

[SE5-OR-1] Disarmament

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Full Summary

This is a time of renewed interest in disarmament, not just because of the situation in North Korea and Iran, but also because the international community must now look beyond New START towards new steps in the arms control process. Bruce MacDonald of the U.S. Institute of Peace moderated the panel on Disarmament, in which participants discussed and identified the next steps beyond New START and how the international community can move closer to achieving Global Zero.

MacDonald opened the panel by stressing that when thinking of the challenges to disarmament, it is important to keep in mind where the desire to acquire nuclear warheads comes from, specifically originating from insecurity and fear. In order for reductions to be possible, the driving fears motivating the political need for weapons need to be assuaged. Countries need to feel secure and thus find it necessary to rely on weapons for security. Thus, in order to reach Global Zero a significant transformation in the atmosphere of international relations is needed.

MacDonald described his take on the process toward Zero:

1. *Twilight of bilateral nuclear arms control*: The next stage beyond New START, wherein the international community will shift from bilateral to multilateral arms control.
2. *Dawn of multilateral arms control*: This will include fully comprehensive limits, involving the whole range of nuclear weapons not just strategic weapons.
3. *End of the world levels of nuclear weapons*: At this point, the number of nuclear weapons would be at a lowered level where, in the event of the breakout of nuclear war the damage, while significant, would be at lower levels and would not mean the “end of the world.”
4. *Zero*: This stage cannot be reached without an absolute transformation of the

international relations environment. Maintaining this Zero stage in a way that countries would feel secure will be a real challenge.

Nuclear reductions need to be in sync with enabling political conditions; neither can be ahead or behind the other. Other potential challenges include: missile defense systems, non-deployed weapons, the problem of other nuclear powers, verification alliance dynamics, and regional security issues.

Corey Hinderstein of the Nuclear Threat Initiative focused her remarks on the disarmament verification process and addressed why discussions on this topic are helpful in thinking about whether or not verification is a credible and desirable path. In their 2007 op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*, the Four Wise Men laid out concrete threat reduction steps towards a nuclear free world, and these remain the guiding principles behind their work. Today, the Nuclear Threat Initiative coordinates the work of the Four Wise Men. Early on in that op-ed verification was identified as an area where meaningful work is to be done. Robust verification is essential to assure confidence in the process, Hinderstein emphasized that there will never be movement toward Zero unless all states have confidence in verification. Because it requires the longest lead-time, it is necessary to begin planning far in advance. In cultivating confidence, it is encouraging that the international community is knowledgeable on how to do verification. However, opponents still rally behind the lack in ability to actually carry out verification, as there are still many technical and policy issues to be explored. But it is important to note that the research and work of the last several decades has a direct bearing on the future ability for credible verification.

All states have a stake in the progression of disarmament, and there is a need to recognize of all of the various stakeholders, non-nuclear weapons states can no longer be relegated to the sidelines. In addition to their own assurance needs, non-nuclear weapons states can also contribute technical expertise to the verification process. It is also time to rethink the classified nature of information on and implementation of verification. This thinking rests on outdated assumptions of the nature of the value of information. This is not to say that there is not a need for protection, however there should be a review of the underlying assumptions of what information should and should not be labeled critical.

There is a need for a systems-based approach to verification. While no verification process is infallible, the verification system that will have political acceptance will be informed by the knowledge of defined risks. A “system of systems” will maximize the opportunity for the weaknesses of one system to be compensated by the strengths of another. Not all solutions to problems are technical. The only way to determine an acceptable system is to leverage all the tools available: legal, political, public knowledge, insider knowledge, incentives for

compliance, qualitative and quantitative measures, acceptance of risk, etc. Nontraditional approaches should be explored. What is the role of those stakeholders with no legal obligation to report? What public and private partnerships can be made? Nontraditional methods require more rigorous analysis in order to determine their value to the verification process.

In identifying challenges, Hinderstein noted that there is still uncertainty regarding the quantities of existing stockpiles, which is compounded in the context of growing inventories. While verification agreements will be complex and challenging, establishing confidence in verification is key. It is also important to grapple with the questions regarding verification now in preparation for when the policy catches up. The robust body of knowledge and support of very capable technical and policy leaders focusing on the issue is a positive sign for the future of verification.

Ambassador Masood Khan, Pakistan's Ambassador to China, began by noting that while Global Zero is important, it is evident that there will be no shortcuts. There has been a renewed international commitment to Global Zero. Khan cited Obama's Prague speech as a bold step that provided fresh impetus to the disarmament discussion and focus on Global Zero. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the goal of complete disarmament. Likewise, the G21 is also committed to the same goal and has initiated an ad hoc committee to start negotiations on a program for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified timeframe.

However, Khan cautioned that this progress is tempered by several factors. Disarmament is not on the agenda for serious negotiations at the United Nations, the proposed Fissile Missile Cutoff Treaty is not an instrument of disarmament. Countries with the largest stockpiles are reluctant to start substantive engagement on disarmament. Newer and more sophisticated devices are currently being theorized and developed. The geographical scope for nuclear weapons has expanded in nuclear alliances and the increasing prominence of nuclear weapons in national security doctrines undercuts disarmament efforts. Even at drastically reduced levels, nuclear weapons states will still retain their arsenals against any unforeseen threats. The principles of transparency and verification are not being observed.

Khan outlined several steps toward disarmament: the convening of special UN conference on consensus on disarmament; the develop of confidence-building measures; moving past stalemates in the Conference on Disarmament and placing it under international control within a specified time period; increased efforts to remove drivers of conflict and steer regions toward strategic restraint; maintenance of nuclear weapons on de-alert status; the creation of a global regime on missiles; no operational deployment on nuclear ballistic

missiles. Global Zero captures the majority of the international communities' aspirations to move forward on disarmament. It will require an elaborate institutional framework that is currently not in place but the recent political surge in support for disarmament should be taken advantage of in progressing toward disarmament.

Echoing Amb. Khan's remarks Andrew Pierre, J.R. Fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace, noted that the plenum was meeting at a time of renewed interest in disarmament. Not just because of the situation in North Korea and Iran, but because the international community has achieved a certain point in the arms control process with New START. The next question, according to Pierre, is where to go now? While there is a need to deal with many difficult issues in the arms control field, Pierre focused his remarks on two issues: theater missile defense in Europe (and how it fits into the next round of arms control negotiations) and multilateral strategic arms control that involves countries in addition to the U.S. and Russia.

Theater missile defense in Europe has become central to the arms control dialogue between Russia and the U.S. and Russia and NATO. More than ever, the U.S. and its European allies want to find ways to counter the growing missile threat from Iran. In dealing with the Iranian missile threat, they are seriously thinking about a cover for Europe as a whole. Obama is not ejecting the Bush plan, but is revising it to strengthen and widen effective missile defense for Europe as a whole.

However, Russia has indicated its discomfort with this proposal. Ever since Star Wars, Russia has been concerned about strategic missile defense and the overall security of the country. To them, theater missile defense poses potential risks and threats to Russia. There are concerns that any new system deployed in Europe should not undermine Russian security, part of fears that missile defense systems could eventually develop to the point that they could counter Russian ICBMs. While Russia understands that the initial phase of the system is not a threat, they remain concerned about later phases.

Pierre characterized these concerns as deep and understandable and cautioned that they should not be perceived as a mere negotiating ploy to eradicate the missile defense system. The Russian Foreign Minister has stated that he would like to see a written guarantee, not quite a treaty, that any missiles developed by the U.S. and its European allies will not threaten Russia. While the U.S. favors bringing the Russian interception system in line with a separate U.S./NATO system, the Russians would prefer to integrate the NATO system with theirs.

Opportunities for mitigating the impacts of missile defense system would be to develop a method for sharing missile launch information between U.S./NATO and Russia, perhaps the creation of a joint information center. While the U.S. is not likely to be keen on an integrated

system, they would be open to sharing data. Information sharing would not only be good for missile defense in and of itself, but it has the potential to unlock the door to dealing with tactical nuclear weapons. Russia believes that it needs a large number of tactical nuclear weapons in order to counter perceived NATO conventional superiority. Although there is no real military or strategic need for these systems, it is an important part of psychological reassurance for some European countries.

Multilateral strategic arms control is an area that countries are just beginning to think about and Pierre commented that the international community is at a point where it is thinking through the possibility of multilateral strategic arms control. However, this may be more symbolic than real, as it doesn't look like some countries will negotiate down, e.g. Pakistan and India. Likely leaders of multilateral arms control would be Britain and France

John Park of the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) noted that disarmament is a concept with origins in a bilateral world that now exists in a multilateral world. Park presented key findings from several Track 1.5 dialogues on Northeast Asia conducted by USIP. He noted that a key advantage of these Track 1.5 dialogues is that, because of the nature of the proceedings, the participants come to the table with their guards down and engage in robust discussions. Park discussed the Korean Peninsula as a case study in the impact of arsenal reductions on alliance dynamics and how spoilers like North Korea can stymie the movement toward disarmament.

North Korea's sinking of the Cheonan in March 2010 and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island are stark reminders of the danger that North Korea still poses to South Korea and the region as a whole. Public opinion is shifting and hardening in South Korea, after the provocations of 2010 there has been a push for controlled escalation. However, Park stressed there really is no such thing, as any actions toward controlled escalation will result in a spiral. While the U.S. reaffirmation of the nuclear umbrella was quick, China's reaction to North Korean provocations has been disappointing. China's lack of condemnation and attempts to encourage all parties to restrain their actions and engage in negotiations signaled to Pyongyang that China would not deviate from their support. China's response has been particularly frustrating to South Korea.

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