

## **News on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Front – The ICNND Report and other matters**

**Bill Frilay**

2009 was a year of hope for nuclear disarmament. After many fruitless years there seems to be a will by the key players – especially the Obama administration - to take real action. But there is a long way to go, and there are many problems. As Copenhagen and Doha have demonstrated, multilateral agreements are immensely difficult.

Nuclear disarmament was in the news in December for a number of reasons.

The International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND) Report was released by the Australian and Japanese PMs on 15 December. This is the international forum set up by the two governments and co-chaired by Gareth Evans and Yoriko Kawaguchi.



Professor The Hon. Gareth Evans, AO QC (Co-Chair International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament), The Hon. Kevin Rudd MP (Prime Minister of Australia), HE Dr Yukio Hatoyama (Prime Minister of Japan and President of the Democratic Party of Japan), Ms Yoriko Kawaguchi (Co-Chair International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament).

What did the report say? The Report contains a raft of policy proposals – short, medium and long term – including

- At least 90% global reduction in nuclear arms by 2025
- All to commit to “no addition” and “no first use”
- All should sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)
- No further nuclear testing
- A moratorium on the manufacture of fissile material
- All states agreeing to a new 20-point statement within the Non-Proliferation Treaty which is to be updated in 2010

- International cooperation on nuclear energy infrastructure to improve safeguards, security and safety
- Multilateralising the nuclear fuel cycle in order to prevent nuclear materials being diverted for non-peaceful purposes
- Commencing work on a new, model, Nuclear Weapons Convention
- Early agreement on a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the US and Russia.

Even just summarising the policy initiatives reflects the many issues involved.

Reaction to the Report was less than warm from two sources in quite different respects.

ICAN Australia (ICAN - The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) , while welcoming many aspects of the report, criticises the objective of a time line of still having 10% of today's nuclear weapons by 2025. Their view is that we should have a zero target. They also see a contradiction in advocating nuclear power for peaceful purposes without the development of proper nuclear fuel cycle safeguards.

Coming from a different direction, but also critical, was Greg Sheridan, Foreign Editor for *The Australian* (17 December 2009). Sheridan believes the report is unrealistic in many of its conclusions because there is likely to be little traction for the initiatives in Moscow, Tehran, Beijing and Islamabad for example. He argues that if the West were to disarm while these others did not would make the world a more dangerous place. He concludes the report does nothing for nuclear disarmament.

Well....not an overwhelming endorsement by these two sources!

The ICNND Report is extensive, reflecting the sheer breadth of the issue. From my reading I do not have many problems with it, except in respect of how it will feed into the program of NPT discussions scheduled for 2010. Will it simply be another means of keeping the momentum going on this important issue.

Another event in December occurring at Copenhagen was the side-meeting between Presidents Obama and Medvedev where they discussed accelerated reduction in their respective nuclear arms weaponry (known as START). The outcome of these talks is not yet known. But the fact that they are doing this, and that they seem to have developed a relationship, is encouraging.

Early this year the US will be hosting the Global Summit on Nuclear Security. This is an initiative Obama announced in his Prague nuclear speech on 5 April 2009. The purpose of this, it seems, is to "come together to turn efforts such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism into durable international institutions".

Then in May 2010 there will be the 5-yearly UN Review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

There is much happening in this area. It may not be perfect. And it will be hard. But, compared with the last few years of inactivity, 2009 was a major improvement.