

**Critical Issues Forum
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**Nuclear Disarmament: Challenges,
Opportunities, and Next Steps**

**Benchmark III
“Relying on Arms Control”**

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*" More and more people are coming to realize
that peace must be more than an interlude
if we are to survive;
that people is a produce of law and order;
that law is essential if the force of arms
is not to rule the world." [5]
William O. Douglas - Supreme Court Justice*

*"Abolition of war is no longer an ethical question
to be pondered solely by learned philosophers
and ecclesiastics, but a hard core one for the
decision of the masses whose survival is the
issue. We must have new thoughts, new ideas,
new concepts. We must break out of the strait
jacket of the past. We must have sufficient
imagination and courage to translate the
universal wish for peace – which is rapidly
becoming a universal necessity – into
actuality." [5]
General Douglas MacArthur*

During the Cold war generations lived with the constant fear that the world could be erased in a single instant. The most horrible hypothetical threat to the world was a possibility of global nuclear war between the two opposing blocs that could be started by a deliberate attack of one of the adversaries, or by an uncontrolled escalation of a regional crisis in which the great powers would be involved.

The end of the Cold War brought the end of the strategic confrontation on the world stage of two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, which had threatened one another mutual destruction. Nuclear deterrence between the United States and Russia moved into the background. Moscow and Washington stopped being the main geopolitical rivals on the international scene and the probability of war between them actually decreased to zero. But despite the hopes of many people the end of the Cold War didn't remove nuclear weapons from current politics.

In a strange turn of history, the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up. [3]

Now we have come to the critical fork in the road, and the path we will choose will determine if there is a future for the mankind or if this is the last act of a great human drama. As the great Russian playwright Anton Chekhov wrote, if there is a gun on the wall in the first act of a play, it will be fired in the third act. We are in the third act of the nuclear era and the gun on the wall comprises the 27,000 nuclear weapons stockpiled, including 12,000 that are ready for delivery. [5]

The new stage of a nuclear era is characterized by an information revolution, wider access to nuclear power technologies, materials, and specialists, appearance of a nuclear black market, and the proliferation of dual-use technologies and materials.

In the late 1990s nuclear proliferation got a new impulse. The 'legitimate' nuclear states have continued the build-up and modernization of the nuclear armaments. The policy of the 'Big Five'

has been inconsistent and lacked coordination in their nuclear supplies and general political line toward 'illegitimate' nuclear and threshold countries.

The political situation in majority of the new nuclear states often is unstable; and there is a high probability of civil wars and coups in these regions. Today there exists a risk of a first or pre-emptive strike and the employment of nuclear weapons by those states. Peculiarities of political situation and foreign policies of such countries increase the chances of nuclear materials or munitions getting into the hands of terrorist organizations. Their civilian and military organizations have a high level of corruption, while the security services and facilities for guarding and controlling nuclear munitions and materials remain unreliable.

There are serious and well-grounded fears over the military nuclear programs being conducted by North Korea, Iran and several other countries. According to the United Nations reports over 30 countries today have the capability to produce nuclear weapons. Nuclear secrets and materials are available through the black market trade.

International terrorist organizations display a keen interest in nuclear weapons and have already started blackmailing governments (in particular, by spreading rumors that they have bought portable nuclear explosive devices from Ukraine for subversive purposes).[2]

The horrible tragedies in New York and Washington on the morning of September 11, 2001, showed to the whole world a glimpse of the worst-possible proliferation scenario, in which nuclear weapons would fall into the hands of international terrorists who would use them to plunge the entire civilized world into shock and chaos. It seems unquestionable that further WMD proliferation and the danger of its merger with international terrorism (so called super terrorism or catastrophic terrorism) will continue to be a priority issue. [2]

The grim reality leaves us no illusions about security of peace. In the face of a terrible possibility of further proliferation and employment of nuclear weapons, the question "What is to be done?" will never leave us. Can the spread of these ultimate tools of destruction be stopped? Is it possible to check and to control them? How can we prevent their use? Can we hope to eliminate them entirely? Or are we destined to live in the world where more and more people and nations break the rules? There is an urgent need to address the challenges posed by these questions.

There is no doubt that our ultimate goal should be seeking the peace and security of a world without nukes. But reaching this goal will be very hard; it will take great patience and persistence, to say nothing about time.

There are enough grounds to say that now there are too many risk factors in the immediate elimination of nuclear weapons. As we see it, the idea of a world without nuclear weapons today is a bit like the idea of a world without war or disease - it would be nice, but, contra John Lennon, it's hard to imagine, at least *in the nearest future*.

What factors oppose the idea of immediate complete elimination?

- Even if we wanted to, the world's nuclear scientists couldn't be made to 'forget' how to make bombs. We cannot uninvent the technology. As someone once said, it's impossible to put the genie back into the bottle.
- We can't ensure that no one would decide to keep a few carefully hidden weapons. Even under inspection regime, a country could easily conceal a dozen warheads. It would be an extremely potent threat. Thus, zero seems to be a very unstable number.
- There is a high risk that terrorists might acquire a weapon as they are determined to buy or steal one. As we know there is unsecured nuclear material across the globe.

Thus, as we can see, it is only reasonable and prudent to maintain some nuclear weapons and *rely on arms control*.

Time has come to join together with an unyielding determination and with an iron will to build a new framework for nuclear cooperation to confront the challenges of this nuclear era.

What practical steps should be taken which will reduce the nuclear danger?

- Great nuclear powers should reduce their nuclear armaments of all types. It will set an example for others. The USA and Russia are going to negotiate a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty this year.
- Testing of nuclear weapons must be banned. The USA must ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.
- Modernization of nuclear arsenals should be immediately stopped.
- Nuclear weapons should not be allowed to be deployed on other countries' territories.
- There is a need to build command and control systems, information support systems among states.
- Serious efforts should be made to strengthen the NPT regime. For example, non-nuclear parties to the Treaty and all nuclear importers, even those beyond the NPT framework, must be made bound to join the 1997 Protocol. [2]
- Recipient countries must no longer be sold technologies for enriching uranium and recycling spent fuel for extracting plutonium. Simultaneously, they must be given guarantees for the supply of nuclear fuel and for the removal or safe storage of spent fuel from nuclear power plants.[2]
- More strict international control must be established over research nuclear reactors, the supply of nuclear materials for research purposes, and their storage.
- The great powers must stop producing and building up reserves of weapon-grade plutonium and place respective production and storing facilities under IAEA control.
- The states should work out a common strategy, methods and means for counter-proliferation and for combating international terrorism and regimes supporting it. As President Barack Obama stated in his speech in Prague, "Rules must be binding. Violations must be punished." [3]
- New guarantees must be worked out for the external security and economic encouragement of some countries in exchange for their giving up nuclear weapons.
- Vulnerable nuclear materials must be locked as quickly as possible.
- Additionally, there is the need to protect the many nuclear power engineering facilities, as well as these facilities for storing nuclear munitions and materials.

There is no denying that at present there are few grounds for optimism, as the actions of the great powers, nuclear exporters and importers often conflict. And still, there is yet hope that the strongest states, with the support of the entire international community, will adopt a new system for organizing nuclear security without being forced to do that by the shock of the first real employment of the 'Judgement Day weapon' since August 1945. [2]

The idea whose time has come is rapid change to create a safer and better world for the 21st century. Education is the key component to convince people to think and to act as responsible Citizens of the World. This is a new individual responsibility to work together across all barriers to achieve our common goal - to construct global governance where lasting peace can prevail.

Sources:

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