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Charting the "hows" of Foreign Policy



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The Diplomatic Lessons Learned from the Renewal of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Remarks at the 15th "Jit" Trainor Award for Distinction in the Conduct of Diplomacy, October 3, 1995

by AMBASSADOR JAYANTHA DHANAPALA AND AMBASSADOR THOMAS GRAHAM, JR.

Remarks by Ambassador Dhanapala

In a period that has seen a remarkable acceleration of historic change, the basic structure of international relations has been in a state of transition. The apparent collapse of bipolarity has yielded to arguments for unipolarity by some, multipolarity by others, and, in this fiftieth anniversary year of the signing of the United Nations (UN) Charter, for UN-polarity by still others. The de-emphasis of ideology as a factor in relations between nation-states may ultimately prove less seminal than the number of nation-states we admit as players into the arena of global decisionmaking.

On the one hand, dormant nationalisms and both transnational and subnational groupisms are emerging, often accompanied by violence. On the other, there is an inexorable trend toward global integration through the spread of consumerism and the revolution in communications technology. These developments are parallel and not always in conflict. The global system of nation-states as we have known it may be undergoing a transition as we witness the power of nonstate actors, especially in the economic field—but also, increasingly, in the

security area—to determine the ebb and flow of world trends. The interaction of people in cyberspace is also dramatically changing cultural patterns.

Through this confluence of currents there is the overriding principle of multilateralism in global politics, a principle that has never been easily reconciled with *realpolitik*. The pressure for the multilateral approach grew with decolonization after World War II. It intensified after the Cold War ended and several new states entered the global system following the implosion of both the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The tension of the Cold War contest between two blocs, which was a disincentive to multilateralism, is now absent. Thus, we have a unique opportunity to reap the benefits of the multilateral approach to global problems. The "level playing field" of the speechwriters of international statespersons has been as much a mirage-like ideal as perfect competition in economic theory or democratic choices in electoral politics. The best being the perpetual enemy of the good, we must now persist in broadening the playing field as we strive to level it. For the more participants in a decision that affects us, the more likely the result will be intrinsically equitable

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About the Authors...

The authors received the "JIT" TRAINOR AWARD FOR DISTINCTION IN THE CONDUCT OF DIPLOMACY for their work in the successful indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

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The views expressed here are the Ambassadors' and do not necessarily reflect the views of their respective governments.

and inherently durable. Multilateral diplomacy is especially vital in the field of international peace and security and in the negotiation of disarmament agreements leading to it. The principle of the sovereign equality of all nations, whether major powers or microstates, is never easy to live with. But when we prioritize among the national security of states, we do so at our peril. The principle of peaceful coexistence also requires that one nation's security cannot be achieved at the expense of the security of others. Security must be universal if it is to be effective. In the practice of democratic politics within countries, the limitations of majoritarian principles have long been recognized. Consultation, compromise, and consensus have emerged as rational and realistic concomitants to voting in the democratic process. The same lessons are applicable in international conferences, whichever side has the votes, especially since we have seen in the UN General Assembly how voting patterns can change over decades. The interests of the few depend on the actions of the many as much as the interests of the many hinge on the actions of the few.

Multilateralism and multilateral endeavors in international relations are not popular subjects at this moment, least of all in Washington. The complexity attending the problems, the responses of some institutions, and the occurrence of some failures have led to a mood of corrosive cynicism over multilateralism in general and the United Nations in particular. The symbiotic link between men and institutions was captured by Jean Monnet, the inspirational genius of today's European Union, when he said, "Nothing is possible without men, but nothing is lasting without institutions." Transposed into the world of nation-states, the UN system and its specialized agencies are both the sum total of the UN's component nation-states and of much more. It is of course axiomatic that while past and present successes had many parents, failure is an orphan. This does not deny the many successes still being achieved by the multilateral system or reject the need for institutional reform.

The need for the principle of multilateralism is undisputed as we move into an increasingly integrated glo-

bal system. We speak today of the "global commons," recognizing, often with alarm, how ecologically interdependent we are. But for the Montreal Protocol, the chlorofluorocarbons used throughout the world would have created a hole in the ozone layer bigger than its present size of Europe. As the safety of nuclear material in the former Soviet Union gives cause for anxiety and the number of kamikaze-like terrorist groups with diverse causes increases, we must look to international cooperation and multilateral diplomacy for patiently negotiated solutions that will be universally and consistently implemented.

It is against this background that the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must be viewed as a rare success in multilateral diplomacy. Many lessons can be drawn from this success. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) based its strength originally on multilateral consensus and the support it drew from multilateral institutions, like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in its implementation. The success of the conference was a collaborative achievement, and the search for key ingredients in its chemistry is more important than the identification of key individuals or delegations. The diplomatic success of a conference that, without voting, both reinforced and rendered permanent the international legal norm against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and made an important statement favoring nuclear disarmament was collective. It was not a zero-sum game. But that collective success made all parties to the treaty the custodians of that success, with a collective responsibility to protect it and nurture it, thus ensuring the fulfillment of treaty obligations and the commitments made at the conference. The mechanics of this custodianship have been provided in the package of decisions adopted at the conference. The greatly strengthened review process of the treaty, commencing in 1997, will have the Principles of Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament as benchmarks to measure the performance of all treaty parties—nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states.

An analysis of the 1995 NPT Conference must begin with the basic premise that all 178 parties at the time of the conference were firmly pledged to the treaty and its continuity. A mutuality of interest combined a shared realism for the present with a common vision of the future. Any differences that existed on the several options for extension arose out of different perceptions about how the treaty could best be served and implemented in all its aspects. This common ground was an important factor, and suspicions about the motives of some states were proved baseless. Certainly there were differences on a number of issues—differences that were responsible for the inability to agree on a final declaration on the review aspect of the conference. A basic convergence of views on the importance of the treaty for international peace and security and nuclear disarmament was thus crucial. There are many other fundamental principles and premises in international relations that unite nations. The identification of these and their relationship to specific courses of collective action are tasks that multilateral diplomacy must engage in.

The cooperation of all delegations in the disciplines of conference management is not an inconsequential element in the success of multilateral conference diplomacy. Too often the larger objectives of international conferences are frustrated by faulty time management, inadequate preparation, or incomplete consultations. The 1995 NPT Conference was well prepared over a period of more than eighteen months through four preparatory committee sessions, during which the agenda was set; the office-bearers selected; the cost-sharing and background documentation agreed upon; and the rules of procedure, with one exception, accepted. At the conference, the agreed timetable and procedures provided opportunities for consultations on the extension decision to proceed concurrently with the review of the treaty. There was no extreme time pressure caused by filibustering or other tactics to hold the delegates as hostages transfixed by the diminishing sand in the hourglass of conference time.

Equally important is the transparency of the conference proceedings. Too often decisionmaking is confined to closed consultations because of the unwieldy and

time-consuming nature of many large group discussions. Many delegations are sometimes excluded from the key decisions. The 1995 NPT Conference employed open committees. It also had carefully selected consultative groups whose members included the coordinators of regional and political groups. The system of groups, whether regional or political, is useful in conference management to ensure that all delegations are consulted through all stages. The coordinators provided a vital conduit for a beneficial, two-way flow of information. Press conferences were also held regularly to keep the public aware of the conference's progress.

The role of the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) both before and during the conference merits special mention. Before the conference, the NGOs were admitted to the preparatory committee sessions as a result of an initiative by the delegations of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Their publications, briefings, and seminars contributed greatly to a better awareness of the issues. NGO meetings also provided delegations with opportunities for understanding each others' perceptions and agreeing on possible solutions to problems. The expertise of some NGOs was of a high order, and although many of them had specific and open political objectives, their role was clearly beneficial. There is a strange contradiction between the reluctance of some countries to provide NGOs adequate space for participation in disarmament conferences and the enthusiasm for their active involvement in conferences on human rights, environmental, social, and economic issues. As many as 195 NGOs, including research institutes, participated in the conference. Responsible NGOs can and do respond positively to the needs of delegations, especially those who have neither the human nor the material resources to research the issues. Some delegations even included NGO representatives. This recognition of the role of civil society in government representation at international conferences can only be a healthy practice, expanding participatory democracy.

The 1995 NPT Conference was more than a role model for successful multi-

About "Jit" Trainor...

J. Raymond "Jit" Trainor was one of the first students to enroll, in the early 1920s, in Georgetown's newly established School of Foreign Service. After graduation in 1927 and the completion of his Master's degree in 1928, Jit joined the staff of the School, which he served in various capacities until his retirement in 1956.

During his long association with SFS, Jit was both friend and counselor to the scores of students who entered the School. At the end of World War II, he served as acting dean, but declined an offer to become dean because he preferred his duties as Secretary, a position that put him into contact with the students he was interested in helping. This very warm and human relationship is remembered by School of Foreign Service Alumni who have generously supported a trust fund to make the Trainor Award and Lecture Series possible.

Jit Trainor died on January 13, 1976.

Security must be universal if it is to be effective.

lateral diplomacy in a dismal period. The issues involved in the conference were fundamental to the national security of all parties to the NPT, to international peace and security, and to nuclear disarmament. It also raised important questions on the rationale for nuclear weapons in a post-Cold War world. The NPT must be perceived as a legal norm prohibiting proliferation in both dimensions—horizontal and vertical. That is why it is the world's most widely subscribed to disarmament treaty. It was not intended to be a nuclear protectionist measure or a device to legitimize nuclear apartheid, as perceived by some. There is less justification for these misperceptions today than ever. The package of three interrelated decisions and the Resolution on the Middle East adopted without a vote at the conference on May 11, 1995, represent a statement against the possession and use of nuclear weapons by all states for all time. It signaled the irreversibility of the process of nuclear disarmament. President Clinton's announcement on August 11 that the United States had decided on a zero-yield Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and France's support of it, confirmed this and augurs well for the completion of a CTBT by the end of 1996. The greatly enhanced credibility of the IAEA's safeguards and the rigorous accountability built into the treaty review process must accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament as the danger of clandestine programs is eliminated.

There are other steps along the route to the total elimination of nuclear weapons—an objective that is no less feasible or desirable than the banning of other categories of weapons that the international community has achieved so far. The negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva of a cutoff on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons production is already under way. The ratification by nuclear-weapon states of protocols respecting existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the creation of new zones; the negotiation of a treaty to guarantee security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states; the negotiation of START III after the ratification of START II; and the dismantling of the nuclear arsenals of China, France, and the

United Kingdom are further milestones we have to pass. While the nonaligned countries stated that there could be no indefinite extension without nuclear disarmament, others argued strongly that without the indefinite extension of the NPT, there could be no credible basis for further nuclear disarmament. We must now see that latter claim realized. The original bargain in the NPT has had another bargain added to it. Bargains are made to be honored, and international covenants must be kept.

Even as we consider the future agenda for nuclear disarmament, we must recognize that powerful and influential voices continue to assert, self-righteously, the need for the nuclear weapons they would deny others. The legal renunciation of nuclear weapons by parties to the NPT is being verified more stringently than before. The universalization of the NPT is best accomplished by taking credible steps toward nuclear disarmament. Great powers do not need the awesome destructiveness of the nuclear weapon to preserve their national security, let alone their supremacy. While the International Court of Justice ponders the legality of the use of nuclear weapons, political realism must recognize that proliferation is a reactive process to the existence of nuclear-weapon states and the power and influence they appear to wield. The global power and influence of Japan and Germany without nuclear weapons is not as exemplary as it should be. Yet South Africa destroyed its nuclear weapons and, as a result, wields a moral influence that was in evidence at the NPT Conference. Japan, under pressure from public opinion in the fiftieth anniversary year of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, has given notice of a more determined effort to achieve nuclear disarmament and is certain to again lead a UN General Assembly effort to adopt another resolution on nuclear disarmament. This, and an inevitable call for negotiating a nuclear disarmament treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, will see fissures in the developed North, where public opinion is more strongly antinuclear than ever before. *Realpolitik* must recede in the face of global public opinion. A greater solidarity among non-nuclear-weapon states may also emerge, spanning all regions.

Fifty years ago, the nuclear genie was released. We have the wisdom and the capacity to put it back and verify credibly that it remains bottled up. Only then can the world be protected from self-destruction. Only then can it move on to the vast agenda of making our one world a better and more joyful place in which to live.

Remarks by Ambassador Graham

War has been the scourge of humankind since the beginning of time. As soon as humans began living together in large groups, they started to make war on their neighbors to seize their goods or their land, and much later to advance their religion or ideology. Attempts at long-term peace between neighboring groups, tribes, and nations were made from time to time, with very limited success. For several millennia, the implements of war did not appreciably change, and victory went to the largest or best-trained armies.

This condition slowly started to change during the Middle Ages, with the advent of the English crossbow, the longbow, and the invention of gunpowder. Then began the first attempts to limit the technology and implements of war to enhance the cause of peaceful settlement and to reduce the likelihood of war. This is what we today refer to as “arms control.” One of the first attempts at arms control was the outlawing of the crossbow in 1139 by the medieval papacy as “hateful to God and unfit for Christians.” Arms control policy has been criticized for not keeping pace with technology. This early example was no exception. In the following century, the crossbow was overwhelmed by the English longbow, which in turn was rendered obsolete by the destructive firepower of the cannon.

Military technology gradually improved over the centuries, and war became increasingly destructive. The rifle, the machine gun, poison gas, and aerial bombardment, among other such developments, slowly followed one another, culminating in World War II. That—the most destructive of all wars—saw approximately sixty million people die. Attempts at arms control were few and far between and mostly unsuccessful. One of the earliest arms control agreements,

the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817 between the United States and Great Britain, had as its objective the limitation of armament on the Great Lakes. It was honored largely in the breach rather than in the observance. The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 prohibited the use of poison gas in war, among other things, but failed to prevent its widespread use in World War I. The Washington Naval Convention of 1922 did not forestall the naval arms race of the 1920s and 1930s. In contrast, the Geneva Protocol of 1925, still in force and largely a reaction to the use of chemical weapons in World War I, prohibited the first-use of poison gas and biological weapons in war. It was the forerunner of the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972 as well as the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993. It is also given credit as being partly responsible for the non-use of poison gas in World War II. Of course, it did not prevent the use of such weapons by Italy in Ethiopia in 1936, Egypt in Yemen in 1967, or during the Iran-Iraq War.

Everything changed on July 16, 1945, with the successful testing of the first atomic bomb. The technology of war had now advanced to the point where humanity had created a weapon of such power that it had the ability to cause its own destruction. All modern arms control comes after that date and is based on the necessity to control and limit nuclear weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction, if humanity is to be preserved. What can happen was graphically displayed during World War II by the horror of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the massive conventional bombings of Tokyo, Dresden, Hamburg, London, and Coventry.

The United States acquired nuclear weapons in 1945, the Soviet Union in 1949, the United Kingdom in 1952, France in 1960, and China in 1964. This increase in the number of nuclear-weapon states took place against predictions during the Kennedy administration of twenty-five to thirty nuclear-weapon states by the late 1970s. If such a trend had continued unchecked, that number could probably have doubled by 1995.

The principal reason why this did not happen was the result of a successful

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arms control negotiation in the 1960s—the negotiation and conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, signed in 1968 and entered into force in 1970. Before 1970, the acquisition of nuclear weapons had been a point of national pride. The NPT, by establishing a norm of international behavior, converted this former act of national pride into a violation of international law.

The NPT has been the most successful arms control agreement in history. It has 180 parties, with only a small number of nations currently outside this “Club of Civilization.” It has added immeasurably to the security of the United States and the entire world. If the trend predicted during the Kennedy administration had not been checked by the NPT, we would be living today in a world of unending nightmares. From day to day, the question would arise whether civilization, or perhaps humanity itself, would survive.

But this did not happen. The NPT was successful in retarding the proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, it is important to keep in mind that the NPT was directed not only against horizontal proliferation but also against vertical proliferation. In negotiating the NPT, the world community decided—enough! We will draw a line where we are; it will be agreed that no additional nation will acquire nuclear weapons; and the five states that have them (in 1968) will agree to engage in disarmament negotiations to reduce the number of nuclear weapons that they possess, with the ultimate objective of the complete elimination of these weapons. Or expressed in different terms, the ultimate objective of the NPT is a verifiable and enforceable nuclear-free world.

In preventing horizontal nuclear weapon proliferation, the NPT has largely done what it was intended to do. It established a rule of international law against nuclear-weapon proliferation. The number of declared nuclear-weapon states is still as it was in 1968—five. Three states remain outside the NPT system with unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, and compliance problems have occurred with two or three parties—but 175 countries have stated their intention under the NPT never to acquire nuclear weapons.

There are now less than ten states that are not currently part of the NPT system, and several of these have pledged to become NPT parties at an early date.

With respect to controlling and reversing vertical proliferation, only limited progress was possible during the Cold War, but much has been possible since its end. In 1969, the United States and the Soviet Union began the strategic arms limitation process that led to the SALT I agreements, the SALT II treaty, and as the Cold War passed into history, the INF, START, and START II treaties, as well as the 1991 Bush-Gorbachev informal agreement on tactical nuclear weapons. The initial effort was to stabilize and ultimately reverse the nuclear arms race by capping the number of nuclear weapon delivery vehicles. As the Cold War ended, there was agreement to actually reduce the number of nuclear weapons as well as their delivery vehicles. Pursuant to all of these agreements, the United States has already eliminated approximately 60 percent of its nuclear weapon stockpile, with approximately 80 percent to be eliminated by the end of the decade. Russia has undertaken similar measures. We must now look ahead to the next phase of this process and the eventual involvement in it of all five nuclear-weapon states.

In 1968 it could not be agreed to give the NPT permanent status, even though that was the outcome preferred by most of the seventeen negotiating parties at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. But these negotiations operated on the basis of consensus—nothing is agreed until all agree—as have all the other multilateral arms control negotiations in Geneva. Uncertainty about the ramifications of the Cold War for international security and the impact of safeguards on nuclear commerce led to a compromise to give the NPT a twenty-five-year trial period. After that, a conference of the parties was to decide, by majority vote, not by consensus, whether to make the NPT permanent.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT in 1970 took place on March 5, and the conference of the parties met in New York from April 17 to May 12, 1995. The conference, with 175 of the then-178 parties participating,

decided by consensus to give the NPT permanent status. But this decision also included a commitment by the parties to certain nonproliferation principles and objectives as well as the establishment of an enhanced NPT review process to enforce this commitment.

This commitment included vigorous pursuit of the nuclear-weapon disarmament process; priority negotiation of a fissile material cutoff agreement, which is under discussion at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva; and an undertaking to support nuclear-weapon-free zones, to achieve universal membership in the NPT, and to conclude a CTBT by the end of 1996.

The NPT is, after the UN Charter itself, the central document of world peace and security. To be truly part of the civilized world, a state must be an NPT member in good standing. That is the unmistakable import of the 1992 UN Security Council Presidential Statement describing nuclear-weapon proliferation as a threat to the peace as well as Security Council consideration of the cases of Iraq and North Korea. Let us hope that by the NPT Review Conference in the year 2000—at the millennium—universal membership in the NPT will have been achieved, or at least clearly in sight.

The expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important trend that strengthens the worldwide NPT regime. It adds emphasis to the important regional aspect of the control of weapons of mass destruction. The Treaty of Tlatelolco—the Latin American Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty—is nearing full implementation. Nearly all Latin American countries are parties, and the five nuclear-weapon states and relevant extraterritorial states are party to its protocols. The decision in New York encouraged the same degree of support for the Protocols to the Treaty of Raratonga—the South Pacific Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty—and the recently concluded Treaty of Pelindaba—the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty.

On September 15 at the South Pacific Forum meeting in Papua New Guinea, the United States said that it is moving quickly to take a final decision on adhering to the Raratonga Protocols. The United States hopes to make the same

commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba when it is opened for signature early next year. In addition, the United States has committed to Indonesia that it would be prepared to consider positively the development of an agreement for a South-east Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone, assuming the standard U.S. criteria for such zones are met.

The pursuit of a CTBT is the oldest arms control objective of the nuclear age. The quest began in the late 1950s, the first step being the informal testing moratorium that commenced in 1958 and collapsed in 1961. An impasse in the test ban negotiations in 1962 over the issue of on-site verification for underground tests led to the bypassing of this issue in 1963 and the conclusion of the Limited Test Ban Treaty, which prohibits the testing of nuclear weapons anywhere but underground. A refinement was agreed to by the United States and the Soviet Union in 1976, which limited underground tests to 150 kilotons, or roughly ten times the explosive power of the Hiroshima bomb.

Despite those agreements, the nuclear arms race continued unabated. By the early 1990s, the five nuclear-weapon states had conducted almost two thousand nuclear-weapon tests, with the United States accounting for more than half. Although a credible argument could be made for such tests during the Cold War, the rationale for continued testing was greatly diminished by the Cold War's end. When that occurred, the nuclear confrontation and the rise of nuclear-weapon proliferation became the greatest threat to the security of the civilized world. Today, continued nuclear-weapon testing by the nuclear-weapon states reduces rather than enhances security because it encourages proliferation and undermines efforts to strengthen the NPT regime. This fact is what led President Clinton in 1993 to support the continuation of the current nuclear testing moratorium and the prompt negotiation of a CTBT, along with a scientific plan to ensure the safety and reliability of existing weapons without testing. President Clinton gave further impetus to this effort by stating on August 11, 1995, that the United States supports a "zero yield" outcome for the CTBT that would prohibit even very small nuclear explosions.

The new arena of multilateral diplomacy is characterized by independent states voting their interests both individually and as part of regional groupings.



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We now have a new commitment by all of the NPT parties—most importantly by all the nuclear-weapon states—as part of the decision to extend the NPT indefinitely, to conclude the CTBT negotiating process by 1996. This will be a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, not a threshold test ban treaty. The United States is committed to this goal. To quote Vice President Gore at the conference in New York, "If the Conference on Disarmament does its job, the United States is prepared for the conclusion that it has conducted its last nuclear test."

And we must further strengthen the NPT regime. Verification must be enhanced, and such efforts are underway at the IAEA in Vienna pursuant to the "93+2" program. Enforcement must be improved. The NPT regime needs more than just an ad hoc process to refer compliance cases from the IAEA to the UN Security Council. In addition, a strengthened and now permanent NPT regime will be the basis for further efforts to enhance peace and stability through arms control. In this regard, it is essential that both the START II Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention be promptly brought into force. These treaties are currently pending in the U.S. Senate. They are indispensable elements of the global arms control and nonproliferation agenda.

Achieving indefinite extension of the NPT was an important policy objective for many parties. The United States sees itself as directly threatened by any further proliferation of nuclear weapons. Other parties, many of them from the NAM, were disturbed by their perception of a lack of progress by the nuclear-weapon states in fulfilling their article VI disarmament obligations and the resultant inequality in the NPT system. They wanted to see the completion of the arms control agenda that existed at the time of NPT signature in 1968 and that related to the basic NPT bargain—most importantly, a CTBT. Therefore, these states believed it important to maintain leverage over the nuclear-weapon states to ensure progress toward a CTBT and other disarmament measures. Thus, they were reluctant to agree to indefinite NPT extension—even though they strongly supported the NPT regime. Because of the

case for the benefits of a permanent NPT regime to be extended worldwide, a narrow majority for indefinite extension existed even before the conference began. This majority consisted of the traditional western and eastern groups, as well as most of Latin America and a few NAM countries such as the Philippines and several states in West and East Africa. But the overwhelming support for indefinite extension was not yet there.

South Africa, supported by all of Southern Africa, stepped forward to provide a bridge between the two sides—to permit indefinite NPT extension to be agreed by a very large vote and at the same time provide assurances that the disarmament objectives of many parties would be vigorously pursued. South Africa therefore proposed the negotiation of nonproliferation principles and objectives and an enhanced review process. By the end of the conference, these goals were agreed to by all parties. This is the meaning of the commitments in the Non-Proliferation Principles and Objectives, and it was this compromise that permitted indefinite extension to be achieved by consensus, the best possible outcome.

Looking to the future, the evolution of the NPT extension process suggests that just as the Cold War is part of the past, so are narrow bloc politics in multilateral arms control negotiations. The reflexive antagonism between East and West and North and South has been overtaken by history. In preparation for the NPT extension decision, states of all sizes and compositions took a serious look at where their true interests lay and chose to put their security, and the security of the world, over "traditional" bloc interests. The new arena of multilateral diplomacy is characterized by independent states voting their interests both individually and as part of regional groupings. Regional politics, more than bloc politics, likely will be the most important focus of diplomacy in the multilateral arena in the future. And further, the NPT extension process demonstrated that there is support for the NPT regime all over the world and that in the new world order, when appealed to directly, all states are prepared to make their own decisions about their own security.