



**James Martin Center for Nonproliferation  
Studies**

Monterey Institute of International Studies

## **Implementation of the Recommendations of the UN Experts Group on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education**

Presentation by Professor William Potter<sup>1</sup>  
to the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, February 25, 2010

### I. Introduction

High Representative Sergio Duarte, Chairman Carlo Trezza, Your Excellencies, and friends. It is a great honor and pleasure for me to meet with you today on a topic that is dear to my heart—disarmament and nonproliferation education.

As some of you know, I had the opportunity to serve for five years on the Secretary General's Advisory Board, and exactly ten years and one month ago today I presented a discussion paper to the Board on Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education. I did so at the encouragement of then Under-Secretary General Jayantha Dhanapala, who was anxious for the Board to take initiatives that might impact directly on the work of his office. At the time, we were fortunate to have as another Board member Ambassador Miguel Marin Bosch, who was astonished to find that he actually agreed with his "Yankee friend" Bill Potter, took the essence of my paper, which among other things called for the creation of a UN Experts Group on Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education, translated it into a General Assembly resolution introduced by Mexico, and—low and behold—with the support of the General Assembly a very diverse 10-member UN Experts Group was created that very year chaired by none other than Miguel Marin Bosch. Two other members of that Group are worth noting: the Japanese expert was a then relatively unknown diplomat by the name of Yukiya Amano; another was none other than your colleague Kate Dewes.

As some of you in addition to Kate may be aware, the Experts Group met for two years and generated an extensive report featuring 34 recommendations, which, in turn, were endorsed by a UN General Assembly resolution in November 2002 (GA Resolution 57/60), and the issue of

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<sup>1</sup> William Potter is Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar Professor of Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. He also is Founding Director of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute.

Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education was subsequently introduced into the NPT review process where it has repeatedly enjoyed widespread support. If the **good news** is that all, or nearly all, states endorse the general concept of D and NP Education, the **bad news** is that relatively little progress has been made to date in translating that support in principle into global action. Indeed, I would venture to say, that most states are unaware of their “obligation” to report bi-annually at the General Assembly on their implementation of the Experts Groups recommendations, including a number of those states that had representatives on the Experts Group. I suspect that most of you also are unaware that the 2002 General Assembly Resolution includes one recommendation specific to the Secretary General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters; Recommendation 30 states that “In the context of its current mandate, the Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters is encouraged to consider periodically follow-up action related to disarmament and nonproliferation education.” I am delighted today to contribute to that follow-up action.

What I propose to do this morning is to: (1) briefly review some of the key premises and major recommendations made by the UN Experts Group; (2) provide my assessment of what is and is not being implemented; and (3) conclude with several recommendations for practical steps that should be undertaken.

## II. Expert Group Recommendations

I don’t have time to describe all of the important recommendations made by the Experts Group, and I refer you to the 2002 GA Resolution (GA 57/60). I also have distributed copies of a short article my CNS colleague Masako Toki and I wrote for the *IAEA Bulletin* in March 2005 on “The ABCs of Initiatives for Disarmament & Nonproliferation Education.”

The basic premise underlying the UN study was that because of a fixation on quick solutions to immediate crises, neither national governments nor international organizations invest adequately in long-term programs of disarmament and nonproliferation training. As a consequence, we face a predicament on a global scale in which otherwise well educated citizens (and many of their elected representatives) are amazingly complacent about and ignorant of disarmament and nonproliferation issues. Although this low knowledge base is deplorable, it also is understandable given the general absence of opportunities for study of the subject. Few high schools have curricula that expose students to issues of disarmament or weapons proliferation and strategies for their control, and the possibility for university training is not much better. This situation, regrettably, has not improved markedly since I made a similar observation in 2000. As such, it remains the case that at a time when there is a pressing need for new thinking about disarmament and nonproliferation matters, there are few venues available for training the next generation of specialists or even for introducing our future leaders to the subjects.

Another major premise of the UN study—and one that made it possible for the diverse group of experts to produce a consensus report—was that contemporary disarmament and nonproliferation education should strive to teach “how to think” rather than “what to think” about peace and security issues. The key educational objective, in other words, is developing critical thinking skills. This objective may be facilitated by a number of traditional and innovative pedagogic

techniques, including participatory learning such as simulations and role playing, utilizing new information and communications technology, and providing on-the-job training opportunities as a supplement to classroom instruction. It also can be fostered by improving liaison among relevant UN bodies such as UNESCO, UNIDIR, ODA, the Department of Public Information, the UN University, the IAEA and CTBTO, and the Disarmament Fellowship Program. With these points in mind, the Experts Group recommended and the General Assembly adopted, *inter alia*, the following points:

1. Member states are encouraged to accord importance to disarmament and nonproliferation education and training in their programs and policies.
2. Relevant UN offices and other international organizations and agencies should prepare, adapt, and disseminate a wider range of user-friendly education material on disarmament and nonproliferation.
3. The Department of Disarmament Affairs [now ODA] should examine, accumulate, and make public and easily accessible the different disarmament and nonproliferation curricula and programs that States have developed for their formal school systems and university courses.
4. Member States are encouraged to include parliamentarians and/or non-governmental advisers in delegations to UN disarmament-related meetings.
5. Members States are encouraged to sponsor training, fellowships, and awareness programs for researchers, engineers, scientists and other academics for the purpose of fulfilling international obligations of member states in the disarmament and nonproliferation fields.
6. The Department of Disarmament Affairs, in cooperation with UNU and UPEACE, should be encouraged to organize a program of training for educators and trainers in disarmament and non-proliferation.
7. DDA, in cooperation with UNESCO, UPEACE, UNIDIR, and NGOs, should produce and maintain an updated international bibliography of reference literature for teachers and make this available on a disarmament and nonproliferation on-line resource site.
8. Organizations of the UN system are encouraged to promote and provide financial support for disarmament and nonproliferation education and training using such techniques as distance learning, the Internet, and videoconferencing.
9. Educators should consider a full range of pedagogical methods. Special emphasis should be given to participatory learning approaches that can be applied to a wide variety of disarmament and nonproliferation problems and audiences.

10. Internships in UN organizations with special competence in disarmament and nonproliferation are a valuable tool for educating graduate and undergraduate students and should be continued and expanded.
11. The DDA should develop a disarmament and nonproliferation online-education resource site in the six official UN languages.
12. UN bodies and other international organizations with special competence in disarmament and nonproliferation education and training should designate a focal point for the subject. Representatives should meet periodically at the interagency level.
13. The DDA should facilitate the work of the interagency group.
14. Member states are encouraged to designate a focal point for disarmament and nonproliferation education and training and to inform the DDA on steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in the present report.
15. Members States and the Under-Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs are encouraged to include in their remarks to the First Committee of the General Assembly information on the results of the implementation of the recommendations in this study.

**What marks should we give states and international organizations for their implementation of these key recommendations?** Obviously, states and international organizations vary in the importance they attach to the issue of Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education and the resources they have available for this purpose. Japan, for example, has long been a leader in promoting the recommendations of the Experts Group and since 2002 routinely has introduced a working paper on Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education on behalf of a relatively small number of other states in the context of the NPT Review Process. It also has convened numerous meetings on the subject and co-sponsored various side events at NPT Prep Coms and Review Conferences. Mexico, Sweden, and New Zealand also have periodically expressed support for the initiative, although in a less visible and routine manner than Japan. What is particularly disappointing is how few states have taken seriously the request to convey to the Secretary General every other year the results of their implementation of the 34 recommendations of the Experts Group. In the last such report of the Secretary General in 2008 (A/63/158), only seven countries (Cambodia, Italy, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Qatar, Spain, and Japan) provided a summary of their activities. More encouraging was the involvement of several NWS—the UK and the Russian Federation—at a side event on the topic of Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education at the 2009 NPT Prep Com. Many of the recommendations calling for action by UN offices and agencies emphasized the lead role envisaged for what is now the Office of Disarmament Affairs. Thanks in particular to the efforts of Michael Cassandra, who is now retired, ODA succeeded in introducing a number of the initiatives called for by the Expert Group. For those who are not familiar with the ODA Disarmament Education website, I encourage you to explore it. Following the 2002 GA Resolution, ODA also convened one or more meetings of representatives from relevant UN entities in the Disarmament and Nonproliferation education and training sphere. To the best of my knowledge, however, coordination among UN offices has diminished in recent

years, and many of the relevant UN entities no longer even have active focal points or, for that matter, much coordination within their own organizations on education and training activities.

While several academic institutions have made advances in the development of disarmament and non-proliferation distance learning and other electronic pedagogical tools, these resources remain relatively scarce and under-utilized, and on-the-job disarmament and non-proliferation training and mid-career professional development in this field leaves much to be desired.

Let me say a little bit about how we are trying to address these needs in Monterey:

As a graduate school, the Monterey Institute's primary audience is in-residence graduate students who pursue a two-year degree program, which combines formal in-class course work, on-the job training at CNS, and international internships. Although we have long had a unique graduate program leading to a Certificate in Nonproliferation Studies, as of fall 2010 we will offer the world's first Masters Degree Program in Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies. Among the unusual aspects of this program will be its use of semester-long negotiation simulations, coverage of the entire range of WMD threats, extended international internship opportunities, and a capstone project in which students will conduct original research leading to a publishable product under the supervision of a senior faculty member. I would like to say a few words about my favorite form of teaching—role-playing and simulations.

1. Simulations: As someone who has made use of simulations for instructional purposes for over 30 years, I would highlight a few of its unusual virtues and advocate its wider adoption for training in the disarmament and non-proliferation sphere
  - Promotes empathy and “seeing with the eyes of others.”
  - Best way to learn is by active participation.
  - Describe NPT and START examples, as well as much shorter variants [By end of course impossible to discern professional diplomats from many students]
  - Combine traditional simulation format with use of Skype and Teleconferencing to bring “real-world” decision makers into the classroom (e.g., Assistant Secretary Rose Gottemoeller interacted with my student START Replacement negotiators this fall, compared notes on problem issues, and students shared their sophisticated treaty with her—refer to our website for a copy of their treaty; similarly in our MIIS NPT simulation conducted by my colleague Jean duPreez, Under-Secretary Duarte opened the simulation plenary session with an address and also responded to our student comments).
  - Student negotiators use of on-line chat rooms/Google Groups to deliberate round the clock with other team members and in-class negotiating working groups to develop rolling text treaty language that could be edited in real-time and shared with members in other working groups.
2. Self-paced on-line learning. CNS has long been involved in the development of electronic on-line learning modules in the nonproliferation field. Many of these self-paced modules, including those devoted to the NPT, NWFZs, and nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons terrorism are available on the Nuclear Threat Reduction website ([www.nti.org](http://www.nti.org)). More

recently, CNS has developed a learning module on international safeguards policy and information analysis as part of a one-week short course for the U.S. Department of Energy's "next generation safeguards" program. This module, which can be found on the CNS website, is supplemented by in-class lectures and exercises conducted by CNS staff and visiting experts, including those from the IAEA.

3. Capacity- Building for Other States. One of the most successful components of CNS' training program has been its work in assisting other countries to acquire nonproliferation expertise. Since we initiated our Visiting Fellows Program in Monterey in 1992, we have trained over 150 young diplomats, scientists, journalists, and educators from the post-Soviet states. For the past ten years, we have conducted a similar training program in conjunction with the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and have trained over three dozen young Chinese diplomats. Indeed, participation in our program has become part of the regular career advancement track for young Chinese diplomats working on arms control issues. More recently, with support from the government of Norway, we have expanded our nonproliferation capacity-building efforts to train young diplomats from the Non-Aligned Movement, and have during the past two years had diplomats in residence in Monterey from Chile, Indonesia, South Africa, and Sri Lanka, and will soon be receiving additional ones from Egypt and Mexico. These diplomats typically reside in Monterey for up to three months and receive small group tutorials, attend regular MIIS classes (such as my negotiation simulation), and conduct policy-oriented research under the supervision of a senior CNS staff member.

In addition to our capacity-building efforts involving residence in Monterey, we also have increasingly made use of various forms of distance learning, including lectures to students at Russian universities via Skype, dissemination of timely information and analysis via listservs, the CNS and NTI website, Facebook, Twitter, and our own variant of You Tube called "Nuke Tube." CNS also has long provided briefings and simulation exercises in New York and elsewhere for groups of young diplomats under the UN Disarmament Fellows Program, and has collaborated with Russian and Chinese universities and NGOs to develop nonproliferation textbooks and other training materials in those languages.

Another important tool we have employed for building nonproliferation capacity abroad is through a program of *Train-the-Trainers*. Three variants of this approach that we have employed with considerable success include semester-long training at CNS for young university professors, one to two-week long intensive courses for university professors conducted in the native language overseas, and a combination of multiple short workshops in Monterey for high school teachers. These approaches have resulted in CNS trainees offering the first university courses in nonproliferation in Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and a number of other post-Soviet States; training programs in Chinese for over a dozen Chinese university professors; and an on-going Critical Issues Forum that trains high school teachers from the United States and all ten of the Closed Russian nuclear cities. We currently are making preparations to expand the Critical Issues Forum to include teachers from China and the Middle East.

### III. Recommendations

Let me wrap up my prepared remarks by highlighting several concrete steps that states and international organizations might take to be more responsive to the recommendations made by the Experts Group:

1. First, it is essential to find mechanisms to alert States (and appropriate individuals/offices within States) to their reporting requirements. My impression is that many states fail to act because they are ignorant of the UN GA Resolution. At a minimum, one would expect members of the Secretary General's Advisory Board to convey to appropriate members in their home governments the thrust of the Resolution as well as the reporting requirements. The initiative, after all, originated in the Advisory Board, which also has responsibilities for monitoring the implementation of the Resolution.
2. Secondly, it is important that all relevant UN offices and International Organizations that currently do not have focal points in place designate them for Disarmament and Nonproliferation as called for by the Resolution. It may be that ODA has continued to convene periodic meetings among these representatives, but if not, it should resume this important liaison function. I also would encourage it to invite appropriate reps from academe and civil society.
3. Thirdly, it is my hope that far more NPT States parties, including the NWS, will join as co-sponsors of the Working Paper currently being prepared in Geneva for presentation at the May 2010 Review Conference. Several of the NWS have been leaders in the field of education and should not be shy in reporting their accomplishments. It is hard to find many issues on which the NWS and NNWS fully agree, but one area where this may be the case is the value of Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education.
4. Funding constraints obviously are a major impediment to implementation of some of the recommendations of the Experts Group. However, my impression is that more creative initiative on the part of both national governments and international organizations could generate the relatively small amount of funds necessary to build capacity in the Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education sphere. One of my long standing—but to date unrealized—recommendations is for States to consider passing legislation to create a National Nonproliferation Education Act, similar to the U.S. National Defense Education Act, which would put aside funds to create competitive scholarships for students to pursue graduate studies in the field. Such action would serve as an incentive for more universities to introduce courses in the field at the same time that it encouraged the best and the brightest students to specialize on WMD issues.
5. Finally, I would urge that more use be made of participatory learning, including role playing and simulations. In this regard, I recall my recommendation to this Board a number of years ago when it was chaired by Egyptian Ambassador Nabil Fahmy. At that time, I proposed that the Board set aside part of one day for a simulation exercise regarding some pressing

disarmament or nonproliferation theme—perhaps at one of its retreats. The idea enjoyed wide support, but ultimately was not adopted because one unnamed diplomat said he could never play the role of a representative from another country. However, I believe the idea remains a good one, and I would be pleased to direct such an exercise if this board were to choose to decide to do so. On a related subject, I would like to note that a number of governments and my Center are likely to host a simulation exercise on the margins of the First Committee next fall. The focus of the simulation will be on testimony before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the verification requirements for ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. I am looking for candidates for various Committee members in case any of you would like to play the role of a U.S. senator.

On that note, I will conclude my prepared remarks and look forward to your questions.