

### III. Challenges

The factors determining whether NATO's process becomes an asset or a hindrance to global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts include:

- Some governments of NATO states are reluctant to re-open basic questions of nuclear policy.
- There is a continued belief within NATO in the applicability of the 1999 Strategic Concept.
- NATO's new members are unwilling to tamper with the Alliance's nuclear umbrella.
- Some NATO governments who station nuclear weapons on their territory are reluctant to start a public debate about these weapons and fear de-coupling could actually have a negative impact on their security.
- Canada lacks support from its likely allies (i.e., Netherlands, Norway) and faces relative isolation in pushing nuclear disarmament issues (while some governments may agree with the Canadian initiative in principle, they show only passive/non-demonstrable support).
- There has been a lack of a comprehensive and integrated approach in NATO's policies. Defence issues have been separated from disarmament, for instance. This points to the fact that since it is virtually impossible to address non-proliferation without taking up doctrine, the current review should logically become a strategy review.
- NATO's agenda includes other pressing issues, such as, for example: the U.S.-led Defence Capabilities Initiative, Balkan management, relationship with the European Union (i.e., Common Foreign and Security Policy), NATO enlargement, and the relationship with Russia.
- The position of the United States government on nuclear weapons has a great deal of impact on NATO's policy. Some argued that it is doubtful the nuclear weapons doctrine would be so fundamental to NATO's identity (unity) without the strong stand of the United States. Over the last eight years Washington has discouraged discussion of the nuclear question. Furthermore, there is a widespread uncertainty over the possible effects of the U.S. National Missile Defence (NMD) on the global arms control architecture, especially the START process. The upcoming elections also contribute to uncertainty about moving on NATO's nuclear policy.
- The position of the Russian government on nuclear weapons makes multilateral nuclear disarmament (elimination) very difficult. Russia perceives having nuclear weapons as the last vestige of its former superpower status. There are serious concerns over the state, safety and location of the Russian sub-strategic arsenal.
- There is proliferation in North Korea, the Middle East, and South Asia.
- Vested interests to keep money, research, development and related industries are a factor.
- There is a wide-spread public apathy about nuclear issues. In the U.S. this apathy is related to the perception that there are more conflicts around the world than before,