

Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Security and Defence

PUBLIC HEARING

THE FUTURE OF THE NUCLEAR NON PROLIFERATION TREATY

How can the goals of nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear technology be achieved?

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Good afternoon friends, distinguished experts and parliamentarians. I am delighted to have the honour of speaking at this important enquiry into a question that is of vital importance to Europe, the world and to many future generations of humanity and thank the Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Security and Defence for their invitation to speak today.

I would like dedicate my remarks today to the memory of Solange Fernex, a former MEP from France, who recently died. She was a shining example of how parliamentarians can work with civil society to raise awareness and promote action on the issues we are discussing today.

In my time today I want to try to address the question “How can the goals of nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear technology be achieved?” in as honest and positive a way as I can. I will look back a little but mostly I intend to look forward and offer some suggestions as to how we can move away from the dangerous situation we are in to more genuine security.

As I was thinking about what to talk about today I recalled the last time I was at a great international institution addressing the question of nuclear non-proliferation. This was at the UN in New York on the occasion of the 2005 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. One of the most memorable ngo sessions at that Conference was when former US Defence Secretary Robert McNamara, President Kennedy’s speechwriter Ted Sorenson and Ambassador Tom Graham (one of the diplomatic architects of the NPT) addressed a packed room full of diplomats and experts. They gave a heartfelt appeal expressing the urgent need for a group of courageous nations to get together and stand up against the refusal of the current US administration to use the multilateral machinery that had been so carefully built up over the years to make real progress on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. I am sure that they had many European nations in mind when they spoke.

So this public hearing is not simply about the theory of nuclear politics it is about the practice of it too. I believe, like McNamara, Sorenson and Graham, that action by European governments, parliamentarians and citizens is crucial. But for that action to happen many things need to change.

I was recently introduced to a fascinating model of change by a colleague that I think may help us. Her model asserted that change has five stages. In reverse order these are:

1. Change that requires assets and resources
2. Change in process, policies and procedures,
3. Changes in skills and knowledge
4. Change in will, desire, motivation
5. Change in ethos.

If we begin with number five – change of ethos - it is clear that many of the changes that we have seen in the international arena in the last 6 years flow from the rejection of the ethos of multilateralism by the government of the most powerful country in the world. So to reverse that we need to revitalise the ethos of multilateralism. I would recommend that we need to develop an ethos of sustainable security that recognises our interdependency. In the words of the latest report from the highly respected Oxford Research Group:

“This new approach to global security can be characterised as a ‘sustainable security paradigm’. The main difference between this and the ‘control paradigm’ is that this approach does not attempt to unilaterally control threats through the use of force (‘attack the symptoms’), but rather it aims to cooperatively resolve the root causes of those threats using the most effective means available (‘cure the disease’). For example, a sustainable security approach prioritises renewable energy as the key solution to climate change; energy efficiency as a response to resource competition; poverty reduction as a means to address marginalisation; and the halting and reversal of WMD development and proliferation as a main component of checking global militarisation. These approaches provide the best chance of averting global disaster, as well as addressing some of the root causes of terrorism.”¹

Change number four – a change in will, desire and motivation relates to the political will called for by McNamara and his colleagues in New York in 2005. The European Union and its member states need to seize the moment and take global leadership on the issues we are addressing. My own country could make an enormous contribution by not renewing its Trident nuclear weapons system in the next few years.

The third change – change in skills and knowledge means to me, in this context, a change in the level of awareness of us all about the reality of the nuclear threat today. We can no longer simply say that the end of the Cold War took the nuclear issue off the agenda and move in an internally referenced world of experts hoping that something or someone will turn up to change public perceptions. If all the 25 countries in the EU really seriously took up the recommendations of the UN study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education than the knowledge base of our societies about nuclear issues would improve beyond recognition and pressure would grow for action.

The second change – in process, policies and procedures relates directly to what this place could do. There is currently a Written Declaration calling for on the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from European territory submitted by Caroline Lucas and Angelika Beer. This needs to be signed up to by the 12th October by at least 350

¹ **Global Responses to Global Threats: Sustainable Security for the 21st Century.**
Chris Abbott, Paul Rogers and John Sloboda, Oxford Research Group. June 2006

MEPs. I would appeal to all those MEP's who have not signed it yet to do so. There is no military reason for these weapons to be on European soil. They are another hangover of the Cold War and their removal would do an enormous amount to counter the charge of double standards that allows some countries to go ahead with proliferation against the will of the international community.

The final change which flows from all the things that preceded it is change in assets and resources. My recommendation for that relates to the IAEA and relates directly to the question posed at the beginning of my talk. I think all of us here value highly the work on the IAEA in monitoring and inspecting nuclear developments around the world and that they need more resources to do that. But I would like to propose something more radical than simply increasing the IAEA's resources. I would propose that its mandate for the promotion of nuclear energy be removed and a new agency – the International Sustainable Energy Agency be created to really tackle the problem of energy security worldwide in a sustainable and secure way. My specific answer to the question “How can the goals of nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear technology be achieved?” is that they can't. They are mutually contradictory. If we really want to stop nuclear proliferation and work towards the global abolition of nuclear weapons we have to honestly face the reality of the proliferation risks of nuclear power. In 1946 The Acheson-Lilienthal report commissioned by the US government contained some startling conclusions about nuclear development and the risk of nuclear proliferation. According to the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*² “...the board determined that the pursuit of atomic energy and the pursuit of atomic bombs were in large part interchangeable and interdependent, and that because of global rivalries, an international inspections regime based on good faith was doomed to fail.

The Board in its report, wrote: *"We have concluded unanimously that there is no prospect of security against atomic warfare in a system of international agreements to outlaw such weapons controlled only by a system which relies on inspection and similar police-like methods...National rivalries in the development of atomic energy readily convertible to destructive purposes are the heart of the difficulty. . . . A system of inspection superimposed on an otherwise uncontrolled exploitation of atomic energy by national governments will not be an adequate safeguard."*

We are now reaping what was sown when those warnings were not heeded. In the long term we need to phase out nuclear power. In the medium term we need to stop the so-called “nuclear renaissance” in its tracks and in the short term we need to Take on board and implement in full the seven-point programme proposed by the head of the IAEA, Mohamed El Baradai, for dealing with the spread of nuclear materials:

These steps are:

- a five-year moratorium on building new facilities for uranium enrichment and plutonium separation, materials that can be used for weapons production

² Atoms for Peace. Did the 50-year-old Atoms for Peace program accelerate nuclear weapons proliferation? The jury has been in for some time on this question, and the answer is yes. Article By Leonard Weiss November/December 2003 pp. 34-41, 44 (vol. 59, no. 06) © 2003 Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists www.thebulletin.org/article.php?art_ofn=nd03weiss

- accelerate efforts to convert research reactors operating with highly enriched uranium (HEU) to low enriched uranium and to make HEU unnecessary for all peaceful nuclear applications
- increased access for IAEA inspectors to all nuclear sites
- swift Security Council action in the case of any country that withdraws from the NPT
- speedy action by all countries to prosecute any illicit trading in nuclear materials and technology
- accelerated implementation by all five nuclear weapon States of their "unequivocal commitment" to nuclear disarmament
- action to resolve existing security deficits and provide security assurances in areas of tension such as the Middle East and the Korean peninsula

I would ask all of us here how we can support Mr El Baradai and the IAEA and make those recommendations a political reality.

I finish my remarks by returning to the first level of change I outlined. The change in ethos. I would add vision to that word to. Both the UN and the EU come in for more than their fair share of criticism. Yes they can be slow and bureaucratic but we should never forget that they are both remarkable manifestations of a commitment to the creation of a more peaceful and cooperative world. The ethos that created them has produced better lives for millions of people. They can do so in the future but only if we participate fully in their work as we have today.

Thank you.