

TOWARD A
DIPLOMATIC ACTION PLAN
ON NUCLEAR ISSUES

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Chester A. Crocker



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Foreword

George P. Shultz and Sidney D. Drell

We and our many colleagues share a deep and growing concern. Recent developments, in particular, the spread of nuclear know-how and material, present increasing challenges to the effort to control the proliferation of nuclear weapons and materials. We face the prospect of the deadliest weapons ever invented being acquired by hostile regimes or by suicidal terrorists. These concerns motivated us to organize a conference at Stanford University's Hoover Institution on "Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on its Twentieth Anniversary" (October 11–12, 2006).

At that conference, we discussed what it would take to rekindle the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons that President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev brought to their remarkable summit at Reykjavik in 1986. We identified a number of practical steps that would need to be implemented worldwide, both to reduce today's nuclear dangers and to realize the Reykjavik vision.

As stated in an essay reporting on the Hoover conference that appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* on January 4, 2007 ("A World Free of Nuclear Weapons," by George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, and Sam Nunn):

Reassertion of the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and practical measures toward achieving that goal would be,

and would be perceived as, a bold initiative consistent with America's moral heritage. The effort could have a profoundly positive impact on the security of future generations. 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. 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.

Encouraged by strong, positive responses to that essay from around the world, we convened, together with the Nuclear Threat Initiative organization, additional conferences and discussions to examine further the necessary steps and to advance our agenda more generally. These continuing activities have resulted in three publications by the Hoover Institution Press:

- *Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on its Twentieth Anniversary*, edited by Sidney D. Drell and George P. Shultz
- *Reykjavik Revisited: Steps Toward a World Free of Nuclear Weapons* (conference summary), edited by George P. Shultz, Sidney D. Drell, and James E. Goodby
- *Reykjavik Revisited: Steps Toward a World Free of Nuclear Weapons* (full report of all the papers presented at the conference), edited by George P. Shultz, Steven P. Andreasen, Sidney D. Drell, and James E. Goodby.

This fourth publication, commissioned as an integral part of the above process, consists of an essay by Ambassador Chester A. Crocker in which he explores the elements of a U.S. diplomatic strategy for moving ahead. Such a strategy,

as developed in this essay, appropriately titled *Toward a Diplomatic Action Plan on Nuclear Issues*, presents a singularly difficult challenge that must be met if we are to reduce the nuclear danger en route to a world free of nuclear weapons. In this essay, Ambassador Crocker brilliantly illuminates the way forward.

TOWARD A DIPLOMATIC ACTION PLAN ON NUCLEAR ISSUES

Chester A. Crocker

I. OVERVIEW

This essay was undertaken in order to explore the elements of a U.S. diplomatic strategy for moving toward a world order that reduces the role of nuclear weapons and prevents their further spread beyond today's nuclear weapon states.¹ The October 2007 Hoover Institution and Nuclear Threat Initiative conference report, *Steps Toward a World Free of Nuclear Weapons*, assembled leading experts on a complex range of nuclear issues. The potential steps envisaged in the report contain many interconnections. A serious U.S. nuclear

I want to thank Sara Thannhauser of Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy for her research and editorial assistance in the preparation of this paper.

1. This essay does not argue the case for devaluing the place of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security. That case is laid out in the op-eds and papers prepared in connection with the Hoover Institution project, "Toward a World Free of Nuclear Weapons." This paper was written in August 2008 amid the Georgia-Russia crisis and revised in light of comments and suggestions received at a Hoover Institution consultation convened by George Shultz in early October; the implications of the Georgian crisis for nuclear diplomacy are not the primary focus of the paper, but they clearly complicate the picture. The author is solely responsible for the judgments and conclusions and for any errors and omissions that follow.

initiative must recognize the links between verification, nuclear testing, arms reductions/disarmament, weapons proliferation, access to the fuel cycle and civilian nuclear energy, and control of the production and security of sensitive nuclear materials. As a new administration takes office in January 2009, it must be cognizant of these linkages between the steps toward a world where nuclear weapons are devalued as the “ultimate currency of power”² and, eventually, eliminated. In developing a broad strategy on the nuclear issue, these linkages form a package of potential steps. But the policy and diplomatic implications that flow from this package are complex. The major purpose of this essay is to explore those implications. The steps that form part of this notional package have been articulated in the *Wall Street Journal* articles signed by the leaders of this project, with the support of both U.S. presidential candidates. The steps closely parallel aspects of the thirteen measures outlined in the 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference final document and are generally consistent with the more elaborate Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Commission Report of June 2006.

Our purpose here is not to assess the merits of the steps but to discuss how to make progress toward their accomplishment. How to begin the diplomatic action? How to orchestrate and sequence our nuclear diplomacy? What kind of road map is required, and how do we keep it both purposeful and flexible so as to adapt to evolving political conditions? Which institutions and forums are critical to

2. Jayantha Dhanapala, “Rebuilding an Unraveled Consensus for Sustainable Nonproliferation,” in *Breaking the Nuclear Impasse: New Prospects for Security against Weapons Threats*, ed. Jeffrey Laurenti and Carl Robichaud (New York: The Century Foundation, 2007), p. 30.

hammering out agreements, and which ones are indispensable to achieving international legitimacy? What are the political requirements and geopolitical conditions needed for a winning diplomatic strategy? Which are the core states whose engagement will be required to create irresistible momentum at the launch of a U.S. initiative? Perhaps most important, how do we get ourselves into a position—at home and in relations with the core states—to move the process forward? A political and strategic foundation must be built.

These questions confront us with two immediate paradoxes. First, U.S. leadership and action will be indispensable if the nuclear agenda is to progress. At the same time, it is important not to suggest that this is strictly an American game plan or an American strategic priority: the risk of reflexive anti-U.S. posturing is real and needs to be preempted and outflanked. Second, progress can only become registered and legitimized in multilateral forums—of which there are a number of relevant ones to consider. But such progress is unlikely, in most cases, to be negotiated in international organizations unless it has first been developed through bilateral diplomacy, beginning with a core of partners and broadening to an expanding base of support. The place for broad-based, multilateral resolutions and declarations is at the culminating points, after the diplomatic heavy lifting.

The essay contains six sections. The first lays out certain assumptions about how the next administration should approach the nuclear agenda and how it should build the foundation for progress, establishing U.S. bona fides and getting its house in order for a sustained and demanding diplomatic initiative. Also included are some basic questions about the place of nuclear issues in overall U.S. foreign policy and choices that should be made *before* going into action. The second identifies critical obstacles and the geopolitical link-

ages for dealing with them. Those obstacles center on the political context in which states have acquired or are seeking to acquire nuclear weapons; removing the obstacles will require a change of geopolitical mind-set and our recognition of the implications for others of going to zero. The third section outlines the basic policy choice and defines parameters of the goal of a fresh nuclear diplomacy. The fourth discusses elements of a U.S. launch strategy, including early actions to be taken by the United States alone as it lays the policy groundwork for early contacts and consultations with key parties. The fifth sets out ideas for U.S. diplomacy with core states that are aimed at bringing momentum to the steps we select to focus on. This section includes points, caveats, and arguments to use with the key parties. The sixth and final section addresses the question of institutions and forums for future nuclear governance. It considers how to strengthen or adapt current international bodies as well as possible new governance initiatives.

II.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS: BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR PROGRESS

The United States has finite power, and the next administration will inherit myriad major challenges in January 2009. Meanwhile, U.S. diplomatic standing in the world is at a low point. A new administration has the potential to develop fresh leverage and regain the international initiative after years of playing defense and fighting high-profile wars. But it cannot take up every challenge at once. If it is to take up the nuclear agenda, the new administration must recognize that this will absorb major chunks of U.S. diplomatic and politi-

cal capital. It should be attempted only if Washington is prepared to prioritize it accordingly, recognizing the linkages among issues and the necessity for basic geopolitical choices that could create the context for movement on nuclear issues. Nowhere is that more true than in the case of U.S. policies toward Russia and the Middle East.

A second assumption is that there are pressures for early action and decision on nuclear issues. Expectations have been created and ideas put into play (not least by the Shultz-Kissinger-Perry-Nunn initiative). President-elect Obama has already committed to taking action on elements of the nuclear agenda. Congress is on record urging the next president to conduct a nuclear weapons policy review by the end of its first year. The congressionally mandated Strategic Posture Review Commission, led by Bill Perry and Jim Schlesinger (and facilitated by the U.S. Institute of Peace), is due to report back in the spring of 2009. A number of leading nonofficial studies are coming out in time for the election and transition.³ In addition are the following external foreign policy pressures for action: the nuclear agenda will be central in any review of the U.S.-Russian relationship in the wake of the August 2008 war in Georgia; the ticking clock in Iran; the final preparatory conference for the 2010 NPT review in New York in May 2009; the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and the Strategic Offensive Reductions

3. See Bruce Jones, Carlos Pascual, and Stephen Stedman, *Power and Responsibility: Building International Order in an Era of Transnational Threat* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, December 2008); Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye Jr., *A Smarter and More Secure America* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 2007); and Casimir Yost, Thomas Pickering, and Chester Crocker, *America's Role in the World: Foreign Policy Choices for the Next President* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, February 2008).

Treaty (SORT), which expire in December 2009 and 2012, respectively; the U.S.-Russian atmospherics surrounding ballistic missile defense, NATO expansion, the recently signed Russia-U.S. civilian nuclear cooperation agreement, future adherence to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), all of which are highly fraught and in urgent need of “gardening”; and the gridlock over the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) ratification and the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) negotiation, which hangs over the nuclear agenda like a noxious cloud.

Thus, a palpable sense of urgency exists to address both the perception and the reality of stalemate on nuclear issues and the risk of further unraveling on both the disarmament and the nonproliferation features of the NPT regime. Outside the United States, the general view is that U.S. policy explains the stalemate (though the reality is more complex)⁴, which places a major, additional burden on American diplomacy. Unlike the closed, bilateral world of nuclear negotiations during the cold war, moving toward the progressive elimination of nuclear weapons today will require a major domestic political and public diplomacy dimension. Most nuclear weapon states today are democracies of one sort or another, as are many of the states that will have a say in the NPT review process and other forums. The “bargain” at the core of the NPT must be refreshed and made sufficiently attractive to meet the political requirements of a wide range of governments and publics. The politics of disarmament and nonproliferation must make sense.

A third assumption flows from the second. Properly man-

4. For a balanced and concise overview, see “The US-Russia Nuclear Balance,” *Strategic Comments*, 14, no. 6 (London) (August 2008).

aged, this situation creates a dramatic opportunity for an incoming administration. Fresh leadership starts not only with the extra political-diplomatic capital of high expectations and a honeymoon phase but also with the knowledge that the United States holds many high cards on nuclear weapons and proliferation issues. In addition, there is the leverage that comes from a potential surprise—that is, a trend reversal if American leaders return to providing leadership on the overall nuclear agenda. To capitalize on these assets will require decision and action on several fronts during the presidential transition and in the first few months after the inauguration.

The flip side of this coin, however, is that the new administration will face an immediate need to get its own house in order. The first part of this involves U.S. domestic public opinion and gaining a license from Congress to take up major parts of the nuclear agenda, parts of which will be controversial. Building the case for CTBT ratification, negotiating an extension of START provisions, concluding the next phase of negotiated warhead reductions, and developing a plan for FMCT verification will be challenging politically. Nuclear experts and many strategic force posture analysts broadly agree on pushing forward on at least some of these issues, but resistance is predictable and will require forceful, determined political leadership.

Moreover, the political foundation for working the public and congressional fronts requires that the new administration get its people in place and get its policies reviewed and organized within the interagency process. This will take some months. As indicated, this effort can succeed only with ongoing and personally engaged presidential leadership. Head-of-state-level interactions will be needed from time to time, and the president will need to maintain discipline and establish clear lines of authority from the White House to the Depart-

ments of State and Defense. The White House itself, however, should not attempt to micromanage the diplomacy but rather oversee and provide guidance to his senior national security/foreign policy team as it reviews policy. The actual diplomacy should be conducted by a senior State Department official backed by a senior interagency team and enjoying direct access to the secretary of state and the explicit imprimatur of presidential support.

III.

GEOPOLITICAL LINKAGES AND OBSTACLES

A starting place for the next administration is to recognize that nuclear weapons and nonproliferation policies cannot be shaped and implemented in a strategic vacuum. They reflect and are intimately tied to political relationships, national security priorities and aspirations, global rivalries, and regional conflicts. Getting to a world where nuclear weapons are devalued and incentives for weapons acquisition reduced will necessitate addressing these issues. There are geopolitical preconditions to advancing the nuclear agenda. In addition, the process of reducing the nuclear arsenals of nuclear weapon states (NWS) raises important strategic issues, defined by one scholar as the maintenance of strategic stability, the risk of rapid breakout and reconstitution of previously nondeployed weapons, verification challenges as arsenals are reduced and configured away from operational deployment, and the latent nuclear potential of nonnuclear weapon states.⁵ These issues require both a serious technical analysis

5. David Holloway, "Further Reductions in Nuclear Forces," paper prepared for the Reykjavik II Conference, Hoover Institution, October 24-25, 2007.

to develop relevant proposals and a sustained diplomatic effort to construct and sustain the favorable geopolitical context without which steps toward a nuclear weapons-free world will not flourish.

The fundamental geopolitical equations require the next administration to master the link between nuclear and non-nuclear issues. Moreover, the equations are themselves in a state of dramatic flux. To illustrate, we need only a brief look at the Russian and Middle East arenas.

The Russian Arena. The sharp downturn in relations with Moscow in August 2008 creates a challenging context for the next administration. The outgoing Bush team has already conducted a basic review of the Russia relationship; the incoming Obama team will develop its own assessment. The most unpredictable element may lie on the American side: namely, are U.S. leaders capable of taking a deep breath, reviewing how the Russian relationship has been managed since the mid-1990s, and considering the options for building a more realistic framework of priorities and assumptions for relations with Moscow? Henry Kissinger and George Shultz (among others) have pointed out why it is important to understand the full extent of the Russian nationalistic reaction to Western policy on issues ranging from our Balkans diplomacy to missile defense, NATO enlargement, pipeline politics in the Caucasus, and arms control.⁶ A policy review should start by asking what are Russia's priorities in its relations with the United States and Europe and then identifying our own.

Fundamental reassessment and reframing are required here. The new administration should decide—during the presidential transition—on its basic direction. Although dip-

6. Henry A. Kissinger and George P. Shultz, "Building on Common Ground with Russia," *Washington Post*, October 8, 2008.

lomatic confrontation and reciprocal hostile actions might be the path of least resistance for leaders in both countries, more ambitious and politically challenging is the option of exploring a fresh political road map with Russia's leaders, one defined by both sides. The European allies will be divided over Russia policy, anxious to avoid a lurch back into cold war reflexes, and anxious to prevent unilateral military assertiveness by the Russians from spreading beyond Georgia. In sum, U.S. leaders cannot expect our allies to choose between these two fundamentally divergent courses of action. Only the second offers prospects for advancing the steps toward denuclearization. But we also do not yet know whether the Russians will be interested in joining with us in further major reductions in nuclear arms and in a broader initiative aimed at global arms reduction, blocking further proliferation, and internationalizing the fuel cycle. They will have to be tested.

The Middle East Arena. In the Middle East there are also fundamental choices to be made with direct relevance for the nuclear agenda, including stopping Iran's march toward nuclear weapons; bringing Israel into the NPT regime or an alternative approach that leads to eventual denuclearization; and preventing any other Middle Eastern states from acquiring the full nuclear fuel cycle. The key questions here are, What evolution is indispensable for achieving meaningful progress on nuclear proliferation concerns in the Middle East? and What is the link between Middle East progress and the U.S./European relationship with Russia?

One view is that Israel's possession of an undeclared weapons program is not based on irregular or asymmetric warfare scenarios against Palestinian or Hizbollah militants but on the need to deter a hostile, nuclear-armed state (or hostile coalition of major conventional armies). This assessment means that settling the Israel-Palestine conflict is *not* a precondition for addressing the Israeli program; rather, the most

powerful conditions, from an Israeli perspective, relate to Pakistan and Iran. Of these, Iran looms as fundamental. This is not to suggest that the Israeli weapons program ought to be on the agenda at the outset of a new U.S. nuclear initiative but to underscore the reality that Israel's own priorities point to the importance of preventing proliferation across the entire Middle East region, starting with (but not confined to) Iran. Success on that front, suitably linked to U.S. missile defense and other security guarantees for Israel, could enable us to bring the Israelis into a regional denuclearization process.

Accordingly, if the next administration has in mind a global nuclear initiative, it will need to decide if it is prepared to reshape its Iran policy from one of isolation, sanctions, and veiled threats of military action—none of which have stopped the drive to acquire nuclear weapons—to one of conditional engagement (leaving all other options as fallbacks) aimed at breaking the nuclear impasse. The Iranian nuclear agenda cannot be addressed in a vacuum; it is part of the respective agendas of both Washington and Tehran. Needed is a proposed road map for jolting this long-poisoned relationship off dead center, a process that will have to include key issues on the agendas of both sides.

The Russia–Middle East Nexus. At present, Moscow runs with the hares and hunts with the hounds on Iran. It serves Russia's short-term interests—blocking U.S. success in the gulf, in arms and nuclear technology exports, in sustaining its role as critical United Nations Security Council (UNSC) member—to continue the double game of engagement in Iran diplomacy and back channel bilateral sustenance of Iranian defiance. This does not mean that Moscow favors an Iranian bomb. Russia may have even less enthusiasm than the United States for an Iranian nuclear weapons program. But Russia probably believes it can block that too and reap the rewards of regional influence by stringing out the game. To break this logjam, the United States could decide to deal directly with

the Iranian regime to test whether the regime wishes to end its isolation and whether it is capable of behaving consistently with the standards of the international community. Such an initiative need not be (and probably should not be) at Russia's expense, however; as the Bush administration, our key allies, and others have proposed, Russia can play a central role as locus of the enrichment programs that fuel civilian reactors for Iran and other states in the region. Moscow cannot stop Washington from engaging Iran; done correctly, we would aim to engage them both.

Another reason to craft a diplomatic strategy that recognizes the inherent link between the Russian and Middle East arenas is that they pivot on each other in terms of energy security:

- If the U.S.-Russian relationship continues to spiral downward in recrimination and hostile actions, the pipeline politics of the Caspian and Caucasus are destined to get nastier, giving growing leverage to Iran and Arab oil (and gas) producers and increasing Europe's sense of energy insecurity.
- A more positive evolution on both the Russian and Middle East/Iran fronts would ease European concerns and lessen the risks of excessive European dependence on Russia's energy infrastructure.

These, of course, are not the only geopolitical linkages relevant to the success of a future U.S. nuclear initiative. A process of negotiated denuclearization is already under way on the Korean Peninsula through the Six-Party talks process; the health of that process will be critical to keeping South Korea as a close strategic partner and to keeping Japan on the non-nuclear path, a goal central to Chinese calculations. Accordingly, the next administration will be well advised to make North Korea the starting place of its nuclear dialogue, both with our South Korean and Japanese allies and with the Chinese. In South Asia, two nuclear-armed states face each other

across a rich agenda of bilateral differences, and they do so with differing strategic imperatives, vastly different political institutions, and asymmetrical incentives by which to consider possible denuclearization.

Beyond the above-mentioned geopolitical linkages, also worth brief note is the global political context in which the new administration takes office, beginning with an economic crisis unprecedented in scope and severity in recent times. Its implications are likely to prove far-reaching and (for our purposes as well as others) center on the credibility and relevance of U.S. global leadership, the question of American standing and reputation for competence, and the possibility for success or failure in one arena to spill over into others. In times of turbulence, seemingly unrelated issues may cascade into one another, further adding to the challenge of gaining momentum on nuclear issues.

Some of the greatest obstacles beyond the economic crisis can be seen in the currently poisoned international climate. The problem is visible in Latin America between populist demagogues and their less anti-U.S. neighbors; in the Middle East at multiple levels of cleavage; in the Islamic world generally over U.S. actions that privilege Israeli security; in the struggle for the soul of Islam reflected in salafist militancy; in the periphery of the former Soviet Union and the old Soviet empire over Moscow's new assertiveness; in the U.N. system over the lingering dominance of the Security Council by the victors of World War II; and in the geoeconomic alignments visible in the Doha Round and in the increasingly dated appearance of the G-8 whose "outreach" efforts to other major states are viewed with derision. This brief summary of today's global divisions points toward a deep well of antagonisms that can be mobilized against American diplomatic initiatives such as those outlined above.

The way to reverse the polarities and create positive momentum is, first, to avoid international fora where negative actors can build blocking alliances until a constructive dynamic has been created elsewhere. Any platform offering opportunities to such actors as Venezuela, South Africa, Cuba, or Syria should be avoided. The second diplomatic technique is to directly engage with each of the leading nuclear parties that (unless recruited by us) can be recruited by those who would block us. U.S. nuclear diplomacy is unlikely to succeed if it leaves relationships to chance or stands back in the hope that others will lead. Thus nothing short of a top-level diplomatic task force will be required in which American leaders privilege the nuclear agenda using all the instruments of alliances, institutions, summitry, and carefully constructed overtures to pull the major actors into positive action.

IV.

DEFINING THE GOAL

Diplomatic strategy requires a clearly articulated goal. If key nations are to work together to block the spread of nuclear weapons and reduce nuclear arsenals, they need a shared objective, an end state. Having said this, clarity about nuclear weapons policy has a price: it may fuel domestic political resistance, and it may generate resistance by certain states with nuclear capabilities or aspirations. But on a question as central to national and global security as nuclear weapons, this price cannot be avoided; progress is unlikely if the ultimate goal is fudged in verbal artifice and ambiguity. The Shultz-Kissinger-Perry-Nunn initiative has stimulated unprecedented attention in various nations as well as debate within the U.S. national security community about the vision

of moving toward a world without nuclear weapons. In a sense, it is a debate—as Sidney Drell and James Goodby have described it⁷—between “partial reducers” and “ultimate eliminators.”

From a diplomatic perspective, the question boils down to: What does the United States propose to other states and how do we make it attractive? Essentially, the next administration has the opportunity to propose an updated version of the 1946 Acheson-Lilienthal report blended together with a re-configured version of the grand bargain contained in the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty. The key elements of the new bargain would include nuclear arms reductions toward the eventual goal of zero operationally deployed weapons; internationally controlled and guaranteed access to the nuclear fuel cycle to meet civilian energy needs; and sustained international action to block nuclear weapons proliferation. These are the three legs of the NPT triad, but events have moved beyond the treaty. The new administration should outline a fresh vision of this global bargain as well as a clear articulation of the dangers of not taking up the challenge and letting nature take its course.

Making the vision attractive to others will depend on the credibility of scenarios of a downward spiral into a more fully nuclear world; the seriousness of U.S. intent to take the lead on key issues of concern to other states such as the CTBT; U.S. recognition of the interests and requirements of both NWS and non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS) as the initiative unfolds and the reality that a “two-tier” normative

7. Sidney Drell and James Goodby, “The Reality: A Goal of a World without Nuclear Weapons Is Essential,” *Washington Quarterly*, summer 2008; this article responds to (among others) Harold Brown, “New Nuclear Realities,” *Washington Quarterly*, winter 2007–8.

system (states with and without weapons) is not sustainable; and U.S. recognition of the major technical and institutional challenges to creating adequate international verification and monitoring systems to support the process.

At the same time, the administration needs to emphasize in its public and early diplomatic messages assurances and safeguards clarifying how the vision of zero nuclear weapons would work in practice. These points should include that

- This is not unilateral disarmament; it is negotiated reductions culminating eventually in verifiable agreements and an international treaty to prevent all nations from producing nuclear materials for weapons
- This process will unfold gradually over a number of years in stages, each of which will be carefully negotiated to ensure that questions of strategic stability and breakout risk can be satisfactorily answered
- The nuclear initiative will commence with intensive consultations with our closest European and Asian allies and with other NWS, especially the Russians
- This will be followed by beginning action on a range of steps that make sense in their own right and that open the door toward achieving the vision of zero nuclear weapons. These steps include further cuts in U.S. and Russian nuclear forces and extension of key elements of the 1991 START agreement; negotiating increased warning and decision times on missile launches; strengthening verification and compliance monitoring capacities under the NPT and upgraded capabilities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for such purposes; enhancing the security of existing weapons and fissile

material stocks; and developing proposals for an internationalized management of the nuclear fuel cycle.⁸

V.

ACTIONS TO ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY AND LAY POLICY GROUNDWORK

Early actions in rolling out the strategy fall into two categories: (1) actions to set the policy tone and underscore the seriousness of our broad intent and (2) actions necessary to review and establish the basis for specific policy initiatives and guidance for upcoming events and consultations. Each is important and must reinforce the other.

Setting the Tone. It will be difficult to begin a new nuclear diplomatic push secretly or even quietly. Policy reviews and “confidential” diplomatic exchanges (see below) will leak. Congressional consultations and hearings will be a necessary ingredient. Although it is important to get the sequence right and avoid preempting the results of these steps, the president must take the lead in shaping public discussion and debate. He needs to set the terms and defuse or preempt unhelpful reactions. Accordingly, the president and his top advisers need to consider making major public pronouncements echoing some of the themes in the *Wall Street Journal* articles (and others) and making some rhetorical and symbolic down payments that would signal U.S. seriousness of intent. Possible themes and announcements include

- Sketching out the extent of the risk of not dealing with our “nuclear imperatives” and underscoring the risks of “business and usual”

8. For a full iteration, see Drell and Goodby, “The Reality,” pp. 26–27.

- Outlining the broad dimensions of a global bargain that would have something in it for all legitimate parties, as well as the various caveats and assurances that will be integral to U.S. policy of leading toward a nuclear weapons-free world
- Proposing a major funding increase in support of IAEA modernization and upgraded capacity for verification and monitoring of nuclear safeguards. Addressing long-standing underfunding woes at IAEA would earn valuable acknowledgment in the antiproliferation community and reverse recent strains with the organization
- Lifting the curtain on the intent to complete policy reviews and commence detailed consultations with allies, the Russians, and other key interested states (nuclear and nonnuclear)
- Drawing liberally from June 2008 Commission of Eminent Persons on the IAEA's future,⁹ outline a vision for a future internationalized nuclear fuel reprocessing agreement and fuel bank and urge the beginning of talks toward this goal. Other components could include enhanced UNSC Resolution 1540 assistance efforts to help states control risks of diversion of nuclear materials to nonstate actors and to shut down trafficking channels
- Reaffirming in speeches the current moratorium on testing, signaling an intent to work with Congress on issues related to CTBT ratification, and opening up discussion of the need to work with the Russians on the challenges of "prompt launch" and outdated retaliatory doctrines

9. Commission of Eminent Persons, *Reinforcing the Global Nuclear Order for Peace and Prosperity: The Role of the IAEA to 2020 and Beyond*. GOV/2008/22-GC(52)/INF/4 (Vienna, Austria: International Atomic Energy Agency, May 2008). Available at <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/gov2008-22gc52inf-4.pdf>.

Establishing a Political Base for Diplomatic Action. A number of basic actions will be required to lay the groundwork for nuclear diplomacy. These include

- Initiating top-level congressional consultations on key issues in the nuclear agenda that will require a significant degree of buy-in from the legislative branch. CTBT ratification—an essential step from the international perspective—will demand intense effort in the Senate. If U.S. diplomacy is to achieve progress on the FMCT front, a greater measure of political consensus will be needed at home. Hearings on issues surrounding stockpile stewardship and verification advances are likely to be needed. Congressionally mandated reviews of nuclear weapons policy will be playing out in the early months of the new administration. A parallel consultation in the Senate on the fate of the Bush-Putin civilian nuclear cooperation agreement of 2007 (signed in May 2008 and sent to Congress for ratification but pulled back three months later during the Georgia drama) will offer the administration an opportunity to outline its thinking on steps to engage with the Russians on the nuclear agenda. The question of extending START provisions and considering additional weapons reductions beyond SORT should also be part of the early congressional dialogue.
- In parallel with the congressional track, the administration needs to launch a fast-track policy review process on a range of issues on the nuclear agenda. The purposes of these reviews are to prepare for the next phase of U.S.-Russian talks on successors to START and SORT; establish the greatest possible measure of interagency coherence to the overall U.S. nuclear posture, including critical issues related to the stockpile and testing, verification challenges, nuclear force posture issues (e.g., negotiating changes in alert status of operational weapons and possible movement from operational to responsive status), an international

fuel cycle proposal, and other issues; consider the staging and sequencing of diplomatic engagement and consultations; and identify critical choices for presidential decision and action on the above menu of issues.

- A parallel review (necessitated by the deterioration in geopolitical relations) of the U.S.-Russian agenda on NATO expansion and missile defense; on Iran; on tensions in the Caucasus and the Balkans; and on the prospects for creating an overall framework of bilateral cooperation. Parallel reviews of Iran and Middle East policies and the Six-Party process on North Korea—required in any event as a new team takes office—will have a direct role to play in helping the administration develop its nuclear agenda.

VI.

ENGAGING THE KEY PLAYERS: SOME INITIAL DIPLOMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

United Kingdom. Britain, our closest ally in the nuclear domain as in many others, has embraced the broad outlines of the Shultz-Kissinger-Perry-Nunn op-eds in official statements at the most senior levels.¹⁰ As one of the three depository states under the NPT, the UK is an ardent champion of salvaging and enhancing the nonproliferation regime, and it appears to share completely the goal of devaluing and downgrading the role of nuclear weapons in international

10. See, for example, the keynote address at the Carnegie International Nonproliferation Conference entitled “A World Free of Nuclear Weapons?” by UK secretary of state for foreign and commonwealth affairs Margaret Beckett (Washington, D.C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 25, 2007. Available at www.carnegieendowment.org/events/index.cfm?fa=eventDetail&cid=1004.

politics. Moreover, London is well placed to provide feedback and counsel concerning the diplomatic rollout of a major nuclear initiative. The UK's diplomatic reach can also broaden significantly the political base of such an initiative, diluting at least to some degree its "made in Washington" signature. British support does not necessarily bring with it credible leverage with the French, Russians, Chinese, Indians, Pakistanis, or Israelis, and London's somewhat poisoned relationship with Moscow in recent years is an example of the complexity of working through close allies. Nonetheless, although there are clear limits to Britain's ability to broaden the base for U.S. initiatives, the United States would be shortsighted—if not foolhardy—to overlook intense consultation with London at the outset of the process.

U.S. officials could also expect to receive candid feedback from the British on our initial game plans for engaging others, and the British would also be well placed to offer counsel on the alliance dimensions of nuclear diplomacy, especially in the NATO context. London's quiet, bilateral nuclear policy dialogue with the French can also offer the United States a window into how a fellow European nuclear power interprets the latest developments in French thinking (see below). Linkages among Commonwealth countries and London's expertise in U.N.-related affairs underscore the importance of starting out close to home. Britain's work on nuclear issues is also relevant here and can complement our own. As an illustration, the British nuclear establishment has given serious attention to verification challenges in a context of shrinking arsenals, and UK officials are likely to highlight their role as a "disarmament laboratory" at the 2009 NPT preparatory conference.¹¹

11. "Swords and Ploughshares: The New Nuclear Pioneers," *The Economist*, August 16, 2008. Available at www.economist.com/world/britain/displaystory.cfm?story_id=11921237.

Russia. Moscow is the indispensable partner in launching any serious nuclear initiatives. The Russians possess not only 46 percent of the operational nuclear weapons in the world but also vast quantities of fissile material and associated infrastructure whose security and safety has been the object of highly successful, if underfunded, U.S. initiatives since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Even more to the point, the Russians are the strategic pivot for U.S. nuclear diplomacy: they are in a position to block movement on the major steps; by the same token, Russia could provide critical positive leverage to support them.

Beyond these evident factors, below are several additional reasons to bring the Russians into the inner core of our nuclear diplomacy:

- Nuclear technology and especially nuclear weapons are (along with UNSC permanent member status) the most important basis of Russia's claim to great power status and the only "equalizer" Moscow has in its bilateral relations with Washington. Russia's nuclear standing provides a basis for converting its technological prowess into a leadership role as a founding member of a new and improved global nuclear regime through partnership with the United States.
- Against the backdrop of today's deeply troubled relationship between Russia and the United States (and much of Europe)—a relationship aggravated by Eastern European, Balkan, and Caucasus tensions, by energy security issues, by Russia's imperious treatment of foreign investment and its autocratic behavior at home, by American self-delusion over the depth of Russian resentment over Western policies, and by differences over Iran—the nuclear arena may be the *only* one capable

of anchoring a basic change in the direction of events. Successfully managed, U.S. nuclear diplomacy could help move the bilateral relationship away from the current downward slide by focusing American and Russian minds on the bigger picture of what is at stake. A well-crafted U.S. nuclear demarche in the earlier months of the new administration would suggest to the Russians a number of possible opportunities to

- Change the negative dynamic with the United States without having visibly to climb down off Putin's imperial high horse. The United States and Russia would instead agree to change the subject to the more profound one of creating a safer, rule-based, and eventually nuclear weapon-free world order.
- Establish a restored basis of legitimate great power standing—instead of reacting destructively to the United States, behaving like tsarist predecessors in the Caucasus, or being sidelined as an investment magnet in the current financial crisis.

Another aspect of a nuclear engagement with Russia from the U.S. perspective is defensive: it represents a basis on which to seize the initiative in the relationship and avoid being placed in a reactive position by Russia's neoimperial moves. An early, top-level nuclear initiative with Russia gives nothing away and can be adapted or put on a slower track if it appears that Moscow is unable to make the necessary decisions or misinterprets the U.S. move. There is no guarantee that Moscow will join with us in further major nuclear weapons reductions (below the levels set in the 2002 SORT treaty) or in other aspects of the nuclear agenda. Essentially, the new administration should plan on early nuclear consultations

with Moscow to test a strategically critical potential partner. Experience with the Russians at other times suggests that Russian leadership can be influenced to behave like a true partner when treated like one. These contacts as well as early in-depth consultations with the British should be launched as soon as the new administration has the necessary people in place—a process that could yield inputs into the Washington policy review and congressional consultations. Such early contacts could also help the administration as it prepares for the April 2009 NPT preparatory conference.

Content of the Russia-U.S. Track. The U.S. launch with Russia would have at least five major thrusts: (1) recruiting a critical partner to rebuild the global nonproliferation consensus and strengthen it by means of beefed-up safeguards, a better-resourced IAEA, and the start of concrete work toward an international (IAEA-administered) fuel bank, as well as confirmation of the 2007 Bush-Putin nuclear cooperation agreement; (2) reversing the negative trend on arms control by achieving (ideally by December 2009) a successor to (or extension of) key START verification provisions and commencing negotiation of further reductions in operationally deployed weapons below the levels set in the 2002 SORT agreement—both to achieve nuclear arms cuts desirable in their own right and to provide indispensable impetus in the lead-up to the 2010 NPT review conference; (3) exploring with Russia the issues surrounding early warning and “prompt launch” to reduce the dangers inherent in current strategic force posture and doctrines; (4) returning to the subject of cooperative missile defense in order to remove a central irritant in the bilateral relationship; and (5) obtaining a partner for mounting a global nuclear initiative aimed at the other nuclear states signatory to the NPT (i.e., France and China), at nonsignatory nuclear states (India, Pakistan,

and Israel), and at near-nuclear Iran and nuclear outlier North Korea.

This is a massive agenda. Russian responses and positions on these agenda items would be essential input for a U.S. review of the scope and pace of possible initiatives in the first two years of the new administration. Should initial consultations with the Russians (and subsequent follow-up talks on specific elements of the agenda) not prove fruitful, the administration will need to identify other core partners capable of mustering some weight on behalf of the goals of negotiated reductions and enhanced nonproliferation efforts. Although the nuclear agenda cannot be advanced without Russian participation, having others associated with us could bring useful pressure to bear and underscore the merit in Russian eyes of avoiding isolation on a politically popular program. In the end, Washington will need a better grasp of Russian psychology and sensitivities in the overall relationship if it wishes to mobilize Russian cooperation on nuclear arms diplomacy.

Consulting with Non-Nuclear Allies and other Non-Nuclear Weapon States. As noted previously, the new administration's activities on the nuclear front will not—and should not—be a secret shared only with other NWS. In addition to the British and French (see below), it will be important to brief and consult with key nonnuclear allies in the first months of the new administration. The purposes of these contacts are to keep the allies with us and informed of broad U.S. objectives as we proceed down this road, garner support for evolving U.S. positions in the run-up to the 2009 NPT preparatory conference and 2010 review conference, gain allied input on the management of U.S. relations with key nuclear states in the run-up to NATO's sixtieth anniversary events, and forestall potentially unhelpful allied readings or interpretations that could spill

into domestic political debate at home. Especially important nonnuclear allies for early and continuing consultation are Germany, Italy, Turkey, South Korea, and Japan.

Consultations should focus on the ominous nature of proliferation trends and the urgency of reinvigorating the NPT consensus. The upside possibilities of enhanced verification and internationalization of the fuel cycle should be stressed, together with U.S. seriousness of purpose in achieving progress on CTBT ratification, pursuing FMCT, START verification renewal, and additional arms reductions. Allies will want to know the administration's thinking on such issues as the transition to fewer operationally deployed warheads and the credibility of extended deterrence in such conditions, as well as how Washington plans to cope with the non-NPT signatories and undeclared nuclear states. Essentially, like all U.S. interlocutors, the allies will want to know what the world will look like from their perspective as nuclear weapons are progressively reduced and devalued as symbols of power and status.

Consultations of a similar nature will also be required with at least some key NNWS that are not U.S. allies. This will partly be a matter of straightforward diplomatic "gardening" in the lead-up to multilateral meetings but also of strong, supportive voices among opinion-shaping states with significant diplomatic reach that can support (or at least not undermine) U.S. positions on key issues that may come before such forums. States such as Brazil, Mexico, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Tanzania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia are examples of those states requiring diplomatic outreach.

France. Each nuclear weapons state (apart from the UK and Russia, see above) needs to be assessed and approached on

the basis of its history and strategic circumstances. France has no intention of letting its voice be overlooked at a time of increasingly active nuclear debates, as was made clear in President Nicholas Sarkozy's March 21, 2008, address on nuclear strategy. From an American perspective, it will be important to manage the intricacies of having two European powers—the two that still count when it comes to power projection within and beyond Europe—at the top nuclear table as the United States seeks to advance the steps discussed above toward a nuclear-free world. Britain has formally adopted the ultimate goal of abolition, France has not. Whatever the merits of the comparison, France may be less secure than Britain in its claim to continuing world power standing; British insight into how this can be handled could be invaluable. That said, Sarkozy's nuclear speech contains much that is positive to work with, including transparency initiatives related to French fissile material production sites; a further reduction of the French air-based arsenal and a public affirmation that total warheads (operationally deployed and in stockpile) are below three hundred; and a challenge to *all* the other NWS to reciprocate French nuclear restraint and transparency by adopting a comprehensive program before the 2010 NPT review conference. Sarkozy's program includes a number of objectives on the list of steps discussed in the Shultz-Kissinger-Perry-Nunn initiative such as CTBT ratification and negotiating an FMCT.¹²

Since neither France nor Britain is viewed as the authoritative voice for the EU or NATO-Europe on a nuclear agenda, channels must be kept open to other leading European states.

12. Bruno Tertrais, "France and Nuclear Disarmament: The Meaning of Sarkozy's Speech," Washington, D.C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 1, 2008.

NATO's sixtieth anniversary in the first half of 2009 offers yet another milestone event at which there is the possibility of working to address potential changes in NATO declaratory policies and nuclear strategic concepts.¹³ In addition, U.S. nuclear diplomacy cannot afford to ignore NPT-focused initiatives of our allies and will want to work to harmonize positions for the upcoming 2009–10 NPT events. It is doubtful whether either Washington or London can “guide” French nuclear policy—just as it is doubtful that other Europeans are eager to be guided by French nuclear initiatives. But some recognition for France (and Britain), including a visible place at the nuclear tables, will go some distance to creating constructive chemistry. The same can be said for taking into account the highly advanced French nuclear energy industry.¹⁴ Over the longer term, if there is progress on the U.S.-Russia track in negotiating further, staged reductions, the time will come when it will be appropriate to take up the question of negotiating further reductions in European deterrents.¹⁵

The China-India-Pakistan Nexus. Each time the circle of consultations widens, the importance of the previous diplomatic contacts grows. Before each consultation undertaken by the new administration, it would be ideal to have explored the best approaches with all of the others without the new interlocutors knowing who said what (in a more perfect world, Washington would have the diplomatic resources to field a global team capable of authoritative outreach almost simultaneously in every relevant region). Each critical NWS

13. The author is indebted to Joan Rohlfing for bringing this point to his attention.

14. The author acknowledges his debt to private communication with Stapleton Roy on this point.

15. See Holloway, “Further Reductions in Nuclear Forces.”

player—British, Indian, Russian, Chinese, Pakistani, French, Israeli—will want to know whom we approached first and why and what sort of a coalition we are trying to build. Moreover, it would be beneficial to be able to tell each interlocutor something authoritative and compelling about what the other NWS players are prepared—conditionally—to consider doing. In practice, much of this diplomatic data gathering and preparation will be based on prior positions, published declarations, and lateral communications not controlled by Washington; some of it will come from nongovernmental sources and unofficial contacts. The Nuclear Threat Initiative staff and the experts assembled by the Shultz-Kissinger-Perry-Nunn initiative have gained considerable knowledge of where key states stand; their collective expertise and experience should be part of the new administration's database.

Above I argued that the Russians are indispensable partners in mobilizing movement toward a denuclearized world, making a call for working with them and the Europeans first, before complicating the geopolitics by broadening the discussion to include Indians, Chinese, Pakistanis, and Israelis. But the prospects for success on the Russian front might be enhanced by lining up as much help as possible from others and creating a fresh impetus for forward movement, which is why we should work closely with the two European NWS to identify steps and sequences we can jointly support (e.g., on verification, transparency, the fuel cycle) that would play into U.S. talks with the Russians. The same logic applies in the case of the Asian NWS.

Early exchanges with the Indians could provide the basis for assessing their view on the major steps in the denuclearization initiative. Preliminary Indian signals have been positive on the concepts and steps, provided that all NWS are

prepared to make parallel undertakings. Indian officials have remarked that this initiative is in certain respects consistent with long-standing Indian policy toward nuclear weapons. Moreover, the U.S.-Indian nuclear agreements give some assurance that American ideas on nuclear reductions could get a constructive hearing. As the Indians look at their relationship with Pakistan, the notion of eliminating nuclear arsenals has attractions. For their part, the Pakistanis see such weapons as an equalizer with their far stronger Indian neighbor. (This analysis of interstate balances on the subcontinent needs to be supplemented by inclusion of domestic political scenarios as Pakistan spirals closer to civil war and state failure. In such circumstances, the first priority is to continue working to strengthen security around the Pakistani nuclear program and sites and to plan possible action for a crisis scenario.)

As Indians look at their strategic relationship with China, on the other hand, nuclear weapons help offset Chinese conventional advantages. Hence, India may resist negotiating down its small arsenal in the absence of reassurances on Chinese intentions, Pakistani stability, and some strategically weighty compensatory payoff for doing so.

The Chinese will have plenty of concerns of their own about nuclear initiatives. The starting place for U.S. diplomacy will be a broad dialogue about the overall relationship, providing a context in which to demonstrate U.S. awareness of Chinese concerns and to situate the nuclear issues in that context rather than as an isolated U.S. "proposal." The Chinese will be wary of nuclear initiatives that appear to have a prior U.S.-Indian endorsement and will want to know whether the nuclear topic is intended as part of an "encirclement" plan developed in Washington or as a serious attempt to manage and reduce strategic competition. Chinese leaders

may also be responsive to arguments about completing the North Korea denuclearization agenda and proceeding forward in ways that minimize the risk that Japan might develop a weapons program. The United States, in turn, will want to look to the Chinese to help bring Pakistan on board and convey some general ideas about the need to explore India's possible receptivity. (It may be desirable to conduct the initial explorations with Indian and Chinese leaders at roughly the same time.)

Expecting the full world power treatment, the Chinese will certainly want to know how gradual denuclearization scenarios affect both their global political status and their force posture. Enjoying its role as an NPT signatory, China will be wary about suggestions that India acquire the same status. The Chinese appear to be interested in the American (and international) discussions about going to zero, but they have a lot of questions about U.S. thinking and intentions. As one of the two major powers that is actively enhancing its nuclear weapons capabilities, the Chinese should expect that American officials will have questions of their own.¹⁶

These considerations—and the question of Israel—all point to the need for creative thinking about the central role and possibilities for strengthening of the NPT regime. It is hard to envisage how today's nonsignatories can be accepted into the NPT regime as NWS without damaging it and creat-

16. As Defense Secretary Robert Gates remarked in an October address in Washington, "China is also expanding its nuclear arsenal. It has increased the number of short-, medium- and long-range missiles and pursued new land-, sea- and air-based systems that can deliver nuclear weapons. To be sure, we do not consider Russia or China as adversaries, but we cannot ignore these developments and the implications they have for our national security." Transcript at http://carnegieendowment.org/files/1028_transcrip_gates_checked.pdf.

ing the wrong precedents for others. On the other hand, something has to be done to bring the three “outliers” into the global nuclear governance architecture. A regime based on notions of “good” and “bad” proliferation is unlikely to be a promising foundation for the next phases of nuclear diplomacy, especially in the lead-up to the 2010 NPT review conference.

If India is prepared to provide U.S. negotiators the necessary ammunition for pulling along the Chinese (assuming that the Russians have already signaled interest in the steps being discussed here), the remaining piece of the Asian quadrangle is to be able to answer Russian questions about Chinese interest in moving toward an Asian security architecture in which nuclear weapons are devalued. Another vital piece of the Asian diplomatic challenge is that our Japanese and Korean allies need to be kept informed about our exploratory consultations with the nuclear weapon states as the new administration rolls out its diplomacy in 2009 and beyond. This analysis presupposes that the North Koreans remain on the track toward denuclearization as the Bush era comes to an end and a new team takes up the reins in 2009.

Israel. The other key stakeholders discussed above will expect the United States to take the lead in bringing Israel into the consultative process at an appropriate point. One may envisage three categories of issues that will feature in the inevitably sensitive U.S. dialogue with Israel on nuclear issues: (1) success in belling the Iranian cat; (2) bilateral U.S. security guarantees, including a defense commitment in the event of the first use of nuclear weapons by another state against Israel; and (3) irreversible progress toward completion of the outstanding pieces of the Israel-Arab-Palestinian peace process. Timing and sequencing will be central in raising and pursuing the topic, and U.S. officials will need their bilateral

diplomacy with the Israelis to foreshadow a series of binding but conditional commitments. As discussed earlier, American diplomats will need to take our Israeli allies into their confidence about the priorities for diplomatic action and the central importance—for both the United States and Israel—of avoiding regional nuclearization of the Middle East.¹⁷

VII.

FUTURE NUCLEAR GOVERNANCE

To say that these preliminary diplomatic reflections are ambitious is an understatement. Realizing the initial consultations could take up the first eighteen months of the new administration; actual negotiations on some of the specific steps may require years. Yet, as illustrated above, demanding time pressures require the new team to get its act together and hammer out diplomatic plans and opening positions that will be needed even in the first six months. Moreover, some of the longer-term goals and specific nuclear steps will depend on progress in dealing with bilateral and regional issues discussed earlier in this essay (see Section III, Geopolitical Linkages and Obstacles, above). In the minds of the core parties and our key partners, everything is ultimately linked. For that reason, U.S. officials can only have a successful launch if they have thought ahead not only about future nuclear steps but also about the critical issues of status, prestige, and security (regional and global) that motivate all states in an anarchical international system.¹⁸

17. The author acknowledges his debt to Tom Pickering for underscoring this dimension of the diplomatic challenge.

18. The phrase lies at the core of realist analyses of world politics; see Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

A successful diplomatic launch also requires a landing pad in a legitimate institutional forum. Some of the steps toward a world less influenced by nuclear weapons will be negotiated bilaterally. But bilateral success will then become the basis of leverage for moving the entire international nuclear agenda forward. As this dynamic builds, progress can be registered after the fact in an appropriate multilateral forum. To illustrate, a signed U.S.-Russian accord providing for significant additional cuts in deployed warheads and strengthened transparency on counting rules can become the basis for pressing to achieve some parallel steps by other nuclear weapon states and an agreement at the 2010 NPT review conference on mandatory, universal acceptance of the additional protocols of the IAEA (enhanced beyond current provisions) and on strengthened verification capacity at the IAEA. Improved cooperation on nuclear safety, adherence to the CTBT, and progress toward an internationalized fuel cycle could create momentum for a successful 2010 NPT review conference. A capstone step toward delegitimizing nuclear weapons could be envisaged *after* a positive NPT review conference: for example, a General Assembly resolution outlining and adopting the vision of a nuclear weapons-free world.

But this may be getting the cart before the horse. There is no shortage of forums and mechanisms for addressing nuclear issues. At different stages in the history of nuclear arms diplomacy, constructive roles have been played by the NPT review process, the Conference on Disarmament, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the IAEA, as well as various initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Cooperative Threat Reduction Initiative. American policy makers need to recall how much has, in fact, been accomplished on

the nonproliferation front since the 1960s.¹⁹ The record of what has been done—and what has been prevented and forestalled—is impressive testimony to the ability of statesmen to narrow the gap between “the is and the ought,” to borrow Max Kampelman’s phrase.

The diplomacy of devaluing nuclear weapons as “the ultimate currency of power”²⁰ however, requires a strategic sense of how to move others toward major additional steps. If nuclear weapon states are being asked to reduce and ultimately eliminate the role of nuclear weapons, they need to know what they can expect in terms of security, prestige, and recognition and how to best assert and defend their ongoing nuclear-related interests. If the near-nuclear states and undeclared nuclear states are also being asked to eventually do away with their weapons, they will have parallel concerns. Finally, if the nonnuclear states are being asked to remain nonnuclear forever and to forswear acquiring the full fuel cycle while nuclear weapons remain in existence for a (probably) prolonged transition, they will want some assurance that commitments such as Article VI of the NPT will now be respected and that nondiscriminatory access to enrichment/reprocessing services will be equitably managed for civilian energy purposes. This is a governance challenge.

As the new administration decides whether to take up the

19. Joseph Cirincione, “Addressing Proliferation through Multinational Agreement: Success and Failure in the Nonproliferation Regime,” in *Ultimate Security: Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction*, ed. Janne E. Nolan, Bernard L. Finel, and Brian D. Finlay (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2003).

20. Jayantha Dhanapala, “Rebuilding an Unraveled Consensus for Sustainable Nonproliferation,” in *Breaking the Nuclear Impasse: New Prospects for Security against Weapons Threats*, ed. Jeffrey Laurenti and Carl Robichaud (New York: The Century Foundation, 2007), p. 30.

nuclear weapons problem, there may be no more important issue than identifying the mechanism and the institutional formula for addressing what one expert has described as “the institutional deficit in the NPT.”²¹ This is not the place to define the charter of a new international body responsible for managing the world’s nuclear affairs. But global denuclearization cannot be done on the back of envelopes, and it is unlikely to be done in any existing alliance or U.N. organ or U.N.-linked specialized agency. What is needed is to *negotiate the establishment of a new, overarching framework* that is sufficiently inclusive to rise above the polarities and obstacles outlined above. The framework can serve multiple purposes: a place for *consultation* among states-parties; a *directorate to oversee* specific functions and processes entailed in denuclearization; a *forum to provide a voice and a stake in governance* of the NPT itself and other multilateral accords in the nuclear field; and a coordinating forum as future capabilities emerge and become part of the “nuclear fuel cycle architecture of the future.”²²

These ideas on future nuclear governance can become a powerful source of leverage for American diplomacy in critical phases of the diplomatic launch, the precise role and functions of which will require the most careful thought. But this sort of vehicle will attract the interest of today’s nuclear weapon states as they contemplate the transition and the delicate steps forward. It has the potential to attract the support of key nonnuclear weapon states that had the option or even the demonstrated capacity to acquire nuclear weaponry and

21. Jayantha Dhanapala, “Achieving the Vision of a World Free of Nuclear Weapons,” paper presented at the International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament, Oslo, February 26–27, 2008.

22. The phrase is Joan Rohlfing’s; NTI has several initiatives under way in the area.

decided against it (or decided to eliminate their programs and arsenals): think of countries such Brazil, Japan, South Africa, Ukraine, and South Korea.

The shape of the new denuclearization directorate will need to evolve out of a detailed consultative process with the critical partners and stakeholders discussed in this essay. Shrewd diplomacy may reside in planting a few hints and ideas with key partners—Indians, British, Chinese, French, and Russians—while avoiding notions of an “American plan.” At the right time, everyone will know that we are generally supportive. They will also know that we are indispensable to such an evolution and will recall that Americans are capable of building institutions when we set our minds to it.

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Crocker chaired the board of the United States Institute of Peace (1992–2004) and continues to serve as a board member of this independent, nonpartisan institution created and funded by Congress to strengthen knowledge and practice in international conflict. He also serves on several corporate boards and consults as adviser on strategy and negotiation to a number of U.S. and European firms. He serves on the advisory board of the National Defense University in Washington and is a member of the Global Leadership Foundation.

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