

EDITOR'S NOTE

By the time Barack Obama became the forty-fourth president of the United States in January 2009, there was a widespread belief, not altogether incorrect, that the nuclear nonproliferation regime was in dire straits. Iranian and North Korean intransigence regarding their nuclear programs, the revelation that Syria had been building a secret nuclear reactor, increasing tensions with Russia over US missile defense plans, and, not least, significant global dissatisfaction with and opposition to the George W. Bush administration's unfettered disdain for serious and binding arms control and disarmament measures had many people asking just how much more strain the regime could handle before it would collapse.

Although nuclear policy received little attention during the 2008 presidential campaign, Obama had laid out an ambitious agenda, one he began to implement shortly after taking office. Among the most important actions to date in this regard was the completion of the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) Report in April 2010. In contrast to the Bush administration's 2001 NPR, this one was completely unclassified and released to the public. While Obama's NPR did not go as far some had wanted in reorienting US nuclear policy (for example, the new posture takes no action on reducing the alert rate of ballistic missiles or reducing or removing tactical nuclear weapons in Europe), it nevertheless took several serious and significant steps toward the president's ultimate objective—"a world without nuclear weapons."

The March 2011 edition of the *Nonproliferation Review* is a "special issue" that presents a thorough examination of a very timely and extremely important topic—the 2010 NPR. Coordinated by Scott D. Sagan and Jane Vaynman (Stanford University and Harvard University, respectively), the special issue, "Arms, Disarmament, and Influence: International Responses to the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review," presents case studies that examine the early reaction to the NPR from experts, policy makers, and military leaders in fourteen states, providing an early look at how the Obama approach is being received in both nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states. In their introduction to the special issue, Sagan and Vaynman note that the Obama administration has argued that its new policies will encourage other states to strengthen the global nonproliferation regime and support nuclear disarmament. They review the changes instituted by the administration and discuss four ways that its 2010 NPR can influence the perceptions and policies of other states.

Among the nuclear weapon states, Pavel Podvig (independent analyst, Geneva) looks at Russian views of the NPR, finding that it has helped strengthen institutions inside Russia that support a cooperative US-Russian security agenda. Thomas Fingar (Stanford University) writes that while Chinese commentators found the new NPR an improvement over the 2001 Bush review, they nevertheless offered significant criticisms and expressed a variety of concerns about the impact of the NPR on Chinese security and strategic stability. S. Paul Kapur (US Naval Postgraduate School) assesses that the NPR is unlikely to have many salutary effects on Indian nuclear doctrine because India has no interest in emulating the United States, and because Indian experts do not believe the NPR will lead to important policy changes—certainly not anything significant enough to mitigate

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the security threats confronting their country. Similarly, Michael Krepon (Stimson Center) finds that Pakistan is unlikely to be swayed by changes in US nuclear policy because concerns about the Indian nuclear threat are paramount. In addition, Pakistani officials and experts know from experience that when it comes to security matters, nuclear issues take a backseat to fighting the Taliban and al Qaeda where the United States is concerned. And Harald Müller (Peace Research Institute Frankfurt) reports that many in France were highly critical of the NPR, not least because of the still-central role nuclear weapons play in the French strategic identity. Displeased with talk of a nuclear-weapon-free world, France nonetheless took comfort from other language in the NPR stressing the continuing importance of nuclear deterrence and the need to maintain an effective nuclear weapons production complex.

Müller also surveys the views of four other NATO states: Estonia, Poland, Germany, and Norway, finding that “each state read into the NPR what matched its preferences best, from an encouragement to pursue nuclear disarmament to a rather conservative preservation of the existing deterrence system.” Other significant developments also influenced each state’s reactions, including President Obama’s Prague speech, the UN Security Council’s 2009 nuclear summit, the conclusion of the New START, and last April’s Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, DC.

Ralph A. Cossa and Brad Glosserman (Pacific Forum of the Center for Strategic and International Studies) examine reactions in Japan to the NPR. Japanese officials and experts found much to praise in the document, but many disarmament advocates were disappointed that it did not endorse a no-first-use doctrine or declare that the “sole purpose” of US nuclear weapons is to deter a nuclear attack on the United States (the lack of such changes in the NPR came as a relief to defense officials and strategists). Indeed, Japan is torn by a strong desire for disarmament while at the same time reluctant to relinquish the perceived benefits of US extended deterrence.

Scott Snyder (Center for US-Korea Policy at the Asia Foundation) reviews the response in South Korea to the NPR, where there has been little public debate and overall acceptance by officials in Seoul. Snyder also considers the impact of the NPR on US-South Korean nonproliferation cooperation, including Seoul’s decision to host the next Nuclear Security Summit in 2012.

Nabil Fahmy (James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies and ambassador at large for the Egyptian Foreign Ministry) provides an insider’s perspective on the official Egyptian reaction to the NPR. While Egypt is more inclined to work with the United States on matters relating to nuclear disarmament, it is unlikely to fully endorse the new US approach until long-standing regional security concerns are addressed.

Irma Argüello (NPSGlobal Foundation) reports that in Brazil, the NPR was received with a mix of positive but skeptical reactions. Although pleased with the constructive tone of the document, as well as the new US approach to negative security assurances and a commitment to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Brazilian officials and experts remain wary of moves that could constrain what they believe are Brazil’s rights under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to develop fully its own nuclear fuel cycle activities, especially when states with nuclear arsenals have done too little (in Brazil’s view) to fulfill their disarmament obligations under the NPT.

Mustafa Kibaroglu (Bilkent University, Ankara) considers the case of Turkey, a US ally and NATO member on whose soil US nuclear weapons have been deployed since 1960. Kibaroglu finds that Turkish military and civilian leaders are generally pleased with the NPR, both for its emphasis on nonproliferation as well as its continuing support for extended deterrence.

Harald Müller also contributes a second article to this special issue, focusing on the impact of the NPR (along with other elements of the Obama administration's nuclear policy initiatives) on the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference—the first real test for Obama's approach to nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament issues.

Scott Sagan and Jane Vaynman wrap up the special issue by summarizing and analyzing the findings of all the contributing authors. They find “convincing evidence that US nuclear disarmament initiatives have had a positive influence in a number of countries, along with a mixed record in many others (where at least some indicators suggest that a government may be positively influenced in the future).” They then offer several theoretical insights and important lessons derived from the preceding case studies, with an eye toward implementing the NPR and developing new editions under future administrations.

This issue also features two other important articles, outside the purview of the 2010 NPR study, the first of which addresses the topic of nonproliferation education in the United States—introducing students to the critical concepts, concerns, and solutions surrounding the spread and control of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials. Nonproliferation education is an essential tool in the fight to prevent nuclear war, the accidental use of nuclear weapons, and nuclear terrorism. Indeed, it is one of the core missions of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS), the largest nongovernmental organization in the United States devoted exclusively to research and training on nonproliferation issues. Not only can such education foster a more informed and engaged electorate, it also serves to encourage the next generation of policy analysts, government officials, and international leaders and diplomats to see the nonproliferation field as an essential and rewarding career path.

Understanding the scope of these opportunities at the collegiate level is essential, which is why the *Nonproliferation Review* in 2002 published a comprehensive survey of undergraduate courses at select US colleges and universities. This issue includes a revealing update of that survey, researched and written by Richard Sabatini, Deborah Berman, Lisa Sanders Luscombe, and Leonard S. Spector (CNS). While the new survey finds a greater number and variety of courses available to students at the top US schools compared with 2002, including outside the traditional realm of international relations and history, more than one-third of the highest-ranked undergraduate programs in the United States—including the California Institute of Technology, Carnegie Mellon, and the University of California, Berkeley—do not offer a *single* course focused on nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. At second-tier schools, the problem may be even more acute. Considering the devastating economic, political, environmental, and health effects that weapons of mass destruction can have, ignorance of these vital issues is most definitely not bliss. We hope this survey stirs debate on campuses across the country—and

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the world—and encourages more professors and administrators to considering offering such courses in the future.

We are also pleased to publish in this issue the 2010 winner of the Outstanding Essay Prize of the Doreen and Jim McElvany Nonproliferation Challenge. Benoît Pelopidas (CNS) takes a close and careful look at the community of experts concerned with the spread of nuclear weapons, in particular their understanding of the history of nuclear proliferation. In so doing, he argues that on the whole experts, and the policy makers who rely on them, share a flawed understanding of how and why nuclear weapons spread from one state to another, in part because the very term proliferation distorts the reality of the situation. These problems, in turn, artificially constrain the perceived policy options, preventing experts and policy makers from considering innovative approaches. Pelopidas concludes with several recommendations for improving our understanding of the causes of nuclear proliferation along with our responses to it.

And finally, we conclude this issue with a book review from J. Peter Scoblic (staff member in the US Senate) of an important new study examining a relatively unexplored topic in the nonproliferation field: when and why states choose to provide sensitive nuclear weapons technology to others.

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