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# European and P5 perspectives on the 2026 NPT Review Conference

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# European perspectives on the Non-Proliferation Treaty: Italy

*Federica Dall'Arche*

**The EU will need to move beyond managing internal differences and instead actively consolidate a strategically coherent set of positions.**

Italy has long considered the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and an integral pillar of its national security and foreign policy. As a non-nuclear-weapon state and a participant in NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements, the country remains committed to non-proliferation obligations under the Treaty and has repeatedly advocated for the long-term objective of a world free of nuclear weapons, pursuable through a realistic, pragmatic, and responsible approach grounded in multilateral cooperation.

On several occasions, Italy has acknowledged that the NPT operates in an increasingly strained environment, characterised by a deterioration of the international security landscape, heightened nuclear risks, the erosion of arms control agreements, and growing mistrust among States Parties. Nonetheless, the country has consistently argued that these challenges reinforce, rather than undermine, the Treaty's relevance. In Rome's view, the NPT remains irreplaceable both as a legal framework and as a political and diplomatic platform for dialogue, transparency, and confidence-building, and there is no viable alternative to the NPT for preventing proliferation, reducing nuclear risks, and sustaining international stability.

Italy's commitment to supporting and reinforcing the NPT is not only diplomatic. In practical terms, Italy offers tangible support to the broader non-proliferation architecture through voluntary contributions to key international organisations that strengthen non-proliferation, verification, and nuclear risk reduction, and underpin the NPT framework. For example, Italy is among the main donors to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Fund and Nuclear Security Fund, supporting capacity-building initiatives and expert training, particularly for developing countries. Additionally, Italy contributes to the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, including through support for auxiliary seismic stations and the Technical Expert Support Programme, which enhances national expertise in verification technologies and global nuclear monitoring.

## **The issue of nuclear sharing arrangements within the NPT framework**

The issue of nuclear sharing has become increasingly divisive within the NPT framework. As one of the countries under these arrangements, Italy has articulated a clear position on the matter. Italy maintains that such arrangements are not only consistent with the spirit of the Treaty but have also contributed to one of its core objectives: non-proliferation. According to Rome, nuclear sharing has so far effectively reduced incentives for States under these arrangements to develop independent nuclear capabilities and, as a result, in the fifty-five years since the NPT entered into force, no NATO member state has acquired its own nuclear arsenal.

Italy further argues that the prominence of the nuclear sharing debate within the NPT intensified following Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014, not as a consequence of new legal or normative developments, but rather as part of a broader

political strategy aimed at polarising the internal NPT debate. From this perspective, the emphasis placed on nuclear sharing has contributed to creating divisions and exacerbating tensions among States Parties, particularly within the European Union, with the intention, on the one hand, of diverting attention from blatant violations of international law and, on the other, of undermining European unity and the non-proliferation regime as a whole. As a result, rather than advancing the cause of disarmament, a continued focus on this issue risks exacerbating divisions among Member States (above all within the EU) and undermining meaningful, constructive progress.

### **Italy's main priorities for the 2026 NPT Review Conference**

Italy's stated objective for the 2026 NPT Review Conference is first and foremost to safeguard the Treaty's unity, credibility, and authority by achieving an outcome that strengthens the review process and keeps all States Parties meaningfully engaged. Substantively, Italy has consistently advocated for the complete, comprehensive, and balanced implementation of the Treaty's three pillars (non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy), explicitly recalling the 2010 Action Plan as the shared and pragmatic basis for progress. This reflects Italy's long-standing preference for incremental advances rooted in agreed commitments rather than approaches it perceives as normatively divisive.

Against the backdrop of heightened nuclear risks, Italy has placed particular emphasis on nuclear risk reduction, transparency, and confidence-building measures as necessary steps to rebuild trust among States Parties and reduce the likelihood of miscalculation. On disarmament, Italy often reiterates its support for the long-term objective of a world without nuclear weapons. It recalls the shared understanding among nuclear-weapon states that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought."

At the same time, Italy's priorities reflect a security- and alliance-aware approach, in which progress on disarmament should be verifiable, pragmatic, and firmly anchored in the NPT framework, balancing geopolitical realities with the pursuit of reduced nuclear dangers through cooperative multilateralism.

### **Cooperation within the NPT Framework and the role of the European Union**

Italy's national policies in disarmament, non-proliferation, and deterrence are primarily designed to ensure national security, and are formulated and implemented within the framework of the common policies and shared strategic assessments collectively agreed within the NATO Alliance. They are (so far) firmly embedded in the transatlantic framework, including participation in nuclear sharing arrangements. This security- and alliance-aware posture informs Italy's emphasis on stability and on verifiable, step-by-step progress on disarmament within the NPT framework.

At the same time, the European Union plays a central role as a key reference point in shaping Italy's approach in these domains.

Coordination with other EU States is constant and substantive rather than merely rhetorical. It is essential to formulate common lines, political priorities, and shared messaging in preparation for multilateral processes.

Through active engagement in EU coordination mechanisms, Italy aligns its positions closely with agreed EU common positions and seeks coherence across national statements, working papers, and negotiating priorities. EU consultations provide a platform for harmonising views on the implementation of the NPT's three pillars, accommodating the diverse security perspectives of Member States, and enhancing the Union's collective weight and visibility within the NPT framework.

In the run-up to the 2026 Review Conference, the EU faces an ambitious task. While continuing to bridge divisions between deterrence-reliant members and more disarmament-oriented states, the EU will need to move beyond managing internal differences and instead actively consolidate a strategically coherent set of positions. Strengthening internal unity and reducing visible fragmentation is essential for the EU to act and be perceived as a credible and effective bloc within the NPT framework. Presenting a more monolithic posture is paramount in significantly enhancing the EU's diplomatic leverage and resilience, helping to prevent its marginalisation in an increasingly contested international environment in which external actors have strong incentives to exploit internal divisions and weaken the EU's collective influence.

### **The future of the NPT and Italy's role**

The geopolitical landscape as we know it is changing rapidly. Core assumptions underpinning security in Europe and in other regions (most notably: reliance on the United States) can no longer be taken for granted and are increasingly under strain. Growing uncertainty about the future role of the United States, driven by shifting strategic priorities, has given renewed urgency to debates on the need for Europe and other regions to assume greater responsibility for their own defence. Inevitably, these dynamics will have significant implications for the future of the NPT, shaping deterrence postures, threat perceptions, and the political conditions for cooperation within the Treaty framework.

In this context, the evolution of the NPT after 2026 will largely depend on rebuilding trust among States Parties and in the review process itself. Rather than focusing on ambitious normative breakthroughs, priority should be given to preserving the Treaty's role as a stabilising framework that provides channels for dialogue, enables the management of strategic risks, and remains capable of adapting to ongoing strategic change.

As the Treaty's credibility increasingly hinges on its ability to deliver tangible results, demonstrating delivery across its three pillars is key. Progress on disarmament and non-proliferation remains severely constrained, making it all the more important to focus on areas where stabilising outcomes are still achievable. Nuclear risk reduction and measures aimed at preventing miscalculation stand out as the most urgent – and likely the only – politically feasible avenues for cooperation.

By advocating for, supporting, and prioritising concrete risk reduction measures (including transparency, confidence-building, and communication), Italy can play a particularly relevant role in sustaining the NPT's credibility in a period of heightened nuclear danger.

Italy is well-positioned to act as a bridge-builder, promoting pragmatic engagement on the issue across regional and political divides.

As a non-nuclear-weapon state participating in nuclear sharing arrangements and as a long-standing advocate of multilateralism, the country is well placed at the intersection of deterrence-based security frameworks and non-proliferation and disarmament commitments, allowing it to credibly advance and support measures that could reduce the risk of nuclear use. Within Europe, it can contribute to shaping a coherent approach that supports strategic responsibility while reaffirming commitment to the NPT's balanced implementation, ensuring that the Treaty remains a credible anchor for non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful nuclear cooperation in an increasingly uncertain world.

*5 February 2026*

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**By advocating for, supporting, and prioritising concrete risk reduction measures, Italy can play a particularly relevant role in sustaining the NPT's credibility in a period of heightened nuclear danger.**

# European perspectives on the Non-Proliferation Treaty: Ireland

*Ciarán Doyle*

**As a small, militarily neutral country, a functioning global multilateral system with the UN Charter at its heart, is one of Ireland's greatest security assets.**

Almost 70 years have passed since Irish Foreign Minister Frank Aiken introduced the first of the “Irish resolutions” at the UN’s First Committee. 10 years later, in 1968, those initial efforts would be consolidated as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with Ireland as its inaugural signatory.

Aiken was a freedom fighter and a revolutionary – he subsequently fought through a bitter and bloody civil war and helped to steer a fledgling Irish state to a nervous peace. He was a man who intimately knew the meaning of violence, and he understood the heavy price for Ireland’s independence.

He also fundamentally grasped the opportunity provided to his young state by the newfound freedom from empire, and the international role that a small state like Ireland, still enjoying its early decades of independence on the world stage, could now play in working to broker détente between superpowers in an emerging multilateral order.

The pursuit of nuclear non-proliferation, both for Ireland and for Aiken, was the pragmatic pursuit of peace – and one fundamentally driven by political vision and will.

Fifty-eight years since Ireland first signed the NPT, the remaining survivors of the only conflict that saw hundreds of thousands perish in nuclear explosions are now few. We are losing the memories of those, the Hibakusha, who still bear the brutal scars of the atomic bomb – who best understand the price of that peace in suffering that echoes through generations.

And while WWII and the legacy of Aiken and his time recede from us, we cannot afford to lose sight of the stakes – and the vision – that brought the NPT into being. That is especially important at this fragile and deeply uncertain moment for our world and its multilateral foundations. No matter what comes next, we need the NPT to endure with an integrity fit for this century.

Reflecting on the importance of the 2026 NPT Review Conference, it is clear to Ireland that the NPT has made an indispensable contribution to global peace and security for over half a century. We regularly repeat the mantra that it is the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, but it is more than that; it has been one of the few fundamentally stabilising forces, both during and after the Cold War, for global geopolitics writ large.

Since the NPT entered into force in 1970, four more states – India, Pakistan, Israel and the DPRK – have regrettably acquired nuclear weapons and tested them. Yet it remains only four, and it would surely be far more without the NPT’s normative power guarding against the normalisation of nuclear proliferation.

The outlook for this year’s Review Conference is inescapably challenging. Russia’s unlawful war of aggression against Ukraine has now endured longer than its involvement in WWII, while political instability in the Middle East maintains a

worrying nuclear dynamic, with one unsafeguarded nuclear-armed state and another in breach of IAEA safeguards, engaged in open warfare.

The taboo against threatening other states with nuclear weapons has been weakened on multiple continents, while the last remaining bilateral arms control agreement between the holders of the two largest nuclear arsenals has now expired.

Reflecting specifically on the disarmament commitments enshrined in the Treaty's Article VI, the end of history – and by extension, the elimination of nuclear weapons – did not happen in 1989. We now face a world menaced once more by novel nuclear weapon delivery vehicles, the wholesale modernisation of arsenals, alongside the rapid and opaque expansion of certain stockpiles.

On multiple fronts, our commitments to a nuclear-weapon-free world, which were laid down in the 1970s, are in rapid retreat in the 2020s. The elimination of nuclear weapons, to which all NPT States Parties have committed, looks further away than ever.

VI commitments and obligations on disarmament, so we can meaningfully compare those actions and engage each in dialogue.

Ireland is realistic about the prospects for agreement this year. We should not overburden the Review Conference with assumptions for wholesale transformation at a time of global rupture. States Parties, however, rightly demand a clear signal of intent – and we demand leadership, in particular from the nuclear-weapon states. As Frank Aiken showed in the 1950s, it takes a clear vision and a strategy from our political leaders – along with the tenacity to implement it – to forge an enduring regime.

This should come from states both small and large this year. The value of multilateralism is that all states can play a meaningful part. As a small, militarily neutral country, a functioning global multilateral system with the UN Charter at its heart, is one of Ireland's greatest security assets. It speaks to our values, and it speaks to our interests. Just as it did in the ashes of WWII, that for Ireland still means building trust, finding common ground, and negotiating compromises within a rules-based multilateral architecture. Rest assured, Ireland will spare no effort to continue this work at the NPT Review Conference this year.

The maintenance of the NPT and its longevity have not been achieved through political passivity. In previous instances of challenge and crisis, States Parties – and their leaders – have shown such ingenuity, flexibility, and adaptability to ensure the Treaty endures. That has included successfully finding common ground and, on three occasions, concluding agreements on a backwards-looking outcome document.

In other instances, Review Conferences have reached decisions to indefinitely extend the Treaty, the Action Plan of 2010, and, before that, the 13 practical steps, among other achievements. Consensus has therefore taken many creative forms to preserve the integrity of the Treaty over that time. For the endurance of the regime, it will have to do so again.

For many, including Ireland, a commitment to enhanced transparency and accountability from the nuclear-weapon states is within reach this year. The demands from States Parties are modest, but they are universal – that we can all see the reports of nuclear-weapon states’ efforts to implement their Article VI commitments and obligations on disarmament, so we can meaningfully compare those actions and engage each in dialogue.

*23 February 2026*

# European perspectives on the Non-Proliferation Treaty: Germany

*Carmen Wunderlich*

**Berlin stresses that deterrence, non-proliferation, and disarmament are mutually reinforcing rather than contradictory.**

Half a century after its accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1975, Germany continues to view the NPT as the cornerstone of the international nuclear order and a core element of national and European security.

Historically, Germany has pursued a balanced, reformist approach across the NPT's three pillars, emphasising entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), transparency, verification (including for nuclear-weapon states), and incremental disarmament to build mutual confidence and ensure irreversibility. For Berlin, the Treaty's relevance has, if anything, increased with the erosion of the broader arms control architecture and rising geopolitical instability following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. These developments, alongside renewed US isolationism and uncertainty about extended deterrence, have reinforced Germany's reliance on the NPT as a stabilising framework that constrains proliferation pressures. At the same time, Berlin acknowledges the NPT's deficits in effectiveness and credibility, especially the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and on regional non-proliferation crises. This dual perception, indispensable yet endangered, has shaped Germany's past but also current NPT diplomacy.

That said, Germany's current policy towards the NPT reflects not only a change in tone but also a gradual shift in priorities. The "Zeitenwende" has redirected attention towards pragmatic measures such as risk reduction and confidence-building through enhanced transparency and accountability, while multilateral disarmament seems to have lost political salience. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Germany has pursued a complementary approach that prioritises national and European security, emphasising deterrence alongside non-proliferation and arms control, but remains nominally committed to the long-term goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world and the NPT acquis, including its catalogue of action-items across all three pillars. This recalibration has muted earlier disarmament activism and made nuclear deterrence rhetoric more explicit, as reflected in the marked defence of the legality of nuclear sharing during the 2022 NPT RevCon.

## German objectives for the 2026 Review Conference

Heading into the 11th NPT Review Conference, Germany's declared objective is to preserve and revitalise the Treaty's credibility through a forward-looking agenda of practical, verifiable progress. Berlin presents itself as a mediator between nuclear-weapon states and disarmament-oriented actors, stressing that deterrence, non-proliferation, and disarmament are mutually reinforcing rather than contradictory. Priorities include strengthening non-proliferation, advancing risk reduction, and addressing both challenges and opportunities of new technologies, particularly for verification.

On non-proliferation, Germany continues to present a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear program, long a flagship project of its foreign policy, as its preferred approach and stresses strengthened safeguards and transparency as essential to upholding the NPT's relevance.

Yet, in light of recent developments in the Middle East, where Berlin has aligned itself politically with US- and Israeli-led military counterproliferation actions against Iran, this commitment appears increasingly ambivalent. Such tensions between professed multilateral non-proliferation goals and support for measures that arguably sit uneasily with NPT principles risk eroding Germany's credibility as a guardian of multilateralism and feed long-standing critiques by non-aligned members of Western double standards.

In this context, Germany's emphasis on risk reduction as a complement to disarmament appears increasingly shaped by a security-driven logic rather than a normative commitment to rolling back reliance on nuclear weapons. Berlin continues to advocate for feasible, even if modest steps: negative security assurances and upholding momentum on the CTBT and a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT), enhancing transparency and accountability through NWS reporting on Article VI.

It also advances nuclear disarmament verification through multilateral initiatives such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV), the UN Group of Governmental Experts, and Germany's recent EXPAND expert panel on developing practical verification methodologies.

Through the Stockholm Initiative, Germany addresses emerging technologies, exploring their verification implications alongside risks from cybersecurity and AI to nuclear command-and-control systems. Yet these "technical" solutions are framed largely within an order-preserving framework that appears to accept the nuclear status quo rather than asserting an active disarmament leadership role.

## **EU coordination and transatlantic strains**

Germany's NPT diplomacy unfolds within a dense web of multilateral alignments, above all the European Union. Historically, Germany has used the EU framework as a force multiplier for pragmatic non-proliferation, from drafting the 1995 campaign for indefinite extension to shaping the 2000 and 2010 EU common positions that fed directly into NPT outcomes. The EU Council Action for the 2026 NPT Review Conference echoes German priorities, while Berlin's diplomatic weight and technical expertise continue to lend substance to EU positions.

The 2026 Review Conference will deepen pressures on European coordination amid sharpened transatlantic frictions. A more transactional US foreign policy under Trump-II will likely translate into NPT positions prioritising arsenal modernisation and coercive non-proliferation over EU-backed multilateral arms control frameworks (further nuclear reductions, FMCT, CTBT), and rejecting even incremental disarmament measures (NWS reporting perceived as constraining US freedom of action).

It remains to be seen whether Germany could maintain its bridge-builder narrative if Washington continues its current

course and acts as a “spoiler” at the Review Conference. In any case, any visible rift between the US and Europe would undermine Western coherence under the NPT.

Concerns about the reliability of US extended deterrence are already straining NATO cohesion and could deepen intra-EU divisions. Macron’s recent proposal to deepen European nuclear deterrence cooperation, including closer collaboration with Germany, may provoke political controversy among disarmament-friendly EU members. France’s announcement that it intends to expand its nuclear arsenal and to cease disclosing its exact warhead numbers risks undermining both Germany’s traditional NPT-based emphasis on transparency and Berlin’s credibility as a proponent of accountability within the NPT framework. In this context, the 2026 Review Conference is likely to expose tensions between Germany’s alliance-centred security posture and its professed commitment to multilateral arms control, raising the question whether its “bridge-builder” image serves to reconcile or to obscure these competing priorities.

### **Prospects for the NPT after 2026 and Germany’s future role**

The NPT’s post-2026 trajectory will likely remain evolutionary rather than transformative. Given deepening strategic rivalries, progress will depend on incremental institutional adaptation - enhanced transparency, reporting, and procedural reform of the review process - coupled with renewed commitment to the Treaty’s core norms. Germany is well-positioned to help shape this agenda.

Looking ahead, Germany’s main challenge will be remaining a normative anchor in an increasingly transactional nuclear order. This requires defending multilateralism and international law against both geopolitical revisionism and alliance exceptionalism.

Upholding the NPT *acquis* offers a principled foundation, but it will carry little weight unless Berlin backs its rhetoric with concrete practice. Equally important is maintaining credibility through example and the readiness to name violations, including those by (allied) nuclear-weapon states.

Germany’s contribution to the NPT’s future will thus hinge not only on preserving the regime but on demonstrating that restraint, transparency, and cooperative security remain effective strategies in a harsh security environment. To do so, Berlin must confront the growing gap between its self-image as a defender of multilateralism and an NPT bridge-builder and its actual policy choices – whether in relation to military counterproliferation, such as in Iran or silence on possible nuclear-weapon-related activities by allies.

In such a context, Germany’s ability to sustain an integrative narrative around the NPT as a shared global public good that seeks to prevent nuclear war will be crucial. If the Treaty is to retain its legitimacy, it must be seen not only as a technical or security-management instrument, but also as a moral and political compact.

By aligning its practice more closely with its professed commitments, Berlin could help reaffirm the NPT's enduring relevance and prove that, even in an age of deterrence revival, the pursuit of arms control and disarmament must not be allowed to fade into nostalgia.

*11 March 2026*

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# European perspectives on the Non-Proliferation Treaty: European Union

*Stephan Klement*

**By bringing together States Parties with diverse perspectives on nuclear issues, the EU provides a valuable platform for developing global solutions.**

The European Union continues to regard the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the indispensable cornerstone of the global nuclear order, viewing its strategic importance through three interconnected lenses: non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Even in today's fractured geopolitical landscape – marked by Russia's suspension of the New START Treaty and lack of meaningful engagement on nuclear arms control, as well as the withdrawal of its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), North Korea's advancing nuclear programme, Iran's enrichment activities, and the expansion of China's arsenal – the EU sees the NPT as the primary bulwark against nuclear chaos, even as its efficacy faces unprecedented strain.

While the Treaty's historical successes – reducing nuclear arsenals from Cold War highs, limiting horizontal proliferation, and enabling civil nuclear cooperation, among others – remain undeniable, the EU acknowledges that its credibility hinges on addressing contemporary failures, particularly the erosion of disarmament commitments (Article VI) and the weaponisation of nuclear energy programmes under the guise of Article IV rights. The EU's approach is therefore continually adapted to counter these challenges, while preserving the NPT's legitimacy.

A key priority is nuclear risk reduction. The EU supports measures that promote transparency, confidence-building, and strategic stability, including dialogue and practical steps aimed at mitigating escalation risks even in the absence of new formal treaties.

At the same time, the EU emphasises the importance of interim steps. While long-term objectives – such as the entry into force of the CTBT and the launch of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) – remain essential goals, the EU increasingly stresses the value of moratoria on fissile material production and voluntary disarmament measures as practical stopgaps.

Regional initiatives also remain central to the EU's approach. The establishment of a Middle East WMD-Free Zone remains a priority, although the current security situation in the region limits prospects for short-term progress. In the meantime, the EU supports initiatives designed to promote dialogue and confidence-building, including projects led by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) that seek to facilitate progress towards the creation of an effective, verifiable, inclusive, and sustainable zone.

## **EU expectations for the 2026 Review Conference**

The upcoming 11th Review Conference of the NPT (RevCon) will take place under exceptionally difficult circumstances, turning the negotiation of an Outcome Document into a highly complex task requiring flexibility from all stakeholders. The EU will continue to work towards a successful RevCon, as it has done throughout this cycle.

As a united bloc, we intend to be flexible. This means keeping an open mind about what formal outcomes could take shape, and focusing on pragmatic steps that can help improve implementation and strengthen the Treaty's authority.

One concrete outcome that appears within reach is the strengthening of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure the implementation of the 'golden standard' of nuclear safeguards and the accountability of States Parties – an issue that has long been a concern of the EU. Geopolitical tensions have exposed vulnerabilities in the NPT's enforcement mechanisms. It is therefore essential to continue insisting on the combination of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and the Additional Protocol as the non-negotiable verification standard, while countering attempts by some states – notably Iran – to weaken inspections.

Another issue where we may see concrete progress is in enhancing transparency and accountability. The EU advocates establishing a systematic, interactive, and structured peer-to-peer review of national implementation reports within the NPT cycle. Further qualitative improvements could also be achieved on reporting practices.

Regardless of the outcome of negotiations on a Final Document, a joint statement by all States Parties reaffirming their support for the NPT would send an important signal of continued commitment to the Treaty and to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

### **The EU as a bridge-builder**

The EU has long played a proactive and facilitatory role in enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of the NPT review process by providing targeted financial and logistical support to ensure broader participation. Through its funding of a project implemented by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the EU has enabled the president-designate to conduct a series of four regional consultations (in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East) to ensure that the priorities and concerns of all States Parties, particularly those from the Global South, are heard and integrated into the RevCon preparations.

Additionally, the EU intends to support the participation of a number of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, enabling smaller and resource-constrained nations to engage directly in the process. These efforts to promote a more inclusive and transparent NPT review mechanism complement the EU's role as a bridge builder, helping to foster greater trust and collaboration among diverse groups of states ahead of the 2026 RevCon.

At the same time, the EU's role extends beyond logistics. By bringing together States Parties with diverse perspectives on nuclear issues, the EU provides a valuable platform for developing global solutions. It can help bridge the divide between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states by championing balanced outcomes, as reflected in the EU Council Conclusions – our political priorities – for the 2026 RevCon. These positions reflect both disarmament aspirations and security realities while proposing concrete steps forward on transparency and risk reduction. In doing so, the EU seeks to create space for compromise rather than confrontation, and to act as a trusted intermediary capable of aligning diverse interests to preserve the NPT's credibility in an increasingly polarised geopolitical landscape.

## Beyond 2026: The EU's role in strengthening the NPT

In order to sustain the credibility of the NPT, the EU aims to institutionalise accountability mechanisms, such as mandatory reporting for nuclear-weapon states on Treaty implementation – including progress on disarmament (Article VI), safeguards compliance (Article III), and peaceful uses (Article IV) – while pushing for standardised formats to enhance comparability and scrutiny.

The EU is also well-positioned to lead further practical initiatives, such as establishing a permanent “NPT Implementation Support Unit” that could, among other things, assist States Parties – particularly in the Global South – in meeting reporting obligations and participating in review cycles, while also developing training programmes on safeguards and verification.

Finally, the EU is open to deepening partnerships with like-minded states, including Canada, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, and to creating or developing tracks of cooperation with regional organisations like the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCON) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on issues such as nuclear security, export controls, and verification, thereby reinforcing norms outside the often-gridlocked NPT forum.

Through these efforts, the EU aims to reinforce the Treaty and ensure that its review process remains a credible, dynamic, and responsive framework for advancing nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful uses.

*30 March 2026*

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# European perspectives on the Non-Proliferation Treaty: Poland

*Łukasz Kulesa*

**Poland can play a role in sustaining the NPT, both by reaffirming its own adherence to the Treaty and its objectives, and by supporting proposals for strengthening its three key pillars.**

As a staunch proponent of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Poland will aim to demonstrate its support for the NPT's goals and contribute to meaningful outcomes during what is likely to be a highly confrontational Review Conference (RevCon) in New York. At the same time, Poland will prioritise its own security requirements while remaining realistic about the likelihood of achieving progress under what is an undoubtedly difficult and unpredictable international security environment.

The war in the Middle East will weigh heavily on the upcoming RevCon, raising broader questions about potential consequences for the global non-proliferation regime. Beyond Iran, there is a long list of contentious issues which may derail the Conference, including a lack of progress on disarmament (Article VI), strain over extended nuclear deterrence and nuclear sharing arrangements, and concerns about the consequences of Russia's ongoing war with Ukraine.

Given these circumstances, the RevCon may turn out to be an exercise in damage limitation rather than an occasion to chart a forward-looking agenda. Still, Poland can play a role in sustaining the NPT, both by reaffirming its own adherence to the Treaty and its objectives, and by supporting proposals for strengthening its three key pillars – non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

## **The importance of the NPT**

Poland has long supported the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. Still, recent events have created a need to address new threats – including Russian nuclear coercion and potential aggression, and the expansion and modernisation of its nuclear arsenal – which have led to a renewed focus in the domestic debate on the credibility of nuclear deterrence.

Poland has signalled its interest in joining NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements and has entered into dialogue with France on nuclear deterrence cooperation. In February 2026, Polish President Karol Nawrocki expressed his support for bolstering the country's security "even on a base of a nuclear potential" while respecting "all international regulations". Prime Minister Donald Tusk, meanwhile, said Poland will not want to "remain passive" on nuclear security issues, concluding, "As our capabilities grow, we will strive to prepare for the most autonomous actions possible".

While these interventions and statements have attracted global attention, they do not seem to herald imminent policy change. Leaving aside the strategic, political, legal, military, economic, and technical challenges of moving towards a sovereign nuclear weapon capability – not to mention the potential reactions of partners and adversaries – undermining the NPT would not be in the national interest of Poland, which has positioned itself as a strong proponent of the rules-based international order.

While the need to take legal commitments under the NPT into account, the policy debate in Poland tends to focus on the security dimension and credibility of existing nuclear deterrence guarantees. Political statements and public debate on these issues attest to a high level of anxiety over Poland's security. At the RevCon, however, Poland is likely to strongly and unequivocally restate its commitment to the Treaty, including its non-proliferation clauses. It can also point to its robust non-proliferation credentials and perfect nuclear safeguards record, including its adherence to the Additional Protocol.

### **Polish priorities for the 2026 RevCon**

Poland has declared a commitment to contribute to a successful outcome of the RevCon, which at minimum would include conducting a thorough examination of the functioning of the Treaty and attempting to reach an agreement on a substantive final document. As a member of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPD), Poland has been co-developing a Landing Zone paper which will offer compromise language and recommendations across the three pillars.

At the RevCon, Poland will likely criticize Russia's recent changes to its nuclear posture and modernisation efforts, as well as its recent deployment of nuclear-capable missile systems in Belarus, and its continued military occupation of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in southeastern Ukraine.

Looking beyond Europe, Poland will likely also highlight nuclear and missile developments in North Korea and call on China to clarify its intentions with respect to its rapid expansion and modernisation of its nuclear forces.

The question of the legality of NATO's nuclear sharing arrangement under the NPT has been raised at previous RevCons, and it will probably come up again this year. Together with other NATO countries, Poland views these arrangements as fully compliant with the Treaty, and considers its security situation as necessitating continued reliance on extended nuclear deterrence.

In the context of Article VI implementation, Poland is likely to support calls for new negotiations on nuclear arms control limitations, preferably engaging China, and their expansion to include non-strategic systems which were outside of the remit of the New START Treaty, which expired on February 5, 2026. At the same time, Poland's immediate goal is strategic risk reduction, including increasing transparency and reporting on stockpiles. Poland will likely avoid directly confronting the policy choices of its three nuclear-weapon allies regarding their postures and doctrine. Instead, it may emphasise its commitment to the step-by-step implementation of Article VI, signalling that any increased reliance on nuclear weapons should be temporary rather than permanent, and framed as a response by the United States, United Kingdom, and France to a deteriorating security environment.

On Iran, Poland has consistently favoured a diplomatic resolution to the nuclear crisis, centred on Iran's return to compliance with its safeguards obligations and the provision of full access to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Soon after the conflict began, Poland refrained from direct criticism of the US-Israeli

operation and expressed hope that “Iran will stop posing a threat to its region” – however it ruled out direct military involvement and expressed concerns about regional destabilisation rippling beyond the Middle East and into Europe. When the war ends, Poland will most likely focus on stabilising the situation, expecting Iran to remain within the NPT framework and shifting attention toward securing its remaining nuclear infrastructure and materials, as well as potentially dismantling elements of the programme, ideally with the involvement of the IAEA, given its central role in monitoring and verification.

With regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Poland is moving forward with the construction on its first nuclear power plant while pursuing a broader program for nuclear energy development – without seeking enrichment or reprocessing capabilities – and in partnership with a range of international partners. It therefore has a strong interest in sustaining and facilitating cooperation under the Treaty’s third pillar, as well as in strengthening the IAEA’s role in supporting these efforts.

### **Between NATO cohesion and EU coordination**

Poland’s position on the NPT is firmly embedded within both its NATO and EU policy frameworks. Given the important role of nuclear weapons in NATO’s deterrence posture, and the alliance’s shared assessment of the threat environment, member states will seek to remain united in opposing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and its rejection of nuclear deterrence, while continuing to defend the legality of nuclear sharing arrangements. Poland is likely to play an active role in facilitating and supporting coordination among NATO allies in this regard.

At the same time, NATO cohesion may be tested by differing views on the scope of support for its three nuclear-weapon members – for example, in response to potential US preparations to resume nuclear testing. In such a scenario, Poland could call on China and Russia to address US allegations of their own testing activities, while underscoring the importance of upholding the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Historically, the EU and its member states have been supporting the NPT and have frequently been described as bridging the divide between states relying on nuclear deterrence and nuclear disarmament-focused countries. The European Council’s conclusions on the NPT, adopted in December 2025, reflects well the preferences of its member states, including Poland, regarding the agenda for the RevCon and the envisioned level of ambition.

EU states’ coordination at RenCons has been crucial for upholding a common position and being able to offer compromise solutions. Yet, given the context in which this year’s Conference will take place, the EU’s role may be unusually limited. The EU’s often-cited bridging role may no longer be viable in a highly polarised RevCon, as the bloc may struggle to effectively address the most contentious issues – particularly those related to Article VI implementation, the

consequences of the Iran conflict, and the continued reliance of many of its member states on nuclear deterrence.

## The future of the NPT

The long-term viability of the NPT will depend less on the outcome of the 2026 RevCon than on whether member states continue to see value in the Treaty as a framework that supports their security and economic development – by upholding disarmament and non-proliferation obligations while enabling cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The positions of countries that may be considering nuclear hedging, such as South Korea and Poland – by developing the infrastructure and expertise needed to potentially pursue nuclear weapons – will become increasingly significant. The NPT regime may come under strain not only from “rogue states” pursuing clandestine nuclear programmes, or from a lack of progress on Article VI and the reversal of past gains, but also from declining support among middle powers that have traditionally been among the Treaty’s strongest advocates.

While Poland is unlikely to be a decisive voice, its choices regarding the development of domestic nuclear capabilities, coupled with a clear recommitment to the NPT’s principles and active engagement across its three pillars, could help reinforce consensus around the continued relevance of the non-proliferation norm.

20 April 2026

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**Poland can play a role in sustaining the NPT, both by reaffirming its own adherence to the Treaty and its objectives, and by supporting proposals for strengthening its three key pillars.**

# P5 perspectives on the 2026 NPT Review Conference: France

*Emmanuelle Maitre*

**France, in close coordination with the United Kingdom – which is currently chairing the P5 – can usefully put forward the risk reduction measures it considers most important.**

The 11th Review Conference (RevCon) of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will begin in New York at the end of April. There are many contentious issues among States Parties regarding the implementation of the treaty and ways forward. Amid heightened global tensions, no tangible progress has been made on nuclear disarmament since the 2022 RevCon. The issue of proliferation is still officially at the forefront of the Treaty, but member states have very different views on how to respond to ongoing proliferation crises. The Twelve-Day War has, in particular, increased polarisation of positions on the Iranian case. The question of peaceful uses is also hotly debated in the wake of Russian strikes on the Ukrainian power plant of Zaporizhzhia, Israeli-US strikes in Iran, and the contestation of the use of nuclear energy as a sustainable energy source.

These points of disagreement mean that adopting a final document reviewing the implementation of the Treaty over the past period and outlining upcoming objectives will likely be an impossible task. However, this does not mean that States Parties should not do their best to promote a constructive conference and set objectives for these three weeks of meetings.

Seen from Paris, balancing the three pillars of the NPT remains a priority and justifies diplomatic efforts conducted at the national level, with like-minded countries, and within the P5. Going forward, France can contribute to a positive RevCon by focusing on several elements.

First, work with the P5 has been inevitably slow and challenging since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Some members of the group have indicated that it would be impossible to adopt any new measures in this framework in the current strategic circumstances. This should not prevent other members from continuing to push for the adoption of concrete elements, particularly regarding strategic risk reduction. In this context, France, in close coordination with the United Kingdom – which is currently chairing the P5 – can usefully put forward the risk reduction measures it considers most important. The ability to preserve the group and keep communication open (for example, in discussions around doctrines) is, in itself, a confidence-building measure.

Second, while the adoption of specific common actions remains unlikely, it is still important to propose measures that may help reduce risks. We should use the current period to discuss this among P5 members and generate interest, which may increase the likelihood of adoption later. The support and funding of the Young Professional Network, a track 2 group created at France's initiative in 2021, is also crucial to advancing ideas and training experts who may be instrumental in negotiating arms control measures in future decades.

Lastly, most of the work done by the P5 needs to remain confidential to ensure it remains a forum where its members can talk openly about sensitive matters. However, it is possible to brief the NPT community to some extent on the group's progress. France, like some other members, has been willing in the past to engage with non-nuclear-weapon states and civil

society representatives. This engagement needs to continue, while recognising the challenges faced by the P5 and the reasonable objectives it can pursue in the short term.

With like-minded countries, in particular EU and NATO allies, but also global partners, France has traditionally worked on all pillars to promote various issues at the RevCon, including nuclear disarmament verification, strategic risk reduction, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the North Korean proliferation crisis, or the use of nuclear technology for non-energy purposes. Creating trans-regional partnerships with non-nuclear-weapon states on these subjects has proved an effective way to demonstrate that, despite the geopolitical tensions among major powers, progress is still possible across several important topics across the pillars. This year, this will take the form of side events and working papers.

France, like the other P5 members, will have to position itself on the many political discussions that will arise during the three weeks of the conference. Many of the disagreements are well-known and have already sparked heated debates at previous review conferences or preparatory committees (lack of progress in disarmament, Middle East WMD free zone, Ukraine, ...). The wild card in 2026 will largely come from Washington, as many US positions are still unknown at this stage. For European states and other partners, it might be necessary to adjust and react to US positions during the Conference, with few opportunities to consult and harmonise their statements beforehand.

They will have to decide how and to what extent they can preserve unity within NATO, and which issues they need to defend with positions clearly at odds with US priorities. This will likely pertain to nuclear testing and the CTBT, support to Ukraine in its opposition to Russian occupation of nuclear power plants, or the issue of sustainable development.

For France, constructive participation in the RevCon will therefore require delicate balancing. At the P5 level, preserving dialogue despite strong opposition remains a priority, but must not prevent calling out behaviours of concern related to the NPT. During the conference, flexibility will be required to avoid political disputes unrelated to the Treaty without ignoring the issues at its heart, namely, ongoing proliferation crises. In the end, what will matter the most will be the readiness of all States Parties to confirm their commitment to the principles of the Treaty in a challenging geopolitical environment.

*18 February 2026*

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# P5 perspectives on the 2026 NPT Review Conference: United States

*Thomas Countryman*

**In the absence of any meaningful step toward a new arms control agreement, the P5 should attempt to say something substantive and meaningful about risk reduction – steps that make accidental or intentional nuclear use less likely.**

The success of the 2010 Review Conference (RevCon) of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) gave positive momentum to the newly established P5 process, in which the five recognised nuclear-weapon states consulted with each other on their respective nuclear policies, with the goal of advancing implementation of the Treaty. In its first few years, its results were notable, if not spectacular. In recent years, however, its consultations have been infrequent, lower-level, and less substantive, with virtually no visible accomplishments. Today, there is little reason for optimism that the P5 process will do anything in the coming weeks that will materially contribute to a successful conclusion of the RevCon in May.

One year ago, I wrote a more positive proposal for what the process could accomplish. Neither the last chair, China, nor the current chair, the United Kingdom, have shown the level of ambition necessary to overcome the deterioration of substantive dialogue, on all issues, between Russia and the US/UK/France, and between China and the US. China, in particular, continues to claim that its participation in the P5 process is an adequate substitute for direct China-US discussion of security issues, which it continues to resist. At a time when none of the five are meeting their Article VI obligation to pursue disarmament, few non-nuclear-weapon states give credence to the claim that the P5 process is a meaningful step toward disarmament.

Another discouraging factor is the absence of any clear action from the US administration on nuclear risk-reduction or arms control. After allowing the New START Treaty to expire, without agreement to continue to respect its central limits, Washington appears intent on increasing the size and diversity of its arsenal. While Donald Trump has stated that he wants a “new era” of multilateral arms control (including, at least, China), there is no indication that his administration has made any specific proposal for the structure of such negotiations. When pressed in a Congressional hearing on March 25 whether it had sought direct talks with Russia or China, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Thomas DiNanno could only say that the US planned to engage through the P5 process.

In addition, the US administration’s ideological approach to, well, almost everything portends new battles at the RevCon over topics that have previously been considered settled, and even non-controversial. The carefully negotiated language between Egypt and the US on a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone may now be unacceptable to Trump’s appointees, given their deference to Israeli positions.

The P5 dialogue process is, in principle, the appropriate venue for discussing how to structure a multilateral arms control negotiation. China, France, and the UK have all expressed reluctance to join such negotiations until Russia and the US make further reductions. The US has made no detailed proposal on structure or goals, so there is little reason to believe that the P5 will produce something of substance before the RevCon. It is, however, positive that the US has publicly restated that each of the five are obligated to work toward

their Article VI disarmament commitments; perhaps it could use the P5 process to press for a meaningful joint re-affirmation of this obligation.

The aborted US-Iran negotiations in February exemplified this administration's preference for rhetoric and ideology and its disdain for real technical expertise on nuclear issues. Although Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Yeaw declared on February 17 that the NPT RevCon is a "high priority for the administration", the delegation the US will send to New York appears set to be the lowest-ranking and least experienced in the history of the NPT. No one involved has publicly outlined how the delegation will help achieve the common goal of a successful RevCon.

What could the P5 do constructively prior to the RevCon, if all five participants showed equal levels of ambition and seriousness? At a minimum, they could agree to support language that sidesteps the issues that blocked consensus at the last two RevCons. They could agree to reconfirm the importance of the Middle East zone and support reassigning this issue to the process created by the UN General Assembly. To prevent a repetition of Russia blocking consensus, they could agree on language affirming the importance of avoiding attacks on nuclear facilities during conflict, without specifically mentioning Russia, Ukraine, or Zaporizhiya.

The five should also discuss the US accusation that China and Russia have conducted nuclear explosive tests in violation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and Trump's threat to resume US testing "on an equal basis". They could jointly reaffirm, as they did in a 2016 UN Security Council resolution, their commitment to respect the moratorium on positive-yield nuclear tests. Even a simple statement restating the formula "nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" would be welcomed by other NPT States Parties and would help set a more positive tone for the conference. From my own experience in 2021, however, I suspect that even such a simple statement is unattainable among the P5 – each of the participants will likely insist on explanatory text that would dilute the power of the original brief sentence.

In the absence of any meaningful step toward a new arms control agreement, the P5 should attempt to say something substantive and meaningful about risk reduction. This has been the primary topic of the mid-level P5 discussions in recent years. A joint P5 statement on continued dedication to risk reduction would be welcome, but without tangible, jointly agreed actions, it is unlikely to be persuasive.

As the nuclear powers ramp up a new, more dangerous arms race, there is little reason to expect that the US is prepared to take the initiative and restore the P5 process as a valuable instrument of arms control and non-proliferation. Can another state – France, the UK, or China – step up to this responsibility?

*27 March 2026*

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# P5 perspectives on the 2026 NPT Review Conference: United Kingdom

*Sahil Shah*

**[T]he true measure of success will be whether the conference can demonstrate that the NPT remains a viable framework for restraint and accountability – even under present conditions of severe geopolitical strain.**

The United Kingdom has the responsibility of chairing the P5 Process in the final stretch before and during the 2026 Review Conference (RevCon) of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). What London does with that role matters, not because one chair can transform the process, but because the manner in which the UK stewards the dialogue will signal whether the P5 remain capable of purposeful collective engagement.

The UK has a narrow but real window to help move the P5 from a holding pattern toward a more constructive trajectory. Ultimately, however, the P5 operates by consensus, and no amount of creative chairing can substitute for political will. The greatest risk is not disagreement, which is to be expected, but the erosion of belief that engagement amongst the P5 and across the NPT community still serves a purpose.

When States Parties convene later this month in New York, the true measure of success will be whether the conference can demonstrate that the NPT remains a viable framework for restraint and accountability, even under present conditions of severe geopolitical strain. A credible outcome will require restoring confidence in the Treaty's continued relevance; demonstrating genuine balance across all three pillars – disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy – as a functional requirement rather than a rhetorical aspiration; and identifying opportunities for convergence where progress is politically credible.

Regrettably, multiple nuclear-weapons states are modernising or expanding their arsenals while the constraints and confidence-building mechanisms that once governed competition among them have largely fallen away. The normative and legal consensus on not conducting nuclear tests – long considered settled – is newly contested. And nuclear-armed states, including one not bound by the NPT, are engaged in military attacks against non-nuclear-weapons states who are parties to the Treaty.

Taken together, these developments place sustained pressure on the credibility of the non-proliferation regime and raise fundamental questions about the durability of the NPT's central bargain. Non-nuclear-weapons states whose compliance sustains the Treaty's non-proliferation pillar are watching, and their patience is not inexhaustible.

## **The P5 Process: Diminished but not defunct**

It is no secret that there was a major rupture in P5 relations due to the war in Ukraine, which has only deepened further in recent years. Western P5 members have broadly maintained a 'no business as usual' approach with Russia, though with varying degrees of rigidity. As a result, the UK, for its part, has been cautious about expanding the P5 agenda or elevating participation to more senior levels.

A change of administration in Washington, and resulting transatlantic turbulence, has also complicated the picture for London and other allied European capitals. Most recently, the

US has called for multilateral, P5-wide strategic stability talks in the pursuit of a new era of arms control that draws in China, effectively deferring formalised bilateral limits with Russia indefinitely.

In the absence of a clear pathway for how such an approach would be realised, there is a risk of ambition outpacing feasibility. The P5 Process, however, is not designed to fill that gap. It is a consultative forum, not a negotiating body. It was never designed to serve as the venue for negotiations, and treating it as one risks overloading it with expectations it cannot meet while undermining the practical work it is suited to deliver.

The P5 agreed at the end of the last Review Cycle to continue their discussions on strategic risk reduction and doctrinal transparency. It is positive that both workstreams have stayed alive. However, on risk reduction, dialogue has remained largely at the level of identifying drivers and perceptions of risk. This is terrain on which the P5 are unlikely to converge, considering their fundamentally divergent threat assessments and the absence of political mandates to move beyond description. Russia, and to a lesser extent China, have resisted agreeing to additive risk reduction measures but have been willing to talk through more specific types of tools in recent months. The doctrinal exchanges, while useful for building baseline familiarity, have remained largely static, limited to formal presentations that do not sufficiently test how postures are interpreted or misinterpreted.

What the P5 Process *can* do – and what the UK should use its position as chair to advance – is deepen engagement on these two key areas, seek common ground on other major RevCon issues, such as calls from non-nuclear-weapon states for enhanced P5 national reporting and more interactive dialogue on the implementation of Article VI commitments, and set the ground for what should follow in the next Review Cycle.

### **What the UK should push the P5 to deliver**

The P5 traditionally issue a joint statement ahead of the NPT Review Conference and are expected to pursue one again. Yet statements alone are not a credible contribution. Principles such as “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought” must be operationalised through functioning systems of restraint as well as routines and habits of communication and cooperation.

As chair, the UK should pitch a short, outcomes-focused workplan for the next Review Cycle – not a sprawling programme that greatly expands their current work, but rather four or five deliverables related to their current discussions.

**First, the P5 should deepen its work on risk reduction by moving beyond abstract discussions of risk drivers toward a systematic mapping of gaps and vulnerabilities in the current architecture to identify where future work should be focused.** The goal should be to advance mutual understanding through descriptive, not prescriptive, engagement, building the shared knowledge base essential for any future measures.

The risk reduction toolbox built during the Cold War – from incidents-at-sea agreements and pre-launch notification regimes to

crisis communications links – demonstrably reduced dangers when grounded in concrete operational practice. But that toolbox does not provide sufficient coverage for the broader variety of escalation scenarios now in play. Adapting that legacy is an urgent matter.

As an example, crisis communication arrangements among the P5 remain foundational but uneven and under-utilised, increasing the risk of miscommunication and misperception during moments of crisis and conflict. The US and Russian Nuclear Risk Reduction Centres – staffed around the clock and never once out of contact since inception – remain the gold standard. Yet comparable arrangements do not exist across all P5 dyads, and there is no multilateral mechanism.

London should ideally push for a commitment that the P5 will work towards clear, secure, and unambiguous communication pathways between all National Control Authorities, as well as explore multilateral communication platforms. As initial steps, the P5 can start by mapping existing channels, informing one another of best practices related to the routine maintenance of current lines, exploring improvement and streamlining of use protocols, and developing redundant pathways and networks resilient to technological disruption.

Similar commitments can and should be made across all other types of risk reduction measures. Even though political will to agree on new tools is absent, a direction of travel can be identified and substantial work can be done to ensure that what already exists is fit for purpose in the context of today's geopolitical and technical realities.

**Second, the P5 should address how emerging and disruptive technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, are reshaping the strategic risk landscape.** This is not a future concern. AI is already being integrated into decision-support systems, intelligence processing, and military operations in ways that compress the time available for crisis decision-making, degrade confidence in the authenticity of information and the communication platforms through which it is exchanged, and create pressure toward automation in high-stakes environments – precisely the conditions under which miscalculation becomes most dangerous.

Doctrine and operational practice have not kept pace with these developments, and the absence of structured P5 engagement on how AI is reshaping strategic relationships among nuclear-armed states represents a growing gap in the risk reduction architecture. Many of the technical tools needed to manage these risks already exist and can be adopted without waiting for broad political agreement.

The UK should use its chair to secure a P5 agreement to include technologists in their delegations and pursue structured engagement on this topic over the next Review Cycle, perhaps through a dedicated working group. There is a clear need for the P5 to develop shared frameworks for understanding how AI reshapes crisis and conflict dynamics and to establish common minimum standards, including for meaningful human control over relevant systems.

**Third, doctrinal dialogue should become genuinely interactive and extend beyond declared policy to address the relationship between doctrine and capabilities.** The P5's doctrinal exchanges have not addressed the growing gap between declared doctrines and observable force structures, which is a primary driver of strategic uncertainty. Doctrinal transparency loses its confidence-building value when the audience does not believe the doctrine reflects actual posture.

More productive formats are available. The P5 could adopt reciprocal interpretation exercises in which each state presents its understanding of another's doctrine and the capabilities that inform that understanding, with the state in question responding to where the interpretation is accurate and where it is not. Scenario-based walkthroughs, in which each country describes in general terms how its doctrine would apply at different stages of a stylised escalation, would test how doctrines interact in practice rather than in isolation. These could be complemented by commissioning non-governmental experts to conduct table-top exercises and report back to the P5 on where doctrinal interactions and capability developments might produce the most dangerous ambiguity.

As a foundational step, the UK should also seek commitment from the P5 to provide official translations of any updates to their key doctrinal documents into all P5 working languages – a low-cost measure that removes unnecessary interpretive risk and signals that doctrinal transparency is a substantive commitment rather than a performative one.

**Fourth, the P5 should preserve and strengthen its Track 2 infrastructure.** The Process has invested years in building next-generation expertise through dedicated mechanisms such as the Young Professionals Network (YPN). That investment must not lapse at the end of this Review Cycle.

Track 2 work is anything but ancillary or decorative; it is often where ideas are generated and tested, language is developed, and peer-to-peer relationships are built – all of which aids future cooperation. There is today a considerable volume of Track 2 activity across multiple bilateral and multilateral P5 configurations producing substantive work on topics of key interest to all five governments.

But the P5 should not assume that these efforts are coordinated among themselves or that their insights are reaching the officials who need them. The P5 should establish a structured mechanism, whether through periodic briefings, dedicated sessions within the P5 Process, or a consolidated reporting channel through which the conveners of major Track 2 dialogues can present key findings and recommendations directly to P5 interlocutors. This would improve the uptake of ideas that are already being generated and ensure that the considerable intellectual investment in non-governmental dialogue translates more reliably into policy-relevant input.

**Fifth, the P5 should engage more constructively with non-nuclear-weapon states and systematically share insights from that engagement among themselves.** Structured mechanisms, such as inviting questions for P5 consideration, convening roundtables with non-nuclear-weapon states, or co-hosting side events with them on

**The goal should be to advance mutual understanding through descriptive, not prescriptive, engagement, building the shared knowledge base essential for any future measures.**

focused topics would demonstrate that the Process is responsive to the broader NPT constituency it is meant to serve.

All five have already undertaken forms of such outreach, especially in the lead up to the RevCon. Ensuring that these efforts are shared within the P5 would help build a more coherent understanding of where different NPT constituencies stand on varying topics, and where limited but meaningful coordination may still be possible amongst the P5.

All in all, the UK's most effective role over the next two months is not to promise what the P5 cannot deliver, but to preserve and strengthen the conditions under which progress remains possible: practical measures grounded in existing commitments, sustained dialogue even where agreement is incomplete, and continued investment in the institutions, habits, and relationships that keep restraint possible and legible in an era increasingly defined by its absence.

*7 April 2026*

# P5 perspectives on the 2026 NPT Review Conference: China

*Tianjiao Jiang*

**Unilateral actions of any kind rarely yield the desired results. All parties must stand united in the face of shared non-proliferation interests and uphold the authority of the NPT.**

In China's view, the five nuclear-weapon states – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States – share a responsibility to uphold the international nuclear order and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Rather than engaging in mutual recrimination, the P5 should take the opportunity of the upcoming NPT Review Conference (RevCon) to prioritise candid dialogue, reduce misunderstandings, and coordinate their positions to actively respond to the expectations of non-nuclear-weapon states.

Over the past year, from eastern Europe to the Middle East to South Asia, nuclear-armed states have come under direct attack, heightening the risk of escalation. Across these theatres, the nuclear taboo is weakening. Meanwhile, the international nuclear order is under growing strain. The expiration of New START Treaty signals the collapse of the bilateral arms control architecture that underpinned Cold War stability, while initiatives such as the US "Golden Dome" risk accelerating strategic competition. Even the expansion of civilian nuclear power introduces new proliferation risks.

Where Cold War bipolarity, arms control, and confidence-building measures once helped maintain stability, today's multipolar environment is marked by competing doctrines, rapid technological change, and heightened geopolitical tension. Advanced dual-use systems and the growing role of artificial intelligence further complicate decision-making and increase the risk of miscalculation.

With all five nuclear-weapon states recently updating their nuclear policies and doctrines, there is an urgent need for dialogue to prevent miscalculation and a renewed arms race. Russia's revised nuclear deterrence principles and updated US strategic documents all point to shifting postures, including debate in Washington over a "tripolar" nuclear order and potential arsenal expansion after New START.

China's 2025 white paper argues that Beijing is not changing its nuclear weapons policy but does provide reasons for nuclear force modernisation. Meanwhile, France has signalled plans to strengthen its nuclear forces and deepen cooperation with the United Kingdom under the Northwood Declaration, reinforcing extended deterrence in Europe.

The five nuclear-weapon states must promptly clarify the rationale behind these policy adjustments, distinguishing between aspects of nuclear modernisation that are genuinely necessary and those that may reflect overreaction driven by miscalculation and should be avoided. Ideally, the P5 should submit a joint statement to the RevCon to address the role of nuclear weapons, as they see it.

Even if they are unable to reach a consensus on these matters – for instance, if some states view their own nuclear modernisation as justified while others deem it an overreaction – they can still explain to the conference how close dialogue and communication among the P5 have helped dispel certain misunderstandings and avert a more severe arms race.

## Reducing nuclear risks

Avoiding nuclear war and reducing strategic risks constitute the primary responsibility of the P5. In January 2022, the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon states affirmed the principle that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought – a concept that should be reaffirmed in the current international climate. Building on this foundation, the P5 must move from principle to practice by exploring how to implement this declaration to prevent nuclear conflict. They should also reaffirm their commitment to a moratorium on nuclear testing and uphold the global consensus against nuclear tests.

The working paper submitted by the P5 to the 2022 NPT Review Conference (RevCon) provides a solid foundation for reducing nuclear risks. At the time, the P5 offered a menu of steps NPT stakeholders can take. Of these and under current political circumstances, political statements (unilateral, bilateral or collectively) promoting restraint and reassurance should be pursued most urgently.

The P5 process itself serves as a crucial platform for enhancing strategic communication and mutual trust through dialogue, and it should never be held hostage by geopolitical factors. China and Russia already maintain a close dialogue on strategic stability. China and the United States, for their part, should leverage the coming bilateral summit to resume the strategic stability dialogue as soon as possible. Given both France and the United Kingdom are strengthening extended deterrence, China – in addition to maintaining its existing dialogues on strategic security and non-proliferation with these two nations – should also incorporate the issue of strategic stability into the broader China-Europe dialogue framework.

At this year's RevCon, the P5 should demonstrate both their commitment to avoiding nuclear war and the concrete steps they have taken to reduce risks. As disarmament remains the most effective means of risk reduction, they should reaffirm their obligations under Article VI of the NPT.

## The P5 and extended nuclear deterrence

Regarding extended deterrence, with the exception of China – which has consistently opposed it – the other four nuclear-weapon states are actively advancing related strategies. In China's view, extended deterrence is a stumbling block to nuclear disarmament: it compels major powers to maintain robust nuclear forces, preserves the option of first use, and, in the event of conflict, heightens the risk of a nuclear conflagration.

Extended deterrence creates a discriminatory institutional arrangement within the NPT framework, disadvantaging non-nuclear-weapon states that do not enjoy the benefits of nuclear protection. In a context of rising geopolitical tensions, their security interests risk being further marginalised. Moreover, nuclear sharing raises concerns around safety, security, and transparency. The fact that NATO's arrangements have coexisted with the NPT does not, in itself, legitimise their continuation or expansion.

As more states seek nuclear protection, crises of confidence or heightened tensions could trigger a new wave of proliferation. The P5 should therefore explore alternatives – such as nuclear-weapon-free zones, legally binding negative security assurances, and strengthened conventional guarantees – to gradually reduce reliance on extended deterrence.

Regarding regional non-proliferation issues, China has consistently advocated for political and diplomatic approaches to resolving nuclear challenges. Unilateral sanctions and military strikes are likely to reinforce the resolve of some non-nuclear states to pursue nuclear weapons. By contrast, sustained dialogue, stronger legal and institutional frameworks, and economic and technical cooperation are often more effective in addressing the root causes of proliferation.

The Iranian nuclear issue now stands at a critical crossroads. Recent US military actions have not resolved the problem; instead, they have raised concerns that a future Iranian government may adopt a more hardline stance, increasing the risks of nuclear proliferation, or even nuclear terrorism.

To effectively address regional nuclear proliferation, the P5 must carefully review their history of cooperation. Whether in the context of the original Iran nuclear deal, the JCPOA, or the earlier Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear issue, experience has demonstrated that effective non-proliferation is impossible without the collective cooperation of these five states. Unilateral actions of any kind rarely yield the desired results. All parties must stand united in the face of shared non-proliferation interests and uphold the authority of the NPT.

North Korea has declared itself a de facto nuclear-weapon state. neither unilateral sanctions nor unilateral engagement can achieve the objective of denuclearisation. The P5 should jointly formulate a phased negotiation plan which makes it an immediate priority to prevent North Korea from further developing its nuclear capabilities – including nuclear submarines and tactical nuclear weapons. Should North Korea agree to freeze its nuclear capabilities, the P5 should take reciprocal steps, such as reducing the US extended deterrence posture on the Korean Peninsula, lifting select sanctions, and providing economic and technical assistance.

### **How will China proceed?**

Even if the P5 are unable to reach a consensus on the aforementioned issues, China will nonetheless take unilateral actions to actively advance the processes of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

First and foremost, China will continue to push for negotiations on a treaty regarding the mutual no-first-use of nuclear weapons. From the 1990s – when China first proposed concluding an international treaty centered on no-first-use – to last year, when it submitted a draft treaty to the NPT, China has demonstrated a serious and earnest commitment to encouraging all nations to abandon first-use policies. China's ambassador for disarmament has also explicitly stated a willingness to engage in in-depth discussions within the P5 regarding the substance of such a treaty, including

technical issues that may arise concerning definitions, verification, and other related matters.

For years, certain nuclear-weapon states have questioned the credibility of China's No First Use policy, using this skepticism as a pretext to avoid discussions on the subject. China has demonstrated ample patience. Should these states persist in refusing dialogue, China could submit a relevant treaty to the United Nations General Assembly – a move likely to garner broad support from non-nuclear-weapon states, and potentially from some nuclear-weapon states as well. Such a step would advance implementation of Article VI of the NPT, reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security policies, and support nuclear disarmament.

A no first-use treaty would also encourage nuclear-weapon states to adjust their postures and force structures – thereby strengthening incentives for disarmament – while reducing the complexity of nuclear command and control and lowering the risk of accidental use.

Secondly, China will actively participate in strategic dialogue regarding the reduction of nuclear risks and take corresponding actions to enhance strategic transparency. However, China has consistently maintained that addressing global nuclear risks requires a comprehensive approach that tackles both symptoms and root causes. The nuclear policies and strategic mindsets of certain nuclear-weapon states – particularly their readiness to contemplate nuclear war and their pursuit of nuclear superiority – constitute the fundamental sources of these risks.

Therefore, nuclear risk reduction measures are not a panacea; they cannot substitute for the consensus that must be reached among major nuclear powers on mutual vulnerability and strategic stability. As China has emphasised in its latest arms control white paper, it has never engaged in – nor will it ever engage in – a nuclear arms race with any other nation. China maintains that the modernisation of its nuclear forces is driven by concerns that the credibility of its second-strike capability has been eroded in recent years by other nuclear-weapon states.

China also intends to take a more proactive role in advancing arms control in the context of emerging technologies. The latest white paper outlines China's positions on arms control in outer space, cyberspace, and artificial intelligence. Although these areas fall outside the scope of the NPT, the rapid development of such technologies has a profound impact on efforts to reduce nuclear risks, advance disarmament, and support the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

China supports the development of global governance frameworks for the military application of these technologies – to strengthen risk management – and has advanced a range of policy proposals to that end. It also advocates safeguarding the rights of developing countries to use technology for peaceful purposes, and contributes

international public goods in areas such as AI, including open-source tools and proposals for international cooperation. By helping guide the trajectory of this technological development,

China seeks to work with other states to reduce nuclear risks, improve transparency, and strengthen nuclear safety.

13 April 2026

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**China will actively participate in strategic dialogue regarding the reduction of nuclear risks and take corresponding actions to enhance strategic transparency.**

# P5 perspectives on the 2026 NPT Review Conference: Russia

*Nikolai Sokov*

**Russia maintains that a state's right to civilian nuclear energy is independent of the nature of its political regime. This reflects a broader commitment to the UN Charter principle of sovereign equality.**

Russia arrives at the 2026 NPT Review Conference (RevCon) in a visibly stronger position than it occupied just a year earlier, at the 2025 PrepCom. This shift is largely the result of actions taken by other states – above all the United States and Israel – and Moscow's decisive response to them. Russian officials now speak with greater confidence and appear to see an opportunity to consolidate alliances and expand support across the Global South within the NPT framework.

The most significant developments since spring 2025 were the 12-day US-Israeli military operation against Iran last summer, followed by a six-week war in spring 2026 that could yet resume (a ceasefire remains in place at the time of writing), as well as the expiration of New START. Together, these events have reshaped the diplomatic landscape ahead of the RevCon.

## **NPT, war, and the UN Charter**

At the April 2026 session of the Commission on Disarmament, Russia's representative unequivocally described US and Israeli actions as violations of international law – standing in contrast to most European states, which limited themselves to expressions of regret. He further characterised the strikes as a “direct attack on the NPT”, arguing that “non-proliferation rhetoric” had been used as a pretext for aggression. In doing so, he drew explicit parallels with the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, similarly justified on non-proliferation grounds.

Russia's advance national report on NPT implementation (published March 2, 2026) uses comparable language in reference to the 2025 operation, though it does not yet address the 2026 war. Stronger language will almost certainly appear in the final version.

A Foreign Ministry statement of February 28, 2026 was even more direct: the motives of Washington and Tel Aviv, it argued, “have nothing to do with the non-proliferation regime” but instead reflect an effort “to destroy the constitutional order and eliminate the leadership of a state they do not like”. This theme has been reinforced by Russia's Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov, who accused the US and its partners of treating non-proliferation as a tool for settling political scores with states pursuing independent policies.

Notably, recent Russian statements have dropped any reference to a Middle East WMD-free zone. Moscow appears to regard the issue as effectively closed following what it characterises as aggression by a non-NPT state against an NPT member.

Two related arguments have been central to Russia's messaging.

First, Moscow insists that efforts to dismantle Iran's civilian nuclear program violate its rights under Article IV of the NPT. Any resolution, it argues, must be diplomatic and must recognise Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy, with safeguards as the only legitimate subject of negotiation. From this perspective, the collapse of the JCPOA following the US

withdrawal in 2019 should have been addressed through a new agreement grounded in that principle – a principle Russia argues has never been accepted by the US, Israel, or European powers. Russian officials have also blamed the EU-3 for provoking Iranian escalation and undermining IAEA-led diplomacy.

Second, Russia maintains that a state's right to civilian nuclear energy is independent of the nature of its political regime. This reflects a broader commitment to the UN Charter principle of sovereign equality, rooted in the post-Westphalian international order. Any attempt to condition nuclear rights on regime type is, in Moscow's view, a violation of fundamental international law.

On both points, Russia's position closely aligns with China's. At the RevCon, the two are likely to coordinate closely, potentially strengthening their appeal among Global South states.

Another issue Moscow will emphasise is the targeting of nuclear facilities. In addition to damage inflicted on Iranian enrichment infrastructure in 2025, the 2026 conflict reportedly included strikes on the Bushehr nuclear power plant. Russia underscores that these facilities were under IAEA safeguards and monitored by inspectors. This argument also intersects with longstanding disputes over the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, where Moscow may now find a more receptive audience.

### **The threat of proliferation**

Russia's view of the future of the NPT is decidedly pessimistic, and its concern appears genuine: non-proliferation is identified as a top priority in its 2023 Foreign Policy Concept paper, reflecting the view that a growing number of nuclear-armed states increases the likelihood of nuclear use while eroding the privileged position of the P5.

Moscow also warns that weakening international regimes could make force the primary tool of non-proliferation. This, in turn, risks accelerating proliferation: states targeted by force may seek nuclear weapons for protection, while US allies could face fewer constraints.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has articulated this concern starkly. Responding to the US-Israeli attack on Iran he warned that "more and more countries adhere to the view that only possession of nuclear weapons can be a reliable guarantee of defence against illegal attempts at their security". This, he said, "carries serious proliferation risks". Russian statements at the Commission on Disarmament have echoed this warning, suggesting that events around Iran could push non-nuclear states to seek "alternative, non-conventional" means of ensuring security.

Lavrov has also pointed to North Korea as a case in point. In late 2025 he argued that Pyongyang had drawn "relevant conclusions" from US actions long ago (probably referring to the second war in the Gulf in 2003), and that its nuclear capability has effectively deterred military action. While stopping short of endorsing North Korea's program, he emphasised that Russia "understood" its motivations. This line of argument is likely to feature prominently at the RevCon.

Russia's advance national report on the NPT adopts a more restrained tone, but still warns of a "radical deepening of coordination" among European nuclear states, including the planning of nuclear weapons use and "joint [nuclear] operations against the background of... development of the issue of creating a 'pan-European joint nuclear capability' in addition to the American nuclear 'umbrella'".

The report also strongly criticises the possible expansion of nuclear sharing arrangements in Europe, as well as AUKUS – a program under which the US will build nuclear-powered submarines for Australia – and similar initiatives involving Japan and South Korea. In Moscow's framing, these developments contribute to proliferation risks, even if they fall short of formal treaty violations.

### **Article VI matters**

The role of nuclear weapons has continued to grow since the last RevCon, and all nuclear-weapon states will be strongly criticized by non-nuclear members of the NPT for not implementing Article VI. Available documents show that Moscow plans to weather that criticism by laying the blame on its opponents – the Western P3 – and justifying reliance on nuclear weapons by their aggressive plans. Western nuclear-weapon states will do the same, and the now-familiar dynamic is unlikely to change.

Similarly, the Russian position on nuclear disarmament will remain unchanged: it will continue to place it in the context of general and complete disarmament and argue that steps toward disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, "cannot be separated from a broader political-military and strategic context" (to quote the advance version of the national report).

That said, the specific context of the 2026 RevCon appears more favourable to Russia than in previous years, and it will likely weather criticism better – certainly better than the US.

Although arms control regimes are broadly eroding – with the last US-Russian arms control treaty, New START, expiring in February without any new agreement in sight or negotiations underway – Russia has, and will, argue that it proposed to the US an informal arrangement to observe the treaty's numerical and qualitative limits, a proposal Washington rejected. Russia has stated that it will continue to adhere to New START limits so long as the US does not exceed them. Western accusations of violating the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty will not only be rejected but also countered with reference to Russia's moratorium on the deployment of INF-range missiles and its proposal to make that moratorium multilateral and verifiable.

With respect to the future, Russian official documents limit themselves to recognising that arms control remains important and that Russia is prepared to pursue it when appropriate conditions are created.

Russia's pledge not to increase its nuclear forces following New START's expiration will look restrained and reasonable, particularly against the backdrop of France's announcement of an unspecified increase in its nuclear arsenal, widely expected US plans for a

buildup in response to new Chinese strategic capabilities, and expectations that the UK may follow France's example.

Russia is also likely to reference US discussions of a possible resumption of nuclear testing as a threat to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), while continuing to emphasize its own commitment to the treaty. The earlier withdrawal of CTBT ratification, which brought its status in line with that of the US and China (signed but not ratified), has been overshadowed by Washington and may be close to being forgotten.

The national report and other documents pay significant attention to risk reduction and confidence-building measures (CBMs). On the former, Moscow strongly advocates the establishment and maintenance of reliable direct communication links between governments and militaries and supports the continued implementation of legacy CBMs, such as advance notification of missile launches, but offers little beyond that.

Available information on P5 discussions of risk reduction and CBMs suggests that Russia has been reluctant to engage more deeply. The national report and related documents help explain this approach, arguing that "mechanical enhancement of transparency is not an unquestionable means of reducing strategic risks" and warning that a careless policy in this area could have the opposite effect.

### **P5 divisions and China-Russia alignment**

Overall, there are unlikely to be surprises in discussions of Article VI at the RevCon. The P5 are unlikely to issue any joint statements, and initiatives in this area appear highly improbable. At the same time, one should not expect a "united front" among the nuclear-weapon states in response to criticism from non-nuclear-weapon states, as has sometimes occurred in the past. Instead, divisions are likely to emerge between a Western grouping and a China-Russia alignment.

Arguably, the most interesting aspect of the RevCon will be the nature of Russian-Chinese interaction. The positions of the two countries appear to have grown even closer, and the need for coordination more urgent. Their approaches to one of the most visible and pressing issues – the war in Iran – are nearly identical, and not necessarily as a result of coordination, but because they share similar concerns and policy preferences. They also align closely in their confrontation with the West and in their views on security challenges in both Asia and Europe.

As noted above, Russia fully shares China's concerns about AUKUS and similar developments, and refrains from criticizing Beijing's reluctance to engage in arms control, insisting that this is a matter for China to decide. The list could be extended. In all, the RevCon is likely to reveal significantly closer cooperation between Moscow and Beijing, alongside deeper fault lines between them and the P3.

Given the low likelihood of any consensus outcome at the RevCon, debates are expected to be more contentious, mutual criticism sharper, and political maneuvering more intense. All key players – particularly the P5 – will seek to win support from Global South states.

**The role of nuclear weapons has continued to grow since the last RevCon, and all nuclear-weapon states will be strongly criticized by non-nuclear members of the NPT for not implementing Article VI.**

In this environment, Russia is likely to be better positioned than in previous years. Across the three pillars of the NPT – Articles I and II, Article IV, and Article VI – its position appears strongest and most persuasive on the first two, and less exposed on the third compared to other P5 states, especially Western nuclear powers. The Russian delegation is therefore likely to approach the conference with a degree of confidence, anticipating an intense political contest less constrained by consensus-building and more focused on consolidating influence among Global South states.

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