

Disarmament Commitments – Research Questions (End of Day 1)

Original Wording: The USFG should substantially change its nuclear posture to be more consistent with its nuclear disarmament commitments.

Question 1 – How should the topic align the posture change with disarmament commitments? (Consistent, More consistent, Compliance, Increase compliance)

The original wording paper provides an argument for ‘consistent.’ The Duarte evidence speaks to the importance of national governments taking steps that are in the spirit of the NPT’s commitments. This is helpful in terms of coordinating both the types of affirmatives that are intended to be included by this interpretation. The Cambridge Online Dictionary’s definition confirms that, “in agreement with other facts or with typical or previous behaviour, or having the same principles as something else.” Because the contextual and dictionary based definitions support consistency as a useful term I find no problem with its use in a proposed topic.

There are some concerns about the desirability of using “to be” as the verb in this phrase. Even through this form of consistent is more commonly used in the nuclear weapons context, the topic could be slightly adjusted to use ‘increase consistency.’ Here is a set of definitions for consistency,

Miriam Webster Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consistency>
1 archaic : condition of adhering together : firmness of material substance b: firmness of constitution or character : persistency
2: degree of firmness, density, viscosity, or resistance to movement or separation of constituent particles <boil the juice to the consistency of a thick syrup>
3 a: agreement or harmony of parts or features to one another or a whole : correspondence ; specifically : ability to be asserted together without contradiction b: harmony of conduct or practice with profession <followed her own advice with consistency>

This would produce the following wording:

The USFG should substantially change its nuclear posture to increase consistency with its nuclear disarmament commitments.

Compliance is also another viable option. Recycling evidence from the wording paper it is easy to find usages of compliance as a contextual term for measuring these efforts.

Andrew Grotto, Center for American Progress & Joe Cirincione , Ploughshares Fund, November 2008, “Orienting the 2009 nuclear posture review: A Roadmap,” Center for American Progress, p. 4 http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear_posture.pdf

The second proposition underlying the bipartisan consensus is that many countries consider **U.S. compliance with its nuclear disarmament obligations** under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation

Treaty, or NPT, **a precondition before supporting additional U.S. nonproliferation initiatives that are vital to countering 21st century nuclear threats.** These threats are characterized by the diffusion of nuclear materials, know-how, and technology—much of it with a civilian dimension—to state and non-state actors enabled by globalization and economic development. In the words of secretaries Shultz, Kissinger, Perry, and Sen. Nunn, “Without the vision of moving toward zero [nuclear weapons], we will not find the essential cooperation required to stop our downward spiral.”²

Other uses are also prevalent, especially in the context of why aggressive US nuclear policy is not popular around the world.

Sharon Squassoni, Specialist in National Defense, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division – Congressional Research Service, April 26, 2005, CRS Report for Congress, “NPT Compliance: Issues and Views” <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RS22125.pdf> p. 1-2

At the May 2005 NPT Review Conference, state parties undoubtedly will discuss treaty compliance, but the shape of that discussion is uncertain.¹ The United States has argued for almost two years that Iran’s noncompliance with the NPT should be referred to the U.N. Security Council. The United States has argued that Iran is violating not just its nuclear safeguards agreement, but also its obligation under Article II of the treaty to forswear nuclear weapons.² At the same time, some of the non-nuclear weapon states have argued that the United States has not complied with Article VI of the treaty, which calls on parties to pursue negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament.³

The NPT itself doesn’t contain specific measures for determining compliance, especially with regard to Article 6 commitments, but that is the reason for the development of the 13 steps (i.e, steps related to that goal).

Sharon Squassoni, Specialist in National Defense, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division – Congressional Research Service, April 26, 2005, CRS Report for Congress, “NPT Compliance: Issues and Views” <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RS22125.pdf> p. 2

The NPT itself is silent on how to assess compliance, how to resolve compliance disputes, and what procedures to follow in the event of non-compliance. Specifically, there is no verification of the obligations in Articles I and II not to transfer or receive nuclear weapons.⁵ The treaty contains no language on verification other than to require states to accept nuclear safeguards (Article III). The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reports on safeguards implementation every year, and sometimes on specific compliance issues at Board of Governors meetings. In terms of Articles IV and VI, the treaty offers no definitions or ways of assessing whether states are living up to their obligations. Nuclear weapon states, in the past, have provided information about their nuclear cooperation efforts, their contributions to the IAEA’s technical cooperation program, and descriptions of their efforts toward nuclear disarmament. At the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the parties agreed to what have become known as the “13 Practical Steps” toward disarmament, but the United States has since withdrawn its support for those steps.⁶ NPT member states may seek to further clarify obligations in Articles IV and VI at the May 2005 Review Conference.

One more to be clear that the lack of compliance, used interchangeably with these types of policies is the way that the policy literature frames the problem.

John Loretz, Program Director, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, April 7, 2009, “Zero Nuclear Weapons is the New Benchmark” <http://ippnweupdate.wordpress.com/2009/04/07/zero-nuclear-weapons-is-the-new-benchmark/>

The US and Russian leaders also promised “to work together to fulfill our **obligations** under Article VI” of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). For most of the near-40-year history of the NPT, the nuclear weapon states have paid lip service to their nuclear disarmament **commitment** under Article VI, while doing everything possible to avoid **compliance**. As a result, the patience of the non-nuclear-weapon states—and their willingness to comply with their own non-proliferation obligations—has been strained to the breaking point. With a crucial five-year review of the NPT scheduled for 2010 and a final preparatory meeting coming up in New York next month, solid evidence of this **fresh intent to comply** with Article VI will be essential.

Research Question 2 - Should the wording include a specific reference to the NPT and/or nuclear disarmament commitments? Should the commitment be singular or plural?

First, I would not declare it is impossible to argue that US commitments for nuclear disarmament do not exclusively stem from the NPT, but the literature overwhelmingly proceeds from this assumption. There are no clear examples that I could locate of another source of commitments. If anything the debate is about if the commitments stem solely from the treaty itself or do they also flow from the subsequent implementation plans.

The NPT’s Article VI is clearly progress toward disarmament.

Sharon Squassoni, Specialist in National Defense, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division – Congressional Research Service, April 26, 2005, CRS Report for Congress, “NPT Compliance: Issues and Views” <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RS22125.pdf> p. 2

The NPT entered into force in 1970, when expectations of the growth of both nuclear energy and nuclear weapons were particularly high. Under the treaty, non-nuclear weapon states agree to give up pursuit of nuclear weapons, but not their pursuit of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The main obligations of the non-nuclear weapon states are to forswear nuclear weapons (Article II), submit to IAEA safeguards inspections (Article III), and not supply certain nuclear-related items unless they are under safeguards (Article III). The main obligations of the nuclear weapon states are not to transfer or help nonnuclear weapon states acquire nuclear weapons (Article I), not to supply certain nuclear related items unless they are under safeguards (Article III), to facilitate the exchange of peaceful nuclear energy technology (Article IV), and to pursue negotiations toward nuclear disarmament (Article VI).

The 13 steps are clearly related to the Article VI commitment, but here are differing opinions on if they exactly constitute those commitments (or examples of progress toward it)

Daryl Kimball, Executive Director, The Arms Control Association, April 2002, “Fact Sheet: Nuclear/Ballistic Missile Nonproliferation” <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/us13steps>

In 1995 and 2000, when the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) was under review, the nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states recognized that to preserve the objective of global nuclear nonproliferation, the nuclear-weapon states needed to reiterate and update their NPT Article VI disarmament commitments. On the basis of their May 1995 agreement to strengthen the treaty review process and pursue specific principles and objectives for nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, the nuclear and non-nuclear NPT states-parties reached consensus to indefinitely extend the NPT. In May 2000, the nuclear-weapon states reaffirmed this approach by agreeing to a 13-point program of action on disarmament steps related to Article VI. This month, as delegates from over 100 states gather in New York for the first meeting on the NPT since the 2000 review conference, they will find that very little progress has been achieved toward these and other nuclear security objectives.

There is an overwhelming belief in the international community that the 13 steps still provide the blueprint for Article VI

Ray Acheson, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security, March 26, 2009, "Reviewing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparations for the 2010 NPT Review Conference"

http://disarm.igc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=280:reviewing-the-nuclear-non-proliferation-treaty-preparations-for-the-2010-npt-review-conference&catid=138:disarmament-times-spring-2009&Itemid=2

Participants can and should, however, expect a greater commitment to multilateralism from the US delegation at the NPT. If nothing else, a spirit of cooperation and respect from US representatives at the next PrepCom would go a long way toward smoothing the road to progress at the Review Conference.

Opportunities to Move Forward

Over the course of the first and second PrepComs, several delegations made substantial, concrete proposals on specific issues related to strengthening and implementing the NPT. Some of these proposals have generated broad interest, momentum or convergence, suggesting they are or could be ripe for action by the 2010 Review Conference. These include:

- Revitalizing the "practical steps" to nuclear disarmament. **The overwhelming majority of delegations** have argued that the 13 practical steps, unanimously adopted at the 2000 Review Conference, **still constitute the roadmap for implementing Article VI** of the NPT.⁴ Many delegates reiterated the need for the steps to be recommitted to, reported on and implemented. Some suggested the steps could be updated or "refreshed" to reflect changes since 2000.

There isn't much dispute that, whatever the Bush administration may have felt, the Obama administration recognizes the NPT as imposing an obligation of working toward disarmament.

Ernie Regehr, The Ploughshares Monitor, Winter 2008, volume 29, no. 4, "Obama on nuclear disarmament"
<http://www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/monitor/mond08h.pdf> p. 1

The election of Barack Obama as President of the United States offers genuine hope that real change is in the offing for US approaches to nuclear weapons and the treaties and agreements that are intended to control and eventually eliminate them.

In September the Washington-based Arms Control Association published an extensive set of responses from then Democratic candidate Barack Obama to a series of arms control questions. The complete questions and answers are available at the ACA website.¹ The following reviews some of the key nuclear disarmament measures which he addressed.

Support for Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the elimination of nuclear weapons

The basic **commitment to nuclear disarmament was clear**: “As president, I will set a new direction in nuclear weapons policy and show the world that America believes in its existing commitment under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to work to ultimately eliminate all nuclear weapons.” He reaffirmed the call by George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, William Perry, and Sam Nunn, issued in January 2007 and again in 2008, to begin working for a world without nuclear weapons.

Specifically, the process at the preparatory conferences describe the improvements due to the Obama administration’s direct change in US policy.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, May 07, 2009, “NPT Talks See First Breakthrough In 10 Years”
http://www.rferl.org/content/Nuclear_Talks_Get_First_Breakthrough_In_10_Years/1623336.html

Delegates meeting on the 1970 Nonproliferation Treaty struck their first agreement on the anti-nuclear-arms pact in a decade on May 6, which diplomats said was largely due to U.S. President Barack Obama.

Three days into a two-week meeting on the landmark arms-control agreement, delegates from its 189 signatories agreed on an agenda for a major conference next year, where member states hope to adopt an action plan to overhaul the treaty.

"Amazing," Ambassador John Duncan, head of the British delegation, wrote on a website he updates regularly. "We just agreed the agenda for the 2010 review conference. It may seem boring but we haven't done so for a decade."

Other diplomats described the agreement as modest but significant, because member states have been unable even to agree on what they should talk about for 10 years. They said Obama's new tone was probably the decisive factor.

NPT signatories have tried for years to overcome sharp divisions, with developing countries complaining that the big nuclear powers have reneged on obligations to disarm while denying them access to nuclear technology.

The last NPT review conference in 2005 descended into procedural bickering and accomplished nothing. Washington tried to focus attention on the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs, while Iran condemned the failure to disarm and Egypt pointed to Israel's presumed nuclear weapons.

The agenda agreed on May 6 includes a **review of disarmament commitments made by the United States, Britain, France, China, and Russia in 1995 and 2000.** It also includes a discussion of "nuclear-weapons-free-zones" -- which diplomats said would mainly be about Israel's presumed nuclear arsenal.

The disarmament commitments have been very divisive in recent years after former President George W. Bush decided he was not bound by those pledges and insisted they be dropped from the agenda. The French supported that position.

"The Obama administration did an about-face and agreed to bring those commitments back on the agenda," a diplomat said, asking not to be named. "The French were still trying to block it but gave in overnight when they realized they were alone and isolated."

Many of the contextual uses describe the plural phrase “commitments” or “obligations”

David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, April 16, 2009, “A 100-Day Nuclear Disarmament Agenda: President Obama Scores High”
http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2009/04/16_krieger_100_day.php

President Obama met for the first time with Russian President Dimitriy Medvedev in London on April 1, 2009. Following their meeting, the two presidents issued a Joint Statement in which they reaffirmed “that the era when our countries viewed each other as enemies is long over...” They pledged their resolve “to work together to strengthen strategic stability, international security, and

jointly meet contemporary global challenges, while also addressing disagreements openly and honestly in a spirit of mutual respect and acknowledgement of each other's perspective." They discussed "nuclear arms control and reduction" and made a number of specific pledges, including "working together to fulfill our **obligations** under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and demonstrate leadership in reducing the number of nuclear weapons in the world." Article VI of the NPT contains the treaty's nuclear disarmament obligation. The two presidents also committed their countries "to achieving a nuclear free world," while recognizing that this would be a "long-term goal."

In short, although there doesn't appear to be much evidentiary support for the idea of non-NPT disarmament commitments, the topic could be easily adjusted to make that reference explicit. I include a series of different options that provides each of the permutations based on these items.

Original

The USFG should substantially change its nuclear posture to be more consistent with its nuclear disarmament commitments.

Consistency

The USFG should substantially change its nuclear posture to increase consistency with its nuclear disarmament commitments.

NPT Spec

The USFG should substantially change its nuclear posture to be more consistent with its nuclear disarmament commitments to Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

NPT Spec & Consistency

The USFG should substantially change its nuclear posture to increase consistency with its nuclear disarmament commitments to Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

NPT Spec w/o disarm

The USFG should substantially change its nuclear posture to be more consistent with its commitments to Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

NPT Spec & Consistency w/o disarm

The USFG should substantially change its nuclear posture to increase consistency with its commitments to Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Compliance

The USFG should substantially change its nuclear posture to increase compliance with its nuclear disarmament commitments.

Compliance & NPT Spec

The USFG should substantially change its nuclear posture to increase compliance with its nuclear disarmament commitments to Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Compliance, w/NPT spec w/o disarm

The USFG should substantially change its nuclear posture to increase compliance with its commitments to Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.