

**“Putting Security First”**  
**Panel on Nuclear Arms in Today’s World**  
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The theme of my remarks is *security first*. That is, the world I would want to live in and, I think, everyone should want to live in would have the *highest priority to ensure the security of all nations*. Unfortunately, this has not been the approach taken to address the concerns of nuclear proliferation.

With respect to nuclear weapons, the goal should be to prevent an explosion of a nuclear weapon by any state or non-state actor. But preventing a nuclear explosion is not sufficient. While the world has been lucky that nuclear weapons have not been exploded in war for 65 years since Nagasaki and a nuclear weapon might never again be detonated, possession of nuclear weapons bestows political coercive power. Without a doubt, such power can cause nations that are the target of this coercion to feel less secure. These nations will then likely take steps to correct the security imbalance, likely stimulating an arms race. An equitable international system would have no nation possessing these weapons. Indeed, Article VI

of the Non-Proliferation Treaty calls on all nations to pursue nuclear disarmament and a treaty on general and complete disarmament.

In the past four years, there has been a renewed debate in Europe, the United States, and other parts of the world about achieving nuclear disarmament. Is nuclear disarmament desirable and feasible? Or should nuclear weapons remain for some period of time while nations are working out an alternative security system? These are difficult questions to answer. Nonetheless, it is our collective responsibility to address these vexing security problems. Here, I will argue that we have by and large been doing little to seriously work toward nuclear disarmament.

The conventional wisdom on how to achieve nuclear disarmament is largely wrong. The viewpoint is that pursuing nuclear arms control and upholding and enforcing the rules of the nuclear nonproliferation regime provide the pathway for disarmament. But this is wrong because political leaders have generally viewed nuclear disarmament almost solely through a nuclear lens. What I mean by this observation is that the tools proposed to pursue nuclear disarmament are almost always nuclear in nature. As an outstanding example, consider the nuclear disarmament agenda outlined in January 2007

in the opinion page of the *Wall Street Journal* by four American statesmen: former Secretary of State George Shultz, former Secretary of Defense William Perry, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and former Senator Sam Nunn. They recommended in the following order:

- “Changing the Cold War posture of deployed nuclear weapons to increase warning time and thereby reduce the danger of an accidental or unauthorized use of a nuclear weapon.
- Continuing to reduce substantially the size of nuclear forces in all states that possess them.
- Eliminating short-range nuclear weapons designed to be forward-deployed.
- Initiating a bipartisan process with the U.S. Senate, including understandings to increase confidence and provide for periodic review, to achieve ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, taking advantage of recent technical advances, and working to secure ratification by other key states.
- Providing the highest possible standards of security for all stocks of weapons, weapons-usable plutonium, and highly enriched uranium everywhere in the world.

- Getting control of the uranium enrichment process, combined with the guarantee that uranium for nuclear power reactors could be obtained at a reasonable price, first from the Nuclear Suppliers Group and then from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or other controlled international reserves. It will also be necessary to deal with proliferation issues presented by spent fuel from reactors producing electricity.
- Halting the production of fissile material for weapons globally; phasing out the use of highly enriched uranium in civil commerce and removing weapons-usable uranium from research facilities around the world and rendering the materials safe.
- Redoubling our efforts to resolve regional confrontations and conflicts that give rise to new nuclear armed states.”

All of their recommendations that focused on nuclear weapons and nuclear materials are most certainly worth implementing. But they have gotten the order of actions reversed. In order to make more progress on nuclear arms reductions, to secure nuclear materials in all states, and to create the possibility of nuclear disarmament, *the last action of “redoubling our efforts to resolve regional confrontations and*

*conflicts that give rise to new nuclear armed states” must be the top priority.*

But this sounds incredibly difficult to do at first or even second or third glance. However, I am reminded of Albert Einstein’s frustration that **“I have little patience with scientists who take a board of wood, look for its thinnest part, and drill a great number of holes where drilling is easy.”**

To learn where and how to drill, we need to understand that nuclear weapons are a symptom of underlying diseases. As Leo Tolstoy wrote in the opening of Anna Karenina, “Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” Each of the possessors of nuclear weapons acquired them because of some “unhappiness”: whether racing to defeat a powerful enemy during a world war, striving to be a great power, preventing nuclear black mail, acquiring an insurance policy against being wiped out, or using as a bargaining chip to obtain the means of survival for a destitute state.

Thus, we will have to understand each unhappy family or nation in its own special way. But some common themes are present that can lead us to

understanding what can be done to achieve nuclear disarmament. If the past is any guide to disarmament or at least deep reductions in nuclear arms, we see certain lessons emerge about the power of political transformations, the improvement of security perceptions, and the strength of security alliances. For example, when the Apartheid regime in South Africa was being dismantled, then-President F.W. de Klerk ordered complete dismantlement of South Africa's nuclear weapons. While many believe he was influenced by racial considerations in this decision, the perceived security environment had changed for the better. During the same time period, the Soviet Union was falling apart. And a visionary Soviet leader named Mikhail Gorbachev worked with another visionary leader President Ronald Reagan to call for eliminating nuclear weapons. The stumbling block of ballistic missile defense prevented them from carrying out this commitment. Nonetheless, they were able to reach agreement on deep reductions of nuclear arms. Civil society also has played a fundamental role especially during the Cold War period in calling for an end to the nuclear arms race. Moreover, U.S. extended deterrence guarantees to about 30 allies has acted as a means to quell several of those states' desires for nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, pursuing nuclear disarmament by itself is not enough and can be dangerous. What is required is to make the top priority to ensure the security of all nations. Only by doing so can we move forward to be a better world that is more secure against nuclear weapons explosions or coercion. Finally, such a world in which the stockpiles of weapons-usable nuclear materials are substantially reduced and highly secured will also greatly lower the likelihood of nuclear terrorism. We have the power to make the world more secure.

Thank you for your attention.