

EDITOR'S NOTE

Since the unlimited extension of the NPT in 1995, the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes have been confronted by numerous challenges. Concerns about non-compliance, the tests in South Asia, political roadblocks in both the United States Senate and the Russian Duma all mean that the NPT Review Conference to be held in May will be set in very different circumstances than the 1995 Review.

For this issue of *Disarmament Forum* we examine questions related to the future of the NPT — how did we get to this precarious situation, is further nuclear disarmament likely, could the NPT collapse — as well as suggesting some constructive approaches to the 2000 Review Conference. We hope that these articles provoke thought and reflection as the Conference approaches.

Issue 2, 2000 of *Disarmament Forum* will take a closer look at many of the recent national and international initiatives to control small arms. It has become more broadly accepted that the global proliferation and illicit use of small arms is a central issue in the evolution of human security. The multiple dimensions of the problem range beyond the confines of arms control and disarmament in the traditional state-to-state sense. They are illustrated by the variety of initiatives undertaken in the last few years, ranging from the local and national levels to regional, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations; and from the disarmament of former combatants and related developmental activities to the fight against transnational organized crime. This issue of *Disarmament Forum* will provide an overview of where such activities stand and what are the prospects for controlling small arms. It will discuss what approaches are needed and how to operationalize them, for example in the context of the international conference scheduled for 2001.

UNIDIR, in cooperation with Monterey Institute of International Studies and Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, has launched a research project on the urgent issue of tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs). There are growing concerns over the deployment and possible future development of TNWs. Outside the scope of existing formal nuclear arms control agreements, TNWs have so far only been addressed by informal arrangements and unilateral commitments, notably by the United States and the Russian Federation. There are no current initiatives seeking to fill this gap. On the contrary, there has been a revival of interest in TNWs. Left unaddressed, TNWs could become a serious stumbling block on the — already fraught — path to nuclear arms control and disarmament.

The project will address such topics as the definition of TNWs, numbers, the roles of TNWs in various military and political doctrines, and future measures to address the TNW problem. The project will be carried out over a period of nine months at UNIDIR. The Institute will commission papers from experts and coordinate the research and related research meetings. The main findings of the study would be ready for discussion prior to the NPT Review Conference in May. The project will

result in the publication of a Research Report in the UNIDIR series and a “UNIDIR Brief” setting out the main findings of the study in a succinct form for broad distribution.

The time has come to say goodbye to Susan Wright, a visiting researcher we have hosted for the past year and a half at the Institute. With the end of her project, Forming a North-South Alliance to Address Current Problems of Biological Warfare and Disarmament, Susan has returned to the University of Michigan where she is a professor of the history of sciences. It is always a pleasure to welcome visiting researchers to the Institute and we look forward to further expanding this sort of fruitful collaboration.

In the last issue of *Disarmament Forum*, an error was introduced into the text of Steffen Kongstad. On page 58 in the first paragraph of the section entitled “Transformation” the third sentence should begin “In order for this unambiguous and strong convention ...”. We apologise for any confusion this has caused.

On a final note, we are working to increase the transparency of our activities and finances. From 1999 forward, we will be producing an annual report, detailing the various projects, accomplishments and finances of the previous year, and which will be available on our website. The 1997–1998 biennium report is now available. The report for 1999 will be online in the coming weeks.

Kerstin Hoffman