nations, particularly the United States, that increased instability in Pakistan could make the country's nuclear weapons and stocks of nuclear explosive material dangerously vulnerable to theft by terrorist organisations and non-State actors. There were also reports that there is a possibility of armed attack on Pakistani nuclear installations by extremists groups linked with Al Qaeda or Taliban; that Pakistan's nuclear security forces personnel are sympathetic to the Islamic fundamental cause; and that the West, specifically America, should secure Pakistan's nuclear weapons.⁴¹

However, during the summit, the United States demonstrated confidence in the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear assets. Prior to the Summit, President Obama, in an interview to the *New York Times* on April 5, 2010, said that, "I feel confident that Pakistan secured its nuclear weapons. I am concerned about nuclear security all around the world, not just in Pakistan, but everywhere."⁴² The Obama Administration has also refused to mark out India and Pakistan as countries that needed to sign the NPT. The U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, Ellen Tauscher, has said in this regard that, "they [Pakistan and India] are very special friends. Washington holds daily conversations with them on such issues."⁴³ This confidence has enabled Pakistan to commence its journey towards recognition as a nuclear weapons State and to acquire its legitimate nuclear energy requirements.⁴⁴

Pakistan is a party to the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Nuclear Safety Convention, the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, and the Convention on Assistance in Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency.

The response to the summit clearly reflects that the international community strongly favours measures against nuclear terrorism and is determined to support the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

2010 NPT Review Conference

When one looks back at the evolution of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, it is quite clear that soon after the advent of the nuclear weapons and their horrific demonstration in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world started to control their spread. Initially, after the creation of United Nations Organisation (UNO) in 1946, the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (UNAEC) was launched with the objective to investigate and propose steps concerning “elimination of atomic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and effective safeguards,” and that “the fruits of scientific research should be freely available to all nations for peaceful ends.”⁴⁵ However, in 1949, when the former Soviet Union became the second country by detonating its first nuclear weapon, the UNAEC virtually came to an end, describing itself as “un-meaningful”.

In October 1952, the UK became the third country to test a hydrogen bomb, followed by the U.S. hydrogen bomb test in November 1952. In 1953, the former Soviet Union carried out its first thermonuclear weapon test, and prompted fears of a nuclear arms race in the absence of any supervisory mechanism. In 1953, U.S. President Eisenhower forwarded the ‘Atoms for Peace’⁴⁶ proposal at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which eventually led to the creation of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) as an organisation to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to seek to ensure that nuclear energy would not serve any military purpose.⁴⁷

However, during the 1960s, the IAEA failed to deter proliferation as France and China joined the nuclear club in 1960 and 1964, respectively. At the same time, concerns about nuclear arms control led to the conclusion of the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) on October 10, 1963; in 1967 the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Tlatelolco Treaty);⁴⁸ and in 1968, the most significant development of them all, the NPT. The Treaty was opened for signature in 1968 and it entered into force in 1970. Currently, there are 190 States party to the NPT; and India, Israel, and Pakistan are not signatories to the Treaty.

When we look back at the negotiation process of the NPT, that dates back to 1958, when Ireland proposed the first resolution at the UN to prohibit the further dissemination of nuclear weapons.⁴⁹ Later, in 1961, the

UNGA passed its resolution 1665 (XVI) and highlighted the fears that the number of States possessing nuclear weapons is growing which threatens to extend and intensify the arms race.⁵⁰ In resolution 1665 (XVI), UNGA stressed the need for an international agreement, subject to inspection and control, whereby the States producing nuclear weapons would refrain from relinquishing control of such weapons to any nation not possessing them, and States not possessing such weapons would refrain from manufacturing them.⁵¹

In 1964, the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Commission (ENDC) took up the task. On August 24, 1967, the first draft treaty was submitted by the U.S. and the former Soviet Union to the ENDC.⁵² A third version of the draft treaty dated March 11, 1968, was submitted with the ENDC's report to the UNGA.⁵³ At the resumed twenty-second session of the UNGA, the draft treaty was further discussed in the First Committee. Final changes were made and on June 12, 1968, the General Assembly adopted a resolution commending the NPT and requested the depositary governments (UK, Northern Ireland, the United States and the former Soviet Union) to open the Treaty for signature.

The latter part of the century saw many significant developments and setbacks to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In 1974, India conducted its so-called 'peaceful nuclear explosion', and in response to that, the Nuclear Suppliers Group emerged so as to regulate strict global nuclear trade. In 1974, the IAEA also published the Trigger List developed by Zangger Committee. In 1995, the first Review Conference of the NPT was held. More and more countries started to join the NPT in the mean time. Later in 1995, the State parties to the NPT extended it for an indefinite time. However, the non-nuclear weapons States, particularly the developing countries belonging to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), expressed disappointment with the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament and feared that a decision to extend the Treaty indefinitely would by default enable the nuclear weapons States to hold on to their nuclear arsenals in perpetuity and avoid any accountability in eliminating them.⁵⁴

The 1995 extension review conference also established certain objectives and principles on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament which includes the CTBT and the FMCT, and the establishment of the Middle East nuclear weapons free zone. The 2000 review conference resulted in the adoption of a 13-point agenda for progress toward nuclear disarmament, including an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapons States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.⁵⁵ The 2005 review conference, however, failed to yield any

significant results. The 2010 review conference is now scheduled to be held on May 3-28, 2010.

On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), the UN Secretary General stated,

*“Forty years ago today, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force. Since then, the NPT has remained the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and a framework for promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.”*⁵⁶

The foundation of the NPT rests on the following pillars:

- *Non-proliferation:* nuclear weapons States will not transfer any nuclear weapons-related technology to the non-nuclear weapons States, and similarly non-nuclear weapons States undertake not to seek nuclear weapons-related technology, and to accept IAEA safeguards. (Article I, II, and III.)
- *Nuclear Disarmament:* parties to the Treaty undertake to pursue negotiations in good faith towards cessation of arms race and general and complete disarmament. (Article VI.)
- *Peaceful use of nuclear energy:* it is the inalienable right of all the parties to the Treaty to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. (Article IV.)

The above objectives can be achieved only through confidence, trust and cooperation between States party to the Treaty for peaceful activities. The NPT has confronted many challenges since its entry into force. It is a measure of success of the NPT that there are now around 190 States parties to it. There are also cases of non-compliance of the Treaty which include Iraq’s programme in 1980s to 1991, North Korean announcement of withdrawal from it, and the unresolved issue of Iran’s alleged non-compliance with its safeguards obligations. Furthermore, 22 non-nuclear weapons States have not yet brought into force a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA.⁵⁷

The 2010 Review Conference is also faced with many challenges such as implementation and non-compliance, nuclear disarmament and peaceful use of nuclear energy. The Preparatory Committee (Pre-Com) has held three sessions, i.e., in 2007 in Vienna, in 2008 in Geneva, and in 2009 in New York. The following items are currently under consideration for the conference:

- Implementation of the 1995 and 2000 nuclear disarmament commitments.
- The 1995 resolution on the Middle East nuclear weapons free zone.
- Entry into force of the CTBT.
- Negotiations on FMCT.
- Non-compliance by North Korea, and allegedly by Iran and Syria.
- Qualitative and quantitative improvement of nuclear forces by the nuclear weapons States.
- Universalisation of the Treaty.
- Negative security assurances.
- Establishing a reporting mechanism for nuclear disarmament.
- Establishing a standing NPT secretariat.

In the March 2010 session of the Disarmament Commission, Indonesia's representative, speaking on behalf of the NAM, said that he regretted the back-peddalling in the past year on the global nuclear disarmament agenda. Despite a few forward-looking statements by some nuclear-weapon States, words had yet to be turned into deeds. "It is high time that the vision of a world without nuclear weapons, which the NAM has long articulated and has been in the forefront of, is realized fully and completely," he said.⁵⁸

He also called for an international conference to reach agreement on a phased programme to fully eliminate nuclear weapons within a specified timeline, and to prohibit their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use. A multilaterally-negotiated and legally-binding instrument to protect non-nuclear-weapon States from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was essential, as was universal adherence to the CTBT.

However, despite the U.S. commitment in its NPR to pursue to ratify the CTBT, it seems a long way for it to enter into force. The lack of progress toward disarmament will be the focal point of the 2010 Review Conference. Although America has taken some positive steps in term of signing the New START, its commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons and the holding of nuclear security summit; a strong commitment for nuclear disarmament from other nuclear weapons States is still missing. China is believed to be modernising its nuclear forces, UK is keeping its option open to replace the trident weapons system, and France's nuclear modernisation programme shows low enthusiasm for nuclear disarmament in the long term.⁵⁹

Nigeria's representative, speaking on behalf of the African Group, implored nuclear-weapon States to fully implement their NPT obligations, stop developing new types of nuclear weapons and grant, unconditionally, a negative security assurance to non-nuclear-weapon States within a legally-binding framework.⁶⁰

China's speaker urged the two large nuclear weapons-holding nations to continue to take the lead in making drastic and substantive reductions in those arms in "a verifiable and irreversible manner". He said all States should work together on key issues, including fulfilling obligations contained in the NPT's article VI, as well as state publicly they would not seek permanent possession of nuclear weapons. Negotiations on a FMCT should begin swiftly in the Conference on Disarmament. Moreover, the international community should develop a viable long-term plan of phased actions, including creating a convention on the full prohibition of nuclear weapons.⁶¹

Pakistan believes that the FMCT is discriminatory as it does not address the country's security concerns. Ambassador Zamir Akram, in his statement at the Conference on Disarmament, said: "Such a treaty, which only calls for a cut-off of future production of fissile material, is or will be cost free for the nuclear weapons States that have assembled the huge arsenal of nuclear weapons and really do not need to add to this arsenal anymore. There are thousands of weapons between them and because of that they really do not require any more fissile material and therefore, this treaty is ripe for them."⁶²

Speaking on the CTBT, he pointed out that major nuclear powers have also conducted thousands of nuclear tests and they do not need to test anymore. Therefore, the situation is ripe for them to also conclude the CTBT.⁶³ For Pakistan, nuclear weapons serve as a security assurance against its traditional rival India which is not only has superiority in conventional weapons but it would also be able to produce more nuclear weapons from its freed-up nuclear fuel through its nuclear deal with the United States. Without addressing the legitimate security concerns of Pakistan, it would not be possible for it to renounce its nuclear capabilities. As Ambassador Akram stated Pakistan's position in the Conference on Disarmament, "Pakistan was not the first to introduce nuclear weapons in our region. We were compelled to do so in order to achieve a credible deterrence to guarantee our security. Pakistan's nuclear programme is purely defensive and based on minimum credible deterrence. It is security-driven, not status-driven."⁶⁴

Furthermore, there is also a need to address the status of declared nuclear weapons States in the 2010 NPT review conference. The NPT should be modified to accommodate these States.

The 1995 resolution to make Middle East a weapons-free zone was an essential part of the NPT review process. In the 2010 Review Conference, there are remote possibilities to achieve progress in this regard. In the March 2010 session of the Disarmament Commission, talking on the Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East, Qatar's representative, speaking for the Arab Group, expressed concern over the silence towards Israel's nuclear system, which led to loss of faith in the concept of nuclear non-proliferation. He noted further that all States in the Middle East had acceded to the NPT except Israel.⁶⁵ Libya's representative added that the Middle East remained the only region that had not seen any real international efforts to rid it of nuclear weapons, which encouraged the Israel to have military nuclear capabilities without any oversight. The international community should exercise necessary pressure on Israel to join the NPT and subject its facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguard system.⁶⁶

In the 2010 Review Conference, the Iranian nuclear programme would be discussed in detail. However, Iran will do its best to not to be singled out. In the March 2010 session of the Disarmament Commission, Iran's representative stressed the right of all NPT States to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. Non-proliferation or steps to strengthen safeguards must not prejudice national development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. He said that "Iran is determined to pursue all legal aspects of nuclear technology, including the fuel cycle, exclusively for peaceful purposes. No one should cherish the illusion that any proposals or measures, which amount to cessation or even suspension of a lawful activity under the IAEA supervision, will be accepted."⁶⁷

On Many occasions, Pakistan has also strongly favoured peaceful nuclear energy cooperation without any discrimination or the application of double standards and under appropriate IAEA safeguards. International cooperation in this regards should not be based on specific countries like India-U.S. nuclear deal; it should be open to all.

The NPT is middle-aged and tired. Life could begin again at 40 for the Treaty, but that would require a sincere effort combined with a willingness to believe that promises made in 2010 would be better kept than those made in 1995 and 2000.⁶⁸ The draft element paper of the 2009 PreCom and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's Five-Point proposal for

disarmament could be a new Action Plan for strengthening of the NPT. The 2010 NPT Review Conference is the best opportunity to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime because the world's sole superpower and other major powers are taking their initial steps to make this world free of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, promoting of civil society involvement and promoting non-proliferation and disarmament education could also strengthen the NPT norms.

As far as international experts' opinion on complete disarmament is concerned, the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, Washington, has stated that "What matters is not just words, but deeds. Momentum should be created by the ratification of the CTBT. The Commission further stressed on strengthening of the NPT, agreement to end production of fissile material for nuclear weapons (FMCT), and to increase the ability of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for a real disarmament."⁶⁹

There is growing evidence of a global awareness of the perils of nuclear weapons as also of a need for their complete elimination. However, the idea of the actual elimination of nuclear weapons still seems to be a remote possibility. A State's national interests, its geo-political location, its internal political and its external security situation are some of the main factors for it to go nuclear, and it is very difficult to abandon the option without any substantive guarantees. Moreover, nuclear proliferation concerns, international terrorism, and growing role of militant/terrorist organisations and non-State actors are threatening international peace and security. Without a serious commitment to root out threats to international peace and security, such agreements would remain meaningless.

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