

## Iran Defends the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

Written by

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Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi's address to the Seventh Review Conference of the Treaty on Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons was a diplomatic masterpiece. It stood in sharp contrast to the bullying and hectoring by the U.S. delegation about the Treaty's supposed "loopholes".

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Kharrazi's theme was the strengthening of the three central goals stated in the Treaty: (a) nonproliferation, (b) peaceful use of nuclear energy, and (c) disarmament.

Excerpts on nuclear disarmament:

"Despite the difficulties that the nonproliferation regime has historically faced, we can generally assess that the NPT has been successful in containing the number of nuclear-weapon states.

"On the other hand, the treaty has not been successful in attaining the objective of nuclear disarmament as it has been called for in its Article VI.

"Following the major efforts by states parties to strengthen the treaty, the 2000 NPT Review Conference welcomed enthusiastically 'the unequivocal undertakings by the nuclear-weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States Parties are committed under Article VI.'

"Therefore, we propose that the Conference would establish an ad hoc committee to work on a draft legally binding instrument, on providing security assurances by the five nuclear-weapon states to non-nuclear-weapon states parties to the treaty, and to submit the draft of the legal instrument to the next review conference for its consideration and adoption."

Excerpts on the peaceful use of nuclear energy:

"Mr. President, the 'inalienable right' of the states to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes emanates from the universally accepted proposition that scientific and technological achievements are the common heritage of mankind.

"The promotion of the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes has been, therefore, one of the main pillars of the NPT and the main statutory objective of the IAEA.

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"It is unacceptable that 'some' intend to limit the access to peaceful nuclear technology to an exclusive club of technologically advanced states under the pretext of 'nonproliferation.' This attitude is in clear violation of the letter and spirit of the treaty and destroys the fundamental balance which exists between the rights and obligations in the treaty.

"The treaty itself has clearly rejected this attempt in its Article IV by emphasizing that 'nothing in the treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all parties to the treaty to develop, research, produce, and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination.'

"Let me make it absolutely clear that arbitrary and self-serving criteria and thresholds regarding proliferation-proof and proliferation-prone technologies and countries can and will only undermine the treaty.

"Iran, for its part, is determined to pursue all legal areas of nuclear technology, including enrichment, exclusively for peaceful purposes and has been eager to offer assurances and guarantees that they remain permanently peaceful."

Excerpts on nonproliferation:

"The IAEA full-scope safeguard system provides the main foundation and basis for preventing the diversion of peaceful nuclear technology to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

"The IAEA has been recognized by the previous NPT Conferences as 'the competent authority to verify and assure compliance with the safeguards agreements' and to consider and investigate concerns regarding noncompliance.

"Nonproliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use are the pillars of the treaty.

"The international community has lent this responsibility to each of us to preserve the integrity of the Treaty and promote its implementation.

"This would be achieved if we take appropriate decisions on:

1. Concrete steps toward ensuring universality of the NPT;
2. Realization of the commitment by nuclear weapons states not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states parties to the treaty through concluding a legally binding instrument;
3. Ensure and promote the basic rights of states parties to unhindered access to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes without discrimination;
4. Reconfirm the undertakings by nuclear weapon states to implement 13 practical steps

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toward nuclear disarmament.

"Today, the credibility of the NPT is at stake. The treaty faces new challenges which we need to effectively address. However, the fact [is] this treaty ? with whatever shortcomings it may have and the deficiencies in its implementation process ? provides the only internationally viable foundation for curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and attaining the goal of nuclear disarmament.

"I sincerely hope that the deliberations of this conference could assist us to consolidate the foundations of this treaty in the circumstances that global security, more than ever, requires wise and brave decisions to salvage the credibility of the treaty."