



Trust and Verify

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US and nuclear testing

Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, spoke on Monday 30 January at a conference of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace entitled 'Nuclear Proliferation in 1995: Renewal, Transition, or Decline?'

He stated that over the weekend before the conference, President Clinton had made three decisions relating to the CTB 'to underscore his determination to make as much progress as possible' before the April NPT Conference:

First, on the assumption that a treaty will be signed before September 30, 1996, and subject to the same understandings that govern our current moratorium, the President has decided to extend the moratorium on its [*sic*] nuclear tests until a CTB Treaty enters into force.

Second, the President has directed our CTB negotiator, Ambassador Ledogar, to propose that the Conference on Disarmament remain in session through August if the negotiation is not concluded during the round now scheduled to end in April.

Third, the president has directed that at tomorrow's session of the Geneva negotiations, the US will withdraw its proposal for a special 'right to withdraw' from the CTB Treaty ten years after it enters into force. Let me also note that the CTB will contain a traditional 'supreme national interest' clause. In articulating his National Security Strategy last July, President Clinton declared that the United States will retain strategic nuclear forces sufficient to deter any future hostile foreign leadership with access to strategic nuclear forces from acting against our vital interests and to convince it that seeking a strategic nuclear advantage would be futile. In this regard, the President considers the maintenance of a safe and reliable nuclear stockpile to be a supreme national interest of the United States.

The opt-out clause — UK views

The CTB opt-out clause proposed by the US had met with much controversy. For example, a British view of it was given by David Logan, Assistant Under Secretary, International Security, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office at a Commons Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on 18 January:

The idea of a ten-year review is not something that has been formally discussed in the negotiations yet, but when it is, it is not a proposal which I think we shall support.

NPT PrepCom

The fourth and final Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 1995 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Conference was held in New York on 23-27 January.

The PrepCom was attended by 142 states parties and 7 non-party observer states, the highest attendance of all the meetings.

Rules of procedure

The PrepCom was able to agree on almost every substantive matter except for parts of Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure dealing with voting mechanisms for the extension decision itself.

As this issue has become very difficult with no clear way forward, a set of 'intersessional' meetings has been arranged, to be held on 14 and 15 June, just before the NPT Conference opens.

Part of the difficulty with Rule 28 is that the type of decision to be taken at the Conference is unprecedented and existing voting systems used, for example, in the United Nations are not particularly suitable for this purpose.

ACRONYM Report

A report on the Fourth PrepCom has been prepared by Rebecca Johnson and has been published as ACRONYM Report No. 5, *Extending the Non-Proliferation Treaty: The Endgame*.

Copies are available from the VERTIC office.

North Korean Statement

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea made a statement at the NPT PrepCom regarding the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) background document on safeguards in that country, which is to be presented at the 1995 NPT Conference.

The statement said that the 'inconsistencies' found in the DPRK's plutonium separation had been explained to the IAEA.

On the provision of US information to the IAEA the statement said:

The IAEA Secretariat is not entitled to apply 'intelligence information' and 'satellite photographs' provided by a third State party to its safeguards activities, for the Agency Secretariat is not empowered to do so.

On safeguards:

Although the DPRK is obligated to accept Agency's [*sic*] inspections under the Safeguards Agreement, the DPRK is not duty bound at all to open even military sites for inspections, and the Agency Secretariat is not entitled, in its rights, to inspect military sites of the State parties.

On its NPT withdrawal decision:

The DPRK's unilateral decision on the temporary suspension of the effectuation of its withdrawal from the NPT was a policy commitment it had made to the United States at the DPRK-USA talks. It is on the basis of this policy commitment that the

DPRK has been permitting Agency's inspections for the continuity of safeguards

On the US-DPRK Agreed Framework:

The DPRK has already suspended the construction of its atomic power plants of 50 megawatt and 200 megawatt capacities and has neither reloaded fuel rods into the reactor at the Experimental Atomic power Plant nor reprocessed the spent fuel rods, and has shut down the operation of the Radiochemical Laboratory and Fuel Rod Fabrication plant.

... The DPRK expects a precise implementation of the DPRK-USA Agreed Framework and believes that nothing should interfere with the implementation of the framework accord.

Japanese views on the US-DPRK agreement

A leading figure in the New Frontier Party, the second largest in the Japanese parliament, Ichiro Ozawa, was cited in an AP report in December as saying that Japan should not commit large sums to the agreement until suspicions of the DPRK are completely removed and that criticized the agreement for containing some ambiguous parts.

US Congressional views

Robert Dole, the leader of the new Republican majority in the US Senate has said that the Senate could delay funding for the supply of oil to North Korea if Congress was not satisfied with the agreement and promised to hold early hearings on the subject.

US Tritium Production

The latest published US budget, that for fiscal year 1996, includes \$50 million for development work for a plant to produce tritium for nuclear weapons. The final production plant, either a reactor or a linear accelerator is likely to cost billions of dollars.

Tritium is required in some nuclear-weapon designs to boost the yield (see below).

The facility most likely to be the site of the new work is Savannah River in South Carolina, the site of tritium production reactors closed down in the 1980s. Coincidentally, this is the state of the Chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Strom Thurmond; and the facility is located within the congressional district of the Chair of the House Armed Services Committee, Floyd Spence. Both have been critics of the Clinton Administration's defence policies.

Tritium and a cut-off

Although tritium itself is not a fissile material, and thus would not be covered by the proposed fissile material cut-off, there would be benefits in seeking a world-wide ban on the production of this material.

Tritium is used to boost the yield of nuclear weapons by acting as a fuel for a fusion reaction at the centre of the weapon. This reaction provides both further energy and a supply of many neutrons that enhance the chain reaction of the nuclear weapon.

For weapons designers, the use of tritium has a fundamental weakness in that it has a short half-life. This means that each year 5.5 per cent of the tritium decays into other products.

A tritium cutoff has long been advocated as an arms control measure as within a decade or two of implementation it would have reduced the yield of existing nuclear weapons and required weapons to be larger, heavier and more expensive to carry out the same roles.

If such a cutoff were ever to be negotiated, the time to do it would be just before spending billions on new production facilities.

Uranium seizure

On 14 December, nearly 3 kg of highly-enriched uranium in powder form was seized by Czech authorities in Prague. Three men were arrested at the scene: a Czech nuclear physicist, a Russian and a Belarusian.

The material was enriched to a level of 87.5 per cent. Published results from tests carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency have indicated that the material did not originate from Czech or Slovak facilities.

United Kingdom and the CWC

Having given earlier assurances that Britain would be an original party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the British Government have so far taken no legislative action toward ratification. The UK signed the CWC in January 1993.

On 7 July 1994 the position stated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was:

We will ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention as soon as the necessary implementing legislation is in place. No parliamentary time has yet been allocated for this.

and that:

The legislation will be introduced as soon as parliamentary time becomes available.

On 28 November the position stated by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) (the government department with responsibility for implementing the CWC) was:

The United Kingdom remains committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention and legislation to facilitate its ratification will be introduced as soon as parliamentary time and other Government legislative priorities permit.

On 8 December, in a question and answer session in the House of Lords on the CWC, Earl Ferrers, Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry said:

I hope that there will not be a long delay before the legislation is brought forward. ... I have given the assurance that we will introduce this measure as soon as is reasonable.

Lord Ferrers talked about a consultation document that the Government is to issue (two years after signing the Convention):

The consultation document will contain the outline of our proposals for the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and it will seek the views of industry. It will cover issues that are important to industry such as declarations; the way in which industries will be inspected; and respecting commercial confidences.

The timescale for ratification, following this new consultation process, seemed to be of concern only in the effect on the trade prospects of British companies: the inspection and verification of the way in which countries operate is an essential part of the convention. It will first come into operation 180 days after 65 countries have ratified. The chemicals in which Britain is interested are not those in Schedule 1, which will come into operation immediately, but those listed in Schedule 2 which will be banned when the Schedule comes into force three years later. Ensuring that countries behave fairly and properly is an essential part of the convention.

The view that the UK has been slow in ratifying is also held by former members of recent Conservative Governments.

Sir John Stanley (Conservative), a former Minister of State for the Armed Forces and a Parliamentary Private Secretary to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, asked Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd at a hearing of the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee the following:

Foreign Secretary, can you explain the delay? It does seem to me to be really inexplicable. Here is this extremely important Convention which has been signed over two years ago now. The legislative requirement for that was wholly foreseeable and could have been planned for and Britain, surely, in terms of its credentials in non-proliferation should have made ample steps to move forward, certainly in this Parliamentary session. Can you give any explanation as to why it has not been given a higher priority by the Government?

Mr Hurd's response was that in each Parliamentary session there are many legislative decisions to be taken and that:

the Government collectively has to take a view. In this particular case the DTI have to take a view about their own priorities.

It seems that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are well aware of the advantages that will accrue to the United Kingdom if it is amongst the first 65 states to ratify, while the Department of Trade and Industry, in conformity to their more general remit, see the issue as one of trade.

Advantages to the United Kingdom if it is amongst the first 65 states to ratify the Convention include full involvement of British staff in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the CWC's verification agency, and places on the OPCW's Executive Council.

United States and the CWC

Following the new Republican majority after the Congressional elections, the timetable for US ratification of the CWC seems unclear.

North Atlantic Assembly & CWC

At its 40th annual session, held in Washington, DC in November, the North Atlantic Assembly passed Resolution 253 on the CWC. The resolution included the following text:

7. Convinced that the international community must make every effort to bring about the CWC's entry into force;
8. Determined that the parliamentarians of the North Atlantic Assembly can make a great contribution to such efforts;
9. Urges member Governments and Parliaments of the North Atlantic Alliance:
 - a. to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention as rapidly as possible;
 - b. to enact national legislation where necessary to ensure that the CWC can be implemented.

The North Atlantic Assembly is made up of parliamentarians from each of the NATO countries.

US-Russian information swap

In late December it was announced that the United States and Russia have come to an agreement on the exchange of information between the two states on nuclear warhead numbers and on the size and locations of surplus fissile material stocks. No details of locations of nuclear weapons would be exchanged.

There are no plans to make any of this information available to other states or to make any of it public.

NPT Accessions 1994 and 1995

At the start of the NPT PrepCom it became clear that Bosnia-Herzegovina had deposited its instrument of accession to the NPT during 1994, but that this information had not been passed on.

The following is a list of NPT accessions in 1994 and so far in 1995:

Kazakhstan	14 February 1994
Georgia	7 March 1994
Kyrgyzstan	5 July 1994
Bosnia-Herzegovina	15 August 1994
Turkmenistan	29 September 1994
Moldova	11 October 1994
Ukraine	5 December 1994
Algeria	12 January 1995
Tajikistan	17 January 1995
Marshall Islands	30 January 1995
Argentina	12 February 1995

Fuming Nitric Acid

The story of the container of fuming nitric acid discovered at the end of the Gulf War has prompted further investigations (see last *Trust & Verify*).

The UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) has stated that laboratory tests have revealed that the Chemical Agent Monitor (CAM) as issued to British troops at the time may sometimes give a false reading, indicating the presence of a low concentration of H (blister) agent, when exposed to concentrated fumes of fuming nitric acid.

It has also been revealed that CAM may give a false reading when contaminated with JP4 jet fuel. The MoD has stated that an indication by CAM of Mustard agent in the Jubayl area on 19 January 1991 might be due to such contamination from a damaged coalition aircraft jettisoning fuel.

US to cut satellites

The Director of the US Central Intelligence Agency, James Woolsey, has indicated that the Agency is cutting the number of reconnaissance satellites 'nearly in half'.

Woolsey was appearing before the Senate Intelligence Committee on 10 January.

Scientists for Global Responsibility

The third Science for the Earth Forum will take place in Cambridge on 4 March, 1.00-6.30 pm. There will be sessions on conservation, consumption/energy use and communication of science. SGR continues to work on its Science and Ethics initiative. A paper by John Porter on Ethical and Policy Aspects of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology is available. Living with Electricity, an information booklet on electromagnetic fields hazards, by Philips, Mayhew and Williams is available, price £9. It includes advice to the public on how to practice 'prudent avoidance'. Some members of SGR and of Powerwatch UK are actively involved in monitoring field levels and providing advice and assisting in a UK epidemiological study.

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