

EDITOR'S NOTE

One person really can make a difference. That's the lesson I am drawing from the Obama administration's whirlwind of nuclear weapons-related activity in early to mid-April. Perhaps not since the end of the Cold War has a president, the Congress, and the news media paid so much attention to nuclear weapons. That's a long-overdue development.

First up was the Nuclear Posture Review, a congressionally mandated report justifying nuclear force levels and budgets. Unlike the two previous posture reviews by the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations, this one was completely unclassified and bore Obama's distinctive imprimatur, something many thought unlikely even a few weeks before its release. And while the report did not go as far as many in the arms control community would have liked, it was a major step forward in reorienting U.S. nuclear posture toward twenty-first-century realities. *Washington Post* columnist Jim Hoagland reported some of the telling inside details on April 18:

[Obama] set an important example for his peers by taking control of the drafting of the Nuclear Posture Review—a document few if any of his predecessors bothered even to read fully, experts tell me. He has accepted presidential responsibility and authority for shaping the nuclear weapons and strategies that the United States will now develop or abandon.

"President Obama was making editing changes in the Nuclear Posture Review right up to the last minutes before it was to go to press," says William J. Perry, defense secretary in the Clinton administration and a member of a quartet of elder statesmen whose advocacy of nuclear disarmament has informed and influenced Obama's thinking.

The president used the review process to force the national security fiefdoms in his administration to sign up to his vision—and the means for achieving it. "They were not lined up that way two months ago, and it took a lot of work to get it done in a way that his predecessors have not done," according to Perry.

The declaration is normally the handiwork of military officers, scientists and theoreticians who bargain with each other to produce a technocratic summary of who does what, and gets what, to manage the U.S. nuclear arsenal. But Obama turned the review into a political document that redefines the Cold War concept of deterrence in ways that reduce the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. defense strategy.

Next was the revised Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), the delayed but much-anticipated successor to the 1991 START, which expired at the end of 2009. By itself the treaty breaks little new ground, but it does set the stage for future deeper reductions. And President Obama made a point of arranging for the April 8, 2010 signing ceremony with Russian president Dmitri Medvedev to take place in Prague, the site of a major speech a year earlier where he set out his plans and vision for the nuclear arsenal and an eventual nuclear-weapon-free world.

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And just a few days later, President Obama convened an unprecedented Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, DC, bringing together the leaders (or their high-level representatives) of forty-seven key states to focus on reducing the risk of nuclear terrorism by securing within four years all weapons-usable nuclear materials. One has to go back to the founding of the United Nations in 1945 to find a similar global gathering.

These initiatives and this focus are all the more remarkable because there is little domestic political value in them for Obama. No one ever won an election because of a position taken on nuclear weapons. Yet to his credit, this is clearly an enduring passion of Obama's, one that will shape his presidency, his foreign policy, and the future of nuclear weapons in ways we cannot yet predict. In a separate interview with *National Journal*, William Perry remarked, "In talking to him, you realize that President Obama truly understands the problem at the deepest level. He's not working from talking points, and he's passionately committed to making a difference on nuclear proliferation." As someone who has worked on these issues for more than twenty-five years, often expending significant effort just to get elected officials to pay attention, this is an exciting and profoundly hopeful development. And a welcome change.

For most U.S. voters—too many, really—nuclear issues, especially regarding the U.S. nuclear arsenal, are out of sight and out of mind. But for a few weeks in April, that changed. And I suspect not for the last time.

This issue opens with an empirical analysis of nuclear smuggling trends in Georgia by Alexander Kupatadze (School of International Relations, St. Andrews University). Using interviews with convicted smugglers and investigating officials and analysis of court documents, Kupatadze finds no evidence of involvement in such activities by professional criminals or criminal organizations and concludes that the unreliable and risky nature of nuclear trafficking serves to keep the professionals focused on more profitable criminal enterprises.

With President Obama's interest in and support for arms control and disarmament, attention is turning to the fate of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), left languishing in limbo in the U.S. Senate after the Clinton administration's failed ratification effort in 1999. President Obama has pledged to seek ratification of the CTBT, and Liviu Horovitz (formerly of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies) and Robert Golan-Vilella (Yale University) explore how other key states that have also not yet ratified the treaty—in particular China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan—will react if and when that happens. They conclude that over time, U.S. ratification will force most of these states to reevaluate their outlier status and ratify the agreement in response to domestic and international strategic considerations.

Bryan R. Early (State University of New York) explores the careful but persistent efforts of the United Arab Emirates to secure foreign nuclear assistance in its quest to become the first Arab country to operate a civilian nuclear energy program. Early examines the strategies employed by the UAE—including addressing potential suppliers' key security concerns and leveraging alliances with France and the United States—and considers how other states in the region seeking to develop their own nuclear power programs might benefit from adopting some of the UAE's approaches.

And what of the long-standing but thus far unsuccessful efforts to establish a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East? Sara Kristine Eriksen and Linda Mari Holøien (Norwegian Defence Research Establishment) consider the difficult dynamics of the region, as well as the motives states there have for acquiring WMD and relinquishing them. They recommend creating parallel processes for resolving conflict in the region and creating a WMD-free zone, because the latter is dependent on the former. Achieving a mutual understanding of security in the region among all affected states will be critical to progress on both fronts.

Amanda Moodie (Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University) and Michael Moodie (CSC) argue that for the Obama administration's arms control efforts to be truly successful, it should adopt some of the perspectives and approaches of the Non-Aligned Movement and others. In particular, the concept of "disarmament as humanitarian action" is gaining ascendancy in non-Western countries. Melding traditional concepts of arms control with this new, broader vision could turn more states into stakeholders in the process and engender significant progress, to the benefit of all.

The daunting, decades-long quest for affordable energy through nuclear fusion is receiving increased attention thanks to concerns about climate change and energy security. Fabian Sievert (Terrorism Research and Education Program, Monterey Institute of International Studies) and Daniel Johnson (Monterey Institute of International Studies) take a critical look at the promise of fusion energy, including the significant economic and technical challenges and the potential proliferation impacts of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor and the Laser Inertial Fusion Engine reactor. Contrary to how it is frequently promoted, fusion energy could have negative consequences for nuclear proliferation. Aggressively addressing and resolving the problems now will alleviate concerns if and when fusion becomes viable.

As interest grows in using nuclear (fission) energy to combat climate change, China has announced ambitious plans to build as many new reactors in the next decade as are currently operating worldwide. Yun Zhou (Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University), provides a rare look inside China's nuclear energy establishment, asking whether China's existing security measures are sufficient to prevent future incidents of nuclear terrorism, sabotage, or diversion of nuclear materials. She finds that although China's approach is impressive in some areas and sufficient for now, there is room for improvement.

Turkey, too, is in the midst of a nuclear energy revival, although regional dynamics will play a far greater role in how its program develops than they will in China. Şebnem Udum (Department of International Relations at Bilkent University, Turkey) reviews Turkey's nuclear "renaissance" and the impact it may have on Turkey's status as a non-nuclear weapon state, as well as relations with its neighbors.

Togzhan Kassenova (Center for International Trade and Security, University of Georgia) assesses the efficacy of Taiwan's export control system. Given Taiwan's ambiguous political status, its role as a major producer of high-technology, dual-use products, and the fact that it serves as a major transshipment point for WMD-related and military items, how Taiwan prevents weapons-usable technologies from falling into unauthorized hands is of significant regional and global concern. In her detailed case

study, Kassenova examines the evolution, enforcement, and efficacy of Taiwan's strategic trade controls.

Of all the proliferation-related developments over the last several years, none was as surprising as the realization—following a September 2007 Israeli attack—that Syria had been building a plutonium reactor with North Korean assistance. Ambassador Gregory L. Schulte (National Defense University's Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction), who represented the United States at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as the story unfolded, makes the case for how the IAEA, backed by its member states, should fully investigate Syria's nuclear activities. He also draws important lessons from the incident that can be used to strengthen the IAEA's verification capabilities.

This issue concludes with two book reviews. Torrey Froscher (CENTRA Technology, Inc.) brings a former insider's perspective to a discussion of the accuracy of the U.S. intelligence community's assessments of post-Cold War major proliferation-related developments and the interrelationship between that community and policy makers. Patricia M. Lewis (James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies) closely examines a new approach for effectively outlawing and eliminating nuclear weapons worldwide.

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