



## Nonproliferation Treaty Meeting Collapses Without Decisions

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By Jim Wurst, *U.N. Wire*

UNITED NATIONS — A meeting of parties to the [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty](#) (NPT) collapsed Friday night after the delegates failed to resolve differences on numerous political and procedural issues, notably how to refer to their own consensus decisions of 2000.

This was the final preparatory meeting before next year's review conference and delegates hoped that the meeting would produce recommendations for the conference, as preparatory meetings have in the past. Hours after the meeting was supposed to have ended, the meeting was simply adjourned with a final report containing minimum details. Breaking its own rules of procedure, the meeting did not even resume in open session to formally close its proceedings. Most of the meetings in the last week were held behind closed doors.

The political debate at the heart of all the procedural wrangling was the relative weight that should be given to disarmament and nonproliferation, specifically if the treaty's priority should be disarmament by the nuclear powers or addressing proliferation threats by countries such as North Korea and Iran.

The chairman of the meeting, Ambassador Sudjadnan Parnohadiningrat of Indonesia, issued his own summary of the meeting on Thursday night, which was an attempt to reflect all the divergent positions expressed during the two-week meeting. As such, there are ideas in it to please and annoy everyone. There was never a chance that all the states would accept the summary as a consensus document, but it had been expected that the paper would be annexed to the final report under the chairman's own authority and sent to the review conference.

But Sudjadnan's paper was strongly criticized in an all-day closed meeting Friday by most of the nuclear weapon states, led by the United States, that insisted the paper could only be referred to in the list of documents and not annexed to the report.

A key sticking point was whether to acknowledge the final document of the [2000 review conference](#). This seemingly procedural question was a lightning rod for the political divisions among the delegates since the 2000 decision includes what has become known as "the 13 steps" — specific actions the nuclear powers agreed to as part of their disarmament commitments under the NPT. The 13 steps include "an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals." That undertaking includes signing and ratifying the [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty](#), reduction in tactical nuclear weapons and halting the production of weapons-grade nuclear materials. The United States now opposes many of these steps, most notably its rejection of the test ban treaty.

Because of this stalemate, the meeting could not even agree to seemingly routine items such as an agenda for the 2005 conference.

Ambassador Sergio Duarte of Brazil will be the president of the review conference, which will be held in New York May 2-27, 2005.

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