

Research Package #2



THBT no country has the right to possess nuclear weapons.



Arguments for the Proposition

1. Nuclear weapons are morally repugnant. Over the past fifty years, we have seen a general tendency towards limited warfare and precision weapons, allowing military objectives to be achieved with minimal loss of civilian life. The entire point of nuclear weapons, however, is their massive, indiscriminate destructive power. Their use could kill tens of thousands of civilians directly, and their catastrophic environmental after-effects would harm many more all around the world. These effects could never be morally acceptable.
2. The idea of a so-called 'nuclear deterrent' no longer applies. Peace during the Cold War was maintained only by a balance of power - neither superpower had an advantage large enough to be confident of victory. This eventually became the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction: both sides had sufficient weaponry to totally annihilate one another, and potentially the whole world. However, there is no longer a balance of power. With the proliferation of nuclear weapons, some rogue states may develop the ability to strike at enemies who have no nuclear weapons of their own. It is not clear that the major nuclear powers would then strike back at the aggressor. This is further complicated by the fact that most of the emerging nuclear threats would not be from legitimate governments but from dictators and terrorist groups. Would it ever be acceptable to kill thousands of civilians for the actions of extremists?
3. By maintaining a strategic deterrent, the current nuclear powers encourage the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. To be a part of the so-called 'nuclear club' is seen as a matter of great prestige; when India and Pakistan recently declared their nuclear capability, it was seen in both countries as increasing their international status. Also, nations opposed to a nuclear power feel that they need to develop their own capability in order to protect themselves. The declared nuclear powers must therefore take the lead in disarmament, as an example for the rest of the world.
4. While nuclear weapons exist, they can fall into the wrong hands. This is particularly true in Russia, which now had control of all of the nuclear weapons which were distributed around the former Soviet Union. The military is disastrously underfunded; technicians and officers who were used to a high standard of living are now finding themselves without pay, sometimes for years. At the same time, other states and extremist groups are willing to pay substantial sums for their services, and to gain access to nuclear weapons. The danger of a weapon being stolen, or - in consideration of the current political instability in Russia - a nuclear base being taken over by disgruntled members of the military or other extremists, can only be ended by destroying the weapons.

Source: http://www.idebate.org/debatabase/topic_details.php?topicID=47

Article for the Proposition:

Lessons from an atomic catastrophe

N S Sisodia

Sixty four years ago on this fateful day, on August 6, 1945 at 8-15 a.m., Brigadier Paul Tibbetz of the U.S. Air Force flew over in a B-29, named Enola Gay after his mother, and dropped a 16-kiloton uranium fission bomb on an unsuspecting Japanese city of Hiroshima. A parachute opened, a flash of

light and blasts followed, and suddenly all hell broke loose. The eyes of young girls watching the parachute melted and their faces became bloated blisters. Ferocious fires raged through the city and temperatures rose to 4000 degrees, melting iron and vaporising human bodies. Skin dangled from the fingernails of extended hands seeking help. Houses were reduced to rubble by the enormous blast and people trapped inside were burned alive. Within seconds, thousands perished. The toll rose to 140,000 within a year. Three days later another bomb, named 'Fat Man,' was dropped on Nagasaki, which suffered a similar fate.

Years after the bombing, survivors (called 'hibakusha' in Japanese) continue to suffer from radiation poisoning and cancers. Traumatized by the horrific experience and emotionally shattered, they live in constant fear of disease and death. The experience of living makes them envy the dead.

The atomic bombing was touted as an extraordinary technological and military achievement. It was called "a great moment of history." The officially sanctioned American view was that bombing was a necessary act in a just war, and it saved a million lives. Subsequent historical accounts, however, reveal that the bombing was in fact unnecessary, as the Japanese were willing to surrender much earlier. President Dwight Eisenhower confirmed this in a 1963 interview to *Newsweek*.

Soon after the bombing, many Americans expressed guilt and revulsion. The Scientific Director of the Manhattan Project, Robert Oppenheimer, said in November 1945 that the bomb was used against "an essentially defeated enemy." He characterized the bombs as "weapons of aggression, of surprise and of terror," which could give nations a "sleazy sense of omnipotence."

The horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki do not seem to have taught the world's political and military elite any lessons. The nuclear age ushered in over four decades of the Cold War and an arms race. At its peak, the nuclear-weapon states had accumulated over 70,000 warheads which possessed the explosive power to destroy a million Hiroshimas, or the earth itself 50 times over.

Despite efforts made to control the numbers of nuclear weapons, prevent their spread, prohibit their use and seek their elimination, little headway has been made to reduce the risk of nuclear annihilation. The number of nuclear weapons today is estimated at 20,000. Of these, some 10,000 remain deployed and many are on hair-trigger alert. Over 90 per cent of these weapons are in the U.S. and Russia.

Humankind has been able to avoid a nuclear catastrophe over the past 64 years, probably as much because of good fortune as any special effort to prevent it. There were more than a few near-misses, however. These include the 1962 Cuban missile crisis; the accidental loading of a simulated attack in the U.S. warning system by a technician at Omaha; a Soviet warning error in 1983 showing the launch of five U.S. missiles against them; and misinterpretation of a rocket launch from Norway by the Russian early warning system in 1995. On August 29-30, 2007, six nuclear-tipped cruise missiles were flown across the U.S. in a U.S. Air Force aircraft by mistake, and for 36 hours no one knew that they were missing.

Apart from the risks of human error there are other real dangers lurking. Terrorists are looking for nuclear materials and technical knowledge; and there can be little doubt that they will use the weapon if they can get one. The arcane theories of nuclear deterrence will not work with them because their 'rationality' is different from that of state actors. Growing cyber-terrorism poses risks for states' nuclear command and control systems, with disastrous consequences.

Nearly 40 countries have nuclear weapons materials and not all of it is secure. With globalisation and the information revolution, the wherewithal to build weapons is relatively easy to access today. The number of nuclear-weapon states may grow in the years to come, as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime is seen to be inequitable, and powerful incentives for weaponisation continue to exist. Even 15 or 20 nuclear-weapon states will make the world a truly dangerous place. States developing nuclear energy will also gain materials and knowledge to produce nuclear weapons, posing a further danger.

The world maintains these dangerous arsenals at a heavy cost. A recent study by Stephen I. Schwartz and Deepti Choubey finds that the U.S. alone spent a minimum of \$52.4 billion on nuclear weapons and programmes in 2008. This does not include the cost of air defence, anti-submarine warfare, classified programmes and nuclear weapons-related intelligence programmes. The U.S. spends nearly \$29 billion, which exceeds India's annual defence budget, to upgrade and maintain its nuclear weapons. The development of nuclear arsenals in the world has consumed trillions of dollars so far and nearly \$110 million is spent each day on their upkeep and readiness.

If the world goes down this road, eventually nuclear weapons will be used again, by mistake or design. A U.S. bipartisan panel recently warned that the world can expect a nuclear or biological terror attack by 2013, unless urgent preventive measures are taken.

Even the Cold Warriors of yesteryear have recognised the imperative of complete elimination of nuclear weapons. But this goal can be realised only with a strong political will and leadership.

The measures required have been outlined earlier, but they are not being vigorously implemented in a time-bound manner. The first essential steps are an unequivocal commitment by nuclear-weapon states to the goal of complete elimination, and a reduction of the salience of nuclear weapons in the countries' security doctrines. These should be followed by an agreement among nuclear-weapon states on "no first use" of nuclear weapons and a legally binding agreement on non-use against non-nuclear-weapon states. Other important measures, including for effective verification and enforcement, will be required.

Since Independence, India has consistently pursued the goal of global disarmament based on the principles of universality, non-discrimination and effective compliance. At the special sessions of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament, India put forward a number of proposals, the most important of which was the Rajiv Gandhi Plan for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The 2010 Non-Proliferation Review Conference offers yet another opportunity to convert the recent calls for disarmament into a binding action plan.

On this day of Hiroshima's devastation, humankind needs to heed what an aging hibakusha had to say: "There is only one way to end this threat and that is to abolish these weapons. Either nuclear weapons must be eliminated or human beings face the threat of extinction by weapons of their own creation."

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[Source: http://www.pugwashindia.org/article_detail.asp?aid=208](http://www.pugwashindia.org/article_detail.asp?aid=208)

Arguments against the Proposition

1. The use of nuclear weapons would indeed be a great tragedy; but so, to a greater or lesser extent, is any war. The reason for maintaining an effective nuclear arsenal is in fact to prevent war. By making the results of conflict catastrophic, a strategic deterrent discourages conflict. The Cold War was in fact one of the most peaceful times in history, particularly in Europe, largely because of the two superpowers' nuclear deterrents.
2. The deterrent principle still stands. During the Gulf War, for example, one of the factors which prevented Iraq from launching missiles tipped with chemical weapon warheads against Israel was the threat the USA would retaliate with a nuclear strike. Although there is no longer as formal a threat of retaliation as there was during the Cold War, the very possibility that the use of nuclear weapons by a rogue state could be met a retaliatory strike is too great a threat to ignore. Moreover, although the citizens of the current nuclear powers may be against the use of force against civilians, their opinions would rapidly change if they found weapons of mass destruction being used against them.
3. The nuclear genie is out of the bottle, and there is no way to go back. Nuclear technology exists, and there is no way to un-invent it. Much as the ideal of global disarmament is fine, the reality is that it is impossible: it takes only one rogue state to maintain a secret nuclear capability to make the abolition of the major powers' deterrents unworkable. Without the threat of a retaliatory strike, this state could attack others at will.
4. While nuclear weapons can be dismantled, the weapons-grade plutonium which forms their warheads cannot simply be destroyed. Instead, they must be stored in special facilities; in Russia, there are some thousand sites where military nuclear material is stored. It is producing this plutonium which is in fact the most difficult stage in building a weapon - by dismantling missiles, you are therefore not destroying their most dangerous part, and hence the risk of theft does not decrease. In fact, it may increase: missile silos in Russia are still the most heavily funded part of the military, whereas in recent years it has become clear that security at storage facilities is often inadequate. Moreover, it is far easier to steal a relatively small quantity of plutonium than an entire Intercontinental Ballistic Missile. Ironically, the safest place for plutonium in present-day Russia may be on top of such a missile.
Source: http://www.idebate.org/debatabase/topic_details.php?topicID=47

Article against the Proposition

US backs out of nuclear inspections treaty

As reported by papers such as *Washington Post* (July 31, 2004) and *Sydney Morning Herald* (August 2, 2004), the [Bush Administration announced that it would back out of a nuclear inspections treaty](#) by opposing provisions for inspections and verification as part of an international treaty to ban production of nuclear weapons materials.

This announcement came at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament on a discussion about a treaty designed to reinforce the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The US and others have pushed for such a treaty for many years, as one of many mechanisms to help prevent proliferation, especially by nations termed as “rogue states”, and by terrorists.

However, the US said it would support the treaty, but without a way to verify compliance.

As the above-mentioned article also noted, in the recent past, various US officials have demonstrated skepticism about the effectiveness of international weapons inspections. In addition, they said they opposed the treaty because:

- It would cost too much;
- Require overly intrusive inspections;
- Would not guarantee compliance with the treaty;

However, “they declined to explain in detail how they believed US security would be undermined by creating a plan to monitor the treaty.”

Maybe cost could be a factor, but so much of the world already spends [staggering amounts of money on their militaries](#), sometimes in relation to nuclear weapons.

In addition, “intrusive” inspections are surely what would be needed as was indirectly argued for against Iraq. Although, there would indeed be concerns that national security and thus national interests could be compromised, as the US themselves pointed out.

While countries may indeed try to hide information to avoid compliance, these inspections are just part of various mechanisms. Furthermore,

- As the above article notes itself, “Arms control specialists said the change in the US position would greatly weaken any treaty and make it harder to prevent nuclear materials from falling into the hands of terrorists. They said the US move virtually killed a 10-year international effort to persuade countries such as India, Israel and Pakistan to accept some oversight of their nuclear production programs.”
- Charges of US hypocrisy will abound from this, especially considering this announcement came “several months after President George Bush declared it a top priority to prevent the production and trafficking in nuclear materials.” As the *Washington Post* also noted, despite that declaration, “the administration has opposed other arms-control treaties that rely on inspection regimes.” Cited examples included:
 - In 2001, the Bush Administration opposed attempts to create an inspections regime for the Biological Weapons Convention;
 - It signed an arms-reduction deal with Russia that doesn’t include new verification mechanisms; and
 - In its first year in office, the Bush administration pulled out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.
- Also significantly, this will further increase the criticism that the US are really doing this so they can pursue their own nuclear options with less scrutiny, as has been considered recently.

Source: <http://www.globalissues.org/article/697/the-us-nuclear-superpower>

Background on Non-Proliferation:

Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT): A Backgounder

Aryaman Bhatnagar

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which was opened for signature in 1968, is a landmark treaty in the field of nuclear disarmament. It is the most widely accepted arms control agreement having three main pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and a right to peaceful use of nuclear energy.

As of now only four states have not signed the NPT: India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea. Both India and Pakistan are openly declared nuclear weapon states; Israel follows a policy of nuclear ambiguity regarding its nuclear programme. As for North Korea it had joined the Treaty, and subsequently withdrew from it.

India believes that the NPT is a highly discriminatory Treaty which does not serve the purpose of achieving nuclear disarmament. It is for this reason that India has repeatedly refused to sign the NPT. However, despite being a non-signatory to the Treaty, India has always urged for nuclear disarmament, discouraged horizontal and vertical proliferation and encouraged the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

We will see in the following paragraphs how India has continued to uphold the provisions mentioned in the various articles of the Treaty despite being a non-signatory to it and maintained a nuclear arsenal only to serve its national interests.

ARTICLE I

The first article binds the nuclear weapon states from transferring nuclear weapon states or other nuclear explosive devices or the means to produce the same and from encouraging or assisting them to manufacture these on their own.

India is not Party to the NPT, but its conduct in the field of nuclear proliferation has always been consistent with the key provisions of the Treaty which also apply to the nuclear-weapon States. India has always been against nuclear armament and has never encouraged the production of nuclear weapons in any other country nor has it transferred such weapons or the technology or knowledge to do so.

This is in contrast to other nuclear weapon states, who have either been active collaborators in, or silent spectators to, continuing clandestine and illegal proliferation, including export of nuclear weapon components and technology. China had encouraged the nuclear programmes of North Korea and Pakistan. The USA has been an all weather ally of Israel, despite the latter's nuclear programme and has put no pressure on it to sign the NPT or give up its nuclear arsenal. Moreover, the Sino-Pakistani nuclear weapons collaboration is a clear violation of the NPT, highlighting the fact that the non-proliferation regime in India's neighbourhood has collapsed.

Other nuclear weapon states not party to the NPT, besides Israel, are Pakistan and North Korea. Unlike, India they don't have an impeccable record in discouraging nuclear proliferation. Pakistani nuclear scientist, AQ Khan was alleged to have traded nuclear secrets to Iran, Libya and North Korea,

while North Korea herself has recently been accused of assisting the Syrian military nuclear programme.

ARTICLE II

The second article binds the non-nuclear weapon states from receiving any transfer or seeking assistance to produce nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and from manufacturing these weapons on their own.

ARTICLE III

The third article has four sub-clauses:

- 1) The non-nuclear weapon states undertake to accept the IAEA safeguards with the purpose of verification that the nuclear energy is being used for peaceful purposes and has not been diverted to the production of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The safeguards would be applicable to all source or special fissionable material in all peaceful nuclear activities within the territory of such state, under its jurisdiction or carried out under its control anywhere.
- 2) Each party state undertakes not to provide fissionable material or the equipment or material designed to process, use or produce fissionable material to any non-nuclear weapon state for peaceful purposes unless the material is subject to IAEA verifications.
- 3) The safeguards will be implemented in a manner which does not hamper the economic or technological development of the other parties or the international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities.
- 4) Non-nuclear-weapon States Party to the treaty shall conclude agreements with the IAEA within 180 days from the original entry into force of the treaty in accordance with the IAEA statute. States which deposit their instruments of ratification after the 180-day period, the negotiations will commence not later than the day of deposit.

Despite, not having signed the NPT, India is a member of the UN watchdog, the IAEA. It has put 4 of its 13 reactors under IAEA safeguards having clearly distinguished between civilian power plants and military power plants. By adopting this policy it has been open about its military nuclear programme and clearly distinguished it from its civil nuclear programme. This highlights the basic tenets of India's nuclear policy, which is committed to upholding the national security of the country and at the same time is seeking to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. With the conclusion of the Indo-US nuclear deal, India has voluntarily placed 14 of its 22 reactors under IAEA safeguards and has signed an umbrella to place all the reactors under safeguards.

ARTICLE IV

This article has two sub clauses:

- 1) The treaty does not prohibit the development of research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful uses by all Parties to the treaty.
- 2) All the Parties to the treaty have the right to undertake the facilitation or to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The states in the capacity to do should also participate in the full development of the potential of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

India has developed a comprehensive indigenous infrastructure and a pool of skilled manpower in the nuclear sector, to meet its energy requirements as well as to enhance its national security. Realizing the importance of nuclear energy as a clean and cheap source of energy, India has placed considerable

importance on nuclear energy in its energy mix. Such energy would not only help in meeting the concerns arising out of green house gas emissions but will also help in bringing greater prosperity to a larger number of people. It is for this reason that India has continued on the path of indigenous development of its civil nuclear programme and at the same time stressed on greater international cooperation in the field which is reflected in its nuclear deal with USA.

ARTICLE V

Parties undertake to ensure that potential benefits from any peaceful applications of nuclear explosions will be made available to non-nuclear weapon states at a low cost which would exclude any charge for research and development.

Non-nuclear-weapon States Party to the treat will be able to obtain such benefits, after bilateral or multilateral agreements through an international body having adequate representation of non-nuclear-weapon States.

ARTICLE VI

Parties to the treaty undertake to commence negotiations on measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear armament at an early date and to bring about a treaty on general and complete disarmament.

This article reflects the hypocritical and discriminatory nature of the treaty. While, the non-nuclear weapon states are persuaded from developing nuclear weapons, there is no time-bound framework for the nuclear weapon states to give up their nuclear arsenal.

India is perhaps the only nuclear weapon state which has called for complete nuclear disarmament. India was the first country to call for a ban on nuclear testing in 1954, for a non-discriminatory treaty on non-proliferation in 1965, non-use of nuclear weapons in 1978, for a nuclear freeze in 1982 and for a phased programme of for complete elimination of nuclear weapons in 1988. It is committed to commencing a Nuclear Weapons convention along the lines of a CWC, which will help in achieving this end. India maintains a nuclear arsenal in the interest of national security but exercises its nuclear might with utmost restraint; having declared a no-first-use policy and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states providing negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon states.

ARTICLE VII

The treaty does not prohibit the rights of any group of states to conclude regional treaties in order to ensure the total absence of nuclear weapons in that particular region.

While, the establishment of a NWFZ may be possible in a region like Southeast Asia, Africa or Latin America, the establishment of a similar zone in the Indian subcontinent is virtually impossible given the current political and military situation. India is in favour of global and complete nuclear disarmament. India's reason behind going nuclear has always been rooted in its desire to protect its own security. So despite the fact that India may be interested in nuclear disarmament, being surrounded by nuclear weapons armed China and Pakistan who are not willing to disarm their nuclear arsenal, it is considered more desirable to retain their nuclear weaponry till the other nuclear powers in the region show any signs of disarming.

Moreover, given the fact that the Chinese and Pakistani nuclear programmes are uranium-based, it may become difficult for the IAEA officials to inspect any clandestine operation as it is very easy to disclose such reactors given their size. In the light of the above arguments, it seems highly unlikely that a NWFZ would be successful in the region.

ARTICLE VIII

This article has three sub clauses:

- 1) Any Party to the Treaty has the right to propose amendments, the text of which will be submitted by the depositary government to the other Parties. If requested to do so by one-third or more of the Parties, a conference will be convened to consider such an amendment.
- 2) Any amendment has to be approved by a majority of votes, including the votes of all the nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty and all other Parties, which on that date are members of the board of governors of the IAEA. The amendment will enter into force after a majority of Party States have submitted their instruments of ratification, including the votes of all the nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty and all other Parties, which on that date are members of the board of governors of the IAEA
- 3) A review conference of the Treaty will be held in Geneva five years after the entry into force of this Treaty. A majority of the Parties can obtain the convening of further such conferences, at intervals of five years thereafter, by submitting a proposal to the depositary governments.

ARTICLE IX

This article has six sub clauses:

- 1) The treaty is open to all states for signature.
- 2) The treaty will be subject to ratification by signatory states and instruments of ratification and instruments of accession will be deposited with the Governments of USA, UK and USSR, which are designated as the Depositary Governments.
- 3) This treaty will enter into force after its ratification by 43 countries, including the three Depositary Governments. The treaty declares a nuclear-weapon State to be one which has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive devices prior to January 1, 1967.
- 4) States which ratify the treaty after it has already come into force; the Treaty for them will enter into force on the date of the deposit of their instruments of ratification or accession.
- 5) Depositary Governments have the responsibility of informing each Party the date each signature, deposit of each instrument of ratification or accession and the date for entry into force of the treaty.
- 6) This Treaty shall be registered by the Depositary Governments pursuant to article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

India maintained its lack of intention to sign the NPT even in 1997, when it voted against the paragraph of the UNGA Resolution which called upon all non-Party States to accede to the Treaty at the earliest possible date. India continues to stress that it will not become Party to the treaty till it lays down a comprehensive and time-bound framework for disarmament by the nuclear weapon states.

Another reason why India has continued to refuse to sign the NPT is reflected in the statement of clause three of this article. If it signs the NPT, it would have to become Party to the Treaty as a non-

nuclear-weapon State as it became a nuclear power only in 1974, while countries like China, among other nuclear-weapon States, will continue to hold on to its nuclear arsenal.

ARTICLE X

This article has two sub clauses:

- 1) Each Party has the right to withdraw from the treaty after a three month notice. The notice will have to be submitted to all other Parties to the Treaty and to the UNSC and should include a statement of the events it regards as having jeopardized the supreme interests of its country.
- 2) A conference will be held twenty-five years after the entry into force of the Treaty to decide whether the treaty should continue indefinitely or for additional fixed periods of time.

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Article on the Status Quo:

START Follow-on Agreement Negotiations: Rhetoric and Reality

Kapil Patil

In an extraordinary spirit that indicated a break from cold war thinking, US President barrack Obama in his Prague speech expressed his commitment to make the world free of nuclear weapons. He stated that, “to put an end to Cold War thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, and urge others to do the same” [1]. As a part of this process President Obama and his Russian counterpart Demitri Medevdev, in their meeting vowed to pursue new and verifiable reductions in their strategic offensive arsenals in a step-by-step process, with a new, legally-binding treaty. This new treaty would replace the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which is due to expire on Dec. 5 this year. During the bilateral summit in Moscow on July 6, both leaders signed a framework deal that will reduce nuclear warheads and delivery systems from the current treaty limitations. Both sides agreed on new limits of 500 to 1,100 carriers of strategic arms and 1,500 to 1,675 warheads while current limits allow a maximum of 2,200 warheads and 1,600 launch vehicles [2]. Within these new parameters the dialogues are being conducted to achieve final agreement that will be part of the new treaty. This piece critically examines the basic parameters of START - follow on agreement that would shape the final outcome of the treaty and in larger context the future of arms control in 21st century.

After six months and six rounds of negotiations, the two governments remain divided on key issue of reductions in delivery vehicles and warheads. Though both parties are committed to conclude a treaty, on the other hand are seeking two mutually opposite goals in a follow-on agreement which at this moment appear irreconcilable. First, Russian authorities are pressing for deeper cuts in nuclear-capable launchers and bombers (delivery vehicles - strategic as well as non-strategic) and U.S. negotiators trying to exclude from the treaty weapons converted to non-nuclear missions. START successfully limited the number of strategic delivery vehicles, irrespective of the mission specification of warheads, a criterion Moscow is hard pressing to retain in a new treaty. Although the Bush

Administration sought to alter these terms and count only operationally-deployed nuclear warheads [3], the Obama Administration has so far been vague on this issue. Though the delivery vehicles have been included in the negotiations, there is a significant mystery over US position on conventionally-armed delivery vehicles specifically. Given that Russia is unlikely to cede ground to US on delivery vehicles, will US agree to cut down on delivery vehicles (strategic and non-strategic) is a key question?

Second, the framework agreement does not include the strategic reserve, non-strategic warheads, tactical nuclear weapons, including U.S. tactical nuclear weapons deployed on the territories of its NATO allies, nor does it require dismantlement of any nuclear warheads. The reduction to 500-1,100 strategic delivery vehicles presented as a “significant reduction in terms of numbers” from the START ceiling of 1,600, is deceptive. In reality, however, the upper limit exceeds what either country currently deploys, and the lower limit apparently higher than what Russia would deploy by 2017 as per the current trends of Russian modernization. Therefore, a 500 -1,100 limit doesn’t force either country to make substantial reductions in their nuclear force structure but essentially follows current deployment plans.

If the non-strategic delivery vehicles are kept out of the purview of follow on agreement, it gives US the required flexibility and manoeuvrability that allows them flexible calculations of extended deterrence towards its allies. US experts believe that a new START is important to drive the Russians toward a more stabilizing strategic posture that does not depend heavily on MIRV’ed ICBMs, and would enable them to monitor Russian nuclear weapons programs. [4] While the Russian delivery forces are on the decline what US wants is to limit their warheads through the treaty arrangement. The declining Russian delivery vehicles would not affect the Russian force structures as the reduction in strategic warheads will. Thus, in order to maintain the strategic balance if not parity, Russians are demanding deeper cuts in US strategic delivery vehicles. However, US appears reluctant to Russian requests for cuts in force structure before completion of nuclear posture review. Thus the ongoing negotiations appear to be directed at not making any deeper cuts in strategic posture of both countries.

The ultimate objective of US for START follow-on treaty is to push Russia towards a meaningful strategic stability without tinkering with their strategic posture to any large extent and locking the Russians in legally binding verifiable treaty. Would such a treaty be acceptable to Russia is a moot question at this juncture. The Russians have been testing a new multiple-warhead version of the “Topol-M ballistic missile” [5] that would be prohibited under START. Russia is deploying the MIRV’ed Topol because Moscow wants to keep its warhead numbers constant, even as the overall number of delivery vehicles descends. Is Russia planning to restructure its strategic forces to assert its revisionism in long term way? The end of START-I in December would put an end to legal restrictions of testing and deploying Topol. If Russia is serious about reasserting its military influence in world politics, perhaps they would back out from extending the existing treaty. Though Washington and Moscow are committed to concluding a START-I follow-on agreement that includes some sort of verification provisions and additional reductions; it is unclear if the December 5 deadline would be met.

A key concept for arms control has been a strategic stability. Traditional arms control process is all but eliminating ambiguities in force structure that enhances predictability; help stabilize a strategic relationship, and contribute to peace and security. While the stability is largely interpreted in technical parameters; the problems of security are perceptively political. Though President Obama has made the case for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in national security strategy, the ongoing

negotiations are essentially aimed at maintaining the current force structure centred at the concept of deterrence and strategic stability thereby extending the strategic thinking of bygone era to current times. Thus the treaty negotiated in current framework would significantly fall short of expectations that after the implementation of the treaty both Russia and US would continue to hold 90% of world nukes. It prompts one to ask if Arms control in 21st century is any different from cold war era and whether the START - follow on agreement is in sync with and President Obama's larger vision of step by step movement to nuke free world?

For any meaningful arms control in 21st century, should address the larger issue of possible doctrinal changes that deemphasizes maintaining mammoth arsenals, facilitates deeper cuts in delivery vehicles and warheads, tactical weapons, warheads in storage and advocates CBMs on issues of missile defence. At this stage it is certainly inexplicable as to why treaty requires seven years for implementation when the agreement could be implemented well within a year using past experiences. Secondly given the tremendous conventional superiority – technical and numerical - that US has, why it is unwilling to move towards de-legitimizing strategic forces in military doctrines.

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End Notes:

[1] President Obama's Speech on Nuclear Weapons at Prague: [FULL TEXT], [URL] at:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/04/05/obama-prague-speech-on-nu_n_183219.html

[2] President Obama Holds a News Conference with President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia on 6th July 2009. [FULL TEXT] [URL] at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/06/AR2009070601537.html>

[3] The START follow-on negotiations: Russians focus on delivery vehicles, BASIC Getting to Zero Papers (14), 1 July 2009 at www.basicint.org/gtz/gtz14.htm

[4] Jeffrey Lewis, Dead Hand, START and Strategy Stability, 7th October 2009, [URL] <http://www.armscontrolwonk.com/>

[5] Senate Republican Policy Committee - START Follow on Dos and Don'ts - Sep 30, 2009. [URL] <http://rpc.senate.gov/public/ files/093009STARTFollowonDosandDontsms.pdf>

Source: http://www.pugwashindia.org/article_detail.asp?aid=218

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