Which are the most urgent, concrete steps on the way to Global Zero? ¹

By Sverre Lodgaard

U.S. leadership is a must. Obama has revived the vision of a nuclear weapon-free world, and Security Council Resolution 1887 (2009) recommits the five permanent members (P-5) to that objective. All governments and non-governmental organizations in a position to do so should weigh in on the American debate and urge US support for important disarmament goalposts.

Under the heading of “anti-nuclear nuclearism,” Darwin Bond-Graham and Will Parish have raised some serious concerns about the direction of US policy. They expect that the Obama administration will rely on overwhelming US power, nuclear weapons included, while making rhetorical and substantial commitments to disarmament, however vaguely defined. The President has declared higher aims for nuclear disarmament, but in the face of domestic and international opposition he may have to strike a national compromise of this kind. Like the disarmament agreements by the end of the Cold War, which were not followed by more agreements, but by revived national interests in nuclear arms, stagnation may be the beginning of reversal.

If the United States and Russia can agree on radical overall reductions of their nuclear forces, more is likely to follow. If not, the call for elimination may come to naught.

First of all, Russian threat perceptions have to be alleviated. Ten years ago, Russia concluded that if NATO could turn on Serbia in violation of international law, it might do the same closer to Russia’s borders. In response, the role of nuclear weapons was upgraded as a stopgap measure while waiting for the conventional forces to regain strength. However, the United States accounts for 45 percent of world military expenditures and Russia for three percent, so to wait for a mutually acceptable conventional balance seems unrealistic. Political reassurances are needed, raising questions about NATO’s military posture, the position of Georgia and the Ukraine in European politics and, generally, about the European security and cooperation architecture. Leading European states should seize the initiative and invite Russia for open-ended discussions about the security architecture and how best to alleviate threat perceptions.

It is inconceivable that the United States would agree to, say, no more than 1,000 operative strategic nuclear weapons while Russia keeps non-strategic weapons in the thousands. Russia has always dragged its feet when this question was raised, but somehow they have to be included in future negotiations. This is not to say that the remaining US weapons in Europe should be part of the pool to be negotiated: these weapons no longer serve any function, so they are rather a matter of NATO housekeeping. Other issues of contention are the US missile defense program and the emerging US conventional Prompt Global Strike capabilities. Russia would certainly like to bring both of them into the next round of negotiations. The deep cut agenda is therefore a long one that needs immediate and energetic attention.

The treaties prohibiting chemical and biological weapons were preceded by the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which prohibited the use of these weapons. First, the use of the weapons was delegitimized and outlawed, and then the weapons themselves were banned.

In effect, the Geneva Protocol was a no-first-use agreement, and an agreement banning the use of nuclear weapons would also allow for nuclear retaliation. Such doctrines—adopted unilaterally or agreed bi- or multilaterally with a view to codification in an international convention—would go a long way to devalue nuclear arms and send an important message to decision-makers of

¹ Background notes for a panel discussion of the subject, Bonn/BICC 16 September 2010
other countries that have not closed the nuclear weapons option. Moreover, no-first-use doctrines have an intriguing in-built disarmament logic: nobody would need them if nobody had them.

The tightening of doctrines to devalue the weapons must go hand in hand with US–Russian hardware reductions. The latter is necessary to ensure the credibility of the former.

The United States, Russia and China are the states that most affect the security dynamics in regions of proliferation concern, i.e., in north-east Asia, South Asia and the Middle East. As veto-wielding members of the UN Security Council, they also determine whether confidence will be built in the enforcement of disarmament commitments. If they cannot stabilize their strategic relationships and put the nuclear order on the path of disarmament, the international non-proliferation regime will be on shaky grounds.

While Western leverage is diminishing, the self-confidence and staying power of the emerging powers are growing. To get them on board, there has to be a significant element of equity both in the disarmament strategy and in single steps, and the sooner they are drawn into strategic dialogues on how to proceed, the better. A strategy of co-option—starting with the United States and its allies, continuing with Non-Nuclear Weapon States which have always made a case for abolition, and successively building pressure on the recalcitrant ones—would be to ask for trouble.

Sverre Lodgaard is currently a Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and chairs BICC’s International Advisory Board.

In September 2010, he published the book Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation: Toward a Nuclear Weapon Free World? (Routledge, UK).

As a Senior Researcher in political science with a broad research and academic teaching background, Elke has complemented BICC’s team since November 2010. She brings in research experience from Africa reaching from livelihood systems, migration and democratization to armed conflict.

Since 2005, she has been managing a cooperative research project with Sudanese, Ethiopian and Kenyan partners and scholarship holders on “Governance and Social Action in Sudan after the Peace Agreement of 9 January 2005”, funded by the Volkswagen Foundation. After the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan (James Currey, 2010) is the most recent publication edited by Elke.

Elke studied Political Science, German Literature and Communication Science in Munster and Hamburg where she was awarded her degree in Political Science in 1985. She started her research career with a study on the socio-economic impact of new sugar schemes in Sudan as early as 1983. Field research on the repercussions of male rural outmigration on women staying behind in Darfur followed in 1988. From 1993 to 2010 she was a lecturer at the University of Bremen and Bremen University for Applied Sciences. After her PhD in Social and Economic Science in 1995, she supervised international students in the Master course “Development Policy with Focus on NGOs” as an Academic Assistant. Between 1997 and 2005, Elke conducted a long-term study on social and political change in rural Tanzania after introduction of the multi-party system. She was awarded her Post-Doc State Degree (Habilitiation) in 2006.

At BICC, Elke works as academic advisor and plans to conduct comparative research in the fields of resource conflicts, conflict transformation and human security.

In her free time, she likes to meet friends, music, dancing, reading, movies, and looks forward to exploring Bonn and its surroundings, both walking and cycling.

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Commercial provision of security in development countries

asked by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) BICC investigates the effects for development cooperation when security is not a ‘public good’ but a commodity, which is produced and can be purchased according to market economy conditions. BICC experts have conducted a first case study in Timor-Leste.

The commercial security industry is the single largest business sector in Timor-Leste in terms of employment. All together, about 6,500 local men work for the three main security firms—Maubere, the Asia Pacific Assurance Company (APAC) and Gardamor. Private security personnel mainly provide unarmed guarding and static perimeter protection to residencies, offices and warehouses. Clients of commercial security are almost exclusively foreign, including the United Nations (UN) mission, international development organizations and large businesses, particularly in the petroleum industry. Except for the East Timorese government, locals do not hire services from security firms. Despite ongoing political and social tensions in society, Timor-Leste appears a relatively safe place from violent crime. The highly visible presence of private security guards throughout the streets of its capital Dili may go some way towards enhancing overall public safety. Relations between security firms and public policing bodies are generally good.

To the minds of many East Timorese people, the most significant impact of commercial security relates to questions of socio-economic development. The commercial security industry does indeed provide much-needed jobs: up to one-fourth of the local population of Dili may be directly benefiting from wage payments to private security guards.

The commercial security industry can also be regarded as an obstacle to development: it clearly illustrates the dependence of the East Timorese economy on the presence of internationals. Should this presence decline at any point in the future, this would generate serious repercussions for, in particular, socio-economic development. What is more, skills acquired as security guard are only rarely (if at all) transferable to other careers.

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Migration—Integration—Development

The study carried out in the framework of the project “Migration—Integration—Development: African migrant organizations in North Rhine-Westphalia” (BICC brief 44) is about organizations of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). Its aim is to, on the one hand, contribute to a better understanding of the forms and purposes of African migrant organization. On the other, it asks about its potentials in terms of development and integration processes and the preconditions needed to implement this.

African Migrants in Germany and North Rhine-Westphalia are a comparatively small and very heterogeneous group. The main reasons for migrating from Africa to Germany are seeking asylum and education as well as family reunification with the latter form of migration generally geared towards long-term migration. Migration for employment purposes is becoming increasingly important, especially for origin countries from Sub-Saharan Africa. What concerns the integration into society of these migrants, it must be pointed out that there is a limited informative value of statistical averages and partially incomplete data.

BICC brief 44 investigates mainly the following questions: What are the preconditions for civil society engagement of African migrants with respect to their ability and preparedness to engage themselves? How can state and civil society actors in North Rhine-Westphalia support the potential of African migrant organizations to contribute to development- and integration processes?

The goal of the study is to show lines of action for an improved cooperation between state- and civil society institutions in NRW on the one hand and African migrant organizations on the other and to give guidelines for how to shape the cooperation with these organizations in the fields of development and integration.

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New BICC Publications

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On 10 November, in cooperation with the Fatal Transactions campaign and the Zimbabwe Europe Network (ZEN), BICC invited to an expert talk on “Conflict diamonds from Africa—What is the reaction of the Kimberley Process to human rights violations?”. Participants were Ian Smillie, Diamond Development Initiative, Kristian Lempa, GTZ Task Manager, Natural Resource Governance, Shamiso Mtisi, Zimbabwe Environment Law Association (ZELA) and Contact person for civil society; Kimberley Process in Zimbabwe. Moderator was Lena Guesnet, Researcher BICC.

A keynote address by Ian Smillie, Diamond Development Initiative, had ‘set the scene’ for discussions. Smillie is co-author of the leading analysis on conflict diamonds and human rights The Heart of the Matter and has been member of the UN Security Council Expert Panel on the involvement of diamond trade in the civil war in Sierra Leone. His latest book Blood on the Stone takes a critical look at the diamond trade worldwide and the diamond certification scheme Kimberley Process.

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On 2 November, BICC invited for a presentation on “Security Challenges in Southern Sudan - The Nexus between Security Sector Reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DD&R)” by William Deng Deng, Chair of the South Sudan DDR Commission (SSDRC). BICC has been supporting the SSDRC for a number of years in the framework of a training project on behalf of the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau and the German Foreign Office.

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Peter Croll and Andrea Warnecke participated in the concluding conference of the projects DIASPEACE (Diasporas and Peace. Patterns, Trends and Potential of Long-distance Diaspora Involvement in Conflict settings) and Infocon (International Civil Society Forum on Conflicts), which took place on 16 und 17 December 2010 in Brussels. Peter Croll was a discussant on the Panel “Research on Diasporas – How can it inform policymakers and civil society actors?”.

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http://www.infocon-project.org/output/brussels-conference

Dr. Michael Ashkenazi presented a paper entitled “Research under violence in post-conflict societies” at the World Universities Congress, Canakkale Onsekiz Mars Universit, Turkey, which he attended from 19 to 26 October. He also chaired the session on “Universities and Regional Security” at the congress. During the congress, ideas for collaborative projects with BICC were discussed with colleagues from Turkey, India, Russia, and Georgia.

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BICC staff wishes you all a Happy New Year