

Policy Memo

DATE: March 3, 2009

RE: Realizing Nuclear Disarmament

Introduction

The Stanley Foundation convened 25 officials, including global diplomats from UN institutions, US and foreign experts, and officials from other nations in Tarrytown, New York, February 20-22, 2009, to examine the first steps toward a world free of nuclear weapons. Key points from the conference discussions follow:

Main Findings

- The world has an historic opportunity to make great progress on global nuclear arms reductions. The window may only last 1-2 years.
- Top-level political will among major powers is essential. Broad US-Russian nuclear arms reduction negotiations are an essential first step, but an early US-China strategic understanding is also key.
- The United States and Russia must reduce nuclear weapons and stockpiles, and not “shelve” weapons as part of a nuclear hedging strategy. Reductions to roughly 1,000 weapons each should be feasible under current nuclear policies and doctrines.
- The United States and Russia should end high alert targeting of each other.
- To foster the needed paradigm shift, the United States should undertake concrete and visible actions that signal to the world that it believes nuclear weapons are a common threat to humanity.
- The United States and China must ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) before the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference to enable a truly productive conference. In addition, it would be helpful if the 2009 Nuclear Posture Review, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) 60th Anniversary, were to lead to real changes in nuclear doctrines, strategies, and policies.
- The reliance of nonnuclear weapon states (NNWSs), such as Japan and Turkey, on the umbrellas of nuclear weapon states (NWSs) should be squarely addressed, with serious thought given to how they would meet their security needs in a world in which extended nuclear deterrence is being withdrawn on the path to disarmament. This would help considerably in addressing sensitive issues in the multilateral context of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

- A major multilateral effort to safeguard loose nuclear materials is important to prevent nuclear terrorism. This international safeguards effort can build on existing national, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and UN Resolution 1540 initiatives.
- This multilateral effort should be viewed as a mechanism for involving, incorporating, and integrating the four “nuclear outlier states” or “de facto nuclear states” of India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan into the global arms control regime.
- More generally, these four “nuclear outliers” should be positively engaged in creative ways that do not automatically assume the need to bring them into the entire NPT framework, which many see as an unrealistic goal.
- The three generally understood pillars of the NPT, nonproliferation, disarmament, and the right to peaceful use of nuclear energy, are still valid and worthy of reaffirmation.
- On both doctrine and diplomacy, the United States should show leadership in the following areas:
 - Adopting ballistic missile defense systems that mesh with the goal of deep nuclear reductions.
 - Giving up on space weaponization (and other types of strategic dominance over major powers) as a core defense goal.
 - Sending a top-level head of delegation to the 2010 NPT Review Conference.
 - Adopting “no first use” as a core doctrinal concept for the US nuclear arsenal.
 - Removing tactical nuclear weapons from Europe.
 - Working with the P-5 to eventually go below 1,000 US nuclear weapons--the threshold currently being advocated under legacy, Cold War-era US doctrines and policies.

As one participant stated, “secure, reduce, and prevent” should be our central goals:

Secure: The US should lead, in close cooperation with Russia, a campaign to secure and eliminate fissionable materials wherever they exist within 4 years.

Reduce: The goal should be 1,000 total warheads, maybe even 500, which would take the process from the P-2, to the P-5, and finally, the P-8, which would involve ending high alert status as well.

Prevent: Prevent new tests; prevent new materials; prevent new nuclear weapon states. And as part of prevention, government and civil society leaders should work to convince populations that nuclear weapons and materials are *national liabilities*, not *national assets*.

Conference participants also stressed:

- Ultimately, the goal of zero nuclear weapons should be broadly popularized.

The analysis and recommendations included in this Policy Memo do not necessarily reflect the view of the Stanley Foundation or any of the conference participants, but rather draw upon the major strands of discussion put forward at the event. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this document. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all of its recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

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