Journal of Denuclearization Design

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The Nuclearist Codex at the Onset of the Obama Era

Bruce D. Larkin

In September 1965 I stumbled across a Jungian article titled “Halloween, the 50-Megaton Bomb, and the Cuban Crisis.”¹ Today is Halloween 2008, and I have in front of me four scary, related texts by which the dying Bush Administration justifies ongoing nuclearism.

Two are public talks. US National Security Advisor Stephen J. Hadley spoke to the Stanford University Center for International Security and Cooperation, in February 2008. Hadley addressed “proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials into the hands of nations or individuals who would do us harm,” reminding his audience that “the threat of a nuclear attack on the American homeland remains very real.”²

US Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates spoke in October to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.³ Gates’ remarks are a defense of the necessity of deterrence and the utility of the ‘reliable replacement warhead.’

Here Gates is the public face of the Department of Defense. Whether he would repeat these shibboleths once freed from the prison of the GW Bush administration remains to be seen.

Government relies on authoritative texts to summarize policy, guide the bureaucracies, and cement policy against anticipated

opposition. The bureaucracy itself, internal dissidents, public critics, and opposition parties may try to erode or undo the government’s initiatives. Steps by the Bush Administration to establish a nuclear policy consistent with its ‘national security strategy’ began with the December 2001 Nuclear Posture Review, followed by the 2002 and 2006 papers titled National Security Strategy of the United States.4

As its second term approached a close, some elements of nuclear policy were set out by the three Secretaries of Defense, State, and Energy (July 2007), the third text on my desk.5 Policy was then further conditioned in a classified document (February 2008) that remains hidden from the public. The fourth text: in September 2008 the Secretaries of Defense and Energy issued a “redacted and edited” version of the February 2008 document, providing the public a summary of the internal Administration position.6

Gates, whose remarks to the Carnegie Endowment are the most recent, speaks disarming, answers questions directly, and summarizes the aims of nuclear deterrence. His talk bears close examination, revealing the persistent tropes of nuclearism.

**Standard Claims: A Dangerous World**

Nuclearists say that the world is dangerous—will always be dangerous—and therefore nuclear weapons must be retained.

Gates: “Our nuclear arsenal is vital for a final reason … we simply cannot predict the future. … We have to be prepared for contingencies we haven’t even considered.”

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5 US Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of Energy.


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Gates: “As long as human nature is what it is, as long as the tragic arc of history continues its course, we cannot eliminate the need to be prepared for war … ”

There are two problems here. First, Gates assumes that nuclear weapons are a necessary component of a country’s repertoire to cope with the unexpected. But states have other means. For many future contingencies, perhaps for all, nuclear weapons will be inappropriate. Second, Gates takes nuclear weapons only as part of a solution-set, not as a source of danger themselves. Such a posture is risk-blind.

If war is bound to occur, is it better to have a war in which nuclear weapons are ready to use, or a war in which nuclear weapons—having been eliminated—could not be used?

*Standard Claims: Abolition, but Long In the Future*

Some acknowledge ZNW as an aim, but distance it. Gates makes this move by saying “as long as human nature is what it is … ”

And Gates: “While we have a long-term goal of abolishing nuclear weapons once and for all, given the world in which we live, we have to be realistic about that proposition.”

*Standard Moves: Equating ZNW with Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament*

Regrettably, Gates dismisses his predecessors in high office:

Gates: Presidents Carter, Reagan and GHW Bush “genuinely wanted to eliminate all nuclear weapons and said so publicly. More recently, George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn echoed that sentiment in The Wall Street Journal, but all have come up against the reality that as long as others have nuclear weapons, we must maintain some level of these weapons ourselves to deter potential adversaries and to reassure over two dozen allies and partners … ”

And Gates quotes Theodore Roosevelt: “It would be a fatal thing to leave ourselves unarmed against the despotisms and barbarisms of the world.”

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But none of the seven cited advocated unilateral disarmament. They were not naifs who “came up against ... reality.” Instead, it was just that ‘reality’ that they proposed be addressed. Current calls—for example, by Shultz et al.—assume the need to negotiate, especially among the nuclear weapon states.

**Standard Claims: NWs Are Needed for More than Nuclear Deterrence**

Nuclearists repeatedly try to grow the list of nuclear missions. The ‘unpredictable world’ argument is one form of this. Others are more concrete.

Gates: “As long as other states have or seek nuclear weapons and potentially can threaten us, our allies and friends, then we must have a deterrent capacity that makes it clear that challenging the United States in the nuclear arena or with other weapons of mass destruction could result in an overwhelming, catastrophic response.” And he adds: “Our nuclear arsenal also helps deter enemies from using chemical and biological weapons.”

There may be two further missions in this phrase. One is certain: that nuclear weapons are required to deter “other weapons of mass destruction.” But is that true? One problem lies in using the category ‘weapons of mass destruction’ which erroneously equates the one true ‘weapon of mass destruction,’ nuclear weapons, with ugly but much more limited biological, chemical, and radiological weapons. ‘Conventional’ capabilities may be more than adequate to deter state use of biological weapons, for example. A second problem is that deterrence, if it is to work, must be focused on the agent and at least minimally credible, conditions which can only be met for the case of a state agent, if they can be met at all.

Deterrence, as a developed concept in nuclear strategy, deters use. But how does a ‘deterrent’ capacity counter ‘potential threats’ or ‘challenges’? Is the term ‘challenge’ unambiguous, clearly signaling the provocative step which could provoke an “overwhelming, catastrophic response”? Is not every other nuclear weapon state’s nuclear force open to the interpretation that it poses a ‘challenge’?
Another mission developed in Gates’ talk is ‘reassuring allies,’ or what we term extended deterrence:

“as long as others have nuclear weapons, we must maintain some level of these weapons ourselves ... to reassure over two dozen allies and partners who rely on our nuclear umbrella for their security, making it unnecessary for them to develop their own.”

Gates does not quite make a claim that the United States must keep nuclear weapons to guard ‘allies and partners’, even in an otherwise denuclearized world, against conventional attack. Nor should he. But we can imagine cases in which an ‘ally’, ‘partner’, or ‘friend’, rather than preparing to assume responsibility for its own safety in a denuclearized world, inveighed against US abandonment of nuclear weapons on the grounds that only US nuclear guarantees kept it from being ‘destroyed’ or ‘shoved into the sea.’ Or made the argument, if it itself was nuclear-armed, that any US moves to negotiate ZNW threatened its nuclear capacity, and therefore its existence. Can you imagine a state that might make such an argument? The client tail must not wag the dog, by insisting on an ongoing mission to ‘reassure’.

The claim that “our arsenal plays an irreplaceable role in reducing proliferation” deserves examination.

**Standard Claims: US NWs Reduce Proliferation**

“[F]riends and allies perceive different levels of risk within their respective regions,” Gates observes, claiming that “Here our arsenal plays an irreplaceable role in reducing proliferation.” He spells out how US nuclear weapons have this effect: “our nuclear umbrella, our extended deterrent underpins our alliances in Europe and in the Pacific and enables our friends, especially those worried about Tehran and Pyongyang to continue to rely on our nuclear deterrent rather than to develop their own.”

US nuclear capabilities did not prevent Israel, Pakistan, or India from developing nuclear weapons.

Gates may correctly assess that US ‘extended deterrence’ has been a significant factor in Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan.

If the US were convincingly committed to global denuclearization, encouraging China and Russia to join that
project, would Asian ‘friends’ insist that the United States stick to providing them a ‘nuclear umbrella’?

Is Design Ongoing?

A main point of successive Administration papers in 2007 and 2008 is to urge the ‘reliable replacement warhead.’ Among the reasons offered are that

• “At a certain point, it will become impossible to keep extending the life of our arsenal … ”

• “the United States is the only declared nuclear power that is neither modernizing its nuclear arsenal nor has the capability to produce a new nuclear warhead.”

• “China and Russia have embarked on an ambitious path to design and field new weapons.”

• creating an “industrial complex that could produce new weapons if the need arose” would permit reduction in inventory

Gates observes that the DoD and DoE undertook the ‘reliable replacement warhead’ program for several years. On the one hand he states that “[n]ew designs build in enhanced safety features and high reliability … ” On the other hand, he insists that “[n]o one has designed a new nuclear weapon in the United States since the 1980s … ” These statements are hard to reconcile except by declaring a difference between design of components and design of a fully completed weapon.

It seems unlikely he means there were ‘RRW’ designs crafted in the 1980s but not thereafter. In November 2004 Congress approved the Reliable Replacement Warhead Program and by 2005 the weapons laboratories had assembled a group of perhaps a hundred personnel to design, as the New York Times put it, “a new generation of nuclear arms meant to be sturdier and more reliable and have longer lives.” As Gates notes, Congress has since cut back the program’s funding.

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Do These Administration Papers and Talks Address the Dangers?

Gates’ arguments assume that the case for a continued US nuclear capability has been made and agreed. But consider the possible and probable effects, on the aim of denuclearization, of undertaking a ‘Reliable Replacement Warhead Program’. After all, instituting ZNW would mean that Gates’ image of long-term reliance on nuclear weapons had been rejected. But even adoption of selected elements of a ZNW regime could radically undermine the assumption on which Gates relies. What is unchanging, what changeable? How do cause and effect run? Would committing to the ‘Reliable Replacement Warhead Program’ stymie striving for denuclearization? Would the ‘Reliable Replacement Warhead Program’ actually promote proliferation? How could the United States respond to the assessment, in one or more foreign capitals, that “if the United States places so much emphasis on the worth of retaining nuclear weapons for the long term, it must be in our interest to launch a long-term program as soon as we can.” Can a ‘reliable replacement warhead’ and the Non-Proliferation Treaty coexist?

If nuclearist ‘modernization’ were run in close parallel with good faith pursuit of denuclearization, claims for a ‘reliable replacement warhead’ could be read as part of negotiation about the consequences if others did not join in denuclearization. But that is not how Gates casts history, the world and possibility. Instead, nuclearists dismiss and preclude the possibility of denuclearization, using some of the arguments we have reviewed.

The main problem in Gates’ approach, then, is that it takes the status quo as fixed, and does not consider alternatives. The talk of 28 October 2008 is an exercise in persuasion. Alternatives are ignored: just left out. It is incomplete. And to anyone who suspects that ongoing nuclearism is dangerous, these nuclearist papers and talks do nothing to address the danger.

The Argument With the Democratic Congress

Gates spoke to the Carnegie endowment just a week before the 4 November 2008 election grew Democratic majorities in the House of Representatives and the Senate, and named Barack Obama President-Elect. As it happens, lines have already been drawn. The
critiques against which Gates was speaking were set out in the Congress earlier in 2008. One subject was the ‘Reliable Replacement Warhead’. The Congressional positions illuminate the match between nuclearists and their moderate opposition, which I will term—revealing something of my own sense of this controversy—the ‘nuclear prudentialists’.

Democrats won a majority in the 110th Congress (January 2007 - January 2009), but their position in the Senate was precarious, and GW Bush could block bills with his veto pen. Nonetheless, legislative history offers an indication where the fault lines lie. We have those sections of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008 that concern nuclear activities of the US Department of Energy,8 and positions taken by the House and Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations subcommittees charged with drafting parallel sections of the 2009 bill.9 But the Appropriations Bill was not brought to a conclusion. Instead, Congress offered, and GW Bush signed, a continuing resolution that maintains funding of Energy Department and other programs into March 2009.

The House and Senate subcommittees agreed that there should be no funding of the ‘Reliable Replacement Warhead.’ The House subcommittee explained its reasoning at some length:

In fiscal year 2008 the Congress rejected funding of the proposed Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW). The President’s budget request for fiscal year 2009 nonetheless included $10,000,000 for RRW. The Committee once again denies this funding.

The Committee is aware of the advantages of a modern warhead design and strongly supports improved surety. The Committee also understands that high margin provides protection against failure due to compound unknowns. The Committee supports trading off Cold

8 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008, passed by the House and Senate, and signed into law by GW Bush on 26 December 2007. See H.R. 2764.

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War high yield for improved reliability, in order to move to a smaller stockpile requiring a smaller and cheaper weapons complex with no need for nuclear testing.

That said, the Committee remains to be convinced that a new warhead design will lead to these benefits. The Committee will not spend the taxpayers’ money for a new generation of warheads promoted as leading to nuclear reductions absent a specified glide path to a specified, much smaller force of nuclear weapons. Similarly, the Committee finds no logic in spending the taxpayers' money on a new generation of warheads promoted as avoiding the need for nuclear testing, while the Secretary of State insists that “the Administration does not support the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.”

The report chides the Administration’s failure to submit plans it had a year earlier required as a prior to any consideration of “funding for most new programs, substantial changes to the existing nuclear weapons complex” or funding of the RRW.

The consolidated House Appropriations Committee’s language on plans sets this requirement:

Before the Committee will consider funding for most new programs, substantial changes to the existing nuclear weapons complex, or funding for the RRW, the Committee insists that the following sequence be completed:

(1) replacement of Cold War strategies with a 21st Century nuclear deterrent strategy sharply focused on today’s and tomorrow’s threats, and capable of serving the national security needs of future Administrations and future Congresses without need for nuclear testing;

(2) determination of the size and nature of the nuclear stockpile sufficient to serve that strategy;

(3) determination of the size and nature of the nuclear weapons complex needed to support that future stockpile.

When the new Congress convenes in early January 2009 it will consider an Appropriations Bill which includes funds for the Department of Energy’s nuclear program.

Looking further into 2009 and 2010, the new Administration will need to bring forward a Congressionally mandated Nuclear Posture Review, the third since the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991.
“National Security and Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century”

The public version of the DoD/DoE paper “National Security and Nuclear Weapons …” is nuclearist. In short, the paper assumes ongoing investment in nuclear infrastructure and pursuit of the RRW:

Over the next two decades, Congress and the American people will be asked to consider initiatives that will help determine how fast and how far the United States can go in transforming its strategic capabilities and nuclear infrastructure to manage the risks and challenges of the 21st century.

And in that vein Secretaries Bodman and Gates write in their covering letter that

Ultimately, a reliable replacement warhead will be needed to sustain nuclear force capabilities, revitalize the nuclear infrastructure, and reduce the nuclear stockpile in a manner that is consistent with U.S. security objectives, including alliance commitments.

Except for references to prior reductions, and the claim that an RRW would be required to “reduce the nuclear stockpile,” there is nothing in this document to acknowledge that nuclear weapons carry risks, nothing to acknowledge NPT Article VI treaty obligations, nothing to suggest that continued reliance on nuclear weapons could promote nuclear proliferation or create opportunities for intending nuclear terrorists. In this report nuclear weapons serve national security … period. The DoD/DoE paper implies ongoing, extended retention of nuclear weapons, and at no point scouts the contrary.

And thus the two lines are drawn. The nuclearist argument assumes nuclear weapons are either desirable or, if not, at least inevitable. The prudentialist argument judges nuclear weapons unnecessary, undesirable (because extraordinarily risky), and at worst catastrophic … and certainly not inevitable.
The ‘Unforeseen’

We’ve noticed that Robert Gates invokes the unforeseen: “Our nuclear arsenal is vital for a final reason … we simply cannot predict the future. … We have to be prepared for contingencies we haven’t even considered.” Unsurprisingly, the “National Security and Nuclear Weapons …” paper also insists on that argument. It is an instance of a nondisconfirmable proposition, precisely because the future is—as Gates observes—‘unpredictable.’ But that is ‘unpredictable’ in the strong sense, of being surely known. Public policy, oriented to the future, requires that we make reasoned speculations on the future: ‘predictions’ in the weak sense.

Claims about the future are open to argument. They can be—if the subject is consequential, they must be—disputed, that is, reasoned on. The correct response to an ex cathedra dictum is to recognize that it is a prediction in the weak sense and ask ‘is that so? then, why?’ And that is exactly what must be said when confronted by the bold assertion, having invoked “unforeseen operational or technical problems or … adverse changes in the geopolitical environment”, that “a responsive infrastructure and a modern stockpile are needed to provide a cushion or hedge against such contingencies.” What if they are “needed” only if governments fail to negotiate a stable, just and secure abolition of nuclear weapon? What if their pursuit, pending abolition, would render abolition less attainable?

A prudent security policy is risk cognizant. Its authors must imagine possible future threats. Since the capacity to act must be prepared, we expect them to conceive and advocate precautions to be taken, capabilities to be put in place. We expect a discussion about ‘what to do?’, about ‘how much is enough?’ and ‘when must it be in place?’, given anticipated threats and some rational work on the likelihood any threat will emanate.

Nothing of that sort appears in “National Security and Nuclear Weapons …” Instead, we are told there could be ‘unforeseen’ threats, and that therefore the steps its authors promote are ‘needed.’ In this public document, at least, no case is made. The case is simply asserted. That is not enough.
Barack Obama on Nuclear Weapons Policy

Arms Control Today, the journal of the Washington-based Arms Control Association, asked Barack Obama several questions on nuclear policy. In this excerpt from his 10 September 2008 response I’ve highlit key phrases:

Obama: As president, I will set a new direction in nuclear weapons policy and show the world that America believes in its existing commitment under the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to work to ultimately eliminate all nuclear weapons. I fully support reaffirming this goal, as called for by George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, William Perry, and Sam Nunn, as well as the specific steps they propose to move us in that direction.[1] I have made it clear that America will not disarm unilaterally. Indeed, as long as states retain nuclear weapons, the United States will maintain a nuclear deterrent that is strong, safe, secure, and reliable. But I will not authorize the development of new nuclear weapons. And I will make the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons worldwide a central element of U.S. nuclear policy.10

Obama’s position has much in parallel with that of the 2008 House of Representatives. What distinguishes this Obama statement is his commitment that global ZNW will be a central element of US policy. Other terms cater to the status quo, whether used by presidents who may have wished to control or abolish nuclear weapons, or by nuclearists who pretend for denuclearization but work to keep a ready nuclear force: the term of art is ‘ultimately’. The test will be whether realistic, determined initiatives are offered to other countries with nuclear arsenals.


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President Obama’s Declared Policy on Nuclear Weapons

Upon President Barack Obama’s inauguration on 20 January 2009, the new Administration posted its agenda on the White House webpage. The section on nuclear weapons is under the heading ‘Foreign Policy’, not ‘Defense’. The general paragraph on foreign policy declares that the Obama-Biden administration will “secure nuclear weapons and loose nuclear materials from terrorists.” The detailed section on nuclear weapons reads:

Nuclear Weapons

- **A Record of Results:** The gravest danger to the American people is the threat of a terrorist attack with a nuclear weapon and the spread of nuclear weapons to dangerous regimes. Obama has taken bipartisan action to secure nuclear weapons and materials:
  - He joined Senator Dick Lugar (R-In) in passing a law to help the United States and our allies detect and stop the smuggling of weapons of mass destruction throughout the world.
  - He joined Senator Chuck Hagel (R-Ne) to introduce a bill that seeks to prevent nuclear terrorism, reduce global nuclear arsenals, and stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

- **Secure Loose Nuclear Materials from Terrorists:** Obama and Biden will secure all loose nuclear materials in the world within four years. While working to secure existing stockpiles of nuclear material, Obama and Biden will negotiate a verifiable global ban on the production of new nuclear weapons material. This will deny terrorists the ability to steal or buy loose nuclear materials.

- **Strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty:** Obama and Biden will crack down on nuclear proliferation by strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty so that countries like North Korea and Iran that break the rules will automatically face strong international sanctions.

- **Move Toward a Nuclear Free World:** Obama and Biden will set a goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and pursue it. Obama and Biden will always maintain a strong deterrent as long as nuclear weapons exist. But they will take several steps down the long road

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toward eliminating nuclear weapons. They will stop the development of new nuclear weapons; work with Russia to take U.S. and Russian ballistic missiles off hair trigger alert; seek dramatic reductions in U.S. and Russian stockpiles of nuclear weapons and material; and set a goal to expand the U.S.-Russian ban on intermediate-range missiles so that the agreement is global.\textsuperscript{11}

This carefully-chosen language sets a ‘goal’, commits to its ‘pursuit’, but defines its actions as “steps down the long road toward eliminating nuclear weapons.” The steps proposed are laudable and should be undertaken. Of course global abolition will depend on the readiness of other governments to agree to concrete, verifiable measures to achieve zero, which none have yet signaled they are ready to do. But the ‘long road’ language panders to nuclearists who argue that nuclear weapons will be with the United States for a long time and—some of them say—should be. What’s missing is putting weapons denuclearization on the agenda and asking other nuclear weapons states to join the drive for abolition or explain ‘why not’.

In the best of worlds the Obama-Biden team would press into the hard work of negotiating actual weapons denuclearization, engaging the governments of nuclear and non-nuclear states alike. Some unilateral steps could be taken, altogether consistently with maintaining a ‘deterrent’ against others’ nuclear forces in being. For example, President Obama could ask the military to begin drafting contingency plans for a non-nuclear world, and begin training for coalition operations to maintain a ‘no-nuclear-weapons’ regime.

Barack Obama spoke briefly of nuclear weapons in his Inaugural Address. Here again the aim, the objective, is muted. “With old friends and former foes, we will work tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat, and roll back the spectre of a warming planet.”\textsuperscript{12} The operative term is lessen. Of course. Laudable. But there is no sign that abolition will be on the table. Governments looking to see an Obama presidency promoting a real prospect of abolition, not just more years on the ‘long road’, may not be encouraged by this careful drafting.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{11} http://www.whitehouse.gov/agenda/foreign_policy/
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What Would Nuclear Abolition Look Like?

Bruce D. Larkin

We are seated, in a very large examination hall, with hundreds of other students. Our assignment is to imagine ‘nuclear abolition’. As we look at our exam paper, we realize that ‘nuclear abolition’ could be either the process by which abolition is brought about, or the end result, a world which had abolished nuclear weapons. These are different problems, because they begin from quite distinct initial conditions.

Assume that it’s the process we’re to survey. Which process? The [i] most likely, or [ii] most desirable, or [iii] best in assuring against nuclear war, or use of nuclear weapons, taking place before abolition is achieved? Or is it [iv] the several which are more likely than others, that is, those among which the actual outcome will probably be found?

What conditions are nuclear weapon states likely to seek? To require? If nuclear abolition is the result of a complex negotiation, what tradeoffs will the states—nuclear and non-nuclear states—endeavor to win?

Process

But perhaps this exam question isn’t so hard after all. I could start my paper by saying that achieving abolition is a simple problem, because of one political fact, one scientific fact, and a compelling engine. The political fact is that each nuclear weapon state must come to agree that global abolition is in its interest. The scientific fact is that sources of significant quantities of fissile material are, at a first approximation, known and controllable. The engine, which

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could drive governments and citizens to commit to finding and following a path to nuclear abolition, is that any states’ having nuclear weapons is *profoundly dangerous* to each of them.

To abolish nuclear weapons the world will need to forge an *adequate consensus among the governments of nuclear weapon states that*

[1] the risks and uncertainties under denuclearization are significantly less, and more tractable, than the risks and uncertainties inherent in nuclearism, and that

[2] the risks inherent in nuclearism are not tolerable.

Note, above all, that both the present world and the future world are assumed to be worlds of risk. That’s important because it means the challenge “it’s too risky to give up nuclear weapons” can be dismissed ... unless the challenger can show that denuclearization is riskier than the *status quo*.

Of course, if the risks in a nuclear world were small, were ‘tolerable’, then we might be persuaded to shrug our shoulders and move on to higher priorities. I don’t believe they are tolerable. But the issue is not what I believe. The question is: in a modern polity, where does responsibility lie to justify mounting and deploying extraordinary destructive power? The answer is quite clear: its advocates must make a persuasive case. Those who advocate continued reliance on nuclear weapons *bear the burden of proof* to show that the risks they impose—on their citizens and all others— are ‘tolerable’.

And in my view, that is a responsibility that nuclearists studiously avoid. They do not want the risks of nuclearism to be aired, to be acknowledged, to be on the agenda of public discussion.

Significantly, *governments* are not in the same position as *nuclearists*. Nuclearists, asked by previous governments to develop, maintain, and deploy nuclear weapons, have come to advocate for nuclear weapons as instruments of state security and advantage. Governments, on the other hand, have to ask ‘how can we best maintain the security of our citizens?’ and the corresponding question ‘if deterrence failed and nuclear weapons were used against our people, would we have the capacity to restore a decent society?’ It is perfectly possible, and in fact is what
we should anticipate, that we would find in any given country—China, the United States, Israel—both nuclearists assuming nuclear weapons serve the national interest and a government of officials concluding that nuclear weapons profoundly threaten the national interest. No doubt nuclearists would be joined by some political factions, some members of every political faction, by members of government, by strong voices in civil society, but if the government concluded against nuclearism, and were adequately supported in political factions and civil society, the State could negotiate with other States to bring about nuclear abolition. This opening into the problem of ‘nuclear abolition’ suggests what the process of nuclear abolition could look like.

**Of What Would a ‘Process of Nuclear Abolition’ Consist in the Coming Year?**

I could read the exam question to mean ‘what should States do in the coming year?’ and ‘what should activists press States to do in the coming year?’

Imagine that ‘the coming year’ is 2009 and that this exam is given before Barack Obama’s inauguration on January 20th. I will divide my exam paper into two parts, one focused on nuclear-weapon states and the other on non-nuclear-weapon states.

**Part I. Nuclear-Weapon States**

Three key steps can and should be taken in 2009: (i) unilateral calls for a forum and a concise statement of the objective, (ii) initiating the forum, and (iii) completing the ‘statement of aims’.

At the best, each nuclear-weapon state, both those ‘recognized’ in the NPT and those not, would declare to the others that it favored instituting the forum and each country’s stating its initial understanding of the aims.

Preliminary to the ‘forum’ I would recommend each nuclear-weapon state designate an officer ready to meet daily with counterparty officers in a convenient city, to ensure that there can be prompt exchanges and acknowledgments among the nine.

The forum would grow out of these officers’ preparations. It would be focused on content. Here one Ambassador could ask another, ‘must the first step be to ask whether we believe having nuclear weapons makes our country more safe?’ Or should it be:
‘assume we agree nuclear weapons make us less safe, how can we abolish them?’ An Ambassador could put the question to colleagues this way: ‘what would you require of an abolition world to judge that it would be safer than the status quo?’

The point is to have one fixed locus, attended by senior Ambassadors with access to and direction from their heads of government, to give ‘defining’ and ‘solving’ the path forward their undivided attention.

A ‘statement of aims’ need not come out of a vacuum. The forum could go back to Resolution 1 of the United Nations General Assembly, meeting on 24 January 1946. It created an Atomic Energy Commission mandated to ‘deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy and other related matters’ and included among its Terms of Reference that the Commission should make “specific proposals”

5. (c) for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction;
5. (d) for effective safeguards by way of inspection and other means to protect complying States against the hazards of violations and evasions.

Part II. Non-Nuclear-Weapon States

The drafters of the NPT (1968) struck a dual bargain. First, states without nuclear weapons would forego them, and those with them would give them up. Second, all states could exploit nuclear insights for peaceful purposes. In doing so, they adopted views on scientific exchange and ‘peaceful purposes’ already explicit in UNGA Resolution 1 (1946).

In an effective abolition world all states—including non-nuclear-weapon states—are freed from the possibility of being attacked with nuclear weapons, or suffering other effects of their use (such as radioactive fallout). But that is not the only security contingency which governments of non-nuclear-weapon states must consider. Many are participants in alliances, or understandings, that they would receive armed help if attacked by states using ‘conventional’ means. Their guarantors are, in some cases, nuclear-armed states which offered their guarantees from the high ground of nuclear forces in readiness. Would they make
analogous guarantees in a denuclearized world? Would their ‘conventional’ guarantees be credible?

Moreover, all states in an abolition world share concern that abolition be and remain effective, that no violation upset their security.

These considerations argue for forums among non-nuclear-weapon states, and among ‘allies’, analogous to those among the nuclear Powers. The questions Ambassadors could address to one another would be variations on those which Ambassadors of the nuclear-weapons states would pose. Their purpose, too, would be to come to an aim, or a panel of aims, offered as the purpose of negotiating abolition. Note that not all states need to have the same objectives.

Some non-nuclear-weapon states are committed to the policy of calling on the nuclear Powers to meet their NPT Article VI obligations. These governments have already given thought to the relationship of abolition to their vital interests. Their caucusing among UN members in the First Committee and the General Assembly suggest the political initiatives they could take vis-à-vis their peers.

• • •

A reminder: 2009 should yield a clearly-stated aim. In addition, forums should address the question ‘how do we pursue this aim?’ A hint: obstacles [objections, fears, uncertainties, ‘red lines’, declared interests] should be explained and put in a soluble form. And a suggestion: keep texts simple and direct.

An obstacle is soluble when there are identified responsive measures that others could take, or would be willing to see the objector take, that dampen or resolve the obstacle. A certain burden lies on the objector to find and state how the objection could be resolved. As a matter of praxis, of course, agreement is more likely if the ‘responsive measures’ do not themselves provoke significant new dispute.

End State

On to the ZNW world. Assume that nuclear abolition had been negotiated and effected. There had been a global agreement to
declare all nuclear weapons and destroy them. Other measures worked against anyone’s making new nuclear weapons.

What would this ZNW world look like? These would be the most significant characteristics of an abolition world:

- the norm ‘no nuclear weapons’ would be universally accepted
- there would be an elaborate fabric of inquiry, surveillance, and accounting to detect any step to build a nuclear weapon
- an acknowledged Assurancy would be chartered to determine whether a weapon program or preliminaries to a weapon program were being undertaken, and then what steps—including use of force—were required to maintain the ‘no nuclear weapons’ norm
- the Assurancy could command a set of institutions to take measures short of force …
- and armed capabilities to implement Assurancy decisions if force were judged necessary.

It’s evident that sustaining an effective ‘no nuclear weapons’ norm would pose ongoing political demands. And it would not be easy.

Just as getting to zero will require states’ believing that it is in their interest to do so, so the social, economic, and security collaterals to maintaining ZNW will need to nurture an ongoing belief that interest is served. That belief must be ‘adequately persuasive’ to keep the state committed to ZNW.

We could put it another way: that a ‘no nuclear weapons security community’ requires ongoing cultural commitments. These could include, for example,

- restraint, in relations with other states
- practices of pacific settlement of disputes
- collective practices, and preparations, for crisis avoidance
- in case of suspicion of forbidden activity, commitment to the ‘satisfaction rule’
• openness and accountability
• ongoing ‘mutual reassurance’ practices

Each of these positions could be applied, as well, to disputes which risk ‘conventional war’. To what extent states would continue to create armed forces, and how they would understand the ‘right of self-defense’ and ‘legitimate’ use of force, will shape the context in which ZNW is practiced. Breakdown of negotiated resolution of differences, and resort instead to threats and force, would spawn arguments for returning nuclear options to each state’s judgment and control. On the other hand, the more successful pacific methods proved to be, the more likely that a ZNW regime would strengthen with time.

What Would This End State ‘Look Like’?

Our examination paper could begin by identifying four tasks which this end state would require:

• sustaining the political authority of the Assurancy
• searching for violation
• managing suspicion of violations
• guaranteeing that civil-sector nuclear energy activities did not spill fissile material into any uncontrolled political space

Of course, these requirements are very much like those we see in today’s nuclear non-proliferation world, with the IAEA taking the role of an Assurancy; the search for and management of violations is undertaken by states sometimes by themselves and sometimes through the IAEA. The IAEA’s pre-INFCIRC/540 role focused largely on watching fissile material flow into civil-sector reactors and nuclear waste, incorporating fissile material, flow out. If it had

Bruce D. Larkin: What Would Nuclear Abolition Look Like?
evidence that fissile material could be being diverted to a military program, the IAEA could raise the alarm.

Similarly, the obverse side of the coin of ‘non-proliferation’ is ‘universality’. A challenge to the Assurancy’s authority, then, would question the norm’s universal acceptance. How could any such challenge be prevented? And what could be done if such a challenge seemed to be emerging? We can speculate on what grounds such a challenge could be made. It could take the form of

- a claim that ZNW was breaking down: for example, that a state or group was engaged in a nuclear program that the Assurancy was failing to halt
- a claim that the transition to ZNW had been significantly imperfect: for example, that a nuclear weapon state had held back nuclear weapons or fissile material
- a claim that the state could not maintain security against conventional challenges: that ZNW had exposed it to unacceptable vulnerability
- a claim that the instruments of ZNW were unacceptably intrusive: for example, a charge that the Assurancy’s powers to conduct inquiries and inspections were being misused to give some advantage—military, economic—to some state or states to the disadvantage of others

**Centrality of Politics**

Another way to compose our examination paper would turn on this proposition: that future ‘nuclear disarmament’ will be the subject of an ongoing and often intense politics, both within and among states, that cannot be described in advance.

This approach argues that if governments believe nuclear abolition is an important global accomplishment then the practical agreement to maintain ZNW will be forthcoming. Satisfaction of requirements for ZNW will flow from that agreement. But if governments doubt that a ZNW world is better than a world in which the nuclear option exists, then neither legalist nor technical arguments will enable effective ZNW. Instead, governments will

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deny the Assurancy resources and access, and may test the limits of the ZNW agreement.

The late Wolfgang Panofsky said that it was natural for the United States and Soviet Union, during the Cold War, to test their arms control agreements by taking actions exploring ambiguities, sometimes approaching that which was prohibited. The reaction of the other party signaled just what it understood the treaty to mean. Their mutual moves were then part of what Thomas Schelling termed “tacit bargaining.”

I’ve observed elsewhere1 that negotiation is the defining activity of politics, properly understood. All elements of a nuclear abolition regime will have been subject to negotiation, and will remain the subjects of negotiation once an agreement and Assurancy are in place. Facts will be disputed. Charges will be made and require assessment. Civil-sector nuclear activities will prompt suspicions. Interdependency of steps taken by the parties —‘sequencing’—may spawn disputes questioning others’ ‘good faith’. Only ongoing negotiation will sustain the regime.

From this vantage, ‘nuclear abolition’ will appear incomplete, uncertain, even fragile. Just as the contemporary Non-Proliferation Regime is seen as a Swiss cheese of inadequacies, non-participations, concealed intent, tolerated violations, postponed commitments, evasions, ambiguities and loopholes, so it is likely that a ZNW regime will also lay itself open to criticism that it is unsound and unreliable.

But if challenge to the abolition regime approaches crisis, Powers will be compelled to judge whether their security is better-served by abolition or, abandoning abolition, unrestrained self-help. Incentives to join in enforcing the abolition regime will be clearer than ever before. No one can say in advance, ignorant of the specific circumstances and the actor governments of the time, whether those incentives will prove great enough to sustain effective enforcement, but there will have been much prior ‘strategic’ thought about action at the brink of such a crisis. Polities stand and fall by their capacities, and their readiness to act jointly, at just such moments.

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1 War Stories (Bern: Peter Lang, 2001).

Bruce D. Larkin: What Would Nuclear Abolition Look Like?
And If the Assumption of Good Faith Negotiation to a Common Purpose is Wrong?

Now we come to the last part of our exam. We open the examination paper. It says: “And if the assumption of good faith negotiation to a common purpose is wrong? what then?”

My first reaction is to reject the premise. What is proposed, I would insist, is realistic and pragmatic. It turns on a demonstrable flaw in the ‘logic of deterrence’. Even if some nuclear powers were to begin with every intention of retaining their nuclear capacity, I believe they could be persuaded that doing so opens them to such grave danger that they should seek security in abolition. I do not assume that every nuclear state will enter a good faith negotiation centered on the common purpose of nuclear weapons abolition at the onset, but I believe it is possible all can be drawn to that purpose, that they can be won to a new, non-nuclear security system that recognizes their fears and uncertainties and offers practical assurances for future security.

In this view, the process of nuclear abolition would be fraught, troubled, unpromising, and beset by states’ seeking advantage at the expense—or greater insecurity—of others. To imagine otherwise would indeed be naïve and merely wishful.

A quick glance around the world, as 2008 comes to an end, illustrates how resistance to nuclear zero could manifest itself. Consider three nuclear weapon states. The United States is only now approaching the end of eight years of ‘we first’ policies that assumed long-term retention of nuclear weapons and claimed a right to undertake unilateral ‘preventive war’, without restraint.2 Israel, not admitting to have nuclear weapons but justifying use of military force as necessary to ‘self defense’, is in the throes of a new war against Hamas in Gaza, reproducing its 2006 war against Hezbollah in Lebanon. In this case, however, it is ‘preventive war’ against a segment of the populations Israel holds in the concentration camps of Gaza and the West Bank. And a recent account of Russian resistance to an exposé of a 1957 nuclear accident suggests how difficult it would be to persuade a Russian

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government that transparency, not continued secrecy, would best contribute to Russian nuclear security.\(^3\) Governments of these three countries could adopt the common purpose of achieving nuclear zero—Barack Obama is on record that “Here’s what I’ll say as President: America seeks a world in which there are no nuclear weapons”\(^4\)—but only in the face of deep-rooted nuclearism.

### A Short List of Immediate Steps

Now I put aside the fiction that we are in a University examination hall, writing our exams. Instead, we are responsible government officials at the highest level. If it were within my authority, I would begin 2009 by doing the following:

- establish an ‘abolition officer’ in an appropriate place within my government, and ensure he or she had adequate staff and authority.

- in discreet diplomatic conversations, request peer governments to do the same, and to anticipate initiatives from our ‘abolition officer’; and indicate readiness of our ‘abolition officer’ to receive correspondence from peers.

- declare in highest-level conversations and by purposive letters to other governments my wish to see a global initiative centered on achieving, within a ‘very few years’, nuclear weapon abolition with appropriate safeguards.

- if mine were a nuclear-weapon state, invite my peer nuclear Powers to take part in an ongoing Forum of the type described above ...

- … and as a first step suggest that aims 5(c) and 5(d) of the January 1946 UNGA Resolution 1 are a sufficient statement of general purposes, to which the Forum should draft appropriate ‘specific proposals’.

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• if mine were a non-nuclear-weapon state, … [as above]

• declare to my peer nuclear Powers readiness to undertake a complete accounting of nuclear warheads and fissile material in the history of our national nuclear program to the present, and to establish sharing of that data and joint means of verifying and correcting such information with any other peer or peers prepared to reciprocate.

• instruct my military to prepare contingency plans and design a force structure suited to (i) security during a speedy transition to nuclear zero and (ii) security given global nuclear zero.

• establish an interagency institute to model and simulate verification and decision processes under nuclear zero; and propose some joint modeling and simulation with other Powers.

That would be enough for starters.
Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAEA</td>
<td>International Atomic Energy Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFCIRC</td>
<td>an IAEA Information Circular</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPT</td>
<td>Non-Proliferation Treaty [Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons]</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNGA</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly</td>
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<td>ZNW</td>
<td>Zero Nuclear Weapons</td>
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**Bruce D. Larkin:**

What Would Nuclear Abolition Look Like?

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Appendix A

Catalog of Moves

to a Transition to Nuclear Zero

Bruce D. Larkin

This is a selective, draft, preliminary list cataloguing measures to advance weapon denuclearization. The plan is to identify each move concisely, add a sentence or two of explanation, and then—with assistance of colleagues—identify one or more especially significant source (description, document, article, book) about the measure.

Some of these ‘moves’ are actually stubs: topical placeholders inviting more specific ‘moves’.

Listing numbers may be changed in subsequent versions.

The complementary list of WMD Commission (Blix Commission) recommendations is attached at the end of this document.

SECTION HEADINGS

A. The Treaty Regime
B. US-Russian Bilateral Relations, &c.
C. Fissile Material
D. Nuclear Systems
E. Deployment Practices, Inventory Reduction.
F. Dismantling Weapons and Facilities
G. Accounting
H. Stability Measures
I. Institutional and Processual Measures
J. Enhanced Verification Capabilities
L. Addressing Political Obstacles to Denuclearization
M. Nuclear Weapons-Free Zones
N. Enforcement
O. Authoritative Decision

Abbreviations and Revision History: at the end of the appendix.
A. The Treaty Regime

[A.1] UN Security Council

The UN Security Council bears, under the Charter, “principal responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.” It could seize itself of nuclear weapons; it could hold that mere possession, in itself, threatens international security. The 2000 NPT Review Conference “reaffirms that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, States must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State … ” It also said that “the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.”

By Resolution 1540 the UNSC declared that proliferation of nuclear weapons “constitutes a threat to international peace and security.”\(^1\) That resolution carefully avoids addressing ‘mere’ possession.

Cf. Recommendation 60 of the WMD Commission (Blix Commission) on UNSC action.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) UNSC Resolutions 1540 (2004), 28 April 2004.
\(^2\) WMD Commission Recommendation 60:
“The United Nations Security Council should make greater use of its potential to reduce and eliminate threats of weapons of mass destruction – whether they are linked to existing arsenals, proliferation or terrorists. It should take up for consideration any withdrawal from or breach of an obligation not to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

“Making use of its authority under the Charter to take decisions with binding effect for all members, the Council may, \textit{inter alia}: require individual states to accept effective and comprehensive monitoring, inspection and verification; require member states to enact legislation to secure global implementation of specific rules or measures; and decide, as instance of last resort, on the use of economic or military enforcement measures.

“Before UN reform has made the Security Council more representative of the UN membership, it is especially important that binding decisions should be preceded by effective consultation to ensure that they are supported by the
[A.2] The Non-Proliferation Regime: NPT and IAEA.

[A.2a] Additional Protocol (INFCIRC/540)

The Gulf War (1990-1991) exposed the inability of IAEA to identify an illicit nuclear weapon program. The remedy was to draft recommended provisions to which IAEA member States would commit voluntarily, including broader IAEA on-site inspection rights. States’ completing steps to adhere to the Additional Protocol is a priority objective of the regime.

[A.2b] NPT Universalization

Only Israel, Pakistan, and India have not signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. North Korea signed and ratified, but amid controversy withdrew.


At the 2005 NPT Review Conference the United States— that is, the GW Bush Administration—dismissed positions to which the United States had committed in 1995 and 2000. The ‘13 Points’ were nothing more than “suggestions.” US reaffirmation of 1995 and 2000 commitments would heal this breach of commonality.

Washington asserts that “the ‘Thirteen Steps’ [declared at the 2000 NPT Review Conference] now constitute an inadequate set of policy priorities for achieving the goals of Article VI and the Preamble of the Treaty.” Further, it asserts a distinction between ‘legal’ results and “statements of political rather than legal agreement,” and diminishes the ‘Thirteen Steps’ as mere “political statements”, as “suggestions.” The White House has concluded that “the ‘Thirteen Steps’ formulation from 2000 does not fit today’s conditions.” “The security environment has changed substantially since 2000, and we cannot assume that all suggestions made then necessarily remain relevant today.” Critics of this White House position believe Washington’s claims violate the principle of irreversibility.

In fact, the US presentation endeavors to redefine irreversibility, replacing its plain meaning by an economistic calculation of a “balance of costs and benefits” in the minds of “would-be violators.” Of course, that’s not what the White House means: what it means is that the United States can abandon its prior commitment to positions agreed among States Party whenever it determines that such-and-such is in the minds of the membership of the UN and will be accepted and respected.”

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[A.3] CTBT Ratification and Entry Into Force

The CTBT opened to signature in September 1996. Its ‘entry into force’ provision requires that all of a group of 44 countries ratify. The 44 include a number of states which have not signed, or have signed but not ratified. Iran and Israel have signed but not ratified; India, Pakistan and North Korea have not signed. France, Russia, and the United Kingdom have ratified. China and the United States have signed but not ratified. [CTBT ratification would be a symbolic step toward Zero, but with few practical effects.]

[A3.a] Test Moratorium

… pending CTBT entry into force.4

[A.4] Negotiating Forum to Address Nuclear Disarmament

For example, within the CD.5

The WMD Commission (Blix Commission) wrote that “There is an urgent need to revive meaningful negotiations, through all available intergovernmental mechanisms, on the three main objectives of reducing the danger of present arsenals, preventing proliferation, and outlawing all weapons of mass destruction once and for all.”6

[A.5] Irreversibility

Attach the norm of ‘irreversibility’ to steps toward denuclearization. [This might require, for example, leadership of a state which may or might be a ‘violator’ sometime in the future. Why would States negotiate with Washington if it insisted on this caveat? The point is that the GW Bush White House did not want these subjects negotiated.

4 [A.2] and [A.2a] are among the “practical steps” agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

5 The 2000 NPT Review Conference called for such a body within the CD, among agreed ‘practical steps’.

abandoning the conventional treaty provision that states may withdraw from a treaty because of changes threatening its vital interests]

[A.6] ‘Unequivocal Undertaking” to Zero

The key language of paragraph 6 of the ‘practical steps’ agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference: “6. An unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI.”


The GW Bush administration abandoned the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Its aims could be brought within the terms of a treaty banning ‘strategic missiles’ with nuclear warheads, which we could call a ZBM Treaty.

B. US-Russian Bilateral Relations, &c.

[B.1] START Treaty Extension

The US-Russian Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (‘START I’) expires at the end of 2009. It includes verification provisions; there is call for their extension beyond 2009.

[B.2] Trilateral Initiative

“Those seeking to design a system for verifying the dismantlement of nuclear weapons do not have to start from a blank slate. They can benefit a great deal from building on the experience of the Trilateral Initiative. This was a six-year (1996-2002) effort to develop a verification system under which Russia and the United States could submit classified forms of weapons-origin fissile material to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verification.

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7 The 2000 NPT Review Conference also called for irreversibility among agreed ‘practical steps’.

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and monitoring in a irreversible manner and for an indefinite period of time.”

[B.3] US ABM System Element Deployment to Poland and Czechoslovakia

The Bush Administration has insisted that its proposed deployment is defensive against Iran. Russia insists that the deployment would threaten it.

[B.4] Collaborations

Cf. the US-Russian collaborative programs: the MPC&A (Material Protection, Control & Accounting) Program, for which the US partner is the Department of Energy, and the parallel Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, partnered with the Department of Defense.

C. Fissile Material

[C.1] Management of Uranium Enrichment

Although the NPT permits all States Party to enrich uranium for civil purposes, the Bush Administration, and others, insist that Iranian uranium enrichment is part of alleged Iranian striving for nuclear weapons and therefore must not be permitted. The UN Security Council has adopted resolutions imposing modulated strictures and sanctions on Iran.

[C.1a] A ‘Fuel Bank’ to Manage Uranium for Civil Reactor Use

Mohamed ElBaradei and others have proposed various forms of a ‘Fuel Bank’ which would place uranium enrichment, delivery of fuel, and retrieval of spent fuel under an agreed system of management and control.

[C.2] Control of HEU Used as Reactor Fuel

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Retrieval of spent fuel aside, several ad hoc agreements have been made and executed to return HEU, held by non-nuclear-weapon states for civil purposes, to the nuclear weapon state by which it was supplied. Other HEU is not the subject of such an agreement.

[C.2a] Removal of HEU From Research Reactors

[C.2b] Cease Using HEU as Fuel in Reactors for Naval Propulsion

[C.3] ‘Denaturing’ of ‘Excess’ HEU and Pu

The Acheson-Lilienthal Report included as one step that could be taken further diluting HEU by mixing the $^{235}\text{U}$ with quantities of $^{238}\text{U}$ until the level of $^{235}\text{U}$ was unsuitable for a bomb. Similarly, Pu suitable for a bomb could be made unsuitable. The term they used to describe this is ‘denaturing’. Some Russian HEU is being delivered to the United States in diluted form as part of a bilateral deal.

[C.4] Designing ‘Proliferation Resistant’ Nuclear Reactors

[C.5] Placing Spent Reactor Fuel ‘Beyond Reach’

The aim is to prevent, or render far more difficult, access to spent reactor fuel to extract from it fissile material (Pu, $^{235}\text{U}$). One proposal is to ‘vitrify’ the spent fuel, encasing it in glass, and placing the resultant cylinders into a deep shaft. Another is to recycle separated fissile material as reactor fuel.


A treaty might, for example, prohibit producing unsafeguarded weapons-grade $^{235}\text{U}$ or Pu.\(^9\)

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\(^9\) The 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference called for a fissile material convention. “The immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices … ”  The 2000 [ Bruce D. Larkin: Catalog of Moves in a Transition to Nuclear Zero]
[C.8] Transfer ‘Excess’ Military FM to Verified Peaceful Purposes

This step was called for in 2000 NPT Review section 15.\textsuperscript{10}

[C.9] Systematic Study of Fissile Material Control

For example, consider work of the International Panel on Fissile Materials, established in 2006, especially their annual reports.\textsuperscript{11}

\textbf{D. Nuclear Systems}

[D.1] Foregoing Delivery System Enhancements

Nuclear weapon states could agree to forego refinements of their delivery systems. The Russian announcement that it intended to improve the penetration capabilities of Russian nuclear missiles is an example of intent to enhance declared.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} NPT Review Conference put the ‘practical step’ this way: “The necessity of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a nondiscriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices … “Consensus on two key issues—what constitutes ‘verifiability’? and how to achieve a ‘non-discriminatory’ text which does not advantage those with nuclear weapon inventories—has been elusive.

\textsuperscript{11} http://www.fissilematerials.org/ IPFM declares its purpose: “The mission of the IPFM is to analyze the technical basis for practical and achievable policy initiatives to secure, consolidate, and reduce stockpiles of highly enriched uranium and plutonium. These fissile materials are the key ingredients in nuclear weapons, and their control is critical to nuclear weapons disarmament, to halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and to ensuring that terrorists do not acquire nuclear weapons.”

\textsuperscript{12} “Russia: Countering U.S. Misile Plans,” \textit{The New York Times}, 2 December 2008. “Russia plans to upgrade its missiles to allow them to evade American weapons in space and penetrate any prospective missile shield, a Russian officer said Monday. The

\textbf{Bruce D. Larkin: Catalog of Moves in a Transition to Nuclear Zero}
Foregoing Warhead Enhancements

Bush Administration efforts to win Congressional support for development of a ‘Reliable Replacement Warhead’ is an example of a proposed enhancement.

Developing ‘Conventional’ Equivalents

The declared role, and justification, for some deployed nuclear weapons would be challenged if ‘conventional’ equivalents could be deployed in their place. For example, precision guidance of a ‘conventional’ HE weapon could bring about as much destruction as was needed, where it was needed, rather than relying on a more powerful nuclear explosion to destroy the target.

E. Deployment Practices. Inventory Reductions.

Dealtering Deployed Nuclear Weapon Systems

Deployed nuclear systems are ‘ready’, or can be ‘ready’ soon after a command to prepare to launch. ‘Dealtering’ moves systems to a state one or more steps removed from being ‘ready’, with the aim of reducing probability of unauthorized launch or launch by error, and giving time for reconsideration.13

Abandoning Categories of Nuclear Weapons, or Moving Them to an ‘Unalerted’ Status

In September and October 1991 GHW Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev took unilateral steps to reduce the number of deployed nuclear weapons. Each removed nuclear weapons from surface ships; cruise missiles were removed from submarines (but for retention, not dismantlement); and tactical nuclear weapons (not deliverable by attack aircraft) were repatriated from Western and Eastern Europe.

France abandoned its ground-based nuclear systems. The United Kingdom has given up aircraft-borne systems.

The Blix Commission urged: “Take nuclear weapons off high-alert status to reduce the risk of launching by error’; make deep reductions in strategic nuclear weapons” and placing “all non-strategic nuclear weapons in centralized storage.”

[E.3]  Sequential Reduction of Warhead Inventories

[E.4]  ‘Jump to Zero’ (‘Last Mile’) Nuclear Abolition

[E.5]  Agreed Multilateral Cacheing of Nuclear Weapons

[E.5a]  … By an International Body (e.g. UNSC)

[E.5b]  … Jointly, by the Nuclear Weapons States

[E.5c]  … As an Enforcement Capability

[E.5d]  … As a Temporary Measure Pending Abolition

F. Dismantling Weapons and Facilities

[F.1]  Dismantling Retired Warheads

Some dismantlement takes place. The United States, however, has a long backlog of retired weapons awaiting dismantlement.


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See [J.1] Enhanced Verification

[F.3] ‘General and Complete Disarmament … ’

The 2000 NPT Review Conference includes among ‘practical steps’: “11. Reaffirmation that the ultimate objective of the efforts of States in the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament under effective international control.”

G. Accounting

[G.1] Accounting: Declarations

Declaring facts germane to accounting of fissile material and warheads will contribute to subsequent complete disclosure. For example, the United States, during the Clinton Administration, made much fuller declaration of nuclear tests than had been made previously.

No strategic harm would occur from disclosing, for example, the deployment histories of dismantled warheads, or deployments of thirty years ago.

[G.2] Accounting: Preserving Archives

Multiple copies of documents and computer records required to achieve complete disclosure should be made and deposited in secure repositories. The existence and completeness of those records should be periodically verified by audit.


The nuclear weapon states, and those states which began but abandoned nuclear weapon programs, could interview personnel who took part in the programs to develop detailed accounts of procedures for inventorying weapon production and tracking warheads. Interviews could include
explanations of the typical handling of key documents. Who prepared these records? On what evidence? Subject to what procures for subsequent correction? &c. Mutatis mutandis the same should be done for fissile material streams.

H. Stability Measures

[H.1] Downsizing of Nuclear Arsenals

See [E.3] Sequential Reduction of Warhead Inventories

[H.2] Greater NW State Transparency

[H.3] Unilateral Reductions in ‘Non-Strategic’ NWs

Eliminating ‘tactical nuclear weapons’, ‘sub-strategic weapons’, and functionally equivalent ‘variable-yield warheads’ from inventories. The argument is that these tempt use for purposes other than nuclear deterrence, such as ‘war-fighting’.


[H.5] Reduced Defense Reliance on NWs

See [H.7] NW States’ Restricting Uses to Nuclear Deterrence Only

[H.6] NW States’ Joining in Process Leading to Zero NWs

See [A.3] Negotiating Forum to Address Nuclear Disarmament.

[H.7] NW States’ Restricting Uses to Nuclear Deterrence Only

That is, neither adopting as policy, nor making preparations, to use nuclear weapons to deter non-nuclear

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15 Cf. section 15 paragraph 9 of the 2000 NPT Review Conference conclusions, in which a number of these measures with aim to promote “international stability” are listed.
attack or suppress ‘WMD’ capabilities, as ‘bunker busters’, for engineering purposes, to produce EMP or directed energy, or for any other purpose than nuclear deterrence.

I. Institutional and Processual Measures

[I.1] See [A.4] Negotiating Forum to Address Nuclear Disarmament

[I.2] Accountability Measures

2000 NPT Review Conference [15.12]: “Regular reports, within the framework of the strengthened review process for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, by all States parties on the implementation of article VI and paragraph 4 © of the 1995 Decision on “Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament”, and recalling the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996.”

J. Verification

[J.1] Enhanced Verification

2000 NPT Review Conference [15.13]: “13. The further development of the verification capabilities that will be required to provide assurance of compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world.”


[K.1] The Blix Commission: “States, individually and collectively, should consistently pursue policies designed to ensure that no state feels a need to acquire weapons of mass destruction.”

[K.2] Issues Posed By: North Korea

[K.3] Issues Posed By: Iran


Bruce D. Larkin: Catalog of Moves in a Transition to Nuclear Zero
[K.4] Issues Posed By: Israel

[K.5] Issues Posed By: India

[K.6] Issues Posed By: Pakistan

[K.7] Acerbic Disputes: Israeli Occupation of Palestinian Territories

[K.8] Acerbic Disputes: Chinese Claim to Taiwan

[K.9] Acerbic Disputes: India-Pakistan

[K.10] Risk Analyses

    Martin Hellman urges systematic study of ‘risk’ that an episode could lead to nuclear weapon use.17

L. Addressing Political Obstacles to Denuclearization

[L.1] United States

[L.2] United Kingdom

[L.3] France

[L.4] Russia

[L.5] China

[L.6] Israel

[L.7] India

[L.8] Pakistan

M. Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones

[M.1] Zones: Exponents of Regional Denuclearization

http://nuclearrisk.org/statement.php

Bruce D. Larkin: Catalog of Moves in a Transition to Nuclear Zero
[M.2] Zones: Nuclear Weapon States’ Adherence to Zonal Protocols

Zones’ treaties typically include protocols to which the nuclear weapon states are invited to adhere. Those which have not done so could adhere. Terms leading regions toward global ZNW could be negotiated.

N. Enforcement

[N.1] Stand-By: State-Designated Stand-By Military Units


[N.3] Support Readiness: Communications and Logistics

N. Authoritative Decision

[O.1] See UNSC

[O.2] Compliance Orders

[O.3] Non-Military Enforcement

[O.4] Armed Enforcement
The Blix Commission: 13 Nuclear Recommendations

We’ve noted a number of Blix Commission proposals, above. The Commission summarised its recommendations on nuclear weapons in thirteen initial points, reproduced here.

* * *

ANNEX 1: WMDC RECOMMENDATIONS

NUCLEAR WEAPONS
Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons

WMDC RECOMMENDATION

1. All parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty need to revert to the fundamental and balanced non-proliferation and disarmament commitments that were made under the treaty and confirmed in 1995 when the treaty was extended indefinitely.

WMDC RECOMMENDATION

2. All parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty should implement the decision on principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament, the decision on strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty review process, and the resolution on the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, all adopted in 1995. They should also promote the implementation of ‘the thirteen practical steps’ for nuclear disarmament that were adopted in 2000.

WMDC RECOMMENDATION

3. To enhance the effectiveness of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, all Non-Proliferation Treaty non-nuclear-weapon states parties should accept comprehensive safeguards as strengthened by the International Atomic Energy

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Bruce D. Larkin: Catalog of Moves in a Transition to Nuclear Zero
Agency Additional Protocol.

WMDC RECOMMENDATION

4 The states parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty should establish a standing secretariat to handle administrative matters for the parties to the treaty. This secretariat should organize the treaty’s Review Conferences and their Preparatory Committee sessions. It should also organize other treaty related meetings upon the request of a majority of the states parties.

WMDC RECOMMENDATION

5 Negotiations with North Korea should aim at a verifiable agreement including, as a principal element, North Korea’s manifesting its adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and accepting the 1997 Additional Protocol, as well as revival and legal confirmation of the commitments made in the 1992 Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula: notably, that neither North nor South Korea shall have nuclear weapons or nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities. Fuel-cycle services should be assured through international arrangements. The agreement should also cover biological and chemical weapons, as well as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, thus making the Korean peninsula a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

WMDC RECOMMENDATION

6 Negotiations must be continued to induce Iran to suspend any sensitive fuel-cycle-related activities and ratify the 1997 Additional Protocol and resume full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency in order to avoid an increase in tensions and to improve the outlook for the common aim of establishing a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The international community and Iran should build mutual confidence through measures that should include: reliable assurance regarding the supply of fuel-cycle services; suspending or renouncing sensitive fuel-cycle activities for a prolonged period of time by all states in the Middle East; assurances against attacks and subversion aiming at regime change; and facilitation of international trade and investment.

WMDC RECOMMENDATION
7 The nuclear-weapon states parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty should provide legally binding negative security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states parties. The states not party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty that possess nuclear weapons should separately provide such assurances.

**WMDC RECOMMENDATION**

8 States should make active use of the IAEA as a forum for exploring various ways to reduce proliferation risks connected with the nuclear fuel cycle, such as proposals for an international fuel bank; internationally safeguarded regional centres offering fuel-cycle services, including spent-fuel repositories; and the creation of a fuel-cycle system built on the concept that a few ‘fuel-cycle states’ will lease nuclear fuel to states that forgo enrichment and reprocessing activities.

**WMDC RECOMMENDATION**

9 States should develop means of using low-enriched uranium in ships and research reactors that presently require highly enriched uranium. The production of highly enriched uranium should be phased out. States that separate plutonium by reprocessing spent nuclear fuel should explore possibilities for reducing that activity.

**WMDC RECOMMENDATION**

10 All states should support the international initiatives taken to advance the global clean-out of fissile material. Such support should encompass the conversion of research reactors from highly enriched to low enriched uranium fuel, storing fissile material at centralized and secure locations, and returning exported nuclear materials to suppliers for secure disposal or elimination.

**WMDC RECOMMENDATION**

11 All Non-Proliferation Treaty nuclear-weapon states that have not yet done so should ratify the protocols of the treaties creating regional nuclear-weapon-free zones. All states in such zones should conclude their comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA and agree to ratify and implement the Additional Protocol.
WMDC RECOMMENDATION

12 All states should support continued efforts to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East as a part of the overall peace process. Steps can be taken even now. As a confidence building measure, all states in the region, including Iran and Israel, should for a prolonged period of time commit themselves to a verified arrangement not to have any enrichment, reprocessing or other sensitive fuel-cycle activities on their territories. Such a commitment should be coupled with reliable assurances about fuel-cycle services required for peaceful nuclear activities. Egypt, Iran and Israel should join the other states in the Middle East in ratifying the CTBT.

WMDC RECOMMENDATION

13 India and Pakistan should both ratify the CTBT and join those other states with nuclear weapons that have declared a moratorium on the production of fissile material for weapons, pending the conclusion of a treaty. They should continue to seek bilateral détente and build confidence through political, economic and military measures, reducing the risk of armed conflict, and increasing transparency in the nuclear and missile activities of both countries. Eventually, both states should become members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime, as well as parties to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreements under the terms of the 1997 Additional Protocol.

Bruce D. Larkin: Catalog of Moves in a Transition to Nuclear Zero
Abbreviations

CD  Conference on Disarmament
CTBT  Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
FM  Fissile Material
FMCT  Fissile Material Control Treaty or
      Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty
HEU  Highly Enriched Uranium
IAEA  International Atomic Energy Agency
NPT  Non-Proliferation Treaty [Treaty on the Non-
Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons]
NW  Nuclear Weapon(s)
UNSC  United Nations Security Council
WMD  Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Appendix B

Distilling Denuclearization:
Selected Texts and Statements [2006-2010]
Bruce D. Larkin [editor]

It’s one thing to talk about ‘getting rid of the bomb’ or ‘nuclear abolition’, but quite another to follow arguments, and make judgments, about how to do it. Texts, declarations, remarks seem to stand alone. Rarely does one text engage the positions or arguments of others. Some speak to the short term, others to a ‘long process’. Some are laundry lists, others focus on a single defined problem, or a handful. There are exceptions. The Carnegie Endowment volume *Abolishing Nuclear Weapons: A Debate*, gives voice to multiple approaches, and concludes with an explicitly comparative essay by editors George Perkovich and James M. Action.¹

This Appendix is a tool to help locate arguments and appreciate how they differ, especially about steps to take and the time required. Entries are listed chronologically.

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Bruce D. Larkin [ed]: Selected Texts and Statements [2006-2010]
The study guide is an index to salient texts, not a substitute for consulting the texts themselves. Highlighting has been applied by the editor.

This study guide is open to ongoing revision. You may wish to check whether this is the most recent version. Citation should specify the revision date, shown in the header line.

**2006.06.01**  Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (“Blix Commission”)

*Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms* (Stockholm: WMD Commission, 1 June 2006).

The full text of the report, and the texts of forty-one expert studies contributed to the Commission, are at http://www.wmdcommission.org

The report is organized in 60 discrete recommendations. Nuclear proposals are under four headings: preventing proliferation, preventing nuclear terrorism, reducing the threat and number of nuclear weapons, and then moving from regulation to prohibition. Recommendation 30 is that “[a]ll states possessing nuclear weapons should commence planning for security without nuclear weapons …” and prepare to outlaw them.

**2007.01.04**  George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger and Sam Nunn

“A World Free of Nuclear Weapons”


Shultz and Kissinger are former US Secretaries of State, and are Republicans. Perry is a former US Secretary of Defense, Nunn a former US Senator and the cofounder of the Nuclear Threat Initiative; both are Democrats.

The text reads, in part:

What should be done? Can the promise of the NPT and the possibilities envisioned at Reykjavik be brought to fruition? We believe that a major effort
should be launched by the United States to produce a positive answer through concrete stages.

First and foremost is intensive work with leaders of the countries in possession of nuclear weapons to turn the goal of a world without nuclear weapons into a joint enterprise. Such a joint enterprise, by involving changes in the disposition of the states possessing nuclear weapons, would lend additional weight to efforts already under way to avoid the emergence of a nuclear-armed North Korea and Iran.

The program on which agreements should be sought would constitute a series of agreed and urgent steps that would lay the groundwork for a world free of the nuclear threat. Steps would include:

• Changing the Cold War posture of deployed nuclear weapons to increase warning time and thereby reduce the danger of an accidental or unauthorized use of a nuclear weapon.

• Continuing to reduce substantially the size of nuclear forces in all states that possess them.

• Eliminating short-range nuclear weapons designed to be forward-deployed.

• Initiating a bipartisan process with the Senate, including understandings to increase confidence and provide for periodic review, to achieve ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, taking advantage of recent technical advances, and working to secure ratification by other key states.

• Providing the highest possible standards of security for all stocks of weapons, weapons-usable plutonium, and highly enriched uranium everywhere in the world.

• Getting control of the uranium enrichment process, combined with the guarantee that uranium for nuclear power reactors could be obtained at a reasonable price, first from the Nuclear Suppliers Group and then from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or other controlled international reserves. It will also be necessary to deal with proliferation issues presented by spent fuel from reactors producing electricity.

• Halting the production of fissile material for weapons globally; phasing out the use of highly enriched uranium in civil commerce and removing weapons-usable uranium from research facilities around the world and rendering the materials safe.

• Redoubling our efforts to resolve regional confrontations and conflicts that give rise to new nuclear powers.
Achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons will also require effective measures to impede or counter any nuclear-related conduct that is potentially threatening to the security of any state or peoples. …

We endorse setting the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and working energetically on the actions required to achieve that goal, beginning with the measures outlined above.

2007.06.25 United Kingdom: Foreign Secretary Margaret Becket


She said “The judgment we made 40 years ago that the eventual abolition of nuclear weapons was in all of our interests is just as true today as it was then.”

2008.01.15 George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger and Sam Nunn

“Toward a Nuclear Free World”

Wall Street Journal, 2008.01.15.

This article pursues the authors’ op-ed of a year earlier.

While emphasising near-term measures, they wrote that “Progress must be facilitated by a clear statement of our ultimate goal. ... Without the vision of moving toward zero, we will not find the essential cooperation required to stop our downward spiral.”

At a conference in Oslo, Norway in February 2008 Shultz insisted that “We cannot wait for a nuclear Pearl Harbor or 9.11. We must get ahead of the game to prevent an even more catastrophic event. So wake up everybody! The danger is real.” [National Public Radio, Morning Edition, 29 February 2008.]

2008.02.05 United Kingdom: Secretary of State for Defense Des Browne

“Laying the Foundations for Nuclear Disarmament.” Remarks to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, 2008.02.05
He said, in part: “I am proposing to host a conference for technical experts from all five recognised nuclear states, to develop technologies for nuclear disarmament. … The UK is determined to have a world free of nuclear weapons. But to get there we must first create an international environment that better supports disarmament. The UK has and will continue to pursue this until nuclear weapons no longer exist.”

2008.06.30 United Kingdom: Former foreign secretaries Douglas Hurd, Malcolm Rifkind, and David Owen, and former NATO General-Secretary George Robertson

“Start Worrying and Learn to Ditch the Bomb. It won’t be easy, but a world free of nuclear weapons is possible.” Times [London], 2008.06.30.

Excerpt: “Substantial progress towards a dramatic reduction in the world’s nuclear weapons is possible. The ultimate aspiration should be to have a world free of nuclear weapons. It will take time, but with political will and improvements in monitoring, the goal is achievable. We must act before it is too late, and we can begin by supporting the campaign in America for a non-nuclear weapons world.”


Among recent French statements on nuclear disarmament, from which abolition is conspicuously absent, is the Livre Blanc sur la Défense, issued in June 2008.

Enfin, la France est engagée en faveur du désarmement nucléaire. Elle a été le premier État, avec le Royaume-Uni, à avoir signé et ratiifié le traité d'interdiction complète des essais nucléaires. Elle a été le premier État à décider la fermeture et le démantèlement de ses installations de production de
matières fissiles à des fins explosives. Elle est le seul État à avoir démantelé, de manière transparente, son site d’essais nucléaires situé dans le Pacifique. Elle a démantelé ses missiles nucléaires sol-sol. Elle a réduit volontairement d’un tiers le nombre de ses sous-marins nucléaires lanceurs d’engins. Au nom du principe de stricte suffisance, le nombre d’armes nucléaires, de missiles, et d’avions de la composante aéroportée sera également réduit d’un tiers à partir de 2008 (cf. chapitre 10). Avec cette réduction, l’arsenal nucléaire français comprendra moins de 300 têtes, soit la moitié du nombre maximum de têtes possédées par la France durant la guerre froide.

Le 21 mars 2008, la France a, de plus, proposé un plan ambitieux en matière de poursuite du désarmement nucléaire multilatéral. Elle encourage le respect de trois principes : suffisance, transparence et réciprocité.²

These particulars are then cited:

Désarmement nucléaire :

le plan d’action proposé par la France


– Engagement des puissances nucléaires à démanteler tous leurs sites d’essais nucléaires, de manière transparente et ouverte à la communauté internationale.

– Lancement sans délai de la négociation sur un traité d’interdiction de la production de matières fissiles pour les armes nucléaires.

– Moratoire immédiat sur la production de ces matières.

– Adoption de mesures de transparence sur leurs arsenaux par les cinq puissances nucléaires reconnues par le traité de non-prolifération.

– Ouverture de négociations sur un traité interdisant les missiles sol-sol de portée courte et intermédiaire.

– Adhésion de tous les États et engagement à mettre en oeuvre le code de conduite de La Haye contre la prolifération des missiles balistiques.³


Bruce D. Larkin [ed]: Selected Texts and Statements [2006-2010]
2008.11 Ivo Daalder and Jan Lodal, “The Logic of Zero,”
Foreign Affairs, November-December 2008.

Excerpt:

… the next president will have an opportunity to make the elimination of all nuclear weapons the organizing principle of U.S. nuclear policy.

Setting a vision of this kind is vitally important, but it is not enough. What is also needed is a strategic logic that explains how the world can get there from here. It involves four major steps, each difficult but feasible. First, Washington must establish as official policy the limited purpose of U.S. nuclear forces: to prevent the use of nuclear weapons by others. Other purposes are no longer realistic or necessary for the United States. Second, given this limited purpose of its nuclear weapons, the United States should reduce its nuclear arsenal to no more than 1,000 total weapons. This would be more than enough to convince anyone that the United States possesses the capacity to respond to any use of nuclear weapons with devastating effect. Third, the United States must work to put in place a comprehensive international nuclear-control regime that goes well beyond the present nonproliferation regime's accounting and monitoring of nuclear materials. It must include all fissile materials and provide an airtight verification system to enable the world to move from thousands of nuclear weapons to hundreds, to tens, and ultimately to zero.

Finally, Washington must launch a vigorous diplomatic effort to convince the world of the logic of zero -- and of the benefits of taking the difficult steps necessary to get there. This effort should start with its closest and most important allies, then include other nonnuclear states who have long called for such an initiative, and ultimately encompass all nuclear states. U.S. leadership of this international effort will be crucial. And a willingness to act boldly to reduce its own reliance on nuclear weapons and drastically cut its own arsenal can give Washington the credibility necessary to succeed.

2009.01.20 China: State Council.


http://english.gov.cn/official/2009-01/20/content_1210227_2.htm

Excerpt: “China holds that all nuclear-weapon states should make an unequivocal commitment to the thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, undertake to stop research into and development of new types of nuclear weapons, and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security policy.”

Bruce D. Larkin [ed]: Selected Texts and Statements [2006-2010]
2009.02.24  United Kingdom: Foreign Secretary David Miliband

“Lifting the Nuclear Shadow”


The paper is simply worded, a summary of UK declaratory policy on nuclear disarmament. It continues the position outlined by then Foreign Secretary Margaret Becket speaking in Washington in June 2007. Abolition of nuclear weapons is treated as an objective, but an ‘ultimate’ goal, before which a number of daunting prerequisites must be met. The paper also paraphrases positions which illustrate the range of different views among specialists and public, enabling it to suggest complexity without being required to resolve it. The paper’s helpfulness is in setting out three general conditions and a number of germane steps which could be taken in endeavoring to meet obstacles.

2009.03.00  Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: George Perkovich and James M. Acton


http://www.carnegieendowment.org/pubs

The original Perkovich-Acton paper asks “How might the security conditions which would permit nuclear weapons to be safely prohibited be created, and how might measures to implement such a prohibition be verified and enforced?” They assert that think tanks should be “venturesome” and “offer policies and procedures for verifying and enforcing a global prohibition on nuclear weapons.” But they are skeptical that abolition could be within reach, or a ‘date certain’ set: “Global nuclear disarmament is too far beyond the horizon for leaders of the US, Russia, China, France, the UK, Israel, India and Pakistan to form a consensus now on how and when it would be achieved.” They address a selection of central topics: political preconditions, verification, implications of civil nuclear power, enforcement, and residual assets (hedge stocks, expertise, reconstitution). The eighteen commentators’ essays are concise, focused

5 Ibid., p. 23.

Bruce D. Larkin [ed]: Selected Texts and Statements [2006-2010]
statements of views, illustrating how diverse approaches to nuclear abolition, and preconditions on which some would insist, can be.

2009.03.17 United Kingdom: Prime Minister Gordon Brown

“Speech on nuclear energy and proliferation”. Transcript [check against delivery]. 2009.03.17.

http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page18631

Gordon Brown delivered a speech on nuclear policy promising to release “Road to 2010” proposals in the coming summer, a “credible roadmap towards disarmament by all the nuclear weapon states.” But Brown emphasises conditions to be met before reaching “the ultimate ambition of a world free from nuclear weapons”:

“So in the coming months Britain—working with other countries—will be setting out a ‘Road to 2010’ Plan with detailed proposals on civil nuclear power, disarmament and non-proliferation, on fissile material security and the role and development of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We will be seeking the widest possible international engagement and consultation around this plan. … We will also host a recognised nuclear weapons state conference on nuclear disarmament issues and confidence building measures, including the verification of disarmament.”

2009.04.00 Natural Resources Defense Council: Hans M. Kristensen, Robert S. Norris, and Ivan Oelrich


Excerpts: “The logic, content, and procedures of the current employment policy are relics of the Cold War and, if not changed, will hinder the hoped-for deep cuts to the nuclear stockpile and the longer term goal of elimination. This report argues that, as long as the United States continues these nuclear missions unjustifiably held over from the Cold War, nuclear weapons will contribute more to the nation’s and the world’s insecurity than they contribute to their security. And without those Cold War justifications, there is only one job left for nuclear weapons: to deter the use of nuclear weapons.” The authors propose focused “infrastructure targeting” and explain that “a minimal nuclear deterrence policy and posture with infrastructure targeting does not require nuclear forces to be on

Bruce D. Larkin [ed]: Selected Texts and Statements [2006-2010]
alert, to be configured for preemption, or to even retaliate quickly.” Implications follow for the size and capacity of the US nuclear stockpile.

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**2009.04.01**

Russian Federation and the United States: President Dmitriy Medvedev and President Barack Obama

Joint Statement by President Dmitriy Medvedev of the Russian Federation and President Barack Obama of the United States of America” issued after their meeting on the sidelines of the G20 conference in London. 2009.04.01.


The statement said, in part: “We committed our two countries to achieving a nuclear free world, while recognizing that this long-term goal will require a new emphasis on arms control and conflict resolution measures, and their full implementation by all concerned nations.”

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**2009.04.05**

United States: President Barack Obama.

Remarks by President Barack Obama, Hradcany Square, Prague, Czech Republic

http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered/

Excerpt: “So today, I state clearly and with conviction America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. (Applause.) I’m not naive. This goal will not be reached quickly — perhaps not in my lifetime. It will take patience and persistence. But now we, too, must ignore the voices who tell us that the world cannot change. We have to insist, ‘Yes, we can.’ (Applause.)

“ Now, let me describe to you the trajectory we need to be on. First, the United States will take concrete steps towards a world without nuclear weapons; To put an end to Cold War thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, and urge others to do the same. …”

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**2009.04.07**

International Commission on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament: Co-chair Gareth Evans

Bruce D. Larkin [ed]: Selected Texts and Statements [2006-2010]
At the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Nonproliferation Conference, Washington, D.C., 6-7 April 2009, former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans contributed remarks anticipating directions which the Commission may follow in its forthcoming report. The panel was titled “The Nuclear Order: Build or Break.” 2009.04.07.

http://www.carnegieendowment.org/events/?fa=eventDetail&id=1313&prog=zgp

Evans posits a ‘short term’ ending in 2012, and specifies steps he hopes are completed before and during the 2010 NPT Review Conference. He chooses 2025 as the year before which the move to actual abolition is unlikely, and sets out measures to be undertaken in the years leading to 2025. Of abolition he insists that

It’s important, in the middle of all this realism, however, about getting to the beyond 2025 final zero, to keep our basic idealism intact. The ultimate goal must remain one – the ultimate goal that we must never lose sight of is the elimination of nuclear weapons and the effective outlawing of nuclear weapons from the planet.

The rationale for that goal I think must again also never be lost sight of. It was very well articulated I think by the original Canberra Commission and rearticulated as the central motif of the Blix Commission, namely that so long as any country has nuclear weapons, others will want them; so long as any country has nuclear weapons, they’re bound one day to be used by accident if not design, and any such use would be catastrophic.

The short-term aims and hopes include CTBT ratification before the NPT Review Conference, ‘rearticulation’ of the 13 Steps of the 2000 NPT Review, and measures to strengthen the NPT. For 2009-2010 he lists several agenda items: START follow-on, strategic dialogue with Russia and China, CTBT, fissile material control, securing loose materials, Iran and the DPRK, and US nuclear policy (including acknowledgment that deterrence is the only nuclear mission).

Medium-term aims:

In terms of the medium term, which for present purposes we’re thinking about as the period running through to about 2025, the basic object, as we’re thinking about it again at the moment, is to both set and get to a target, minimalist vantage point – we’re still wrestling with the appropriate metaphor but I’ll leave that discussion to one side – a minimalist vantage point which would be characterized by dramatically reduced numbers of warheads, and we’re still debating what those numbers should be, whether it’s possible to have any actual numbers or would it only be a formula, but certainly dramatically reduced; secondly, dramatically reduced deployment of any of the weapons left in existence; thirdly, nothing anywhere on high readiness – on high launch readiness; and fourthly, common acceptance in military doctrine that the only purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter their use by others.

Bruce D. Larkin [ed]: Selected Texts and Statements [2006-2010]
Again, whether or not no-first-use should be part of that kind of military doctrine or whether that’s an add-on or more emotional and real-world utility is something the commission is wrestling with. But we believe, I think in our preliminary discussions, that getting to a result like this with very low numbers, very little actual deployment, nothing on high readiness, and a common doctrine accepting that there’s no other purpose for these things in their potential use of tools other that to deter others from using nuclear weapons, we think that that would be a very much better world than the one we have a the moment, and one that is achievable within a time certain by a date certain, and for present purposes, 2025 seems to be workable.


The 23 task force members, for the most part former US government officials, “are asked to join a consensus signifying that they endorse ‘the general policy thrust and judgments reached by the group, though not necessarily every finding and recommendation.’” Two, Ashton B. Carter and Michèle A. Flournoy, have assumed positions in the Obama administration.

Does the Report break new ground? Not exactly. It is an orderly, accessible canvass of steps about which there is wide agreement they should be undertaken: ratifying the CTBT and conducting a security dialogue with Russia, for example. It neither urges nor rejects measures, such as providing for the ‘reliable replacement warhead’, for which status quo nuclearists have been campaigning. It gives at most passing attention to ZNW, complete denuclearization. Crafting a consensus document must have been a difficult task. The result is a text that avoids hard questions—such as ‘how can abolition be brought about?’—and achieves an anodyne survey of centrist recommendations.

A few task force members submitted ‘additional or dissenting views.’ George Perkovich comments that

“the discussion of the purposes of U.S. nuclear weapons does not persuasively make the case for their role beyond deterring threats to national survival, nor does it make the case for the need to develop new nuclear weapons, an option that the report does not exclude.”


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“(4) the United States must engage Russia and China on nuclear issues if progress is to be made on reducing stockpiles and slowing proliferation, for example by Iran and North Korea; (5) preventing or reversing a country’s move toward the bomb is best achieved by addressing the country’s security concerns; coercive international agreements are secondary;”

What language does the Report adopt to address two bellwether issues, the RRW and abolition? Its preface begins, after all, citing President Obama’s remarks in Prague on 5 April 2009, and the “U.S. commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons.” The Report’s treatment is dismissive:

“The question of whether and how to move toward the elimination of nuclear weapons has emerged as a central foreign policy issue. But that vision remains just a vision. President Obama himself has acknowledged that ‘this goal will not be reached quickly—perhaps not in my lifetime.’”

“Although Task Force members disagreed on the practicality and desirability of eventual nuclear abolition, the report supports deeper reduction in U.S. and Russian arsenals.”

“[Two cited] studies also point out that progress toward disarmament, even if abolition is not attainable, would short up allies’ support for a stronger nonporeliferation regime.”

“Task Force members have differing views on the feasibility or even desirability of achieving the global elimination of nuclear weapons, but all agree that, if feasible, abolition will likely require decades to accomplish. ... [S]upporting the long-term goal of nuclear disarmament may be necessary to mobilize widespread support for the short-term actions needed to further reduce nuclear dangers.”

“Recognizing that the political conditions that will lead to abolition are rather daunting, the United States can still lead on this objective by having serious discussions about conditions for achieving further nuclear arms reductions. It can put the onus on itself and all countries interested in disarmament to provide insights about necessary political, security, and technical preconditions.”

In short, there is some deference to abolition as a goal, but it is scant.

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8. Report, p. XXX.

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What of the ‘reliable replacement warhead’? The Task Force characterizes the views of supporters and skeptics.13 It then states that

“Any new warhead designs should meet four criteria: no required new nuclear testing, no additional military capabilities, enhanced safety and security features, and enough confidence in the designs and manufacturing processes to allow for deep reductions in reserve warheads.”14

More subtly, there are more than a few references in the report to maintaining a “safe, secure and reliable deterrent force.”15 Of course no one advocates an unsafe, insecure, and unreliable deterrent, but invoking ‘reliability’ might be read by some as coded support for the RRW. In short, the Report treads carefully on the RRW and the related question of transforming the nuclear weapons complex. Its recommendations are carefully prudent, and limited.

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Excerpts:

4. India attaches the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament. Speaking at the UNGA on 26 September, 2008, our Prime Minister reiterated India’s proposal for a Nuclear Weapon’s Convention for banning the production, development, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and to provide for their complete elimination within a specified time frame. This is consistent with India’s longstanding commitment put forward in the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan in 1988. Nuclear weapons are an integral part of our national security and will remain so pending the global elimination of all nuclear weapons on a universal, non-discriminatory basis. An FMCT would be a step towards this goal.

5. While joining the consensus on this Programme of Work, we wish to place on record our disappointment that the Conference could not decide on launching negotiations on nuclear disarmament. We feel that there is a heavy responsibility on the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, to respond meaningfully to growing international opinion in favour of Nuclear Disarmament. While India has gone along with the establishment of Working Group to exchange views and information on practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to reduce

15. E.g. Report, pp. ix, xiv, xv, 5, 8, 56, 67, 76, 78, 81, 91, 92. On p. 77 the citation to ‘safe, secure, and reliable’ notes the annual formal certification of the stockpile.

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nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal of their elimination, we believe that the CD should continue to actively explore all possible avenues to advance the Conference’s work for actual commencement on negotiations on nuclear disarmament, CD/1863 does in fact include the possibility of future negotiations and we believe that the CD should take concrete steps in that direction.

2009.06.03 Odvar Nordli, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Kåre Willoch, Kjell Magne Bondevik and Thorvald Stoltenberg.

Odvar Nordli, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Kåre Willoch and Kjell Magne Bondevik are former Prime Ministers of Norway. Thorvald Stoltenberg is a former Foreign Minister of Norway. The text was originally published on 3 June 2009 by Aftenposten: http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article3105200.ece English translation from Nuclear Age Peace Foundation: http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2009/06/04_norwegian_leaders_statement.php

Note their call for elimination of nuclear weapons facilities, as well as the weapons themselves. Full text:

Two years have passed since George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn revived the idea of a nuclear weapon-free world. In the meantime, leaders from many other countries have joined in. President Obama has done the same. They have all referred to concrete measures that can bring us closer to the goal.

The four American leaders underlined the relationship between vision and action: "Without the bold vision, the actions will not be perceived as fair or urgent. Without the actions, the vision will not be perceived as realistic or possible". To create such a dynamic interplay, we have to be serious both about the vision and about the measures. We call on all to do so, as strongly as we can.

The goal must be a world where not only the weapons, but also the facilities that produce them are eliminated. All fissile materials for military ends must be destroyed, and all nuclear activities must be subject to strict international control.

The United States and Russia, which together account for more than 90 per cent of the world's arsenals, must take the first steps. They should reduce their arsenals to a level where the other nuclear weapon states may join in negotiations of global limitations. All agreements must be balanced and verifiable and provide enhanced security at lower levels of arms. While reductions are going on, mutual deterrence will remain a basic principle of international security.

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tactical ones - must be included in the negotiations. We urge Russia, which has big arsenals of tactical weapons, to accept this.

Today, there is the risk that nuclear weapons will proliferate to more states as well as to non-state actors and terrorist networks. The latter want nuclear weapons in order to use them. Together with the US and many other countries, Norway has participated in programmes to control and destroy nuclear materials and ready-made weapons. A major increase in the funding for such programmes is urgently needed.

Establishment of missile shields should be avoided, for they stimulate rearmament. Nuclear powers which do not have such shields will seek countermeasures to maintain their retaliatory capabilities. Others fear that for those who have a shield, it will be easier to use the sword. Ongoing missile defence plans and programmes should therefore be subordinated to the work for comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

While new negotiations are set in motion, existing agreements must be maintained. That goes for the INF Treaty, which eliminated intermediate-range systems from Europe, and for the CFE agreement on conventional force reductions that was concluded as the Cold War drew to an end. Also, it goes for the American-Russian presidential initiatives of 1991/92 on withdrawal and elimination of American and Russian tactical weapons. Above all, it goes for the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT), which is currently under pressure. In connection with next year's review conference for the NPT, it is important to reconfirm the validity of the principles on which it is built: non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Holding the chair of the seven-nation initiative, Norway may contribute to the successful conclusion of this conference.

2009.06.04 Remarks of the Ambassador of Pakistan, Zamir Akram, to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, 4 June 2009.


Excerpts:

The document CD/1863, even in its current form, is a litmus test for those who claim to champion the cause of nuclear disarmament and promote the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. Pakistan has demonstrated a persistent and principled commitment to general and complete disarmament, which is CD's raison, d'etre. For peace and stability in South Asia, we worked hard to maintain conventional armaments at the lowest levels. Our pursuit of a nuclear weapon free zone in the region With overwhelming support in the UN was thwarted by the nuclear weapons tests conducted in May 1998. Pakistan was obliged to respond in order to ensure peace and stability in the region. And it

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has proven to be so. As a responsible nuclear weapons state, we have since maintained credible minimum mutual deterrence. We have proposed the establishment of a Strategic Restraint Regime in South Asia that encompasses three inter-locked tiers of conflict resolution, nuclear and missile restraint and a conventional balance.

Pakistan stresses once again that issues of peace and security and disarmament are inextricably linked. Security is indivisible. International peace and security and universal and nondiscriminatory disarmament can only be achieved meaningfully by addressing the asymmetries both in the nuclear and conventional fields that exist at the regional and sub-regional levels.

2009.06.10 President Putin’s remarks.

Source: David Nowak, Associated Press, 2009.06.10. “Putin: Russia Might Abandon Nukes if Others Do”


Excerpts:

MOSCOW – Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said Wednesday that **Russia is willing to abandon nuclear weapons, if the United States and all other countries that have them do the same.**

"If those who made the atomic bomb and used it are ready to abandon it — like, I hope, other nuclear powers officially and unofficially owning them — of course we will welcome and facilitate this process in all ways," Putin said, according to state-owned RIA Novosti news agency.

Putin spoke at a meeting with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who said earlier that the idea of scrapping nuclear arms altogether rather than limiting their proliferation was a real prospect.

"The goal of global zero is not a game for utopians, but will be taken up by the doyens of U.S. foreign policy as well as by German and Polish politicians," Steinmeier said. ...
**Editor’s Note**

Analysts and governments use ‘ultimate’ and ‘eventual’, ‘steps’, ‘goals’ and ‘aims’, and circumlocutions such as ‘first create an international environment that better supports disarmament’ to avoid committing to any given date. They may be simply cautious, or may be masquing a policy of ‘never now, only later’. After all, advocates of abolition ‘sooner rather than later’ also speak of goals and aims. One reason to return to original texts is to parse carefully whether what is proposed, while it may also address immediate concerns, is a practical step toward abolition.

Once the governments with nuclear weapons commit to ‘prompt, prudent, and pragmatic denuclearization’ the world could achieve ‘pragmatic zero’ within ten years. It is in the interest of nuclear weapon holders, and will remain in their interest, to do so.

Governments convinced of the merit of denuclearization will be faced, in some countries, with vigorous domestic opposition, which will paint a contrary case, insist abolition is simple-minded, and may even charge treason. In consequence, in large measure, abolition will be decided in the domestic political arenas of each of the nuclear weapon states. But choices made in other states—nuclear and non-nuclear—will crucially complicate or advance the case for abolition.
Abbreviations

CTBT  Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
DPRK  Democratic People's Republic of Korea
IAEA  International Atomic Energy Agency
NPT   Non-Proliferation Treaty [Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons]
START Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty [START I]
UK    United Kingdom
WMD   Weapons of Mass Destruction

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