

# Ask the Disarmament Guru



Dear Disarmament Guru

I am a diplomat representing a smaller non-nuclear-weapon state, and I'm just not sure what to do at the NPT review conference. There doesn't seem to be any prospect of making real progress on nuclear disarmament; everyone is saying the best we can hope for is some kind of renewal of the 2010 Action Plan.

I know the NPT is important and a cornerstone and everything, but I just can't see the point of this. I'm finding it hard to get motivated. What can I do?

A. Delegate

## My Child

Indeed, these are dark times. But there are many paths to enlightenment. You, like so many others, are stumbling around in a dark, dead-end corridor, squabbling about how best to move forward. You are in the wrong place: only when you decide to step out into the light and liberate yourself from bondage to this dark regime will you find a true path. Perhaps you are not yet ready, but one day I know you will find the courage to negotiate a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

In the meantime, here are some exercises you can do during the NPT to help prepare you and your colleagues for your journey to enlightenment. And also to provide some much-needed entertainment.

1. Challenge those who speak of the benefits of nuclear weapons. Such foolish statements are incompatible with the object and purpose of the NPT and contradict Action 1 of the 2010 Action Plan. They also undermine the cherished non-proliferation pillar of the NPT, by encouraging other states to acquire nuclear weapons. You should push for the review conference to take action to prevent such incitement of proliferation. You can even propose text for

the non-proliferation section of the final document, like this:

*"The Conference notes with concern that claims by States that nuclear weapons provide benefits to national and international security and regional stability are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Treaty, and constitute incitement of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Conference resolves that all States will refrain from making any statement or other communication implying that nuclear weapons play a positive and enduring role in maintaining international security and regional stability."*

2. Oblige the weasel states to undertake specific commitments. The weasels have been ignored in previous NPT outcomes, yet they play a pernicious and wicked role in shielding the P5 from pressure, often under the guise of "bridge building" between the P5 and the genuine non-nuclear-weapon states. You should push for weasel states to be given obligations in any new action plan, especially in the areas of reducing the role of nuclear weapons in national security doctrines, and transparency of arsenals. You can suggest text like this:

*“The Conference recognizes that along with the nuclear-weapon States, a number of non-nuclear-weapon States currently include a role for nuclear weapons in their national security and defence doctrines, and in some cases host nuclear weapons on their territory. The Conference resolves that:*

*a) All non-nuclear-weapon States that are members of a nuclear alliance commit to identifying, and reporting to the 2017 Preparatory Committee, specific steps they will take to diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in their security and defence policies and doctrines;*

*b) All non-nuclear-weapon States that have nuclear weapons stationed on their territory commit to providing regular transparency reports with respect to these weapons.”*

3. Remind the United States and Russia that their stockpile reductions, and other arms control and disarmament actions, are not purely a bilateral matter, subject to the vagaries of bilateral relations and the international security environment, but a binding and unconditional multilateral commitment to all NPT states parties. Push for the NPT to highlight this fact, for example:

*“The Conference emphasizes that the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament is not dependent on bilateral relations between nuclear-weapon States, the global strategic context, the particular national security concerns of individual nuclear-weapon States at any given time, or any other factor extraneous to the Treaty itself and the decisions of its Review Conferences.”*

4. Finally, seek out and gather those who genuinely share your vision of nuclear disarmament. The forces of darkness have conspired to scatter the true non-nuclear-weapon states into different groups, and have lured them into false alliances like the duplicitous NPDI. You must work to reunite them, and shape them into a force which the nuclear-weapon states and weasels must respect. Convene a meeting of the 155 states which joined the humanitarian impact statement at First Committee last year, and begin your journey.

Do not lose hope, my child. You may feel powerless, but even these small acts will have their effect. And as the great philosopher king Jayantha Dhanapala said, “we won’t know how high these bastards can sing, until we’ve got their balls in the vice”.

Peace and consensus be upon you.

*The Guru*