
The Prague agenda – why is change so hard?

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Obama's 2009 Prague speech

- ◆ Comprehensive agenda to reduce nuclear dangers from:
 - Use of existing nuclear weapons (arms control)
 - Spread of nuclear weapons to additional states (nonproliferation)
 - Nuclear weapons in terrorist hands (nuclear security and more)
- ◆ Combined near-term steps and a long-term vision of “a world without nuclear weapons.”



Source: U.S. State Department

Dramatic reversal in tone from Bush administration

- ◆ Bush administration opposed CTBT
- ◆ Opposed verified fissile cutoff
- ◆ Negotiated no-verification Moscow Treaty
 - Expires the day its limits take effect
- ◆ Refused to discuss past disarmament commitments
 - Rejection of agreed “13 Steps” contributed to collapse of 2005 NPT Review
 - Disarmament and nonproliferation not even mentioned in 2005 “Millenium Summit” declaration
 - *But*, continued to cut stockpile



Source: Salon

A clash of nuclear world-views...

Nuclear traditionalists

- ◆ Nuclear weapons are essential to deterring a wide range of threats
- ◆ 1000s of nuclear weapons, on high alert, are needed
- ◆ Nonproliferation institutions have little benefit; what matters is use of political, economic, and military power to keep nuclear weapons out of hands of adversaries
- ◆ Nuclear weapons will be needed forever

Nuclear transformationalists

- ◆ Nuclear weapons can only credibly deter nuclear use or state-threatening invasion
- ◆ ~1-300 survivable weapons are likely sufficient – real costs and risks of maintaining more
- ◆ Strong institutions help slow proliferation; for international legitimacy must apply to friends and foes alike
- ◆ It is possible to imagine future conditions in which security would be increased by eliminating nuclear weapons

New START

- ◆ Reductions to 1,550 deployed strategic warheads, 700 launchers
- ◆ Renewed, simplified inspection system
- ◆ Proved far more contentious and difficult than expected
- ◆ Substantial ratification debate underway
- ◆ Next stage slated to address *far* more difficult issues
 - Deeper reductions
 - Non-deployed and tactical warheads
 - Missile defenses
 - Far more difficult verification



Source: U.S. Department of Defense

Nuclear posture review

- ◆ Obama in Prague: “we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons”
 - Intense internal debate between those who emphasized “concrete steps towards a world without nuclear weapons” and those who emphasized “the United States will maintain a safe, secure, and effective arsenal”
- ◆ Review conclusions
 - Nuclear weapons’ “primary” – but *not* only – role is to deter the use of nuclear weapons by others
 - United States *cannot* adopt “no first use” posture – but will promise NPT parties in good standing not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them
 - Must maintain nuclear triad on high alert – *increase* spending
 - No conclusion on whether reductions beyond New START are possible (contrast Obama’s “this will set the stage for further cuts”)
 - Obama administration pushing NATO to *maintain* U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe

CTBT ratification

- ◆ Obama in Prague: we “will immediately and aggressively pursue U.S. ratification” of the CTBT
 - Very little has been done since
- ◆ CTBT widely seen as crucial to Article VI obligations – highlighted in preamble of NPT
- ◆ Treaty voted down in Senate in 1999
 - Didn’t even get a majority – not close to 2/3 needed to ratify
 - Many of those Senators still serving
- ◆ Ratification requires 67 Senate votes
 - Today, means requires ≥ 8 Republican votes
 - More Republican votes will be needed after November elections
 - Obama administration working to build support – Sen. John Kyl and others working to build opposition
 - Obama committed not to bring it up until the votes are there to ratify

Fissile cutoff

- ◆ Obama in Prague: U.S. will seek “a new treaty that verifiably ends the production” of fissile materials for weapons
 - China lifted block on progress in CD; now being blocked by Pakistan
 - No progress toward negotiating a fissile cutoff since Prague
- ◆ All states still producing plan to continue, oppose cutoff (Pakistan, India, Israel, North Korea)
- ◆ Some nuclear-weapon states lukewarm (U.S. in Bush administration, China, Russia, France...)
- ◆ Some non-nuclear-weapon states would like to expand to cover existing stockpiles – fiercely opposed by all states that have such stockpiles
- ◆ Little prospect of real progress in the CD, little discussion of other negotiation options

Strengthening nonproliferation

- ◆ Monitoring: “more resources and authority” for the IAEA
 - modest progress on resources, none on authority
- ◆ Enforcement: “Rules must be binding. Violations must be punished.”
 - new round of sanctions on Iran; 1887 identifies proliferation as threat to international peace and security; modest progress overall
- ◆ Nuclear energy: “new framework for civil nuclear cooperation”
 - Russian Angarsk fuel bank that IAEA can draw on approved
 - IAEA-controlled fuel bank may be approved soon; both widely seen as *undermining* rather than contributing to Article IV rights
 - Little progress on “cradle to grave” fuel services
 - Policy unclear on reprocessing
 - India deal effectively gives India same access to nuclear energy cooperation outside the NPT (better, in some respects)

The hard cases: what balance of engagement and enforcement?

- ◆ Enforcement:
 - Obama called for sanctions in response to North Korean and Iranian violations
 - Latest round of Iran sanctions passed this month
- ◆ Engagement:
 - Obama trying to get N. Korea back to 6-party talks – but without offering incentives
 - Obama trying to engage with Iran – but with unrelenting sanctions, demand for zero enrichment
- ◆ In last 2 decades, only progress has been through engagement, step-by-step incentives...



Source: Reuters

UNSC Resolution 1887

- ◆ President Obama chaired meeting of all leaders of the Security Council – focused exclusively on nonproliferation
 - Clear message of U.S. priority
- ◆ Resolution passed unanimously, calls for:
 - Nonproliferation violations may be threats to international peace and security requiring Security Council action
 - Stricter export controls
 - Universalization of Additional Protocol, “necessary resources and authority” for IAEA
 - States still responsible for violations after they pull out of NPT
 - Securing all vulnerable nuclear material in four years, full implementation of UNSCR 1540
 - Etc.
- ◆ Stark difference in purpose and form from UNSCR 1540
 - 1540 *requires* states to take wide range of actions
 - 1887 “encourages,” “calls upon” – *political* support for NPT

Results of the NPT review

- ◆ Reached consensus on final document
- ◆ Final document includes action plans for all 3 pillars of the NPT:
 - Disarmament: reaffirms “unequivocal undertaking” to achieve “total elimination” of nuclear arms; reaffirms “continued validity” of 2000 “13 steps”; CD to establish disarmament working group
 - Nonproliferation: “encourages” acceptance of Add’l Protocol, stronger export controls, improved nuclear security
 - Civil nuclear energy: all parties to facilitate civil cooperation; “continue to discuss” multilateral fuel cycle approaches as long as they do not impinge on rights; “encourage” states to minimize civil HEU stocks and use
- ◆ Middle East: call for conference of all regional states in 2012 on weapons-of-mass-destruction-free-zone
 - Israel rejects
 - Strongly negative U.S. statement after conference

Nuclear security

◆ Obama in Prague

- nuclear terrorism “most immediate and extreme threat to global security”
- “new international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years”
- host a nuclear security summit

◆ Nuclear security summit

- 47 countries; raised issue to level of presidents and prime ministers
- Agreed on four-year goal, range of particular steps
- Follow-up summit in Seoul in 2012 – regular sherpa meetings between
- Individual country commitments
- *But will it be enough?*



Source: U.S. State Department

The vision: a world without nuclear weapons

- ◆ Nuclear disarmament will not be achieved until each of the states that has nuclear weapons concludes they are better off without them
 - None of them believe this today – requires major transformations
- ◆ What would be needed?
 - Resolution of major conflicts driving demand for nuclear weapons (e.g., India-Pakistan, Israel-Arab states...)
 - Robust international system to provide non-nuclear security
 - Unprecedentedly effective verification system
 - Increased recognition of dangers of *maintaining* nuclear weapons
- ◆ Different end states have different strategic implications
 - Example: “zero” might mean that all nuclear weapons are dismantled, but several countries still have components, perhaps deep underground, under continuous international inspection – if ability to turn these into weapons were survivable, would greatly reduce the value of cheating

A new world of verification

- ◆ Deep reductions and eventual nuclear disarmament would require a broad new verification regime
 - Verifying not just missiles and submarines, but warheads themselves, and the fissile materials needed to make them
 - Verifying warhead dismantlement without revealing classified information involves wide range of interesting (but ultimately solvable) issues
 - Biggest challenge: building confidence that no one has 100s of weapons hidden away
 - No single technical solution
 - Broad range of declarations and monitoring at many parts of the nuclear weapon life-cycle – combined with intelligence and “societal verification” – can provide increasing confidence over time that it would be difficult to put together a lie that was significant and consistent with all available information

The Prague agenda: A net assessment

- ◆ The bold vision of Prague greatly improved the global political atmosphere for nonproliferation initiatives
 - Contributed to passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1887
 - Contributed to successful NPT review
- ◆ Real implementation in many areas has been modest
 - Russia not interested in very deep reductions, cutting tactical weapons, etc.
 - Republicans in Senate not supportive of much of Prague agenda, especially CTBT
 - Many non-nuclear-weapon states not prepared to support tougher measures for them without more definitive disarmament action
 - Nuclear security may represent the greatest progress – but action on the ground, where it counts, is still limited
- ◆ *The fight between nuclear traditionalists and transformationalists is ongoing – and makes achieving unity on strong policies far more difficult*

The Prague agenda: why is change so hard?

- ◆ Nuclear weapons are central backstops to the security postures of several countries
- ◆ Existing nuclear postures supported by decades of thinking, practice, development of bureaucracies – resistant to change
- ◆ States with advantages under the existing system (mainly the NWS) do not want to give them up
- ◆ States who feel disadvantaged under the current system do not want to accept what they see as additional disadvantages
- ◆ Within nuclear weapon states, the idea of slashing or even eliminating nuclear weapons is easy to portray as foolish, gambling with country's security
- ◆ *Policymakers are not yet convinced that the dangers of the current path are greater than the dangers of change*

Some Opportunities

- ◆ To achieve success in:
 - Drastically reducing nuclear weapons and stocks of fissile materials
 - Verifiably ending further production
 - Dealing with the hard proliferation cases
 - Developing a new approach to the nuclear fuel cycle
 - Securing nuclear stockpiles worldwide
 - Stopping the next black-market nuclear network
 - Reducing demand for nuclear weapons
 - and more...
- ◆ The world will need a whole new generation of nonproliferation, safeguards, and nuclear security experts – from analysts who can develop working strategies to overcome political obstacles to technical experts who can conceive and implement new and more effective security and safeguards systems – exciting and critically important careers

For further reading...

- ◆ Full text of Managing the Atom publications at:
 - <http://www.managingtheatom.org>
- ◆ A major web section we maintain for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, *Securing the Bomb*:
 - <http://www.nti.org/securingthebomb>
- ◆ Includes hundreds of pages of analysis, links, and databases, and our most recent reports:
 - *Securing the Bomb 2010* (April 2010)
 - “Funding for U.S. Efforts to Improve Controls Over Nuclear Weapons, Materials, and Expertise Overseas: a 2009 Update” (June 2009)
- ◆ For regular e-mail updates from Managing the Atom, write to atom@harvard.edu