

The experience of the previous two Review Conferences provides a guide. Although the First Review Conference in 1975 concluded successfully, it proved to be a highly political exercise, particularly in the areas of nuclear disarmament and security issues. The Neutral and Non-Aligned (NNA) countries, insisting that they had lived up to their obligations under the Treaty, accused the nuclear powers, particularly the superpowers, of not fulfilling either their commitments under Article VI, which deals with the nuclear arms race, or Article IV, which calls for the sharing of nuclear equipment, materials and technology for peaceful uses.

The debate in the closing days and hours of the Conference was marked by acrimony, and it was only at the last moment that the Conference succeeded in adopting by consensus a final document. Nevertheless, this Final Declaration of the Conference reflected the frustration felt by many states, particularly the NNA countries, over the lack of implementation of the basic bargains of the Treaty during the previous five years.

The concerns of the NNA remained outstanding at the time of the Second Review Conference in 1980. However, the atmosphere and disarmament climate were relatively hopeful. The SALT II treaty had been recently signed and promising trilateral (UK, USA, USSR) negotiations for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty were still officially taking place.

Despite marathon sessions of informal negotiations, the Conference ended without a consensus final document because of lack of agreement on issues relating to nuclear disarmament, particularly on a Comprehensive Test Ban. Although provisional agreement had been reached in Committee II on language dealing with non-proliferation and nuclear cooperation, there was no agreement on a final document. This was a major setback.

A rapid review of the international situation during the past five years regrettably shows a number of opportunities lost. The trilateral talks on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty have ceased; the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to agree to a practical mandate for a nuclear test ban ad hoc committee. The United Nations second Special Session on Disarmament was not able to produce a consensus final document. The Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces negotiations were broken off and the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks were suspended. The Stockholm Conference is well into its second year with few signs that East and West are any closer in their approach to confidence-building measures. The Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Talks in Vienna are still not able to resolve basic issues after more than eleven years of negotiations.