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Transcript

**2015 NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE:
TRAGEDY, FARCE, OR
UNEXPECTED SUCCESS?**

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ELENA CHERNENKO

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much for joining this session. I'll first introduce our great panelists that we have here today for this intriguing topic. In the seating order, from my right is Ambassador Jacek Bylica, the principal advisor and special envoy for non-proliferation and disarmament as the European External Action Service.

Then we have Nilvana Darama, the Deputy Director General for OCE Arms Control and Disarmament at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. Then we have Ambassador Takeshi Hikiyama, the Director General of the Department for Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Then we have Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, the Undersecretary of State Foreign and Security Policy in the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and also the Facilitator of the Conference for Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East. And in the end we have Ambassador Adam Scheinman, who is the Special Representative of the President of the United States for Nuclear Non-Proliferation at the Bureau of International Security and Non-Proliferation at the US Department of State.

Let me briefly introduce also myself. My name is Elena Chernenko. I'm the Special Correspondent for the Kommersant newspaper from Moscow. If you would like to know more about the vast experience and expertise of our panelists today, you can look it up here in the book. I think it's on page 26.

And also one organizational thing before we start into the topic. Once again, I'd like to remind you to download the app, because at this actual session you will need it for the first time. In the end, we'll have a poll, so everybody that has the app can participate in it. If you would like to ask how to download the app, you can ask the organisers, but you'll definitely need it at this session.

We have the session which is called the 2015 NPT Review Conference: A Tragedy, a Farce, or an Unexpected Success. Coming from Moscow, and having heard everything that has been said about Russia in the first half of the day, I feel a bit like a representative of the Axis of Evil, so I must admit that I'm almost happy that there are so many problems and obstacles to a successful NPT Review Conference that the crisis around Ukraine is not the only one.

That means that we have definitely lots to talk about. The way that this session is going to work, organisational-wise is I would give our great panelists about five to seven minutes to answer a question that I will pose to them right away. Then after we do that, I will ask one more additional question to one of the panelists, and then we'll open up to questions.

The NPT Review Conference this year, there is already a big discussion around it. Will it be now a tragedy, a farce, or maybe unexpected success? There are many problems that can make this conference either one of those three. I'm more of a pessimist, but maybe the panelists will have more optimistic things to say on that.

The first question that I would like to ask all of you would be, from your point of view, what could be the most contentious topic to the NPT Review Conference? Is it going to be, for example, the fact that the five nuclear states do not live up to their commitments because, for example, the glossary is a good thing, but it's definitely not enough.

Is it the possible impasse on the Iran talks? Is it the fact that there's still no conference on the weapons of mass destruction free zone in the middle, though it has been decided at the previous

review conference? Is it North Korea or something else? So please, if we can just start out with Ambassador Bylica?

JACEK BYLICA

Thank you very much, Elena, and good afternoon to you all. First of all, I'd like to say briefly what the European Union is bringing to the NPT table. We are bringing to the table 28 European member states who are actually quite diverse in terms of their approach to nuclear issues. But at the same time, all of them very supportive of the NPT, and looking forward toward the successful review conference.

First, a word about this diversity, because I believe it's actually an advantage. Among the 28 member states of the European Union, we have, on the one hand, two nuclear weapon states, obviously members of the NPT. On the other hand, we have neutral states, some of them very much forward leaning on nuclear disarmament.

We have a number, in fact the majority of EU member states are, at the same time, members of NATO. So part of an alliance which declares itself to be a nuclear alliance, as long as nuclear weapons exist. And some of them actually participate in the nuclear sharing arrangement and train with nuclear weapons.

Even on peaceful uses, we have countries which rely very much in their electricity and power generation on nuclear energy. And on the other hand we do have a member state which has a constitutional prohibition on nuclear energy. This is a very diverse group. I like to call it a microcosm of the world, because we reflect all the sensitivities, I believe, which are there represented in the NPT. And very often, the middle of the road approach which the European Union takes, actually proves to be a balanced approach for all.

At the same time, EU, as I mentioned, is very united in supporting the NPT. We have a similar threat assessment, long term threat assessment, listing proliferation among the five key threats, which have been identified in the EU Security Strategy, along with regional conflict state failure, organised crime, and terrorism, obviously. And I believe we have a rather sophisticated understanding of the interaction, interplay between those threats. For example, with regional insecurity, very much feeding the demand for weapons of mass destruction.

At the same time, NPT is for us, a cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. It is an essential basis for future multilateral disarmament efforts, in accordance with Article 6 of the NPT, and an important element for the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy for those countries which wish to develop those.

What we would expect from this RevCon. Well the short answer is, a strengthened NPT, and strengthened in all three pillars. This means that we probably need to review the implantation today of the action plan, the 64 actions which were agreed by all in 2010, and implementation of which is actually a responsibility both collective, and individually, of all states parties to the NPT.

We would like to have a good discussion, obviously, on the non-compliance issues. We would like to have some decisions on the strengthening of nuclear safety and security and so on.

But the real question which you asked us to answer is about the difficulties, the problems, or I would prefer to call them, challenges, because...

ELENA CHERNENKO

Yes, they're diplomatic words.

JACEK BYLICA

First of all, let's be honest. I mean, this RevCon is going to be held against the backdrop of a very severe security environment, very different from 2005 or 2010. Much worse, for a number of reasons, some of which were mentioned today. The Russian aggression against Ukraine, which has a nuclear dimension to this, the violation of the Budapest Memorandum, the actual mentioning of nuclear weapons in the crisis and so on.

The point I'm making is that the possible failure of the conference, which I'm not predicting, would have much more serious implications this year than in 2005. I think this should increase our sense of responsibility for a good outcome.

The second challenge I see is a general feeling of frustration, which one can sense in different quarters. A frustration with lack of implementation, with the pace of implementation, of different obligations. And frustration can be an impulse for action, but sometimes not for very wise actions. This is an important point to make.

Then there is a whole host of regional issues from the WMD Free Zone in the Middle East and other regional issues, but we have much better, more qualified people in the panel to address those. Those would be the three baskets of challenges I would see.

As far as my prediction is concerned, I am from the generation that likes paper books, so I went to a bookstore here over the weekend and was browsing some stuff. I came across a book by a senior White House staffer who analysed decision-making in the White House during different crises, including the Cuban Missile Crisis and so on.

He tries to come up with recommendations of what is the best course of action during such crises. His conclusion is that the best approach is actually what he calls a wise muddling through. Doesn't have a very glorious sound to it, I admit: wise muddling through. But it has some value, I believe. Sort of incremental steps forward, very well thought through, and cautious, but a step forward in a difficult situation, and then you look around and see where you go from there. So I am expecting a moderate success of the review conference.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Well, you said at the beginning you would present a balanced view of the European Union, and so you did. Very balanced with the downsides and the optimistic view. Nilvana Darama, from Turkey, please.

NILVANA DARAMA

Thank you very much. Good afternoon, everyone. I also would like to start by saying what NPT represents for Turkey. Again, for us, it's the foundation of the achievement of disarmament, cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and also basis for the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The success of the review process depends very much on a balanced approach to these three pillars, and they are mutually reinforcing, so in Turkey we do not favour one to the other. We do not think that progress in one will be enough by itself. The other two pillars should catch up with the most advanced pillar.

In the context of RevCon meetings, the success is about realistic and achievable expectations, maximize positions we want to avoid. Seeking answer to your questions, Elena, it's still hard to predict what will be the result of the NPT RevCon. We've been seeking the answer for the last

four years, and has just been said, we are now going to have a meeting against a more difficult background. So what's considered success, maybe we should first define the answer to this question. A constructive debate? A final outcome paper?

If it's going to be a final outcome paper, what sort of paper should we expect? In Turkey, we think review of implementation is important, stock taking of past achievements, and updates, maybe on the 2010 RevCon. A document would be welcome, but it's not the most important criteria to define the success. A document, if it's going to be there, can also be short. It doesn't necessarily be a long one, reflecting the meeting and a commitment to work together for the strengthening of the process.

We have to have an honest recognition of the weaknesses of the NPT process, and where we need further progress; and also the strengths, because we have failures, but also we have achievements. Honest recognition of both is important.

A genuine dialogue is needed because most of the time we hear monologues. Sides do not hear each other. It's important to have a fruitful exchange, a constructive exchange, and hear each other's perceptions and expectations.

It's obvious that there is going to be a difficult RevCon ahead. 2010 was a success, but then now the situation on the ground is different. Middle East conference will be one of the major issues, major challenges that will be discussed during the RevCon.

In 2010 there was final document that was possible, thanks to the decision on the Middle East conference compromise. But there is failure in delivery. Again, frustration of a group of countries is important over the lack of progress in implementation. This cannot be undermined. And this is not about the Middle East conference only. This has been a long-standing dissatisfaction about non-implementation of commitments.

The NPT itself was a great bargain, and its indefinite extension was another bargain. Then there came the 13 steps in 2000. We have the 2010 RevCon conclusions, and then there is consistent lack of implementation of some of the commitments. I'm not discussing here the results, the causes of that lack of implementation, but then a group of countries are frustrated. In their eyes, promises are made but are not kept. They are unmet commitments, and this diminishes the credibility of the process and also the faith in the process. So there has to be an honest recognition of this fact, and an open exchange on this.

Now, according to some countries, there is a strong non-proliferation focus, but disarmament lags behind. And some non-proliferation, versus peaceful uses of nuclear energy because the access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, for some, is not encouraged as much as it should.

Of course, the UN disarmament machinery, there is going to be discussion on that. It's not functioning well. A long standing impasse in the conference on disarmament. An FMCT negotiation cannot be triggered. The CTBT is not yet enforced, and it's not universalized.

There is some progress on the front of nuclear weapon free zones. We welcome that. But then there are discussions needed on further transparency on disarmament and also maybe the alerting and nuclear postures. These are the challenging issues that will be on the agenda of the upcoming NPT.

Of course, there are nuclear arms states outside the NPT. This is a big challenge because universalisation of the NPT is needed for further strengthening the commitments to it, but it's not foreseen for the near future. Also, how we are going to achieve disarmament, as well there

are differences of opinion, humanitarian aspect which entered into the scene during last RevCon will receive further focus during this upcoming one.

And then there are differences of views whether we shall achieve disarmament step by step or whether we should forget all about it and start negotiating a new document banning the nuclear weapons. If it's going to be step by step, well really concrete steps are needed. And again, commitments and promises are not enough, because, as I said, there is frustration about lack of implementation.

So these are the challenges we see. But we are not pessimistic in Turkey. With a group of countries from different parts of the world, we are working towards the success of the NPT, and the success, according to our words, I defined earlier, constructive dialogue, realistic, achievable objectives, not maximalist positions, maybe a final outcome document, but not an ambitious one, and a middle way, like the EU. And here we agree with the European Union countries.

Maybe I should stop here, call it questions afterwards, and maybe I will have further things to say.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Thank you very much for pointing out all the obstacles and challenges through the conference. It does, indeed, sound like a difficult muddling through that Ambassador Bylica has said before. What is the view from Japan on the perspective of the conference? What does success or unsuccess look like, and should we actually expect a document or not even try for it?

TAKESHI HIKIHARA

Thank you, Elena. Good afternoon. It's such an honor and a pleasure to be here. For the coming review conference, I think there's the good news and the bad news. The bad news is as you earlier mentioned, there are so many contentious issues surrounding the NPT. The good news is that the NPT does not have to necessarily solve all these problems. Our NPT stands for non-proliferation treaty. It does not stand for, for instance, Neighborhood Policing Team. These policemen fix every problem that you might have in your community, but the NPT does not.

Why is the NPT important? Why do we attach such an utmost value to it, to this treaty? In the international situation that we are faced with, it's very different from the one that we have been facing in the Cold War era. We are faced with much more diverse fight and nuclear risks. But still, the NPT remains the very fundamental set of norms to deal with the nuclear issues, and it's really a cornerstone of our international peace and security.

Maybe we first have to look at what will be the failure or success of the NPT conference? Having an agreed document at the end of the conference, it's an important factor. It would be a big criteria. But it may be not enough. To my mind, more important is whether or not the outcome of the conference is going to contribute to maintaining the strength and the legitimacy of the NPT. And I should say that an agreed document without much substance is not enough to be called a success.

From this point, for Japan, we seek to strengthen and enhance the 2010 action plan by agreeing upon the robust and the profitable measures from all three pillars of the NPT disarmament non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. And especially for disarmament, I would like to mention the three points that our Foreign Minister Kishida said in his statement last week. The first, improvement of transparency of nuclear forces. The second, further reduction of nuclear weapons and multilateralization of nuclear disarmament negotiations, and the solidarity of the

international community on the issue of the humanitarian aspects of nuclear weapons. So we hope to find the consensus on all of these important issues.

Elena pointed out there are lots of difficult issues. Many people think that these issues will be a fatal element, leading to a breakdown of the negotiation, a fatal tragedy. But as I told you, the NPT does not have to solve every single issue that you mentioned. We realise we have to concentrate our effort to the essential things, the issues essential to the NPT and to my mind, among others, the most important essential issues are the first inception progress in disarmament, and second, Middle East WMD free zone issue.

And for the second, Middle East issue, I'm sure that Ambassador Laajava is going to make a most updated professional point of view, so I'm not going into details. But I just directly point out any single issue, including this Middle East issue should not take the whole process as a hostage. I think this is important to say.

And for the disarmament, we have to admit with pleasure that there has been some progress. For instance, the entry into force of the new START treaty, a very steady implementation. Or some unilateral disarmament measures by a few number of nuclear weapons states. But as I recognise, just as mentioned by Ambassador Bylica, it is obvious that there is a mounting dissatisfaction on the part of non-nuclear weapon states.

We welcomed the reports on disarmament presented by the five countries to the preparatory committee in 2014. But if we look closer, there is even a report without any numerical data, or they have agreed upon a standard reporting form, but it looks more like a set of common items rather than a full-fledged standard reporting form.

I say this because the transparencies are one of the most important issues for us. For the credibility of the NPT, we need a progress in disarmament. And for non-nuclear weapon states to recognise, evaluate and appreciate the progress in disarmament, the further improvement in transparency is indispensable. So I think this is one of the most important issues for us to have some gain in the coming review conference.

I think that there is a good chance of success for this review conference. It may sound a little bit optimistic but I'm optimistic, and we should try to be optimistic. And my experience as a diplomat taught me that long, hard negotiation, long, hard work to the end, and a kind of shared sense of exhaustion may sometimes lead to a final agreement. I tell you that if you don't get tired, keep on working.

And there's an opinion that since 2000 there is an alternation, the failure and success comes in turn. And they say it's a failure this year. Obviously this is too simplistic to say so, in comparison with the last failure in 2005 where we observed almost a total lack of attention to disarmament. We are in a different situation. Rather we are faced with a huge gap between expectation and the reality when it comes to disarmament.

So what we have to do is to be the momentum to fill the gap of this perception. And it is in this context that Japan has set up a group called NPDI [unclear 00:28:15] and Turkey is a very active member of that group. We have presented 18 proposals and working papers in the process, and very recently consolidated these papers into a single, very comprehensive proposal.

The NPDI are just a little bit like the EU. It's a group of countries of very different background. And on top of these political or ideological diversities we have also got regional diversity. It's a cross-regional group. So I think that our proposal to the RevCon might be a good basis for a discussion, and hopefully for agreement among different countries or groups of the review conference.

We don't have any shortcut to a world free of nuclear weapons. The both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapons states should get together and build up concrete practical measures in a steady manner. I think that's the shortest way to achieve our goal.

I'm sorry I'm getting a little bit long, but before concluding I would just like to recall that this year, 2015 marks 70 years since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And I must say that [unclear 00:29:45] of A bomb survivors, many of them are getting very old, so that they may feel that this review conference will be the last milestone occasion for them. So I think it is very important to be successful for this review conference. We really should be determined in passing this objective. Thank you.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Thank you very much, Ambassador, for your very important reminder, and for also giving us quite an optimistic view on the conference itself. Ambassador Laajava, I'm afraid to even ask you for your prognosis on the conference, but what is it? What should we expect? You have one of the most difficult tasks there, I think, the hardest burden that everybody is going to be talking about.

JAAKO LAAJAVA

Thank you very much, Elena. Good afternoon, everyone. So is the Middle East really the black swan here that destroys everything? Let me offer a couple of thoughts. Of course, I think this audience, for one, knows that the idea is not new. It's there since the mid-'70s in a slightly different format, further elaborated and developed in '95, and finally then decided upon in 2010 when the action plan contained the IDF conference to be convened on the establishment of a Middle East free nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

I must say that I've seen many describe this as a pie in the sky, which will never become a reality. And of course, being a realist myself, I must say that, of course, while we have to take into account, number one, the project itself is extremely complex and requires time, and is actually very ambitious, and number two, that this is, of course, a very complicated and complex Middle East environment, and with the ongoing transformation, and the emerging terrorist threat by non-state actors, of course, any endeavour of this type will be very difficult to achieve.

Nevertheless, I continue to believe that there's important potential here. Important opportunity to shape the Middle East security environment in a new way. An opportunity that might open an avenue for a more peaceful, more secure and more cooperative Middle East. That's a huge opportunity, and I think should not be lost.

Defense, in the wake of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, I was appointed by the Secretary General of the United Nations, that was in October 2011, to be the facilitator, to facilitate the convening of the conference on the establishment [unclear 00:33:00] and Finland was chosen as the host government.

Quite a lot of things, of course, have happened since then. My team, which I immediately assembled, has really had tremendously busy activity in the region and beyond. As a result of several hundred meetings, contact in the Middle East and around the world, both officials and also civil society, I must say that there is an amazing support and interest regarding this idea. It's shared worldwide, and it's seen to have the potential to not only improve the situation in the Middle East, but, indeed, be a contribution to international peace and stability.

In 2012, which was the original date, we were not in a situation where all states of the region would have been willing to participate in a conference, to be held in Helsinki. So the co-conveners, the UN Sec-Gen, Russia, UK, and USA were unable to convene the conference as planned.

But of course, the reality is, if we want to have a conference attended by all states in the Middle East region, we have to find arrangements that are acceptable to all parties. That is that the agenda and modalities are based on consensus.

Against the backdrop of the evolving situation on the ground in the region, it is quite understandable that progress towards an agreement tends to be slow. The governments want to have full clarity regarding what they want to become part of.

What does the facilitator do? Of course, I can do many things, but still the role is limited. I cannot, and will not, of course, solve the issues on behalf of the future participating states, themselves. The facilitator can only facilitate something, when there is political will on all sides to proceed. And the ownership of the project, of course, must always remain in the region itself. At the same time, the co-conveners and the facilitator share with the regional states, responsibility to make this initiative happen.

It took a while before we were able to really engage in meaningful talks. But since October of 2013, we have met five times in formal consultations in Switzerland, with the attendance of a significant number of Arab states, as well as Israel, and at an early date also, Iran.

In the consultations, I made the observation that this extremely complicated endeavour requires an enormous amount of cooperation between the countries of the region which today does not exist. Therefore, it needs to be developed by an increasing mutual confidence, mutual trust. Therefore, an addition to deliberations on the properties of the WMD-free zone, there should be work on confidence security building measures and cooperation, aimed at contributing to a favourable environment for the establishment of that free zone. And this, obviously, should be reflected on the agenda.

The parties, including the Arab countries and Israel, have presented important proposals during the preparations. I want to respect the work that has gone into them, and do not want to impose anything on anybody. At the same time, it is the facilitator's duty to present ideas, and my office has produced an informal orientation paper which has been distributed to all future participants of the conference; a paper that contains all aspects of the arrangement for Helsinki, and can be used, if the parties, among themselves, cannot find consensus on the relevant issues.

Any progress here? Obviously it is for the future participants themselves to assess whether there's any progress achieved so far. Truth is that we have been able to register a number of interim agreements, but, as usual, nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. In any event, I would like to say that the fact that we've had discussions in these meetings with so many countries, discussions that have been good and constructive, and the atmosphere has been excellent. This, in itself, is no small thing.

So while progress is limited, the co-conveners and I am convinced that an agreement on the arrangements for Helsinki conference is within reach, provided that there is willingness to seek solutions acceptable to all, and to make the necessary compromises. I do not want to belittle the difficulties that still remain.

At this moment, late hour before the RevCon, of course, many countries concentrate exactly on this, on the prospects of the NPT review, what the member states of the NPT wish to do with

regard to the Helsinki conference. That of course, remains within their sole competence, and I do not want to speculate too much about their preferences.

What I can say is that there is much talk about wide array of alternatives, including talk about the wish to skip the idea all together, or the wish to determine in the RevCon, everything in detail with regards to the Helsinki conference. But there are also voices calling for simpler ways to continue pursuing conference product with minimally dramatic changes.

As to the prospects, I have great confidence in Ambassador Feroukhi of Algeria, the Chairperson of the Review Conference. I'm very confident that she will help us to find a good outcome. No doubt, there's going to be a lot of heated debate on this thing, but it is really difficult, I guess, for me at least, to foresee a collapse of the entire RevCon, because of this issue.

Let me just finish with a quote that I've come to appreciate very much. And that of course is from our respected Winston Churchill. And this reads as follows. Sir Winston said, and I quote: Success is not final. Failure is not failure. It is the courage to continue that counts. Thanks.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Thank you so much. That's a really great quote. I'm happy to hear that you said that progress was slow, but you still said that progress was there and still, after so many years of hard work on this extremely difficult issue, you didn't say that it's a mission impossible. Ambassador Scheinman, we have heard already, so many things that can make this conference a failure. Can you add something to this?

ADAM SCHEINMAN

I don't think that's my job. I'm sure others here in the audience will help add to the list. But I was thinking about the panel over the weekend, and even the title of the panel, of tragedy, farce or unexpected success. And it struck me that that's probably not the right way to think of a review conference. In part because tragedy and farce have a very theatrical connotation. And even farce suggests something that's trivial and comedic. And I don't find anything trivial or comedic about the NPT or our preparations. They're tough.

But I thought maybe paraphrasing another American author, a better title for the panel may have been: hope for the best, plan for the worst, and be prepared for surprise. And I think given the history of review conferences, where each has charted its own dynamic and been led by review conference presidents with different skill sets and energy levels, I think we can expect to deal with potential surprise, but we can still expect success at the end of the day.

The question that was put to the panel was what else can we add to the list of things that will leave the review conference to fail. What else is contentious? And I would just like to pick up on comments made by others, in that I think it's a mistake to look at the NPT or to attempt to define it by its difficulties, or even the few failures and shocks that it's had to endure over the years. And in fact, it would be far more profitable, I think, to assess the treaty and try to define it in terms of its success. And the successes are enormous.

The treaty text hasn't changed one word. In fact, it couldn't, because the amendment process is so onerous. It hasn't changed one word over 45 years. But the regime has shown a capacity to adapt. And we've seen the safeguards regime respond to problems and developments. We've seen export controls move from a focus on a narrow set of items in a small number of countries to a much wider set of items and internationally shared lists and regime policies.

We've seen regimes pop up that are outside of the NPT framework, with the proliferation security initiative and a whole handful of assistance programs that are made available to countries, whether it's export control or border security, or safeguards, safety, you name it. So I think the regime has largely succeeded over the years, and we should reflect on that.

The treaty does provide a basis for insisting on compliance by states that violate the treaty. It's the common framework that we have to pursue nuclear disarmament actions, neither of which would exist if we didn't have the NPT. The treaty is open, the door is open to universality, when conditions change, and states outside the treaty are ready to come back in. Of course, we recognise that will take some time. And generally, I think the benefits to treaty states, whether in terms of security or development assistance, are huge.

We took a look back at the level of assistance that's been provided by the IAEA since the 1995 extension conference. And it's close to \$2 billion now, and that's not small change. On top of that, we have pursued the peaceful uses initiative which has brought another \$75-80 million to IAEA that's helped the IAEA respond to urgent crises, whether it was after the Fukushima tragedy, or dealing with the Ebola crisis in West Africa. I think there are real positives that we want to maintain our focus on. If we do, perhaps we think in less dramatic terms when we think about the next review conference.

That's not to say the treaty is not without very serious challenges. It is. Some of those are strategic, in which I would place... if Iran does, in fact, move toward nuclear weapons, if North Korea's program continues unconstrained, these pose very serious and strategic stresses on the NPT, and could be a factor for new nuclear weapons proliferation in the future. And even if you look at peaceful uses, as a long-term measure, if additional countries pursue facilities for enrichment and reprocessing, I think that, too, would pose potential threats to the regime in the long term, and I'd put that in the category of strategic challenges.

Other challenges are more political in nature, and I think we see that with respect to the disagreements and rising level of frustration over what we meant when we signed up to Article 6 of the NPT, and had to think about the humanitarian impacts movement. And certainly with respect to the Middle East zone, the NPT has, in some respects, become a referendum on the Middle East issue and the communities' treatment of progress towards a Middle East zone, which we think is mistaken, but that is a fact of the NPT life.

On both nuclear disarmament and the Middle East zone, I can offer reassurance to everyone here, if you weren't reassured already, that the United States is strongly committed to the goals of Article 6 of the NPT. The new START treaty will reduce nuclear weapons levels held by the United States and Russia to historic lows. The President has offered to pursue additional reductions in negotiation with Russia. That offer remains on the table.

We have pursued activity in the P5 Conference process. You might characterise it as insignificant, the issue of the P5 glossary. I think it's very significant, because it has provided the first opportunity for the P5 states to talk about concepts of nuclear arms control and verification. We have never done this, as a group, historically and so it's an important first step forward. We hope to build on it in the future.

The United States has also just launched this international partnership on nuclear disarmament verification, which is also about helping to lay the groundwork for future progress on arms control and disarmament. We had a couple of meetings that started just last week, and that work will continue and we'll offer further briefings on that work, particularly when we get to the review conference.

The multilateral disarmament regime is clearly not working very well. The conference on disarmament hasn't negotiated a thing in many years. There's a tendency to look beyond a CTBT and a fissile material cut off treaty and think about the next or the last step on the disarmament pathway. I think that is fundamentally mistaken, because CTBT and FMCT are both foundational agreements, and we need to have the experience with them in effect, and verification pursued, have comfort with these treaties, because we will not be able to move to very low numbers of nuclear weapons with confidence that breakout won't be challenged. It is important that we pursue these agreements.

I know we're running out of time, but just one last point on what we think we may see at the review conference, and what approach the United States is going to take. There clearly are very difficult issues and very serious challenges before us, as we head into the NPT review. Our goal is to go beyond contention and try to focus on a consensus outcome.

I don't think the sky will fall if we fail to achieve a consensus. The treaty will go on as it's gone on for years. It survived the lack of consensus final documents. But it would be a huge lost opportunity, I think, if we take a complacent view, and don't work very hard, deep into the night, and take all our vitamins, as we prepare for this war of attrition that is the four-week review conference.

I think the review conference is largely a political process, where we go and we defend our positions, and we try to hammer out areas of agreement, leaving more divisive agendas on the sidelines. I hope that's the approach all states will take heading into New York. We certainly will.

I think the only question that really matters at the end of the day is whether we, as an international community can continue to stay ahead of proliferation dangers as they arise. I'm quite confident a successful review conference with a consensus outcome will advance that goal, and failure to achieve a consensus may weaken it. Thank you.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Thank you, very much, Ambassador Scheinman. Since we only have about 20 minutes, let's just get right to the questions and answers. Please, just as in previous sessions, if you have a question, just line up in one of the three lines, and be precise and tell us which of the panelists you would like to address your question to. Do we have the microphones in here? Okay, let's get to the first question from there.

MUHAMMAD UMAR

Mohammad Umar from the National Defence University, Islamabad. There is this one thing for the first time in the history that Pakistan's not India-centric on, which is the NPT. Constantly they have said they want to be part of the NPT, but want to be part as a recognised nuclear state. There is something India has also expressed. What are the challenges? I mean, they already have a nuclear facility under IAEA safeguards. They are part of export control regimes, etc. Why don't we see that kind of revision, or talk about that kind of revision? Wouldn't that go a great way towards non-proliferation by binding them to the treaty? Thank you.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Who would like to take that question? Ambassador Scheinman?

ADAM SCHEINMAN

Yes, I can offer a quick response. I'm not sure there's any support within the 188 states party to the NPT that would like to see India in as a nuclear weapons state. That's certainly not US policy. We supported the India nuclear deal, but on the basis of India as a legal non-nuclear weapons state, not as an acknowledged nuclear weapons state. I think the best path forward is to continue to encourage India to support those measures that are supportive of the NPT, whether it's safeguards on reactors, export controls and support for arms control actions.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Thank you. William Potter?

WILLIAM POTTER

Bill Potter, Center for Non-Proliferation Studies in Monterey. I would suggest that perhaps the genre of literature which better characterises the NPT review process is that of magical realism, because there certainly is a surreal quality to many of the review conferences that I've had the opportunity to observe. And in that spirit, what I would like to ask of each of the panelists who would like to respond, is if they can identify one concrete action that the review conference might take that would mitigate a real world nuclear danger.

ELENA CHERNENKO

That's a tough one. Ambassador Bylica?

JACEK BYLICA

Well, let me start. Again, you asked about one action. I think specifying the modalities of withdrawal from the NPT is something which is not addressing a fictional scenario. After all, we have seen DPRK leaving the NPT, developing nuclear capability, testing a nuclear weapon and claiming to be a nuclear state. And by the way, there is still a dispute among lawyers. They can dispute about anything, if they're well paid, obviously... but whether DPRK remains in the NPT or not.

So one concrete deliverable, which addresses, I think, the criteria you mentioned, which is addressing a real risk, is this issue of making clear that the Article 10 right is there, but there are certain, let's say, modalities, if not to say price of invoking it.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Thank you. Anybody else?

EDWARD LEVINE

Edward Levine, retired from the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. NPT conferences can be arenas in which countries bring gifts for the international community. And this morning, Ambassador Burns mentioned that nuclear states might have to give up the use of HEU fuel for nuclear reactors for naval vessels. I wonder whether the United States is considering that possibility in the context of this year's meeting?

ELENA CHERNENKO

Ambassador Scheinman, that's obviously one to you.

ADAM SCHEINMAN

I have no knowledge of the United States or the United States Navy preparing to give up the option of HEU fuel for naval reactors, so I wouldn't say keep your fingers crossed on that particular item.

I would like to just come back to Bill's question, because I think it's an important one. We need to be thinking about specific concrete actions that support NPT goals, and reduce nuclear threats. And I certainly agree that withdrawal is an issue that deserves treatment, and perhaps can secure a consensus in terms of recommendations.

I think capacity building is another area. I mentioned that in my opening remarks. Whether it's with respect to making good on nuclear security summit commitments. Whether it is building capacity for countries to deal with nuclear materials, radiological materials safely. Or whether it is preparing the groundwork for arms control verification through technology partnerships, all of that capacity building to my mind, is very important for the long term health of the treaty, and will, in the end, reduce nuclear dangers.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Thank you. We have a question on the right.

HOWARD MORLAND

Howard Morland. I might as well mention the name, Voldemort. There's a fact about this that everybody in the panel seems to have jumped through hoops to avoid saying, which is that the obstacle to a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East is the United States and Israel - the only states which have weapons over there.

So the question of what or how difficult this is seems to me is really a question of how difficult is it to get the United States to pull its weapons out of Turkey and to get Israel to take the South Africa solution and de-nuclearize its weapons systems.

ELENA CHERNENKO

I wonder who would like to answer that?

ADAM SCHEINMAN

I'm happy to start and then I'm going to make Jaakko say something. I don't think that is the obstacle to a zone. The obstacle to a zone in the Middle East is the fundamental lack of trust and confidence in the region. The Middle East is hugely complex. It bears no resemblance to any of the other zones that have been negotiated, there are five across the world. The Middle East is going through a major transformation, as Jaako has mentioned. Military conflict still persists in the region. The region is proliferated, historically, like no other zone region has.

It is not a simple matter of one state opening its facilities and IAEA comes in, makes its inspections, and off we go. It's going to require a new dialogue in the region. It's going to require that that dialogue involves states speaking to each other, and not just to the United States as a convener, and not just to Ambassador Laajava as the facilitator. The states in the region have to create the impetus for the zone, for it to have any chance for success.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Ambassador Laajava?

JAAKO LAAJAVA

I don't have much to add to that. Of course, we are right now at the diplomatic phase of the endeavour. We have not yet confronted the technical and arms control type issues regarding the zone. That will be a later date issue. In any case, and of course, I do agree with Adam that this is a longer term perspective, obviously, and requires a lot of debate and discussion between the partners of the region.

NILVANA DARAMA

May I add something?

ELENA CHERNENKO

Of course.

NILVANA DARAMA

Although this is a nuclear policy conference, also we have to note that it's not all about Middle East nuclear weapon free zone, but Middle East weapons of mass destruction free zone, because there are other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and they've been used in the past. I agree with previous speakers that it's a matter of big confidence crisis and the situation in the Middle East is very complex.

One thing I should say that the solution cannot be imposed to the Middle East from outside. It has to come from within, and that has to be a true and genuine will on the part of each and every single country to sit together and discuss, and find a solution. This is not going to be from one day to the other. It's going to be a long term issue. Thank you.

ANTON KHLOPKOV

I'm Anton Khlopkov from the Center for Energy and Security Studies based in Moscow. Ambassador Scheinman, since you are the only representer of P5 countries among the speakers on the podium, the question goes to you.

You referred to a recent P5 meeting in London, which, I understand, was quite useful, and that was a joint statement as an outcome of that. Are P5 countries working together to draft a joint statement for the upcoming conference in New York?

ADAM SCHEINMAN

One word answer. Yes.

JAAKO LAAJAVA

It was in the statement, if I remember correctly. The promise of the statement for the NPT review conference was in the London statement.

ADAM SCHEINMAN

That's correct.

ANTON KHLOPKOV

Yes, but a promise and work, sometimes it's different thing.

ADAM SCHEINMAN

We are working on a draft. I hope we succeed by late April.

ELENA CHERNENKO

And that's already something optimistic. So please, we have one more on the right.

FEMALE PARTICIPANT

I am [Unclear 01:01:28] from Quaid-I-Azam University in Islamabad. My question is directed to Ambassador Scheinman. How do you see...

ELENA CHERNENKO

You're popular.

FEMALE PARTICIPANT

How do you see the prospects for the global nuclear zero considering the international security challenges like the quest of Iran and North Korea for nuclearization, secondly, the hostility factor in the South Asian region, among the nuclear neighbours, and thirdly, last but not the least, the US as a non-signatory of NPT. Thank you.

ADAM SCHEINMAN

I'm sorry, what was the last part of the question?

ELENA CHERNENKO

Will you repeat the last part of your question, please?

FEMALE PARTICIPANT

It is the challenge for the global nuclear zero, and the last part is the US, just like the India and Pakistan is an international security challenge, because it is a non-signatory of the NPT. How would you see it, for the global nuclear zero?

ADAM SCHEINMAN

With respect to global zero, I think United States has been very clear and consistent that we support the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. But, as the President said, in his speech in 2009, this is going to take some time. It may not be achieved in his lifetime, and it has to proceed along an incremental step by step process. Each step will build on the last.

And it starts with our work with Russia. We did, of course secure the new START treaty. And as I said, we are prepared to pursue deeper reductions in negotiation with Russia. That would be a further step. We would like to see the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty negotiations go forward in Geneva. Those talks have been blocked for reasons that I think most of you are familiar with.

Maybe you were asking, at the tail end of your question where the United States is on ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. And I can assure you that very much remains a priority for

this government. But we don't want to take a treaty forward to the Senate and see the treaty fail. I think that would be fatal to a CTBT in the long term.

So in the meantime, Undersecretary Rose Gottemoeller has been travelling around the country to educate communities, constituencies in various parts of the country on the value of a CTBT, what it brings to the United States in terms of national security, and what it would bring to the long term goal of achieving global zero, which will take some time.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Thank you. Then back to the middle.

KATERYNA BILA

Kateryna Bila, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. The day before the NPT review conference, unfortunately we have to recognize violation of the provisions of the NPT treaty, the preamble of which prohibits the violation of state borders of other countries, in Article 1, which prohibits transfer of nuclear weapons from nuclear state to the non-nuclear state, as it was done in Crimea.

In this situation, what should be the answer to this challenge, so that the DPRK and Iran, for example, stop and will not proceed with their nuclear military programs?

ELENA CHERNENKO

Ambassador Bylica, would you like to take that one?

JACEK BYLICA

The violation of NPT, you meant in the context of Crimea. Was that your question? I think there is no doubt in anyone's mind that the Russian action, especially the violation of the Budapest Memorandum, have inflicted damage on the prospects for global disarmament and non-proliferation. The question is how great the damage. What will be the long term consequences?

At the same time, one has to recognise that the Russian Federation has a stake in the NPT, as one of the recognised NPT nuclear weapon states, and as an exporter of nuclear technology, and so on. So it's working also, jointly with other P5 to actually support the NPT review process, and has been active in the WMD-free zone process, constructively.

Obviously, compliance is a concept which will need to be addressed in the NPT review process. The modalities of stationing weapons in other countries' territories are quite challenging, and have been addressed, I think, a number of times, in the review process. We just had at lunchtime the question about application of safeguards in Ukraine. And again, the answer is not readily available.

What I may say here is that at least the European Union, I think, has a very clear position on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and on the illegal annexation of Crimea, and is actually working, both in terms of restrictive measures, how we call sanctions, but also in terms of finding a solution.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Thank you. Before we go to the next question, let's try to do this polling thing with the app. I think all of you that have downloaded it should be able to vote. The way it works is, open the

app, then open the main menu. Tap the word, agenda, then scroll down and tap the topic of this session, which is 2015 NPT Review Conference, and then tap polls. If you reach this button, you should see a question which is very easy and requires only a yes or a no. We don't have our phones here, because we were asked to leave them in the room, but I also ask the speakers to think about that question, because when we wrap up, I would also like to hear from all five of you a yes or a no.

The question is, "Will the 2015 NPT Review Conference reach a consensus final document?" Thank you. We'll see the results in a few minutes on the screen. And the next question, please.

JESSICA VARNUM

Jessica Varnum from the Centre for Non-Proliferation Studies at Monterey. Nilvana, I'd be interested to talk about the peaceful uses pillar for a moment, and particularly, there's been a lot of discussion about what the precedent for the Middle East would be, if any, should Iran agree to limitations on its program in the nuclear negotiations. And I'm curious whether Iran accepting limitations on its program would be seen as a positive or a negative precedent for other countries in the region with regard to the right, as perceived by Turkey, for non-nuclear weapons states, in compliance with their safeguards agreements, to have enrichment and reprocessing technologies, if they wish to do so. Would there be a precedent, or is this just a separate issue?

NILVANA DARAMA

Actually the negotiations with Iran, we're following it from that perspective as well. And when we say we, it's not Turkey, it's the international community, because it's an open debate whether the NPT recognises enrichment as right to peaceful use or not. According to some countries, there is nothing banning enrichment in terms of peaceful use. According to other interpretation, it's not openly recognised. So, of course, when a deal with Iran finally ends up recognising the right to enrichment of Iran for peaceful use, of course, in compliance with its NPT obligations, that's going to be a reference point, maybe, for the other countries.

But any activity, including enrichment should be in full compliance under full transparency, and maybe under intrusive verification modalities available to all countries that are interested. This is the point of view of Turkey, and that doesn't have any other connotation, and recognising its right to enrichment for peaceful users is exercised under full compliance with the NPT provisions. But of course, if there is a deal with Iran to that effect, that's going to be a reference point for all countries.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Thank you. We have time for one more question.

NANCY GALLAGHER

Nancy Gallagher from the Center for International Security Studies at the University of Maryland. I want to build on the last question, and ask each of the panel members, but I want to preface it with something that Ambassador Scheinman said, that the NPT is the legal foundation for raising concerns about any country's nuclear program. And yet, at least when Americans talk about Iran, they discuss it almost completely separate from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, whether it's the administration, or Congress, or independent experts act as if they are two largely independent issues.

I'd like to hear from each of the panel as to how big of a difference do you think it would make in the success of the NPT Review Conference, if there is or is not agreement in the next couple of weeks on principles for a comprehensive solution with Iran?

ELENA CHERNENKO

That's a very important one. Please keep it short, if possible.

ADAM SCHEINMAN

I'd start with a comment that I think the impacts are largely political, and very significant. If we have a framework deal, I think that would be a major boost, heading into the review conference. Maybe on par with the President's Prague speech in 2009. I think that would really put us on the right path.

The converse is that in the absence of an agreement, or the collapse of talks would, of course, be very negative for the review conference. I think we can expect a severe challenge reaching consensus at the end.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Ambassador Laajava?

JAAKO LAAJAVA

Along the same lines as Adam, I would perhaps say the point that not everything that happens in the Middle East is necessarily negative. I would like to highlight the Syrian chemical disarmament which is an important thing. And of course, this is not only about the nuclear weapons, but also chemical/biological weapons, and means of delivery. So maybe there is something that we can build on, after the successful chemical disarmament in Syria. Maybe there's something that we can work on in the review conference and beyond. Thank you.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Ambassador Hikihara?

TAKESHI HIKIHARA: Yes, I agree too, with Adam, this is a political problem that is not particularly connected to the review process, but I think that if the negotiation with Iran is to be concluded successfully, it will be a testimony of the legitimacy and the well functioning of the whole non-proliferation system. So in that sense, I think that should give a very good, positive impetus to our review process.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Nilvana Darama?

NILVANA DARAMA

Exactly. I mean, if there is a successful conclusion of the negotiations with Iran, that will have a very positive implications on the NPT process and particularly the RevCon. But if not, it's not going to be the end of the world, because Iranian nuclear program has long been on the agenda of the international community and past RevCons have witnessed certain disagreement with Iran in that respect. We still have time until June, and we will try to be positive about it.

JACEK BYLICA

Like my colleagues, Iran is a clear case of non-compliance. It has been determined to be such by the IAEA, by the UN Security Council. And in the view of the EU, the cases of non-compliance need to be addressed, resolved, through diplomatic means. And this would have, obviously, a positive impact on the whole regime, if this is achieved. And the EU is playing, as you know, an important role in this respect.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Thank you so much. We have the result of the poll. Can we have them on the screen? For the panelists, you can see it over there. So just instead of a wrap up, please a yes or no, from each of the panelists.

So the question is the same. Will there be a consensus final document?

ADAM SCHEINMAN

Hope for the best, plan for the worst, prepare for surprise.

ELENA CHERNENKO

You're being a diplomat. So a yes or a no?

ADAM SCHEINMAN

Yes.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Okay.

JAAGO LAAJAVA

Yes.

TAKESHI HIKIHARA

Definitely yes.

NILVANA DARAMA

It should be yes, then.

JACEK BYLICA

Yes, but the document will not be satisfying to all.

ELENA CHERNENKO

Diplomats. Please join me in thanking our panel. Thank you so much.