

# BRITISH AMERICAN SECURITY INFORMATION COUNCIL

## SUBMISSION to the U.S. STRATEGIC POSTURE REVIEW COMMISSION

September 10, 2008

### I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Commission's inquiry is greatly welcome. Despite some proposals made by the current Administration, U.S. nuclear posture has remained largely unchanged since the posture review of 1994.<sup>1</sup> Even with reductions, the United States and Russia still possess thousands of nuclear weapons on various levels of alert way beyond any rational concept of minimum deterrence.<sup>2</sup> They dwarf those of the other declared nuclear weapons states of China, France and the United Kingdom, which have between 160 and 400 nuclear weapons each; while the non-NPT states of India, Israel, and Pakistan are thought to maintain fewer than 100 warheads each.<sup>3</sup>

1.2 The U.S. nuclear arsenal has diminishing relevance to the strategic threats faced by the United States today, and in some cases, has unintended consequences that exacerbate these threats. The leading predictable strategic challenges facing the United States are:

- Terrorism and other asymmetric threats;
- The unraveling of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, including new nuclear powers that threaten the United States and its key strategic interests;
- A resurgent Russia that sees its strategic assets as constraints on U.S. power and ultimately as tools in asserting influence over the former Soviet sphere of control;
- A possible long-term strategic shift of global power toward Asia;
- Energy insecurity and dwindling of key resources;
- Climate change, ecological collapse, irreparable damage to life-support systems; and,
- Economic stress, growing national and international inequalities and poverty, social unrest, overpopulation, pandemic disease, migration, and radicalization.

1.3 The power of these threats lies in the intrinsically complex relationships between them, which magnify their impact and make them uncontrollable. Effective strategies that do not take into account those inter-relationships are doomed to failure and will produce severe side-effects.

1.4 An overwhelming nuclear posture has relevance only to the nuclear threat from Russia – and even that, beyond a certain minimum number of warheads, is debatable. The U.S.–Russian relationship is currently under severe strain, a situation that may tempt some to reach immediately for the traditional tools of deterrence and containment, which fail to address the rapidly shifting and emerging economic and political dynamics of a multi-polar world. Every effort must be made to avoid a retreat into Cold War postures without tolerating breaches of international law and norms. The United States and Russia should focus on common interests, such as safeguarding and reducing nuclear arsenals, and these should not be sacrificed to any disputes that might arise between the two. The most significant arms control agreements of the 1980s arose at the height of the Cold War. We also need, as a matter of urgency, to develop additional strategies to containment and deterrence that move beyond these two countries in our quest to establish strategic stability and international confidence. This requires leaders to see the mutual benefit in deepening economic and political ties, and multilateral action to tackle the common challenges to global security.



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1.5 The British American Security Information Council (BASIC) has covered nuclear weapons issues from a transatlantic perspective for over twenty years. During this time, we have seen the primary nuclear security threat shift from a war between the Soviet Union/Russia and the United States, to nuclear proliferation and terrorist attacks against the U.S. mainland and U.S. troops and allies overseas. The possible inter-relationship between terrorism and nuclear proliferation, creating the possibility of a nuclear terrorist attack, is now considered by some to be a greater threat than the long-feared all-out nuclear war still rehearsed by Moscow and Washington. In the long-term, nuclear proliferation could bring about many additional nuclear weapons states in which traditional bi-polar deterrence strategies, still the primary underpinning for the current strategic posture, will fall short. Consequently, reversing the decline of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and establishing progress on mutual and verifiable nuclear disarmament involving all states with nuclear weapons must become a top priority of the next U.S. administration. Pursuing a new generation of nuclear weapons now will only hasten the demise of the regime, and a large nuclear arsenal will no longer have any relevance to supporting, if it ever truly did, a U.S.-led world order.

## II. HOLES IN THE NUCLEAR DETERRENT DOCTRINE

2.1 An emphasis on a large nuclear deterrent is losing much of its traction in the face of emerging nuclear threats in the twenty-first century. These inter-related threats include the size and alert status of U.S. and Russian arsenals as a reflection of previous Cold War postures, the possibility of far wider nuclear proliferation, and nuclear terrorism.

### **RUSSIA – ABANDONING THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE**

2.2 Nuclear deterrence was always directed against the threat of strategic attack from the Soviet Union, which was thought to be capable of matching or overwhelming NATO's conventional capability. The threat of a nuclear war with Moscow has since 1990 largely subsided, notwithstanding disagreements over NATO expansion, ballistic missile defense (BMD) and military activity in the Caucasus. Indeed, many analysts blame U.S. posture and an assertive foreign policy in former Soviet republics for undermining trust with Russia, and creating the very security dilemma we face today. We may have witnessed in 1991 the demise of an ideological opponent, but may yet be partially responsible for creating hostility with an increasingly authoritarian state that sees strategic competition as inevitable. Handling the relationship with the Russians in a manner that encourages them to see the United States and NATO as partners is directly crucial to American security, as well as to building the necessary unity among the world's principal powers in tackling the threats we face.

2.3 Early in the Cold War it became clear that the choice to sacrifice safety in the interests of keeping up in the arms race was not sustainable. Both the Americans and the Soviets introduced tighter controls on the release of their warheads. Yet, even today, many nuclear weapons are on short-response alert and dependent upon fallible technical and human control systems, so that an accidental launch, most likely from Russia against the United States, but even from the United States against Russia, remains a possibility. In many respects that risk has worsened along with the deterioration of Russian command and control.<sup>4</sup>

### **NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION**

2.4 The principal nuclear threat arises from the possibility of many more states acquiring nuclear weapons, which raises the specter of a world threatened daily by highly unstable multi-polar nuclear relationships.<sup>5</sup> These relationships could involve unstable states, some of which may be in long-term dynamic conflicts, or have close links with terrorists and other non-state actors.<sup>6</sup> Such relationships would significantly reduce U.S. freedom of action – enabling states that challenge the international community to act with impunity. Worse, Americans would be unavoidably involved, directly or indirectly, in any regional nuclear war that itself would have devastating global environmental, social and economic consequences.<sup>7</sup> The U.S. nuclear arsenal of the current size and alignment has little relevance to these threats.

2.5 Smaller states contemplating any nuclear attack against the United States will more than likely look to use novel and clandestine delivery methods to reduce the chance of retaliatory annihilation. In any case, the size of the U.S. nuclear arsenal beyond a hundred warheads is irrelevant to the calculations of such states.

2.6 There is often a denial of the link between U.S. deployment of nuclear weapons and the motives of states thought to be seeking their own deterrent. While the linkage may not always be direct, it exists, to a greater or lesser extent, even if its most potent expression is more in the popular support regimes enjoy for their strategies, and in the failure to universally agree on tighter non-proliferation mechanisms. We cannot deploy a sizable nuclear arsenal and expect other states to indefinitely accept a discriminatory system. If we are to build a more secure international community we have to strengthen the rules and norms behind non-proliferation that demand existing nuclear weapon states move seriously toward disarmament. The U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals also confer prestige to nuclear weapons, motivating other countries to pursue nuclear weapons programs or refrain from disarmament measures.

## **NUCLEAR TERRORISM**

2.7 Analysts are currently debating the level of risk from nuclear terrorism. One possible scenario is a terrorist attack on a major city with a radiological 'dirty bomb' that would probably fail to result in many casualties, but could produce serious economic and psychological effects.<sup>8</sup> The more grave threat, however, is a terrorist nuclear detonation that would result in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. While such a devastating attack may be less likely than the use of a radiological weapon, the threat is increasing as technology and materials disperse and the sophistication of terror groups increases.<sup>9</sup>

2.8 Nuclear deterrence cannot possibly work in most realistic terrorist situations. All too often we have witnessed suicidal terrorist attacks, unconnected to a particular state or government, motivated by ideologies and identities that transcend state boundaries. Even when a terrorist group is closely linked to a particular government, there will be no unambiguous return address. A nuclear deterrent targeted at governments with links to terrorist groups may well provide an added incentive to those governments not to allow their technology, materials or warheads to transfer into their client terrorists' hands, in all likelihood there would be sufficient temporal or decision-making distance to render the deterrent virtually irrelevant to such calculations. In addition, the delay between the original attack and adequate proof of connection, the impact of retaliation on innocent civilians, and the unilateral decision-taking will render any vengeance strike grossly illegitimate in the eyes of the international community.

2.9 The presence of numerous nuclear weapons and associated fissile material, particularly at less secure sites, may be vulnerable to theft or illicit transfer. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has confirmed at least 18 cases since 1993 in which illicit parties have obtained highly enriched uranium or plutonium or where the weapons-grade material has simply disappeared.<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, reducing fissile material and improving the security of stockpiles is essential if we are to prevent a nuclear terrorist strike.<sup>11</sup> This requires continuing and strengthening Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR)-type programs and the ability of law enforcement to prevent and cope with terrorism. The focus has been on former Soviet warheads and materials, and indeed there have been a number of successful projects under the umbrella of the Global Partnership. But the prospects for future progress are not good. European allies have been slower than they might have been in allocating and spending, and growing hostilities with Russia may prove an insurmountable obstacle. Last year's embarrassing nuclear weapons incidents in the United States, including security failures that allowed nuclear weapons to be flown unknowingly across the country, and nuclear missile technology to be shipped to Taiwan by mistake, also reveal that the problem is not wholly limited to the former Soviet Union. While the Defense Secretary fired the Air Force Secretary and Chief of Staff in June 2008 as a result of these recent U.S. security lapses, policymakers must take appropriate measures to ensure adequate safeguards and security throughout the rest of the domestic nuclear weapons complex. This will require sufficient personnel and improvements in training and oversight. Furthermore, the recent Blue Ribbon Review revealing lax security<sup>12</sup> at some of the European bases, where the United States stores tactical nuclear weapons, poses more troubling problems because of the abovementioned fears about terrorism. As long as the United States has nuclear weapons in Europe, safeguards and security at those sites must be improved to meet the highest standards.

## **III. INVESTING IN UNILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL SOLUTIONS: AN AGENDA FOR ACTION**

### **IMPORTANCE OF THE NON-PROLIFERATION REGIME**

3.1 Successive U.S. Administrations, including the existing one, have recognized the importance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in holding back the dynamics of proliferation. Although undoubtedly under pressure, the regime is not yet broken. It has so far contained the number of nuclear weapons states to under ten. All states are now either members or have already developed nuclear arsenals, and only one state has left the regime to develop a nuclear arsenal. But Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the IAEA, among others, has warned we could live in a world with over 20 nuclear weapons states if we do not revive the regime as a matter of urgency.<sup>13</sup>

3.2 Both leading candidates for the presidency have highlighted the need to strengthen U.S. leadership in halting and reversing nuclear proliferation. The NPT Review Conference in 2010 is a major touchstone for the future health of the regime, and as a top priority, the new Administration should provide the leadership necessary to ensure a successful conclusion to the conference and to produce an extensive work plan that plugs the holes in the regime. This will require an explicit recognition that non-proliferation is inseparable from a credible commitment to progressive nuclear disarmament programs. The U.S. nuclear posture should take account of this global requirement.

3.3 The previous 2005 Review Conference ended in failure, largely because of:

- Egypt's objections to stronger non-proliferation measures while Israel was allowed to operate a nuclear arsenal outside the regime unimpeded;
- The crisis over Iran's nuclear program;
- The failure of the nuclear weapon states to convince several key non-nuclear weapon states of adequate progress on the 13 steps for disarmament (an NPT Article VI commitment) agreed at the previous Review Conference five years earlier; and,
- The U.S. negotiating position, including opposition to the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and general opposition to addressing nuclear weapon states' disarmament commitments, which also contributed to procedural delays that stalled the conference.<sup>14</sup>

3.4 Since the 2005 Review Conference we have seen a war in Lebanon, increased violence in Gaza, the imminent conclusion of the U.S.–India deal, and an Egyptian government that remains vulnerable to domestic charges of being too close to the West. If anything, their freedom to agree on a final text will be even more limited this time. Since the conference, we have witnessed in Iran the election of President Ahmadinejad, a rapidly developing uranium enrichment program, and his government's defiance of U.N. sanctions. It seems hardly the time to be overly optimistic that this issue will not stall progress in 2010. Since 2007, we have seen some encouraging rhetoric from key leaders within nuclear weapon states, but with modernization programs continuing a pace, the non-nuclear weapon states will want to see far more concrete steps toward nuclear disarmament before they believe in the project again.

## **AGENDA FOR WASHINGTON**

3.5 In consultation with allies, the next President can take a certain number of unilateral steps that would directly strengthen U.S. security and demonstrate good will for further multilateral steps. Withdrawing NATO's aging tactical freefall nuclear warheads from Europe, and then opening negotiations with the Russians to eliminate the more vulnerable strategic bombs or missiles (fixed land or air-based), could be the first steps in achieving deep reductions in the numbers of warheads.

3.6 Such moves will be all the more important as the relationship between the United States and Russia becomes more strained. America needs to demonstrate its willingness to negotiate, albeit from a position of strength, and to be ready to offer real incentives to Russia to engage. But in a situation where the relationship is deteriorating, the best approach may be to focus on multilateral arrangements that can be negotiated without the United States over-exposing itself or its allies in any expression of naïve trust, and can go some way into locking Russia into the international community, with all the added benefits this brings.

3.7 The next President should aim to make early progress in Washington on achieving national agreement to the following measures that are *not dependent upon reciprocal agreement from other states*:

- Refrain from developing new nuclear weapons, including the "Reliable Replacement Warhead" (RRW);
- Explicitly rule out all threats of nuclear use other than in response to the threat of nuclear attack, and declare a no-first use policy;

- Withdraw tactical nuclear weapons from Europe; and,
- Ratify the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

### No new warheads

3.8 The United States should abandon plans for the production of newly designed nuclear weapons, such as the "Reliable Replacement Warhead" (RRW), and the rebuilding of the nuclear weapons complex. An independent group of scientists and engineers, known as the JASONs, said in 2006 that the nuclear components of warheads in the current U.S. arsenal should have a total lifetime of at least 85 years. With the oldest warheads in the arsenal created in the 1970s, their nuclear components should last at least another half century.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the same group of experts doubt whether the RRW could receive certification without nuclear explosive testing,<sup>16</sup> which would run contrary to the U.S. signature of the CTBT. U.S. policymakers have no reason to risk the non-proliferation regime by rushing to produce a new kind of nuclear warhead now. While production of an RRW would not necessarily lead to other countries immediately increasing their arsenals, it would serve as a powerful symbol of long-term U.S. intentions at a time when the non-proliferation regime is so fragile.

### No first-use, no new roles

3.9 U.S. leadership should focus upon eliminating the most damaging postures and less useful systems, explicitly shifting policy and posture to an explicit last-resort use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent only against nuclear use or threat by adversaries. The Bush Administration came to power questioning the limits of nuclear deterrence, raising the possibility of first strike preventive and preemptive use in response to proliferation. With new roles for an evolving strategic posture, the Administration talked of the developments of new systems such as "mini-nukes," and nuclear "bunker busters." While these would have extended the deployment choices open to U.S. commanders, the lack of faith demonstrated in the non-proliferation regime coupled with the direct implication of threat to NPT states without nuclear weapons would have been highly destabilizing to the future of the NPT, and would almost certainly have led to the very arms races that the policies were designed to counteract. The brakes applied by the U.S. Congress on these ambitions for new roles and for new nuclear warheads have been a critical saving grace for the non-proliferation regime these last seven years. If this opposition crumbles, the new Administration is going to have a sharp uphill struggle to convince other NPT states of U.S. commitment to the regime.

### Withdrawal of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons from Europe

3.10 Russian tactical nuclear warheads present a significant and now growing threat to Europe. They have always been considered the part of its nuclear arsenal most at risk of unauthorized or early use, partly because some probably still do not have permissive action links, but mainly because, by their very nature, they are vulnerable forward-deployed forces involving a level of pre-delegated decision-making.<sup>17</sup> Because they are smaller, more portable and have fewer controls, they are also more vulnerable to theft. They are therefore more likely causes of proliferation and reduce the nuclear threshold.

3.11 This makes more worrying Russia's recent threat to expand the forward deployment of tactical nuclear warheads in the Baltic Sea based at Kaliningrad. Reports suggest that Tochka-U tactical missiles with a range of 120 km are already stationed there, but there is some discussion in Moscow of deploying nuclear-tipped Iskanders, with a range of up to 500 km.<sup>18</sup>

3.12 A bilateral agreement with Russia for the withdrawal of all tactical warheads from Europe appears even more elusive today than it was previously. Rather than wait for movement, a wait that in all likelihood would be indefinite, U.S. leaders should instead consider removing NATO's free-fall nuclear bombs unilaterally, to realize several benefits to the United States and allies.

- The bombs have no strategic value, as alternative U.S. systems are perfectly capable of fulfilling any potential role they may have more effectively, with less risk, less vulnerability, and less complex command structures.
- They are vulnerable to theft and terrorist acquisition. According to a recent Blue Ribbon Review on nuclear safety, some European partners devote insufficient scarce military resources to protecting these weapons.
- They have only symbolic value around demonstration of strong transatlantic ties and specifically commitment to NATO's nuclear policy. This reasoning misplaces unconvincing value on the possession of

nuclear weapons and ignores the political friction caused within Europe and with the Non-Aligned Movement,<sup>19</sup> as well as the opportunity cost to more useful European military commitments to other NATO missions. This is particularly important when host European governments are approaching expensive reinvestment decisions in new aircraft. For instance, the F-35 is slated to offer a nuclear capable version that would carry the B-61 tactical bombs as the current aircraft are phased out, but this investment of billions of dollars for each country that participates must be balanced against other military spending requirements for NATO that seem far more relevant to current and likely future transatlantic missions.<sup>20</sup>

- The withdrawal of NATO's tactical bombs, at no strategic cost, would isolate Russian deployment of tactical warheads and strengthen calls in Moscow for a reassessment.
- At a time when the strategic relationship with Russia is under strain, U.S. leaders must continue the *de facto* trend in safely reducing roles for nuclear weapons, in a rational and transparent manner. The reported withdrawal of over 100 B-61s from Lakenheath in the United Kingdom is to be welcomed,<sup>21</sup> but the substantial benefits will only be realized when all tactical warheads are withdrawn from Europe, unconditionally.

## U.S. ratification of CTBT

3.13 Some key Congressional opponents of CTBT ratification in 1999, including Senator John McCain, have expressed their willingness to revisit the issue. Previous objections to U.S. ratification have fallen away, particularly in the light of a growing global network of verification measures that will make it increasingly difficult, year by year, for states to cheat without detection. The United States will also need to work with partners to encourage the remaining hold-outs to ratify the CTBT to bring it into force. This step will not only signal U.S. seriousness about future intentions, but will also allow for tighter monitoring that will assure global coverage. It also shows that serious intention to achieve a nuclear weapon free world in the long term.

## Consultation and action with allies

3.14 The nuclear posture of the United States has had a powerful impact on nuclear decisions by allies and strategic competitors alike. The reassurance offered by the U.S. nuclear umbrella, whether formally under NATO's structures, or in bilateral relationships, has undoubtedly helped persuade some of its allies not to develop their own nuclear weapons programs. At the same time, the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons on its allies' territory has often been controversial within the host country and can strain crucial strategic relations with competitor states (the agreement to site missile interceptors in Poland is a clear case with dramatic ramifications). While decisions over U.S. nuclear deployments, within the boundary of international law, are clearly sovereign to Washington, it will be important to consult with allies on the impacts of these decisions on alliance security.

3.15 A future President looking to provide leadership in global nuclear arms control and disarmament is likely to find strong support from his closest allies. Over the last year the British government on a number of occasions has already expressed firm support, and is currently looking to draw together the nuclear weapon states in a cooperative agenda, both technical and political, to establish real progress. For example, when U.K. Defence Secretary Des Browne attended the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in February 2008, he declared:

*"The international community needs a transparent, sustainable and credible plan for multilateral nuclear disarmament. A plan that also addresses proliferation, so that disarmament and counter-proliferation both move forward together, each supporting the other. Although, we all understand that there is no formal conditionality between progress on disarmament and non-proliferation, our goal should be a virtuous circle, where progress on one reinforces the other."<sup>22</sup>*

3.16 While Secretary Browne commended recent cuts in the arsenals of the United States and other nuclear weapons states, he went on to explain that without further reductions in the major powers' nuclear arsenals, "we risk generating the perception that the Nuclear Weapon States are failing to fulfill their disarmament obligations and this will be used by some states as an excuse for their nuclear intransigence." He also announced the United Kingdom's willingness to host a technical conference of nuclear laboratories on the verification of nuclear disarmament before the next NPT Review Conference in 2010. As a whole, support is evident from across the political spectrum in the United Kingdom, and as in the United States itself, such thinking is attracting statesmen normally associated with a Realist perspective.<sup>23</sup>

3.17 Leaders in other European countries are also coming to the realization that a reduced emphasis on nuclear arsenals makes sense within the current security environment. French President Nicolas Sarkozy has announced a reduced nuclear arsenal and outlined an eight point disarmament plan in 2008.<sup>24</sup> At the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in December 2007 in Brussels, Foreign Ministers from Germany and Norway called on allies to recognize the importance of nuclear disarmament, and its relevance to non-proliferation.<sup>25</sup> Momentum has also recently appeared in Italy, when four elite statesmen and a notable physicist endorsed bolder plans for nuclear disarmament.<sup>26</sup>

3.18 At the very least, a new U.S. administration knows that it can count on the support of its closest allies in exploring the possibilities for movement in the direction of responsible nuclear disarmament. A renewed and transparent commitment to consultation and joint action will strengthen immeasurably America's claim to leadership among its allies.

### NATO's Strategic Concept

3.19 NATO's Strategic Concept (likely to be debated next year) offers an ideal mechanism for announcing the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons. This would enable allies to discuss the possibility without premature announcements or the hint of reduced commitment or Alliance disunity. The review of the Strategic Concept must highlight the limited deterrent role of nuclear weapons, deployed only against the threat of nuclear weapons by other states, and explore the possibility of developing a relationship with other nuclear powers based upon reduced readiness and the development of a mutual no-first use and non-offensive nuclear doctrine. U.S. nuclear posture has shaped NATO's decisions regarding nuclear weapons, so while NATO is a consultative body, the United States is responsible for taking the first step.

### Fissile material treaty

3.20 U.S. leaders have complained that a fissile material treaty would be too difficult and expensive to verify, and too intrusive.<sup>27</sup> Finding a way to reasonably verify compliance has thus become a priority. According to a paper from the International Panel on Fissile Materials in 2008, while the technical challenges may be significant, they should be possible to overcome, and these challenges and the costs should fall as states close their military production facilities.<sup>28</sup> Ultimately, it will be the political challenges of negotiating the treaty that may prove to be the most onerous because of issue linkages. As proposed in the January 2008 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed by Shultz, Perry, Kissinger and Nunn, the United States should work multilaterally to improve the monitoring and security provisions of the NPT and the IAEA. The United States should be ready to consider alternative arrangements to make nuclear cooperation contingent on the additional protocol and other tighter measures to prevent proliferation. This may require considerably more political capital invested in this objective than we have witnessed up to now by U.S. administrations and their allies.

### Operational Readiness

3.21 The United States should work with other nuclear weapons states to reduce the operational readiness of their arsenals. This will increase decision times and also help prevent accidental launches and hedge against the emerging threat of cybernetic attacks against command and control systems. Bruce Blair of the World Security Institute has covered the issue in-depth and proposes a sound four-stage plan for de-alerting arsenals with a gradual lengthening of the time to launch. The basic steps include: eliminating launch-on-warning and massive attack options; isolating strategic missiles in silos from external launch controls; separating all warheads from their delivery vehicles (with wide dispersion at secure sites); and finally, transferring all warheads from nuclear combat positions to storage facilities on land, accompanied by verification and surveillance.<sup>29</sup>

## IV. MOVING FORWARD WITH RUSSIA

4.1 A working negotiating relationship with the Russian Federation is essential to an active and effective global non-proliferation effort. We stand a greater chance of achieving cooperation with Russia if the United States initiates some of the measures outlined above. Current prospects appear bleak, but we must not lose heart. Russia's dependence upon nuclear weapons for its strategic posture is now undeniably greater than that of the United States. Russia will be tempted to modernize its nuclear arsenal to deter the qualitative U.S. superiority in

smart weapons exhibited so effectively in the latest conflicts involving U.S. forces. Moreover, Russia has been agitated by the Bush Administration's pursuit of ground-based midcourse missile defense (GMD), with plans for a radar station in the Czech Republic and ten GMD interceptors plus Patriot defenses in Poland. Although the agreements still face ratification by the participating countries, and serious doubts about the functionality of GMD persist, the prospect of U.S. missile defense in those countries only heightens Russia's inclination to modernize its nuclear arsenal.

4.2 Nevertheless, late last year Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called for the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) to be replaced by a legally-binding agreement between not only the United States and Russia, but by a treaty that would include other countries.<sup>30</sup> This remark was followed in April 2008 by the U.S.–Russian 'Strategic Framework Declaration,' which included references to nuclear arms control, most notably stating that the two countries would "continue development of a legally binding post-START arrangement" and declared their commitments to Article VI of the NPT. Minister Lavrov announced in June that Russia would like to reach a follow-up strategic nuclear arms control treaty by the end of 2008.<sup>31</sup> In mid-July, President Medvedev approved an official policy paper that called for renewed strategic cooperation between Russia and the United States.<sup>32</sup>

4.3 The retention of over five-thousand nuclear weapons in both countries primarily deployed to deter each other has sustained decades-old suspicions of one another, making a slide back into a cold hostility more likely. The Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT) set forth reductions of deployed nuclear warheads on both sides between 1,700 and 2,200 by 2012 (when the treaty expires). While both states have reduced the number of their deployed warheads under SORT, the treaty lacks the verification component of START (which expires at the end of 2009), ignores stored warheads, and permits the possibility of backsliding after 2012. A worst case scenario, however, would be no agreement at all and for U.S. leaders to go into the 2010 NPT with an unrealistic and unworkable agenda of promises that cannot be kept because of intensifying strains on the American-Russian relationship.

4.4 Therefore, U.S. leaders must take a realistic approach to the next round of arms control negotiations with their Russian counterparts. While it is difficult to project an agenda for specific steps that Russia and the United States can take in reducing their nuclear arsenals, Alexei Arbatov and Rose Gottemoeller have reasonably proposed an "enhanced SORT." This plan would address the concerns that led both sides to weaken the previous agreement while providing stronger elements this time around. As they explain, "For the Russian side, the major goal would be to maintain a semblance of parity with the United States while addressing the basic problems with SORT, the lack of acceptable counting rules and corresponding verification procedures. For the U.S. side, the major goal would be to maintain sufficient transparency with respect to Russian strategic nuclear forces while making sure that force cuts would not be too expensive for the United States and would be acceptable in force structure terms, i.e., would not require the United States to move immediately from a triad of nuclear forces to a dyad."<sup>33</sup> While a stronger agreement would be desirable, this may be the most promising option in the short-term. If the next administration can move rapidly to take the unilateral measures mentioned above, and renew multilateral commitments, then U.S. leaders will be in a better position to convince their Russian counterparts that they are serious about disarmament, which should lead to a more productive series of discussions.

## V. CONCLUSION: DEVALUING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

5.1 The nuclear danger facing the United States has been evolving in recent years, and our nuclear posture needs to change with it. A policy that emphasizes sovereign choices to maximum capability first without adequately considering the impacts on other states within the international community will have unintended consequences.

5.2 The principal challenge facing the new Administration is in working with allies and rivals alike to devalue nuclear weapons as a currency of power and to strengthen the measures required to prevent proliferation. The United States should reduce its nuclear arsenal, and now with the support of allies growing for reducing the role of nuclear weapons, U.S. leaders should take advantage of this opportunity to successfully carry out changes in the nuclear component of the strategic posture. Doing so will help untangle and reduce some of the myriad of strategic threats facing the United States in the long-term and free up resources and attention for the other strategic challenges that are best managed multilaterally.

## NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Nuclear Weapons, Force Posture and Infrastructure, *Policy Dialogue Brief*, U.S. Nuclear Policy Review Project, The Stanley Foundation, August 2008, [http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/publications/pdb/Forced\\_Posture\\_PDB\\_808.pdf](http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/publications/pdb/Forced_Posture_PDB_808.pdf).
- <sup>2</sup> According to publicly available estimates, the United States has about 3,500 operational strategic warheads, and Russia has over 3,200 such warheads (these totals do not include tactical or stored warheads). ("Status of World Nuclear Forces, 2008," The Nuclear Information Project, Federation of American Scientists, updated January 3, 2008, <http://www.nukestrat.com/nukestatus.htm>).
- <sup>3</sup> "Status of World Nuclear Forces, 2008." North Korea may also have nuclear weapons, but these are likely to be fewer than ten.
- <sup>4</sup> Michael Jasinski, "Russia: Strategic Early Warning, Command and Control, and Missile Defense Overview," Center for Nonproliferation Studies, via Nuclear Threat Initiative, March 2001, <http://www.nti.org/db/nisprofs/russia/weapons/abmc3/c3abmovr.htm>.
- <sup>5</sup> See, Sidney Drell and James Goodby, "The Reality: A Goal of a World without Nuclear Weapons Is Essential," *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2008; Benjamin Frankel, "The Brooding Shadow: Systemic Incentives and Nuclear Weapons Proliferation," *Security Studies* 2 (Spring/Summer 1993), p. 37, as discussed in Tanya Olgivie-White, "Is There a Theory of Proliferation? An Analysis of the Contemporary Debate," *The Nonproliferation Review*, Fall 1996, p. 47.
- <sup>6</sup> "[T]he Soviet Union and the United States had the luxury of time to develop rules, tacit and otherwise, to tilt the scales against the use of nuclear weapons. These circumstances do not exist in the Middle East, Northeast Asia, or South Asia, and they may not exist in other parts of the world where nuclear weapons competition could suddenly erupt. To assume that nuclear deterrence will always work successfully, even in very different conditions, is an exercise in wishful thinking. [Harold] Brown's views regarding the limits of nuclear deterrence are similar to our own. He points out that 'the stability of even the one-on-one case depends on the internal stability, rationality, and command-and-control arrangements of the respective regimes.' He correctly points out that 'what works on one does not necessarily work on many.'" (Sidney D. Drell and James E. Goodby, Summer 2008, pp. 28-29.) Also see, Sidney D. Drell and James E. Goodby, "What Are Nuclear Weapons For? Recommendations for Restructuring U.S. Strategic Nuclear Forces," An Arms Control Association Report, October 2007.
- <sup>7</sup> "Regional Nuclear Conflict Would Create Near-Global Ozone Hole, Says CU-Boulder Study," University of Colorado at Boulder News Center, April 7, 2008, <http://www.colorado.edu/news/r/1fac2c9873881f656efa3029f6ffb551.html>.
- <sup>8</sup> Brian Knowlton, "Authorities try to imagine 'dirty bomb' in Washington," *International Herald Tribune*, June 11, 2002.
- <sup>9</sup> Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, final report, "Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms," Stockholm, Sweden, June 1, 2006, pp. 24, 40, 83-84.; Charles D. Ferguson, William C. Potter with Amy Sands, Leonard S. Spector, and Fred Wehling, *The Four Faces of Nuclear Terrorism*, Monterey, CA: Center for Non-Proliferation Studies, 2005.
- <sup>10</sup> Richard Hoskins, "Threats and Risks in Trafficking," *IAEA Bulletin* 49-2, March 2008, p. 2.
- <sup>11</sup> Ferguson, *et al.*
- <sup>12</sup> Major General Polly A. Peyer, Chair, "Air Force Blue Ribbon Review of Nuclear Weapons," Headquarters U.S. Air Force, February 8, 2008, Obtained by Hans M. Kristensen, Federation of American Scientists, available at <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/usa/doctrine/usaf/BRR-2008.pdf>.
- <sup>13</sup> ElBaradei said in a 2007 interview with *Spiegel* that, "We pay completely inadequate attention to the important threats, the inhuman living conditions of billions of people, climate change and the potential for nuclear holocaust. We stand at a crossroads, and we are moving rapidly toward an abyss. There are currently 27,000 nuclear warheads in the world. If we don't change our way of thinking, John F. Kennedy's prediction that there would be 20 nuclear powers will soon come true. And with each new player and each new weapon, the risk of a planned or accidental nuclear war increases." (*Spiegel* Interview with Mohamed ElBaradei, "We Are Moving Rapidly Towards an Abyss," Part 3: "A Small Dirty Bomb Could Set Off Massive Terror," *Spiegel*, September 3, 2007, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,503841-3,00.html>.)
- <sup>14</sup> Rebecca Johnson, "Politics and Protection: Why the 2005 NPT Review Conference Failed," *Disarmament Diplomacy*, Issue No. 80, Autumn 2005.
- <sup>15</sup> "New Nuclear Weapons: The RRW Program," Union of Concerned Scientists Fact Sheet, May 2007.

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<sup>16</sup> JASON, Reliable Replacement Warhead, Executive Summary, September 7, 2007, available via the Website of the Federation of American Scientists: <http://fas.org/irp/agency/dod/jason/rw.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> CIA report on Prospects for Unsanctioned Use of Russian Nuclear Weapons, 1996, available at: <http://fas.org/irp/threat/cia9609.htm>

<sup>18</sup> Yury Zaitsev, "U.S. missile defense in Europe becomes a reality," for RIA Novosti, August 15, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> European parliaments have been voicing their increasing disapproval of the retention of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. The Bundestag has seen tension especially after recent news of insufficient security where bombs are held (Cordula Meyer and Alexander Szandar, "Withering Away," *Der Spiegel*, June 30, 2008.). Also see Oliver Meier, "Belgium, Germany Question U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe," *Arms Control Today*, June 2005. The Non-Aligned Movement (now representing 115 states) has called for an end to NATO nuclear sharing, viewing the arrangement a violation of Articles I and II of the NPT, which forbid the transfer and reception of nuclear weapons technology between NWS and non-nuclear weapons states (Nigel Chamberlain, Matt Martin, Carol Naughton, and Karel Koster, "NATO: Nuclear Sharing or Proliferation?" Presentation document for the 2005 NPT Review Conference, New York, May 2005, <http://www.un.org/events/npt2005/statements.html> and Martin Butcher and Nicola Butler, "NATO's Nuclear Sharing: A Threat to the NPT," Presentation document for the 2008 NPT PrepCom, April 28-May 9, 2008, <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/prepcom08/ngostatements/NuclearSharing.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Olivier Meier, "News Analysis: An End to U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe?" *Arms Control Today*, July/August 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Hans Kristensen, U.S. Nuclear Weapons Withdrawn from the United Kingdom, FAS Strategic Security Blog, June 26, 2008, <http://www.fas.org/blog/ssp/2008/06/us-nuclear-weapons-withdrawn-from-the-united-kingdom.php>.

<sup>22</sup> "Laying the Foundations for Multilateral Disarmament," Speech by the U.K. Secretary of State for Defence," Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, February 5, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> In a ground-breaking op-ed in the *Times* (London) on June 30, 2008, former U.K. Foreign and Defence Secretaries endorsed the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. Sir Malcolm Rifkind (Conservative), Lord David Owen (Crossbencher), Lord Douglas Hurd (Conservative), and Lord George Robertson (Labour; and former NATO Secretary General), in an article titled "Start worrying and learn to ditch the bomb," warned that the world is entering a dangerous new phase "that combines widespread proliferation with extremism and geopolitical tension." They argued that the only way to deal with this danger is to work multilaterally toward complete nuclear disarmament (see: [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest\\_contributors/article4237387.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article4237387.ece)).

<sup>24</sup> Jean-Marie Collin, "Sarkozy and French Nuclear Deterrence," *BASIC Getting to Zero Paper*, No. 2, July 15, 2008, <http://www.basicint.org/gtz/gtz02.htm>.

<sup>25</sup> German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and his Norwegian counterpart Jonas Gahr Støre. Their discussion in Brussels followed their earlier joint statement, "Two Sides of the Same Coin: Nuclear Non-proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament," which appeared in *Frankfurter Rundschau* in November 2006.

<sup>26</sup> Gianfranco Fini (former Minister of Foreign Affairs and current Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies), Massimo D'Alema (former Prime Minister and recent Minister of Foreign Affairs), Giorgio La Malfa (former Minister of European Affairs), Arturo Parisi (former Minister of Defense), and Francesco Calogero (Professor of Physics, University of Rome and Secretary General of the Pugwash Conference), "For A Nuclear Weapon-Free World," op-ed published in *Corriere della Sera*, July 24, 2008.

<sup>27</sup> Daryl Kimball, "Fissile material treaty: trust but don't verify?" *Trust & Verify*, Issue No. 116, VERTIC, September-October 2004.

<sup>28</sup> "The Verification Challenge," A Fissile Material (Cutoff) Treaty and Its Verification: Progress Report from the International Panel on Fissile Materials, Geneva, Switzerland, May 2, 2008.

<sup>29</sup> Bruce G. Blair, "Increasing Warning and Decision Time ('De-Alerting')," paper presented to the International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament: "Achieving the Vision of a World Free of Nuclear Weapons," Oslo, February 26 – 27, 2008.

<sup>30</sup> "Lavrov says any new nuclear pact with U.S. must lower WMD limits," RIA Novosti, November 28, 2007, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20071128/89926549.html>.

<sup>31</sup> "Russian Foreign Minister Urges Clarity over Missile Shield," RIA Novosti, July 23, 2008.

<sup>32</sup> "News Analysis: Will Russia's new policy paper renew Russia-West ties?" Xinhua General News Service, July 17, 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Alexei Arbatov and Rose Gottemoeller, "New Presidents, New Agreements? Advancing U.S.-Russian Strategic Arms Control," *Arms Control Today*, July/August 2008.