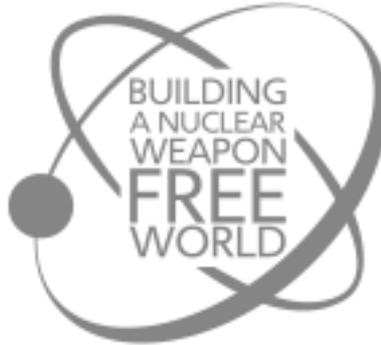


International Conference: Building a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World

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National prohibition and Nuclear-weapons-free zones: Geography of a sustainable world: Understanding South Africa's Past Nuclear Weapons Programme

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1. It is a great pleasure to be here in Astana so far from home but so welcoming and so pleasant to be with friends.
2. I have been asked to say a few words about 'Understanding South Africa's Past Nuclear Weapons Programme'.
3. While a great deal has been written on South Africa's nuclear weapons programme, given that both the programme's development and its dismantlement was conducted under a cloud of secrecy, even today, more than twenty-three years later, it is difficult to discern speculative analysis from evidential investigation in many of the written accounts.
4. While it is important from an historical point of view to reflect on apartheid South Africa's rationale for its weapon programme and to explore the motivations for its nuclear posture, including whether the programme was morally, militarily and economically justifiable, the story's larger significance derives from the country's unprecedented unilateral dismantling of a fully mature nuclear arsenal – the first country ever to take such a decisive step.
5. The manner in which South Africa dismantled its weapons, joined the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), accepted comprehensive safeguards on all its nuclear material and co-operated fully with the International Atomic

Energy Agency (IAEA) in its investigation of the abandoned nuclear weapons programme may serve as a useful future model.

6. We should also be able to draw lessons from the South African case to illustrate general proliferation concerns currently facing the world or to test academic theories relating to why states decide to build or refrain from developing nuclear weapons, including nationalist security cultures.
7. Another reason for looking at the South African case is to examine the future role of the IAEA in the verification of dismantlement given that in our view nuclear disarmament will need to be done multilaterally. As such it places a clear emphasis on the establishment of a role for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Understanding South Africa's Past Nuclear Weapons Programme and its dismantlement allows us to describe and analyse how South Africa's dismantlement process was undertaken and verified (after the fact) in order to ascertain key steps that might be considered in the future by other States' undertaking similar disarmament processes – both those States Parties to the NPT and, those countries presently outside of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, namely, Israel, India, Pakistan and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea.
8. This is a crucial discussion at a time when the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture is under increased strain, caused by what we can only call an increasingly worsening international security environment. And there is polarisation with regard to nuclear disarmament:
9. Some argue that we need to address what is really happening in the real world - the conclusion and implementation of the New START Treaty, which continues to drive down the number of nuclear weapons today; the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran; the continued primacy of nuclear weapons to certain countries national image and strength.
10. Others argue that our world is a nuclear-weapon-obsessed world. The real world is one in which nuclear weapons are beginning to increase in salience again. They are being used as part of a pattern of threats again and the risks of use may be rising. The real world, is one in which nuclear weapons are already in the Middle East, and yet there is no process to address the issue of WMD in the Middle East any more. The real world also includes the reality that the Conference on Disarmament, on which NPT Action Plans depend, has not achieved anything since 1996. The real world is one in which the US-Russia bilateral process has ground to a halt and the most recent NPT Review conference failed to reach consensus on a new Programme of Action.
11. The real world is also what is providing the urgency and impetus for those who are trying new approaches to nuclear disarmament such as – the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) to substantively address concrete effective legal measures and provisions and norms that would need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. The OEWG to take forward nuclear disarmament negotiations is due to deliver its report in October 2016. Countries such as Indonesia, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines, Zambia, South Africa, and Nigeria, are calling for the convening of a conference in 2017, open to all states, international organisations,

and civil society, to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. Unfortunately the NPT nuclear weapon states were not present.

12. However, the South African decision to renounce and dismantle its nuclear arsenal serves as a reminder that anything is possible. This spirit of hope and optimism ushered in by South Africa's historic nuclear disarmament should serve to inspire further progress in the nuclear non-proliferation regime. This is particularly relevant given the current obstacles and discord in the nuclear non-proliferation regime caused by frustrations and discontent due to unfulfilled promises dating back to 1995. Bearing in mind that South Africa was the only NAM country that supported the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, the frustration of unmet promises may lead some states to assess that the NPT review process is no longer satisfying their security demands for progress towards disarmament. South Africa was instrumental in the indefinite extension of the NPT and it, and several other NPT non-nuclear-weapons states (NNWS) remain frustrated at the lack of fulfilment on agreed promises.
13. It is our hope that the South African case will go some way to achieving further steps needed to rid the world of nuclear weapons and prevent others from seeking them and how those like Kazakhstan and South Africa who gave up these weapons now play global leadership role in disarmament and no-proliferation matters.
14. Thank you.