

## NPT Depositaries in Surprise Discovery *U.S., U.K. and Russia find 'lost article' of NPT*

In a surprise statement issued simultaneously in Washington, London and Moscow on April 1, officials from the United States, United Kingdom and Russian Federation announced that archivists in the U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) had discovered a 'lost article' of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). The missing article, which originally appeared between articles VI and VII, was apparently misplaced due to a 'clerical error' in the course of the preparation of the final text of the treaty for signature in June 1968. It has been dubbed Article VI *bis* by officials.



### A New Era for the NPT

Daryl G. Kimball  
Executive Wonk

The remarkable discovery of Article VI *bis* is the best news in a long time for the NPT. What yesterday looked like an extremely difficult and contentious review conference now appears as the best opportunity in a generation to restore the fortunes of this landmark treaty, the cornerstone of the international nonproliferation effort.

The formal recognition of the global strategic context as a key factor in NPT implementation restores much-needed balance to discussions on nuclear disarmament. Demands from non-nuclear-weapon states for progress on disarmament regardless of considerations of stability and security were never realistic, and unfortunately have contributed to the extended stalemate bemoaned by all NPT states parties.

Now that Article VI *bis* makes clear how the disarmament obligations of the NPT are to be implemented, we have a tremendous opportunity for renewed cooperative engagement in the NPT, as all states parties focus on the common goal of developing a global strategic situation in which further steps on nuclear disarmament might one day be contemplated.

'We are delighted by this unexpected discovery', FCO archives director Sarah Broughton said in London, 'although it is somewhat embarrassing that the article went astray in the first place'. U.S. officials confirmed that the recovered Article VI *bis* was being incorporated into official versions of the treaty text held at the Department of State, with certified copies of the corrected treaty to be sent to all NPT states parties 'within the next few days'.

The recovered article specifies that global stability and security are to be taken into account when implementing the treaty. The full text of the article states, 'The provisions of this Treaty, in particular the provisions of Article VI, shall be implemented in a manner designed to take into account all factors that could affect the global strategic context, and to avoid jeopardising the stability and security which nuclear weapons can help to ensure.'

The article therefore reinforces an interpretation of the NPT that the nuclear-weapon states have long advocated. 'It's a welcome vindication, really', said a senior FCO official who asked not to be named. 'It's as if we subconsciously knew it was there all along'. Ambassador Adam Scheinman, U.S. Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation, said he thought the discovery of Article VI *bis* would greatly improve chances for a successful review conference. 'Article VI *bis* really shows that all NPT state parties need to work together on creating the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons,' Scheinman said.

Reaction from governments of non-nuclear-weapon states has so far been muted, as officials study the implications of the discovery. 'We're still looking at it, but it looks as if the P5 were right all along,' said an Indonesian diplomat in New York. 'I guess we'll just have to be more patient and work on improving the strategic context'. An Iranian official contacted by Arms Control Today said, 'Whatever. Have the sanctions been lifted yet?'