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The Implications of South Asia's Nuclear Tests for the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Regimes

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1. Introduction

On 7 and 8 September 1998, fifty experts, drawn from over twenty-five countries and from academia, non-governmental organizations and governments, met in their personal capacities in an off-the-record, "track one and a half" style meeting to discuss the implications of the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in May 1998. The meeting was hosted by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and sponsored by the governments of Australia, Denmark, Italy, Norway, New Zealand and the United States.

The conference was divided into five sessions, each beginning with one or two short opening statements from selected experts followed by discussion amongst all the participants. The final session comprised a summary from two of the participants, which was circulated soon after the meeting.

This report outlines the various discussions in the meeting and provides a list of possible policy directions that were suggested during the meeting. Not all policy suggestions received the full support of all participants, nor does their inclusion herein imply any endorsement by UNIDIR, the United Nations or any of the sponsoring governments. That said, there was a great deal of agreement during the two days and many of the policy proposals received wide support. More views were expressed than can possibly be printed here but it is hoped that the general flavour of the meeting is represented in this document and that minority views have been given adequate coverage.

2. The Responses to the Tests

The tests by India and Pakistan came at a difficult time within the Non-Proliferation Treaty enhanced review process. The second PrepCom following the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995 had just taken place in Geneva and had failed to achieve some very basic agreements. There was a great deal of dissatisfaction expressed by many States Parties to the Treaty and even some rumblings about possible withdrawals in the long term if key concerns were not addressed before the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in 2000. Three days later, India conducted its first nuclear tests since 1974 and later that week announced that it had also conducted sub-kiloton tests. Within the same month, Pakistan carried out its tests in response.

The nuclear weapons tests drew strong and categorical condemnation from some countries, such as Japan. In other countries the response was more muted, and in neighbouring South Asian states some politicians even expressed support. Sanctions have been imposed by some states but not by others and there were strong statements from the P5, the G8 plus Task Force, 47 States in the Conference on Disarmament, the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary-General. In several Latin American countries there was strong reaction against the tests because of the high level of awareness of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and a fear of the unraveling of the non-proliferation system. Many experts at the meeting expressed the view that, in general, the practical response to the tests had so far been inadequate. The prospects of India and Pakistan testing in this manner had not been seriously addressed outside the region and governments were ill-prepared to respond. Some from non-nuclear-weapon states felt uneasy with the P5 taking such a strong and vocal role in this matter and worried that it might set a precedent. Remarks were made on double standards and hypocrisy. It was felt that one of the weaknesses of the reaction to the tests was that so much was viewed only in the framework of the conflict between India and Pakistan whereas the aspirations of India to become a nuclear

weapons power—and thus important on the international scene—had not been adequately taken into account.

China's first response was moderate but became stronger when Indian leaders said that the tests were in response to a threat from China. It was as though the improvements in the relations between India and China and the series of confidence-building measures and high-level talks between the two countries were irrelevant to the new Indian government. However, India is now more aware of the difficulties the tests introduced into its relationship with China and bilateral relations are improving again.

In other South Asian states, the degree of reaction differed depending on the degree of closeness to India and Pakistan. Generally, smaller regional states did not want to antagonize and shake up bi-lateral relations. Non-aligned countries have showed mixed reactions and the Non-Aligned Summit that took place in Durban at the end of August 1998 was discussed at length during the meeting.

In India the initial response was highly emotional. The tests came as a surprise to most of the population the vast majority of which fully supported the tests at first. That response was later moderated, when the wider implications of India's actions were revealed and when Pakistan carried out its tests. In Pakistan, at least among the ruling elite, India's tests were somewhat expected. The public expressed their outrage and demanded reciprocal tests. Pakistan was ready to test within a few days but delayed in order to explore its options fully.

India is now very concerned about stability in the region and knows that it needs a stable Pakistan. India is also aware now that the issue of Kashmir is back on the international agenda, which has been the long-held wish of Pakistan but an approach that India has resisted.

There was a general sense in the meeting that India could sign the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty but there was some doubt as to which government could best achieve that and a degree of consensus amongst the political parties will be required. Pakistan, having de-linked its nuclear policy from India's could sign the Comprehensive Test Ban

Treaty with or without India, although certain actions by India could prevent signing. India's desire to be recognized as a nuclear-weapon power was thought by some analysts to be lessening although there were many hurt feelings in both India and Pakistan at the suggestion that they be considered as reckless and irresponsible states.

Concern was expressed about the connection to Islam and the "Islamic bomb" that has been made in Pakistan and other countries. Such sentiments were exacerbated by the bombing of training camps in Afghanistan and the implications for regional security. In Pakistan, the concern is that bombing a state when not at war could have consequences for the relationship between Pakistan and India. It was thus asked whether hot pursuit over the Kashmiri border could more easily lead to large-scale conflict.

3. Causes of the Tests

The reasons behind the nuclear weapons tests by India and Pakistan were many and complex. There was/is a belief that nuclear weapons confer status, prestige and security. India had some long-term security concerns about the military cooperation between China and Pakistan and decided that going nuclear was the quickest, easiest way to get the attention it desired and the long-term economic benefits it needed. The 1995 decision to extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty indefinitely came as a shock to India and it has since hardened its approach to nuclear weapons. The zero option in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty may also have factored into the equation, because there was some evidence to suggest that India felt that it could not join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty without the ability to carry out low-level tests.

The general perception in India and Pakistan has been that nuclear weapons are not destabilizing, and that the logic of deterrence and arms control will hold. This attitude has gained ground despite both countries' long tradition of calling for nuclear disarmament.

It was easier for India to test because of the precedent in 1974 and because of the institutional framework for testing had existed for decades. But, such a framework also existed in Pakistan which was able to follow India's lead without many problems.

There was a general sense that while China's nuclear weapons were not a cause for India's tests—although they are an excuse—the role and behaviour of China in the region have been a factor. Certainly, the conflict between China and India in 1962 was the trigger for the Indian nuclear programme and the close cooperation between China and Pakistan did not help (although China had previously offered civil nuclear cooperation to India). However, throughout years of bilateral talks between India and China, the threat from Chinese nuclear weapons was not raised as an issue for negotiation by India. There was strong

agreement that India did not need to test for security reasons: its relationship with China was sound and through nuclear ambiguity, India could have maintained conventional and nuclear superiority over Pakistan.

In the case of Pakistan, the response to India's conventional, nuclear and missile programmes and the termination of military and nuclear cooperation with the USA has meant that since 1990, Pakistan has increased its emphasis on nuclear deterrence. Increasing feelings of vulnerability have led Pakistan to demonstrate that it could match India's capability. However, Pakistan's nuclear programme is not purely responsive. Nuclear weapons now have a clearly established role in Pakistan's defence policy. They are seen domestically as a vital part of Pakistan's force posture, given its weakness in conventional forces.

4. Consequences of the Tests

4.1 Regional Security

Relations between India and Pakistan and regional security had improved before the tests despite the ongoing tensions over Kashmir. The relationships between India, Pakistan and China are now complicated due to the shift from one to three countries with nuclear-weapons capability. The risk of nuclear war cannot be ruled out particularly because the command and control structures are embryonic in both India and Pakistan and there is low-level conflict at the border of disputed territory. In addition, both India and Pakistan are increasing their military spending.

There was a strong sense in the meeting that no country had been made safer as a result of the nuclear tests and that the approach between states in the region should be one of building trust and confidence, not a Cold War-style approach. The position between the two could become very volatile with serious consequences.

The issue of weaponization was discussed at length. What is actually meant by weaponization was not agreed. There is a difference between overt and covert weaponization. Overt weaponization with nuclear warheads deployed on missiles could be a worse situation than covert weaponization where nuclear warheads may be available to be delivered by aircraft. It is likely that both India and Pakistan will move towards missile-based weaponization, which could result in a spiraling arms race between the two.

There was concern over Pakistan's statements on first-use. India has committed itself to no-first-use of nuclear weapons, whereas, because of conventional inferiority, Pakistan would be prepared to use nuclear weapons first—perhaps even early—in a conflict. Pakistan has made it quite clear that it will not sign on to a no-first-use agreement.

4.2 Consequences for Non-proliferation and Disarmament

The nuclear tests in South Asia have complicated the non-proliferation process. It may be however, that the disarmament process has had an injection of activity as a direct consequences of the tests—the fissile material negotiations have begun in Geneva, and it is possible that India and Pakistan could sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty at some point in the next year. However, there was no suggestion that the tests may prove to be beneficial in the long term or that they actually furthered the cause of disarmament.

The attainment of universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty seems increasingly unlikely. At the time of drafting the Treaty there were five nuclear-weapon states and any provision allowing for an increase in the number of possessor states would have been a contradiction with the very purposes of the Treaty. Since 1995, a new coalition of like-minded states is emerging to push for nuclear disarmament. The suggestion now being made is that there be a parallel regime with India and Pakistan as part of the fissile materials agreement, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and so on. There was consensus that there will be no simple solution, rather that there will be choices of options, some less unpleasant than others. The next few years will be decisive for such crucial issues as whether disarmament will gain the upper hand, whether some new nuclear order will emerge, or whether nuclear disorder turns out to be a real danger.

Some debate centred on the implications for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. In answering the question on whether the detection of the tests had implications for the verification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, if and when it enters into force, the general sense was that it was too difficult to say as yet. The international monitoring system is not yet fully developed or running. There are unanswered questions, posed by the scientific community, as to whether India and Pakistan actually carried out the number of tests they announced and whether the yields were as claimed. It was pointed out that if the tests were not as successful as hoped by the bomb designers in India and in Pakistan, there may be pressure to carry out further tests.

The failure of the Non-Proliferation Treaty PrepCom just prior to the tests was frequently mentioned. Whilst many experts stressed that the difficulties within the Non-Proliferation Treaty should not be over exaggerated, there were fears expressed over the possible long-term unraveling of the Treaty. Because a significant cause of the failure of the 1998 Non-Proliferation Treaty PrepCom was the inability to agree on language on the Middle East, much discussion focused on the situation in that region and the nuclear ambiguity question. Now that India and Pakistan had made their nuclear weapons capabilities clear to all, the ability for Israel to retain its own nuclear ambiguity was called into question.

The restraint shown by China over its positions within the Non-Proliferation Treaty and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was praised by many participants. Others drew attention to Chinese nuclear cooperation with Pakistan in the military realm. There was a general sense that neither India nor Pakistan will easily give up their nuclear capabilities, particularly considering India's aspirations to regional and global influence.

5. Damage Limitation

In 1995, it was presumed by many that the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty would somehow guarantee the (eventual) universality of the regime. Since May 1998 certain key countries have expressed concern over the validity of the Non-Proliferation Treaty for the future. They renounced nuclear weapons and joined the Treaty on the understanding that the number of nuclear-weapons possessor states would not increase beyond five. They now argue that new realities will lead them to reassess the effectiveness of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and their role within it.

Despite such ominous statements, the positions of Brazil and Argentina gave cause for optimism. The fact that Brazil ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty after the tests by India and Pakistan was strongly praised. The bilateral relations between Brazil and Argentina were seen as possible pointers to a future route for India and Pakistan and the giving up of the nuclear option by both Ukraine and South Africa were also reasons for hope. It was pointed out that the major problems in non-proliferation over recent years have been caused by states within the Treaty but not in compliance. The need for states to remain in compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and not to consider leaving the regime was stressed.

There was concern that the tests will be used by other countries as reasons not to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and by the nuclear-weapon states as reasons not to further efforts in nuclear disarmament. However, it was pointed out that the current global economic situation may well be far more damaging to regional and international security. It was also noted that 44 countries are required to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty for entry into force, and whilst it may now be possible for India and Pakistan to ratify, other countries would also have to do so and some of them may refuse. There was some skepticism about the possibility of India joining the

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, partly for technical reasons and partly for political reasons.

The meeting considered the question of how best to influence the behaviours of India and Pakistan and discussed positive and negative incentives. There was concern that positive incentives could be viewed as rewards for the tests. Some participants were concerned about possible counter-productive effects of sanctions and negative incentives. The issue of what constituted rewards was a recurring theme in the discussions but there were worries that anything perceived as a reward to either country could be an incentive to other states to develop a nuclear-weapon programme.

The opinion of some experts was that there is still scope for preventing full-scale weaponization in India and Pakistan and perhaps even for a “rollback” to the previous position of nuclear ambiguity (by making statements on non-weaponization) although that may require a high degree of transparency between the two states. Other experts felt that weaponization is either now *de facto* or is on the cards in the short term and that it would be better to concentrate on how best to deal with that and what sort of weaponization would be preferred. However, the point was made that once nuclear weapons are operational and integrated into the military forces, the security rationale for them becomes entrenched, whether or not the security reasons were originally justified. The issue of weaponization and deployment needs to be addressed quickly.

There was wide agreement that India and Pakistan could accept the norms and obligations of nuclear powers by agreeing not to transfer nuclear technology or receive assistance in their nuclear programmes and to explicitly implement export controls.

The potential for war between India and Pakistan was the subject of many discussions as was the possibility of the economic collapse of Pakistan. It was felt by many that the issue of Kashmir had to be kept on the international agenda and resolution of the complex situation ought to be a priority. It was acknowledged that the security situation in South Asia affects more than just those countries and could have implications

beyond the region. For that reason, and for basic humanitarian motives there was a sense that the international community could not remain inactive and had to focus attention on the region.

Many experts expressed the opinion that the treatment of countries that violate international norms ought to be more even-handed. For the rule of international law to be upheld, it needs to be applied impartially. In addition all states should comply with their obligations under international treaties, including the nuclear-weapon states.

6. Developing the Non-proliferation and Disarmament Agenda

Whether or not agreements are in force, there is a system of international norms against nuclear, chemical and biological weapons proliferation and for nuclear, chemical and biological disarmament. There is also an international norm against nuclear testing. It is important that these norms are recognized and accepted.

Proposals were made concerning no-first-use agreements, security assurances, missile deployment limitations, missile defences limitations, fissile material production, confidence-building measures and nuclear disarmament.

The fissile material negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament were the subject of much discussion, particularly the issue of stocks. The participants recognized that this will be, politically and technically, a very difficult negotiation. It would be a treaty with universal pretensions and will require universal adherence. The treaty would establish a new international norm against nuclear weapons and has the potential to act as a policy driver. It was also recognized that India and Pakistan have very different needs and views on the issues of stocks and transparency and there is a replication of this complexity in the Middle East.

No-first-use was a hot topic for discussion, with particular reference to the difficulty that China now finds itself in vis-à-vis India. It was explained that China has a policy of no-first-use against nuclear weapons states and a policy of no-use against non-nuclear-weapons states. Hitherto, China has always afforded India and Pakistan the policy of no-use as non-nuclear-weapon states. The tests however, could put an end to such an approach because other non-nuclear-weapon states could argue that India and Pakistan should no longer be granted such a favour by China. China's dilemma is that if it thus announces that India and Pakistan have lost their right to a guarantee of no-use by China and will henceforth be granted an assurance of no-first-use, this could be

interpreted as implicitly granting some de jure nuclear weapon state status to India and Pakistan—a status to which China is adamantly opposed.

The possibility of “parallel tracks” on non-proliferation or “inner and outer circles” was the subject for wide discussion. The idea behind this thinking is to address proliferation outside the Non-Proliferation Treaty and thus involve states that are not parties to the treaty. The lack of a legal status in such parallel approaches could be an advantage rather than a disadvantage. This would not be a substitute for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but it might serve—temporarily—as an acceptable second-best.

The difficulties over entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty were pointed out. The implementation costs of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty may well be higher than expected and few countries have ratified the Treaty. The international monitoring system could be running within the next two years and a great deal will depend on what happens in 1999.

7. Conclusions and Policy Options

The following was presented at the end of the two-day meeting in an attempt to provide as inclusive a summary of the findings and proposals as possible. Not everyone present agreed with all of the points made in this summary and there may be points absent. It was felt, however, that the salient points were made and that participants at the meeting would benefit from receiving this summary soon after the meeting.

7.1 Main Summary

There was general agreement among participants that despite the intentions behind the tests on the part of India and Pakistan, neither had enhanced its own security or international status by conducting the tests. There was also agreement that the tests had amplified the dangers posed by the collapse of the Asian economies, the current crisis in the Russian Federation and the ongoing problems in the Middle East. It was also recognized that the international response to the nuclear tests in South Asia was inadequate in countering the effects of the tests on the regional and global security environment and non-proliferation regime, and participants agreed on the need for more coherent and collective action.

With this firmly in mind, participants then focused on practical ideas and proposals that could potentially provide options for policy-makers attempting to minimize the effects of the tests in South Asia. Some of the proposals were contradictory, or at least not necessarily consistent—there were many differing views in the room. But they were included in the summary because they offered interesting, challenging or useful ways of looking at this problem.

The proposals were grouped under three themes: prevention of war, in particular nuclear war; saving the non-proliferation and nuclear arms

control regimes; and coping with the effects on regional tensions, especially in the Middle East.

7.2 Prevention of Nuclear War

Participants concluded that as a result of the tests in South Asia there was an increased risk of nuclear war in that region, and participants felt they were not able to discount the possibility of a regional flashpoint escalating into the use of nuclear weapons. In reaching this assessment, participants were able to point to a number of considerations that had contributed to this greater danger of nuclear conflict in the region. The tension over Kashmir and other disputed territories was the most obvious consideration. It was felt that India, by nuclearizing its relations with Pakistan, had reinforced the international dimension of the ethnic and territorial conflict in Kashmir and made it a potent threat to global security. As a result of this “nuclearization”, the issue of Kashmir had to be addressed with great urgency. Participants also pointed to the disparity in conventional arms in the region as a factor contributing to the increased risk of nuclear conflict, and recognized the role of other states in this disparity (e.g., the United States, United Kingdom, France, China, Israel and Russia) with their past and present supplies of nuclear-related technologies and conventional arms. Participants noted the imbalance and destabilizing effects of such military transfers, but also the complex and not necessarily constructive role of sanctions-based responses.

Participants developed a number of practical suggestions to counter the increased risk of nuclear war:

- C Confidence-building measures: making current confidence-building measures work more effectively, including, for example, the hotline between Pakistan and India; and also consolidating current confidence-building measures;
- C New security assurances (including non-nuclear positive security assurances);

- C Enhanced security cooperation among countries in the region, including the neighbours of India and Pakistan. There was an emphasis in this respect on the importance of dialogue between India and Pakistan, and India and China where appropriate;
- C Conflict resolution mechanisms, i.e., a political approach based on conflict resolution;
- C Efforts by global powers, especially the United States, aimed at enabling Pakistan to de-link its strategic responses from its current heavy dependence on reactivity to India's decisions;
- C Rolling back of weaponization; non-deployment of ballistic missiles; non-weaponization and no-first-use. There was a general feeling that while some of these should be encouraged bilaterally, others could best be fostered by initiatives and actions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty nuclear-weapon states;
- C Developing international initiatives on the de-alerting of nuclear weapons;
- C The possibility of assistance with command and control safety features (e.g. permissive action links (PALS)). This option was strongly disliked by some on the grounds that it could be construed as recognizing, rewarding and even encouraging the integration of nuclear weapons into the military force structures of India and Pakistan, thereby breaching Article I of the Non-Proliferation Treaty; and
- C Emphasizing to India the need to address regional security issues in a cooperative rather than adversarial manner.

7.3 Saving the Non-proliferation and Arms Control Regimes

Participants recognized that the Non-Proliferation Treaty and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty were in difficulty prior to the tests in South Asia, as evinced, in the case of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, by the failure of the second Non-Proliferation Treaty PrepCom. Participants

held the view that the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime was somewhat inelastic and not sufficiently responsive to the evolving strategic environment, and that this combined with the apparent and provocative complacency of the nuclear-weapon states, had raised questions about the relevance of the current non-proliferation regime. However, despite the view that the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime was not in great shape, it was recognized that it is the best option available, and therefore remains of crucial importance. For that reason, it is worth preserving and reinforcing. Despite much talk about whether the tests in South Asia would tempt others to leave the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, there was general agreement that there was in fact no immediate threat of collapse of the regime, or of departures from it. However, there was agreement that in order to prevent this in the future, there had to be a concerted effort to re-establish and strengthen the values the regime represented, and ensure that the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime remains the best option for all countries, from both political and security perspectives.

The tests had revealed that the Non-Proliferation Treaty was turning a blind eye to de facto nuclear weapon possessors, but not doing so very effectively. Hence states were now being forced to deal with the situation in which the main proliferation problem was taking place outside the non-proliferation regime. There were three options considered in the context of reversing this damaging trend:

- C Ignore the tests and accept the existence of India and Pakistan as de facto nuclear-weapon states outside the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime;
- C Change the regime to reflect this new situation;
- C Bind India and Pakistan onto the objectives of the non-proliferation regime through mechanisms other than the Non-Proliferation Treaty—a parallel process.

It was agreed that the third option was the only viable one from the perspective of the international community. With that in mind, the participants raised a number of considerations that they believed should

be taken into account in any attempt to bring India and Pakistan into the non-proliferation regime, without damaging the regime itself. These included the following:

- C The need to resolve the status of India and Pakistan to provide a context in which they could be addressed as *de facto* nuclear-weapon possessors, but without acceptance or rewards as such for their behaviour. Bearing in mind that the Non-Proliferation Treaty definition of nuclear-weapon states was not intended to legitimize the possession of nuclear weapons, but rather, to identify differential obligations, it was suggested that India and Pakistan could be encouraged to undertake some of the obligations of the nuclear-weapon states (e.g. no transfer of nuclear material and technology, and joining nuclear arms control measures) and also some of the obligations of non nuclear-weapon states (e.g. no receipt of nuclear material), in an attempt to incorporate them into the regime without recognizing them as equivalent to the P-5 in status;

- C The perceived failure of the nuclear-weapon states to fulfil their obligations under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty as well as they ought, and the perceived failure to make systematic and effective progress on nuclear disarmament, was recognized as an important factor that would require attention if the ongoing viability of the current regime was to be preserved, as was the importance of implementing the 1995 Non-Proliferation Treaty Principles and Objectives. The failure to make progress on the resolution on the Middle East was recognized as a factor which also had to be addressed. The uncertainty regarding the apparent redefinition of targeting policies to include, for example, biological and chemical weapons appeared to reinforce for the foreseeable future the possession of nuclear weapons by the P-5. This, and the widely acknowledged failure of the P-5 to meet the expectations of others on nuclear disarmament, played heavily in the justification by India and Pakistan of their nuclear tests. It was recognized that this was a self-serving argument on the part of India and Pakistan, but it also illustrated a real concern shared by many non-nuclear-weapon states, including Japan, South Africa and most of the Non-Aligned Group. Ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

- by the nuclear-weapon states that have not done so and the reactivation of the START process were seen as important and necessary measures in this regard;
- C The forthcoming negotiations on fissile material were seen to be an important step and of long-term security value. Stocks would be a central issue, and there were suggestions of a parallel process of transparency to deal with the issue of stocks if it proved too difficult to incorporate into the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament;
 - C Participants pointed to the need to consider small steps, both reciprocal and unilateral, or arrangements that could be taken in the interim which could be used to reinforce the non-proliferation and nuclear arms control regime. In addition to those already mentioned, such as de-alerting and ballistic missile controls, there were suggestions regarding renewed security assurances, strengthened no-first-use arrangements, and the requirement that nuclear-weapon-free zones should be respected by all surrounding and relevant countries. In the context of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, for example, requesting all relevant and surrounding countries to respect its provisions could bring Pakistan and India into the security assurance structure of the zone without conferring special status on those two countries;
 - C There was significant support for the proposal to bring together a group of countries, including the nuclear-weapon states, India, Pakistan and a few key non-nuclear-weapon states to negotiate some complementary and parallel processes referred to above.

7.4 The Effects on Regional Tensions, Especially in the Middle East

A large number of participants made clear their absolute opposition to any preferential treatment being given to non-Non-Proliferation Treaty states. They were concerned that if the basis of the Non-Proliferation Treaty were to be eroded by the acceptance or the rewarding of a non-Non-Proliferation Treaty state with nuclear

capability, this may cause some Treaty parties to reassess their membership. This concern referred not just to countries in the Middle East, but also to countries that had joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty on the basis that there were only five nuclear-weapon states and those which had foregone the nuclear option on the understanding that an agreed status quo prevailed. Participants noted that while the threat of withdrawal was not regarded as immediate, the possibility of this threat needed to be taken seriously.

It was considered important that the regime should seek to compel members to adhere to their obligations, and deal with possible violations quickly and effectively (there were references made here to Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea). The importance of not tolerating double standards, and equal treatment of different non-Non-Proliferation Treaty states, was reiterated in the context of handling regional tensions. It was also felt that support should be offered to those countries in the Middle East that are firmly behind the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime. This would require that the 1995 decisions, especially the resolution on the Middle East, be taken seriously, and that genuine attempts be made regarding its implementation, including a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. In conjunction with this, participants agreed it would be essential to reinvigorate the Middle East peace process and return it to its original pace and spirit. Finally, there was concern about the implications of the delay in the full acceptance of the Conference on Disarmament mandate for the fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations, and the need for all states, in the Middle East, and elsewhere, to participate fully in the negotiations.

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