

**SYMPOSIUM ON STRENGTHENING THE
NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION TREATY**
Christiansborg Palace, Copenhagen
November 17, 2008

The background of the symposium is as follows: Since light water reactors use low enriched uranium (LEU) as fuel, it follows that states using such reactors must either be able to purchase LEU on the world market or else possess enrichment facilities. But if they possess enrichment facilities, for example high-speed centrifuges, these can be used to produce weapon-usable highly-enriched uranium, and it becomes impossible to distinguish between civil and military nuclear programs. IAEA Director General Mohamed El-Baradei has called the spread of enrichment and reprocessing facilities the “Achilles heel” of the nonproliferation regime. He has proposed that the entire nuclear fuel cycle, including the production of LEU fuel rods, and the reprocessing of spent rods, be internationalized, i.e., all production and reprocessing of fuel rods should take place under the strict control of the IAEA.¹ We hope that the symposium will discuss the steps needed to bring about this internationalization.

Other threats to the nonproliferation regime come from noncompliance with Article VI, from “nuclear sharing”, and from the US nuclear deal with India. The symposium will also discuss NATO nuclear policy, the Missile Shield and its role in increasing international tensions, as well as the situations in Iran, Pakistan and North Korea.

The vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world

In a recent speech (19 March, 2008), Prime Minister Gordon Brown of Britain said: “I can tell the House that Britain will be on the forefront of diplomatic action on nuclear weapons control and reduction, offering a new bargain to non-nuclear powers. On the one hand, we will help them, and we have proposed the creation of a new international system to help non-nuclear states acquire the new sources of energy that they need ... through a global enrichment bond... and we are today inviting interested countries to an international conference on these themes later this year. But in return, we will

¹The internationalization of reprocessing is necessary because spent fuel rods contain plutonium, which can be used in nuclear weapons.

seek tougher controls aimed at reducing weapons and preventing proliferation. First, ending the stalemates on the Fissile Materials Cut-Off Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Second, achieving after 2010 a more robust implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, with aim of accelerating disarmament among possessor states, preventing proliferation and ultimately freeing the world from nuclear weapons.”

Last year, former US Defense Secretary William Perry, Senator Sam Nunn, and two former Secretaries of State, George Schultz and Henry Kissinger, expressed the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world in two widely-read articles in the Wall Street Journal. The fact that these former “Cold Warriors” now strongly advocate the complete abolition of nuclear weapons is an expression of the urgency of the task. Part of this urgency comes from the threat of nuclear terrorism, and part from the danger of accidental nuclear war. There is also a danger that nuclear weapons may be intentionally used, for example in a conflict between India and Pakistan or between the US and Iran. Proliferation will increase these dangers, and as long as any country has nuclear weapons, other countries will want them.

The overwhelming majority of ordinary citizens throughout the world strongly favor complete abolition of nuclear weapons. This is reflected by many votes taken in the United Nations General Assembly. For example, in October 2006, the First Committee voted 169 to 3 in favor of Japan’s resolution to abolish nuclear weapons. 113 countries have signed treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, and the entire Southern Hemisphere is out of bounds for these weapons. A public opinion pole conducted by the Simons Foundation showed that in six industrialized countries, the following percentages of the people support abolition of nuclear weapons: Britain, 84.5%; France, 86.6%; Italy, 94.6%; Germany, 95.4%; USA, 73.5%; Israel, 78.0%. If countries in the developing world had been included in the poll, the percentage of people favoring abolition would undoubtedly have been even higher. Thus the continuation of a system of international security based on a balance of nuclear terror violates democratic principles.

According to a 1996 decision of the International Court of Justice, “The threat and use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law..”. The Court added unanimously that “there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith *and bring to a conclusion* negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict international control”. We hope that this symposium will contribute to making the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free-world a reality.