

## [SE7-OR-2] New START II

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### Full Summary

Col. Paul Hughes (USA, Ret.) of the United States Institute of Peace moderated a discussion on the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) signed in April 2010 by the United States and the Russian Federation. The panel featured experts Leonid Ryabikhin of the Committee of Scientists for Global Security and Arms Control, Elbridge Colby of the Center for Naval Analyses, and retired Pakistani Brig. Gen. Feroz Khan of the Naval Postgraduate School. It focused on Russian, American, and Pakistani perspectives on the New START process and arms control more broadly, its accomplishments, limitations, and future prospects.

Prior to the panelists' opening remarks, Hughes provided a brief overview of New START as well as thoughts on the broader role of arms control. He argued that arms control must be grounded in the realistic assessments and national security objectives of the states involved, and must provide mutual outcomes in the form of assurances about each side's intentions and capabilities.

Mr. Ryabikhin opened by suggesting that, from a Russian perspective New START was a great achievement in a "modern era of stagnation" for arms control as a process and a step forward for the U.S.-Russian relationship. He stated that following START I, both Russia and the U.S. focused more on the immediate national security concerns of each state by pursuing less formal national security agreements than focusing on strategic issues and arms control as a whole. During the Bush administration, he argued, emphasis was placed on political will rather than a formal arms control process concluding with the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT). While this did lead to significant warhead reductions on each side, Ryabikhin suggested that the process demonstrated that political will alone does not work. He noted that there remained a great portion of distrust between the United States and Russia, particularly following the 2008 war in Georgia and aggravated by the expiration of START I in 2009. This, he said, demonstrated the need for a formal mechanism and structure for the implementation of arms control measures and agreements that are legally binding, particularly to maintain political will through leadership transitions and periods of tension.

The Obama administration, Ryabikhin noted, realized this early on, and wanted to speed up

the process of ratification. Though he cited that New START was largely a political declaration, it was an essential root step that satisfied the Russian leadership and the Russian military leadership. Moreover, he noted that pressure from both presidents during the ratification process was impressive and overcame difficult domestic political obstacles, particularly on the American side.

The absence of such talks between the United States and Russia for over a decade, Ryabikhin argued, led to a loss of experienced negotiators in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs who understood the full scope and complexity of the problem, which was difficult to overcome. Most of the designers and negotiators of the START I agreement had retired, passed away, or were too old to work on the new treaty. This, he said, was also felt within the U.S. Department of Defense and Department of State. Addressing this required working closely with the United States early on in the process. Fortunately, he said, the two countries enjoyed close consultation at the Track I and Track II levels, and both countries understood early on the incremental nature of the agreement. U.S. experts and retired officials, including Walter Slocombe and William Perry, participated in numerous off the record discussion, which was very important, he said, to making progress at the Track I level. Even so, due to time constraints and the domestic political situation in the United States, other critical issues, such as ballistic missile defense, non-strategic nuclear warheads, and strategic conventional capabilities, would have to wait.

Still, Ryabikhin argued the U.S. and Russian expert communities largely felt that the two sides made an important step in ratifying the treaty and, more importantly, set up a follow-on process. Ryabikhin noted that the next step is important, as the United States and Russia will need to decide whether and how to invite other declared and undeclared powers to the negotiation table, and how best to implement that process. He argued that there is no future for arms control without expanding it to other participants—China, France, and the United Kingdom, he said, will be important actors.

Elbridge Colby then provided a U.S. perspective on New START and the question of arms control. During the debates in the U.S. Senate that led up to the vote on New START, many he said, argued that New START represented a sharp change from the policies of previous administrations. Colby argued that it did not. Instead, Colby suggested that New START represented a reinvigoration and strengthening of traditional U.S. approaches to nuclear policy by pursuing “practical, modest arms control efforts while maintaining a firm and modern deterrent.”

He explained that, following the deep reductions and intrusive verification of START I, U.S. administrations placed less and less emphasis on strategic issues leading up to the end of the

Cold War. START I permitted this, he argued, because the treaty provided greatly increased transparency and stability, allowing each party to demonstrate their commitment to the end of the arms race. The Clinton administration moved away from strategic issues following failed attempts at additional arms control initiatives, and the Bush administration sought to move away from arms control as a foreign policy tool.

That lack of attention, Colby argued, was responsible for the degradation of the strategic forces and supporting infrastructure. Accidents such as the accidental transport of nuclear weapons from Minot to Barksdale Air Force Base, and incidents such as the accidental shipment of nuclear missile components to Taiwan, emphasized the need to update equally aging arms control frameworks.

The impending expiration of START I in 2009, and the endorsement of a world without nuclear weapons by the Four Horsemen (Shultz, Perry, Nunn, and Kissinger) reinvigorated interest in nuclear issues, and led to a number of influential commissions, including the congressionally chartered Strategic Posture Commission, chaired by former Secretaries of Defense William Perry and James Schlesinger, to look into how best to move forward. The intent was to develop a consensus view of sorts in the defense policy community that could help guide Congress and the Obama administration in developing its nuclear policy.

Colby argued that the Commission succeeded. The Commission's recommendations represented an agreement of leaders across a broad spectrum on a way forward that balanced the traditional U.S. dual approach to maintaining a strong deterrent while pursuing a vigorous arms control agenda. The Commission, he said, came together "around a strategy that...is firmly grounded in the strategic tradition of the United States in balancing deterrence and other means, including principally arms control and nonproliferation, to reduce nuclear dangers." In saying this, Colby argued, the Commission advocated a U.S. commitment to maintaining and investing in the nuclear triad and the nuclear complex while pursuing arms control and seeking to uphold and strengthen the nonproliferation regime. As Colby noted, the Commission specifically endorsed the pursuit of a START I follow-on treaty.

Colby argued that it was against this backdrop that the Obama administration developed its nuclear policy and initiated New START negotiations. The Commission's recommendations also influenced the inclusion of nuclear modernization commitments by the United States to help balance reductions in New START and any follow-on agreements.

Colby reiterated that in the eyes of the United States, New START was never intended to be a transformational agreement. Rather, the focus would be on extending and strengthening the verification provisions of START I while making modest reductions. In this light, Colby

argued, the treaty succeeded. It extended modified inspection and data exchange regimes, allowing parties to benefit from transparency in the other's strategic forces. It included modest limits on warheads and delivery vehicles, and generally remained true to a force posture outlined during the Bush administration. Further, New START provided some support to the “reset” in U.S.-Russian relations, which Colby argued, may have provided encouragement for increased Russian support on the Iranian nuclear issue.

Domestically, the debate in the Senate over ratification proved more challenging than anticipated, largely in part because the ratification process included debate on the second half of the Strategic Posture Commission's bargain—commitment to the refurbishment and modernization of the U.S. nuclear infrastructure. Where the Senate Resolution of Ratification indeed provided the advice and consent of the Senate to move forward with reductions and generally committed to arms control as a useful tool of foreign policy, Colby stated that it also included firm commitments to items nominally outside the bounds of the treaty, including the modernization of the Triad and the weapons complex, and a commitment to move forward with U.S. plans for advancing its ballistic missile defense and strategic conventional strike capabilities. Colby concluded in saying the debate around New START and the ultimate result made it clear that U.S. nuclear policy is back on track, and the United States is “committed to mitigating nuclear dangers through cooperation while maintaining a nuclear posture that can continue to meet the obligations of deterrence...for the foreseeable future.”

Finally, Brig. Gen. Feroz Khan provided a third party reaction to U.S.-Russian bilateral reductions with particular attention to arms control dynamics between India and Pakistan. Following the 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, Khan said, the United States took an aggressive approach behind the scenes, suggesting that India and Pakistan to develop a strategic restraint regime, which culminated in the Lahore Declaration. However, problems arose. Tensions between India and Pakistan escalated with the breakout of conflict in Kashmir, and Khan noted that India increasingly had difficulty applying what was largely considered a U.S.-Russian arms control model in the region.

As such, from an NPT outlier perspective, Khan argued, arms control should expand beyond the bilateral agreement, and become more comprehensive. India and Pakistan, he said, coined the term strategic restraint regime. Moreover, India's problem was really two tiered. It must direct a credible deterrent to both Pakistan and China. Russia, too, Khan argued must calculate the total potential of its deterrent as well as its vulnerabilities. Pakistan shares similar concerns. The Lahore document, he said, simply represents an arms control agreement for the sake of an agreement—yet one that draws on no regional experience.

Khan also cited inconsistencies in U.S. behavior, including the conclusion of the U.S.-India nuclear deal as a blow to arms control initiatives in the region. He called this a substantial blow to prospects for arms control in South Asia. Furthermore, he noted, India and Pakistan share the position that neither can accept in the short term arms control, including restrictions brought on by a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) or a Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). Arms control must be multigenerational as enjoyed by the United States and Russia. Pakistan and India, he said, simply do not have the experience of a long term strategic relationship.

Also precluding arms control progress in the region is possibility that 20-30 countries worldwide have a nascent nuclear capability that could be converted into weapons programs in a short period of time. This, Khan argued, can only resolved through a multilateral approach. Many of the same issues that cloud U.S.-Russian progress in arms reduction—MIRVs, missile defense, conventional strike capability, and a lack of transparency on nuclear issues—also complicate prospects for India-Pakistan bilateral arms control.

Most important to the India-Pakistan relationship, Khan said, is the conventional imbalance between the two countries. Any country that loses this balance with an adversary will naturally rely more heavily on nuclear weapons. Khan pointed to the stance of NATO during the Cold War as a prime example. Furthermore, Khan pointed out the complications associated with the notion of tactical weapons in South Asia. He argued that there is simply no such thing—all weapons are strategic weapons for India and Pakistan. Regarding transparency, Khan argued that it may be as much a lexicon issue as a real issue. He noted that he did not think that Pakistan has a true grasp of what transparency means.

Khan concluded by suggesting the best strategy for arms control is a broader commitment to international disarmament.

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