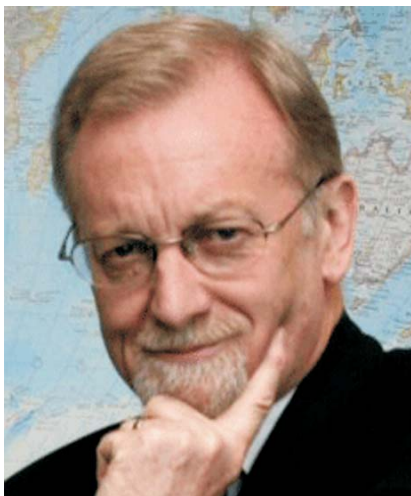


THE WORLD WAITS FOR RUSSIA AND AMERICA TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP

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A 'global zero' is possible in regard to nuclear disarmament, but it will take some time to achieve. The International Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Commission argues for the necessity, and possibility, of reducing the world's nuclear weapons arsenal by 90% by 2025, bringing the world's total to less than 2000 warheads. However, we can not credibly put a target date on the final stage, where the number of warheads might be brought down to absolute zero. This is because of the very tough geopolitical, psychological verification and enforcement, conditions that must be met before states will willingly give up the last of their weapons. At any rate, sustaining American and Russian leadership will be crucial for an early start to the next round of deep reduction negotiations.

However, China and other nuclear powers will also have to provide early indication of their serious commitment to ultimate elimination. After all, while this may not be a sufficient condition for holding the line against proliferation, it is clear that **as long as any state has nuclear weapons, others will also want them.**

President Obama's Nuclear Posture Review has made a significant contribution to continuing the process of delegitimizing nuclear weapons. He has recognized the inherent impossibility of using these weapons in the modern world, irrespective of whatever contribution to international stability they might have offered during the Cold War. Similarly, it is important that other prominent nations also visibly reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security doctrines and **most unfortunate that the recently released Russian Military Doctrine was not more helpful in this respect.** Of course, it will take a long time to wean away from clinging to nuclear weapons as a deterrent those states that genuinely believe they face an imminent threat from one or more neighbouring nations more substantially armed than themselves. However, the arguments against the viability of nuclear deterrence are becoming increasingly weaker with time.

The US Nuclear Posture Review did not go as far as the Commission and myself would have liked. President Obama stopped short of

ment to build no further generations of nuclear weapons was an important step forward. Other changes do not add any new aspects to the administration's determination to reverse North Korea's position and hold the line against Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons.

The Obama Administration's position on both the START Treaty and the Nuclear Posture Review has been carefully calibrated. It has been designed to maintain momentum toward an ultimate nuclear weapon free world that was outlined in his Prague speech last year, and to maximize the chances of a positive outcome at the May NPT Conference. At the same time, it holds the line on issues like conventional weapons capability, ballistic missile defense, and nuclear weapon stockpile reliability, all of which are hot-button topics for the Administration's right-wing domestic critics.

It is in everyone's interest that the START follow-up treaty be ratified quickly on both sides, and that the US and Russia move quickly to the next round of deep reduction negotiations, where the context of conventional imbalances and ballistic missile defense will, undoubtedly, be revisited.

Presently, what we are seeing is not a PR exercise, but a very serious, albeit cautious, effort to make the world safer and saner. The media, civil society organizations, and commissions, like the one I represent,

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making a declaration that the 'sole purpose' of nuclear weapons is to deter their use by others. Nevertheless, he did go as far as he could have, given the international and domestic political pressures on the Administration. The review narrowed and clarified the former scope of the US Negative Security Assurance (NSA), and it's commit-

should continue to stay rigorously objective and press for further and stronger action. Above all, if governments are to be encouraged to do the right thing, we must all recognize and applaud real progress whenever and wherever it is made. ■

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