

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

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[10 minutes speaking – check against delivery]

In trying to address this question let me begin by spelling out *why* we should all be against the further spread of nuclear weapons around the world.

It is because it increases the risk that one day there will be a nuclear war between nation states – whether started deliberately or accidentally.

But it is also because proliferation increases the risk of nuclear weapons, materiel and expertise falling into terrorist hands.

This can happen either because a nuclear-armed state deliberately cooperates with terrorists; or because of ‘leakage’ onto the black market; or because such a state collapses.

Unfortunately, the present international regime that we have in place to tackle proliferation has become dysfunctional in a number of respects. Let me set out what I think the main problems are:

- **FIRST** – because the control regime is perceived to have failed to prevent clandestine nuclear weapons activities in Iraq, North Korea and Iran
- **SECOND** – because the NPT allows states to develop sophisticated civil nuclear technology that can subsequently also be used to manufacture nuclear weapons.
- **THIRD** - Because three of the nuclear weapon states outside of the NPT have no incentive to join: Israel because it believes its national survival to be at stake - India because it is now receiving the benefits of membership without the costs (thanks to the deal that the US has recently agreed) – and Pakistan because it mirrors India’s position.
- **FOURTH** - Because the rogue ‘proliferant’ states – most obviously Iran and North Korea - part of President Bush’s “Axis of Evil” – don’t want to

suffer the same fate as the third member of that axis – Iraq, which did not have nuclear arms.

- FIFTH - because certain other states that are *capable* of developing nuclear weapons – are beginning to wonder whether they can continue to do without – either because they feel threatened or because they are no longer so sure of the security guarantees of allies, or both.
- And SIXTH - because none of the five ‘acknowledged’ nuclear weapon states really believes that complete nuclear disarmament is possible and for one reason or another cannot contemplate renouncing these most powerful weapons.

It is this dysfunctional situation that has led Koffi Annan to warn:

“We are approaching a point at which the erosion of the non-proliferation regime could become irreversible and result in a cascade of proliferation.”

Part of the solution to tackling proliferation, therefore, is how to advance nuclear *disarmament*. Because:

- If there were no nuclear weapons there would be no nuclear war and
- If there were no weapons programmes the chances of terrorists somehow acquiring a nuclear weapon would be drastically reduced.

But this begs the question that is often asked – how can we ever get rid of nuclear weapons now that they have been invented?

Well the first point in response is that disarmament is a *process* – it must proceed on the basis of multilateral agreement between *all* nations.

And - if it is to be both sustainable and irreversible – must be underpinned by international treaties that are robust, enforceable and credible.

Put another way – if all nuclear weapons were disposed of immediately - in the *absence* of treaties that could verify such elimination – this would destabilize international security. I say this because:

- Some states might be tempted secretly to rearm and then to brandish their nuclear weapons coercively against others.

- And some states, previously deterred from acting aggressively by the prospect of nuclear retaliation, might now feel less constraint to initiate war.

It is not possible to say whether nuclear weapons will ever be completely eliminated. Perhaps we will have to be satisfied with something short of that – maybe a residual force under international control.

But what I think is very clear is that we can go much further down the disarmament road than we have managed so far.

Various respected bodies have examined the possibilities here – one thinks of the Canberra Commission in the mid-1990s, Koffi Annan's 'In Larger Freedom' Report last year, and earlier this year the Blix Commission Report.

This brings me to the substance of the question posed in the title: How do we reconcile non-proliferation, disarmament and civil nuclear power into a coherent security policy?

I think what we really need is what one might call a new 'International Nuclear Settlement' – a package of self-reinforcing measures that would rejuvenate a regime that has become stuck - between those who don't believe in arms control (unless it suits them) and those who are intent on cheating the system.

Let me briefly sketch out some of the key elements of what such a package might look like:

First - the nuclear weapon states should rejuvenate the arms control and disarmament process. They should agree that their nuclear weapons are purely for deterrence purposes and not for war fighting – and especially not in the context of preventive doctrines.

Existing political assurances and other legal constraints on the circumstances in which nuclear weapons might be used should be codified into a new, legally binding instrument.

Essentially we want to get to the situation whereby the **ONLY** role of nuclear weapons is to deter the use of other nuclear weapons – so that essentially they cancel each other out. While at the same time we reduce their numbers and reconfigure their deployments.

There are a series of practical measures to be taken – all of which will make us more secure not less.

These include:

- The withdrawal of all tactical nuclear weapons from Europe, the US and Russia;
- US and Russia should take weapons off hair trigger alert
- Cooperative Threat Reduction programmes fully funded and driven forward;
- Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty
- CTBT to enter into force
- Further reductions in strategic weapons

India, Israel and Pakistan have to be included in this process.

Second - through diplomacy and containment - we need to resolve the proliferation concerns surrounding North Korea and Iran. Let us get this into perspective - these are now the only two seriously worrying states whereas five years ago there were four – (Notwithstanding that Pakistan may yet become one and a lot further down the road perhaps others – such as Syria).

Third - we need to provide greater reassurances to countries such as South Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey that they will not be subjected to nuclear threats and that extended security guarantees remain steadfast.

UN Security Council Chapter VII must be invoked when there is *serious* non-compliance with the NPT i.e. when the credibility of the regime is at stake.

Fourth - Overcoming the reality that the technology required for producing civil nuclear fuel can also be used to develop nuclear weapons is not easy.

One way forward is to ensure that the model Additional Protocol – which allows for stronger verification of compliance – is universally adopted.

Another proposal is to create incentives for states voluntarily to forego the development of domestic uranium enrichment and plutonium separation, while guaranteeing the supply of the fuel necessary to develop peaceful uses.

This might be done through the IAEA acting as a guarantor for the supply of fissile material to civilian nuclear users at market rates.¹

¹ In Larger Freedom, Report of the Secretary General, United Nations, 21 March 2005, para.99. Available at: <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap3.htm>

And if we are to ask others to accept this – then the handful of developed countries with reprocessing and high enrichment capabilities need to accept further restraints themselves.

Fifth - More widely - Foreign Policies must be consistent with sustenance of the non-proliferation objectives. Nuclear weapons have no role to play as coercive tools of foreign policy – and certainly not in the context of preventive war doctrine, which should be renounced as a fundamentally unstable basis upon which to sustain international relations.

Conclusion

We must start to believe in arms control again and breathe new life into the international non-proliferation regime and not let its enemies dismantle it.

We need to forge a new approach built on the principles of international law and its effective enforcement – on values that genuinely reward abstinence and punish violators and which is applied consistently to all states that abide by those laws.

If we resolve Iran and North Korea successfully – without resorting to the use of force – if we set course purposefully towards denuclearization – and if we square the civil/military nuclear circle successfully – we can build a new, stronger non-proliferation regime.