

Old and New Wisdoms

Statement of the Norwegian Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs Delivered to the SOAS Conference on 7 January 2008

It is an honour and pleasure to be invited to address this Conference. The title “Old and New Wisdoms” is highly relevant. We need to restore international consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation.

12 years ago the international community agreed on an indefinite extension of the NPT. 11 years ago the international community concluded the CTBT negotiations. A little more than 10 years ago the CWC entered into force. Given current realities, I am not certain that those bold agreements could have been reached today. From an arms control perspective, there was more wisdom in the 1990s than today.

We need to come back to the positive atmosphere of the 1990s. It will not be easy. We have to think out of the box. Indeed, we must develop new wisdom in order to revive the old wisdom.

Norway has a strong interest in restoring international consensus. To this end, we are working with like-minded nations, key actors and not the least the civil society. We trust that think tanks and NGOs will help us developing ideas and proposals on how to get the disarmament process back on a more positive track.

I would also like to express appreciation that this conference is seeking to illustrate the linkage between disarmament and development.

From a traditional Western perspective the Non-Proliferation Treaty or the Biological Toxins Weapons Convention are seen as arms control treaties. The perspective from a developing country would be different. Countries from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) view for example article X of BTWC (peaceful co-operation in biological science) as an essential component of the BTWC. Unless we move forward on art. X we cannot achieve consensus on further strengthening national implementation of this Treaty. The same goes for art. XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention (peaceful co-operation in the chemical sector). Let me also stress that the NAM/G-77 countries are the most vocal advocates of art. IV of the NPT. This is a point which is often difficult to explain to nuclear disarmament advocates in Norway, who often also strongly oppose nuclear energy.

An important challenge is to reconcile development aspirations with non-proliferation concerns. Maintenance and further strengthening of the norms set by the NPT, BTWC and CWC are essential. Norway is also making a point that countries having in place adequate national non-proliferation legislation and enforcement provisions will be much better positioned to acquire goods, materials and technologies. Export controls are not intended to harm social and economic progress. Export controls are to serve our collective security.

In the field of conventional weapons we also see a close inter-linkage between disarmament and both development and humanitarian concerns. The Mine Ban Treaty is clearly a humanitarian instrument. The campaign to ban cluster munitions causing unacceptable harm has a clear humanitarian objective.

Clearance of landmines and other unexploded devices in a post conflict situation is imperative for allowing food production and other economic activities. A country moving out of civil strife cannot achieve development unless arms and ammunitions are collected. Illicit trade of small arms and light weapons represent a fundamental threat for the development of African nations.

I will now provide you with an overview of Norway's policy on disarmament, with a particular emphasis on nuclear weapons.

The Norwegian Government's clear objective is the full elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that the irreversible dismantlement of nuclear arms is the best way to ensure that such weapons are not proliferated. Nuclear disarmament serves both Norwegian and global security interests.

We realise that it will not be easy to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. The path to full nuclear abolition will be long and arduous.

Right now we are faced with some tough and difficult challenges. Some of them can be described as country specific, while others are linked to the functioning of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

There can be no doubt that horizontal proliferation is today a genuine threat to international peace and security. All efforts and political will need to be mobilised in order to prevent the "Nuclear Club" from getting new members.

Last year there was good progress is being made in the Six-Party Talks in Beijing to get the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to give up its nuclear programme. This has shown that diplomacy works in addressing serious proliferation challenges. Yet, we cannot exclude new disappointments. Indeed, the DPRK has failed to meet a reporting dead-line on its nuclear activities to the other partners in the Six-Party process. Recent news from Pyongyang is very discouraging.

I believe that the right mix of stick and carrots has so far yielded positive results. The stick was the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1718, which opened up for sanctions against the DPRK. The carrots were economic incentives and prospects of political normalisation. What greatly helped was that there was international unity behind such an approach. The implementation of the framework agreement between the six parties will be tough, but if we can achieve a de-nuclearised Korean Peninsula, the global nuclear non-proliferation regime will be in much better shape.

From a Norwegian perspective it is essential to support the Six-Party process. We should explore how donor countries can play a supportive role. Last fall, the Ministry hosted an informal workshop in Oslo with other Nordic countries, the EU and Switzerland to look at our assistance to the DPRK in light of the positive momentum we are seeing in the Six-Party Talks. Our aim is to make it even more apparent that the DPRK has much to gain from cooperation and much more to lose from making the wrong choices.

The second crucial country case is the Islamic Republic of Iran. According to a November report from the IAEA, Iran has shown more willingness to cooperate on resolving outstanding

issues related to the country's past nuclear activities. But the IAEA knows less about Iran's ongoing activities today than it did a few years ago.

On the other hand the US National Intelligence Estimate from December last year on Iran tells us that Iran has not pursued a policy of acquiring nuclear weapons since 2003. This report must encourage Iran to show maximum transparency on the scope and nature of its past and present nuclear activities. It is up to Iran to restore its international credibility. Iran can only do this by:

- Meeting the demands of the Security Council and suspending sensitive nuclear activities.
- Cooperating in a proactive way with the IAEA in clearing up all outstanding uncertainties.
- Showing the IAEA full transparency with regard to current activities and implementing the IAEA Additional Protocol.

The international community is by and large united behind these demands. At the same time we must be ready to engage the Iranian authorities and make it clear that the country has much to gain by cooperation. No one is denying Iran the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy according to the provisions of the NPT. Indeed, we should make it clear that we are ready to assist Iran in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. But this depends on Teheran's readiness to take the legitimate concerns of the international community into account and make a real contribution to reaching a politically negotiated outcome.

Resolving the Iran dossier through diplomatic means would definitely boost the non-proliferation regime and would also have positive effects in the Middle East. Norway remains committed to achieving a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East. That would mean that Israel would have to join the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state.

Norway has therefore supported various analytical studies and workshops on how to achieve this goal, such as the SOAS Conference last fall. Let me underline that there are no quick fixes. It will be a long and difficult process. But we cannot achieve this aim unless we are ready to discuss how to get there.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We often hear that the nuclear non-proliferation regime is under severe strain. It has been affirmed that the NPT has been seriously weakened and that the "Grand Bargain" of 1968 is being eroded. In short, the historic compromise made nearly forty years ago was that non-nuclear weapons states pledged not to acquire nuclear weapons, provided that they were assured the right to fully benefit from peaceful uses of nuclear energy and that the nuclear weapons states committed themselves to reducing their arsenals with a view to eventually achieving total elimination.

Today some are questioning the relevance and utility of the NPT. It could, from an academic point of view, be interesting to enter into such a discussion. From my perspective it would be highly unfortunate to conclude that the NPT is no longer valid. This treaty contains clear obligations for all of its States Parties. These legal commitments stand irrespective of our frustrations and disappointments over the 2005 Conference. We should refrain from any

actions that could undermine the authority and integrity of the NPT. The last thing we need today is breakouts from the NPT.

No one can deny that non-proliferation is fundamental for the NPT regime. Certain nuclear weapons states make the point that the NPT is primarily a non-proliferation agreement. Indeed there is clearly room for improvement in the non-proliferation regime. But let me reiterate, the NPT is a non-proliferation treaty, but it is also a treaty that commits States Parties to nuclear disarmament and ensures the right to peaceful use of nuclear technology.

There are still too many countries that have not yet in place comprehensive safeguards agreements and Additional Protocol with the IAEA. It is only on the basis of full adherence to the Additional Protocol that the IAEA can conclude that the nuclear activities of any given country take place for peaceful uses only. Such assurances are essential for the credibility of the regime as a whole.

The IAEA still lacks resources for fulfilling its safeguards and verification mandate. A committee established several years ago in the IAEA was not able to agree on a programme of work and thus could not deliver forward-looking recommendations. This was regrettable, since the Agency needs more funding and better tools to carry out its verification task.

There are still too many countries that are deeply sceptical to Security Council resolution 1540 concerning proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. They do not see that the adoption and enforcement of essential legislation with respect to the physical protection of nuclear materials and export control are to their own advantage. Only countries that have developed adequate laws and enforcement procedures will be in a position to fully participate in peaceful nuclear cooperation.

A broad nuclear security and non-proliferation architecture must also encompass credible efforts to combat nuclear terrorism. Important steps would be universal adherence to the revised Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the Convention on Suppression of Nuclear Terrorism. We must also intensify efforts to minimise the use of highly enriched uranium in the civilian sector.

So far I have mainly talked about non-proliferation, but we also have to make more progress along the two other pillars of the NPT: disarmament and peaceful uses.

As I have said, from a Norwegian perspective both disarmament and non-proliferation are essential for the total elimination of nuclear arms. But we must refrain from making artificial links. Necessary non-proliferation measures should not be delayed due to a perceived lack of progress in nuclear disarmament. At the same time, a diminished role for nuclear weapons in security policies will help to make it less attractive to acquire such weapons.

Furthermore, it is my firm view that nuclear disarmament on the basis of irreversibility, transparency and verification is essential to reduce the availability of nuclear weapons and make sure that they do not fall into the wrong hands.

We must pursue an incremental disarmament agenda.

Firstly, we need further reductions in nuclear arsenals. Norway welcomes the considerable reductions that have been made since the end of the Cold War. START will expire in 2009

and the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (the Moscow Treaty) in 2012. It is vital that these treaties are replaced by new agreements that lead to deeper and irreversible reductions. It is encouraging that consultations between the US and the Russian Federation have already started. The two countries have now a window of opportunity that should not be missed.

We also hope it will be possible to move forward on sub-strategic nuclear weapons. The commitments made in the early 1990s concerning the reduction of such arsenals must be honoured.

Secondly, transparency on disarmament measures is essential to foster confidence that we are moving towards further reductions in nuclear weapons stocks. We encourage all nuclear weapons states to provide the fullest possible transparency.

Thirdly, we cannot achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons unless we are able to prevent a new arms race. Norway attaches great importance to existing bilateral arms control treaties, and no State Parties should run away from them. But we also need multilateral treaties such as Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a Fissile Materials Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) in order to prevent a new arms race.

Norway reiterates the importance of the CTBT. We welcome the unilateral test moratoria that are in place, but they cannot replace a global legally binding treaty. Norway urges universal adherence to the CTBT.

It is high time to start negotiations on a FMCT. Our view is that FMCT negotiations should be commenced without preconditions. However, we hope that a common understanding will emerge during such negotiations that credible verification is both feasible and would serve the cause of international security.

We also expect that the question of existing stocks will be addressed. Even today important steps are being taken to remove stocks of fissile material that are no longer serving military purposes and convert them to civilian use. This shows that disarmament can support peaceful use.

Fourthly, we consider nuclear weapons free zones to be important disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. Such zones, based on UN guidelines, provide an important avenue for attaining legally binding negative security assurances. More effort should be made to promote regional zones where nuclear weapons states are in a position to sign and ratify the supporting protocols. Indeed a regional zone for the Korean Peninsula could be a step towards resolving the DPRK proliferation crisis.

Fifthly, we remain convinced that continued efforts to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons, as agreed in previous NPT Review Conferences, will generate more confidence and security. We welcome the efforts made so far, and encourage further steps.

Sixth, non-nuclear weapon states can also contribute to nuclear disarmament. For instance, Norway allocates considerable funds for nuclear safety and dismantlement of nuclear submarines in north-western Russia. It is also of crucial importance that all non-nuclear weapons states ratify the CTBT in order to put maximum pressure on the nuclear weapons states that have not ratified this instrument.

Seventh, we must engage civil society in promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Norwegian Government has for this reason considerably increased its funding to research institutions all over the world. Our financial support goes both to institutions that support developing countries in implementing their NPT obligations and to regional nuclear weapons free zones.

We also provide considerable financial support to various think tanks that are considering ways of moving the disarmament agenda forward. In this connection, we will be hosting an international conference on nuclear disarmament on 26-27 February next year, to which a number of academic institutions and governments are invited. Former Secretary of State George Shultz will be one of the keynote speakers. We were all impressed by the Wall Street Journal article in January on nuclear issues, of which he was co-author.

Norway does not produce nuclear energy and have no plans to start doing so. On the other hand, we fully recognise the rights under Article IV of the NPT. Given the prospects of climate change, we expect that the use of nuclear energy will increase in the years to come.

The challenge is to ensure that peaceful use does not undermine non-proliferation efforts and harm the environment and human safety. Let me outline how we believe this challenge can be met. Firstly, we must forge a consensus that development of nuclear energy in a country would not imply development of a whole nuclear fuel cycle. This would involve very costly investments that would be difficult for most countries to bear.

Therefore we need to make progress on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle with the aim of ensuring deliveries of affordable fuel to customers that refrain from developing their own full production cycle. The IAEA should be at the centre of such efforts. Norway has funded studies on possible arrangements that take into account concerns of developing countries.

In addition we must equip the Agency to better assist various national authorities in implementing nuclear safety programmes. In the event of an accident, the international community must be able to respond. These areas have been among Norway's main priorities while we had a seat on the Board of Governors.

Lastly, let me say a few words about how we are promoting our disarmament agenda. If we are to achieve results, we have to work in tandem with other partners.

The Seven-Nation Initiative, which consists of my country, Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Romania, South Africa and the UK, is one key avenue. The strength of this initiative is that it is truly cross-regional. The political declaration adopted on in 2005 gained wide-spread support. If we are to break the impasse in multilateral disarmament diplomacy, we must work across the regions.

Norway will to continue give high priority to the Seven-Nation Initiative. Of course, we do not consider this initiative to be an end in itself, but a potentially important facilitator in forging consensus at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The Seven-Nation Initiative will not replace other existing cooperation arrangements, but will supplement them. For instance South Africa will continue its active role in the New Agenda Coalition. And the UK will continue its close cooperation with the US and France.

Norway is and will remain a committed member of NATO. We will, however, work closely with like-minded NATO countries in seeking to further strengthen the disarmament dimension within the Alliance. Together with other like-minded allied countries, we intend to make constructive contributions to the NPT Review Process, as we have done in the past.

Norway is also active in the Vienna-based G10, with other like-minded countries such as Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Sweden in promoting nuclear non-proliferation, security and safety.

Norway has also good contacts with the New Agenda Coalition, and we have facilitated broader support from NATO countries for NAC resolutions at the UN General Assembly.