

START : USA - RUSSIA

Russian and US negotiators appear optimistic following 24 April talks in Rome aimed at creating a new treaty to reduce their nuclear weapon stockpiles.

After a one-day meeting in Rome on 24 April, 2009 negotiators said they held a "very productive" initial round of talks. Russian negotiator Anatoly Antonov said Moscow would do "everything possible" to prepare a new draft treaty by year-end, and that the new treaty would serve to improve bilateral relations, with negotiations set to resume in May.

The goal of the talks was to find a replacement for the landmark Cold War-era nuclear arms control treaty, the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).

START¹ is a treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.

The treaty was signed by the United States and the USSR, that barred its signatories from deploying more than 6,000 nuclear warheads atop a total of 1,600 ICBMs, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and bombers.

START negotiated the largest and most complex arms control treaty in history, and its final implementation in late 2001 resulted in the removal of about 80% of all strategic nuclear weapons then in existence. Proposed by United States' President Ronald Reagan, it was renamed START-I after negotiations began on the second START treaty, which became START-II.

The first START proposal was presented by United States' President Ronald Reagan in Geneva on 29 June 1982. Reagan proposed a dramatic reduction in strategic forces in two phases, which he referred to as SALT-III at the time.

The first phase would reduce overall warhead counts on any missile type to 5,000, with an additional limit of 2,500 on ICBMs. Additionally, a total of 850 ICBMs would be allowed, with a limit of 110 "heavy throw" missiles like the SS-18, with additional limits on the total "throw weight" of the missiles as well. The second phase introduced similar limits on heavy bombers and their warheads, and other strategic systems as well. At the time the US had a commanding lead in strategic bombers. The US B-52 force, while aged, was a credible strategic threat but was only equipped with AGM-86 cruise missiles, beginning in 1982, because of Soviet air defense improvements in early 1980s. The US also had begun to introduce new B-1B Lancer quasi-stealth bomber and was secretly developing the Advanced Technology Bomber (ATB) project that would eventually result in the B-2 Spirit stealth bomber.

The USSR's force was of little threat to the US, on the other hand, as it was tasked almost entirely with attacking US convoys in the Atlantic and land targets on the Eurasian landmass. Although the USSR had 1,200 medium and heavy bombers, only 150 of them (Tupolev Tu-95s and Myasishchev M-4s) could reach North America (the latter only with in-flight refueling). They also faced difficult problems in penetrating admittedly smaller and poorly defended US airspace. Possessing too few bombers available when compared to US bomber numbers was evened out by the US forces having to penetrate the much larger and heavier defended Soviet airspace. This changed when new Tu-95MS and Tu-160 bombers appeared in 1984 equipped with first Soviet AS-15 cruise missiles. By limiting the phase-in as it was proposed, the US would be left with a strategic advantage, for a time.

Continued negotiation of the START process was delayed several times because US agreement terms were considered non-negotiable by pre-Gorbachev Soviet rulers. President Reagan's introduction of the Strategic Defense Initiative program in 1983 was viewed as a threat by the Soviet Union, and the Soviets withdrew from setting a timetable for further negotiations.

¹ Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

Due to these facts, a dramatic nuclear arms race proceeded during the 1980s, and essentially ended in 1991 by nuclear parity preservation at a level of more than ten thousand strategic warheads on both sides.

This treaty also stated that the United States and Russia would have 6000 fighter aircraft, 10,000 tanks, 20,000 artillery pieces and 2000 attack helicopters. It was signed on July 31, 1991, five months before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Entry into force was delayed due to the collapse of the USSR and awaiting an Annex that enforced the terms of the treaty upon the newly independent states of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. The latter three agreed to transport their nuclear arms to Russia for disposal.

It remains in effect between the U.S. and Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. These latter three have disarmed since becoming independent nations in the wake of the break up of the Soviet Union.

Today, the United States has 3,696 and Russia has 4,237 deployed strategic warheads.

The US has roughly 10,000 total warheads, counting strategic and tactical, both deployed and in reserves. The figures for Russia are less reliable, but are considered to be in the range of 15,000 to 17,000 total warheads. 365 B-52Gs were flown to the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona. The bombers were stripped of all usable parts, then chopped into five pieces by a 13,000-pound steel blade dropped from a crane.

With the current START-I set to expire on December 5, 2009 there are proposals to renew and expand the treaty, supported by U.S. President Barack Obama.

President Obama supports sharp reductions in nuclear arsenals with Russia and the U.S. would like to sign sometimes this year a new treaty that would replace START-1, but Russia will certainly put as a condition for a new deal would only happen if Washington abandoned plans to place elements of a missile shield in central Europe.

The president's own speech in Prague on 5 April 2009 that focused partly on the idea of a nuclear-free world, qualified by acknowledgment that he did not expect it in his lifetime, is an indicator of a striking change in political discourse. More broadly, what makes the current moment so interesting is that the US is at the centre of an unusual combination of attitudes that together favor progress.

Russia will also be waiting for the U.S. to abandon attempts to "*surround Russia with a missile defense ring.*" This referred to the placement of ten interceptor missiles in Poland, as well as accompanying radar in the Czech Republic.

Russian President Dmitri Medvedev, said, the day after the U.S. elections, in his first state of the nation address, that Russia would move to deploy short-range Iskander missile systems in the western exclave of Kaliningrad "*to neutralize if necessary the anti-ballistic missile system in Europe.*" Russia insists that any movement towards a new START should be a legally binding document, and must, then, set lower ceilings on the number of nuclear warheads, and their delivery vehicles.

On March 17, 2009, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev signaled that Russia would begin a "*large-scale*" rearmament and renewal of Russia's nuclear arsenal. President Medvedev accused NATO of pushing ahead with expansion near Russian borders and ordered that this rearmament commence in 2011 with increased army, naval, and nuclear capabilities.

Additionally, the head of Russia's strategic missile forces, Nikolai Solovtsov, told that Russia would start deploying its next generation RS-24 missiles after the December 5 expiry of the START-1 treaty with the United States, so Russia hopes to change the START-1 treaty with a new accord.

The increased tensions come despite the warming of relations between the United States and Russia ever since U.S. President Barack Obama took office.

As of May 4, 2009, the United States and Russia began the process of renegotiating START, as well as counting both nuclear warheads and their delivery vehicles when making a new agreement. While setting aside problematic issues between the two countries, both sides agreed to make further cuts in the number of warheads they have deployed to around 1,000 to 1,500 each.

The United States has said they are open to a Russian proposal to use radar in Azerbaijan rather than Eastern Europe for the proposed missile system.

The Bush Administration was using the Eastern Europe defense system as a deterrent for Iran, despite the Kremlin's fear that it could be used against Russia. The flexibility by both sides to make compromises now will lead to a new phase of arms reduction in the future.

A “*Joint understanding for a follow-on agreement to START-1*” was signed by Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitri Medvedev in Moscow on 6 July 2009.

This will reduce the number of deployed warheads on each side to 1,500-1,675 on 500-1,100 delivery systems. A new treaty is to be signed before START-1 expires in December 2009 and the reductions are to be achieved within seven years.

Under a new deal, Russia and the US were understood to be considering cutting their nuclear arsenals by half. Even before bilateral talks started, the Kremlin appeared keen to demonstrate its willingness to pursue nuclear disarmament.

On 20 April, President Dmitry Medvedev announced Russia was prepared to make more serious cuts to its strategic arsenal than it had previously pledged. However, he made it clear that Moscow would accept arms reduction only in exchange for a ban on strategic arms deployment in space. Medvedev also said Russia would aim to limit not only missiles and strategic bombers, but warheads as well. Russia's top military official echoed these sentiments, saying the country was prepared to “*significantly*” cut its nuclear arsenal if a deal was reached with the US.

On 23 April, General Nikolai Makarov, chief of General Staff of the Russian army, said Russia could cut its nuclear arsenal to levels lower than stipulated by the Moscow Treaty of 2002, which envisaged cuts down to 1,700-2,200 nuclear warheads. Moscow also insists that any strategic arms reduction agreement with Washington should be linked with the issue of the US missile defense in Europe. Indeed, negotiating a successor part to START-1, due to expire on 5 December, 2009, has proven a major challenge. In Russia, moves toward nuclear disarmament are not universally popular. On 21 April, opposition Communist Party lawmaker Vladimir Kashin warned against cutting the country's nuclear arsenal, arguing that significant arms reductions could seriously undermine the strategic deterrent.

He urged the Kremlin to withdraw from the nuclear test ban treaty and resume nuclear tests.

Russian officials have also warned against inflated expectations over disarmament talks.

On 21 April, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Russia did not expect any “*supernatural*” strategic arms cuts, commenting on speculations that both nations were prepared to cut the number of nuclear warheads below 1,000 level.

Ryabov also argued that it would be “*counterproductive*” to invite other nuclear nations to join arms reduction talks.

What we can conclude from the Rome talks, for which very little was revealed other than that they were “*very productive*,” is that while Russia seems prepared to deal, its perceived attempt to link strategic arms cuts and the issue of US missile defense in Europe place the ball in Washington's court. It is unclear at this point whether the new US administration will play along. This, combined with opposition to the deal among certain circles in Russia, is likely to render bilateral negotiations a long and arduous process.

Moscow reiterates pledges to reach a major strategic arms reduction agreement with Washington, despite the continued dispute over the US missile defense plans in Europe

Over the last couple of years, a new anti-nuclear movement has emerged led by former politicians and officials of the Cold War era. They want to rid the world of nuclear weapons and they have put forward proposals for achieving this that largely consist of business left unfinished when they were in power. If they are to succeed in their ultimate goal, they need to be complemented by an anti-nuclear movement composed of citizens and politicians of the emergent global era who could develop a new set of proposals aimed at challenging outdated ways of thinking about nuclear weapons.

The proposals that have been put forward for reaching the goal of a nuclear-free world, so far, have largely involved different variants of the following set of approaches:

- Reduce and de-alert US and Russian nuclear weapons. These account for 95% of the world's nuclear warheads so it makes sense for any reductions to start with them.

Actually, numbers have steadily declined through a series of agreements since the end of the Cold War and the most recent agreement to further reduce numbers was signed by President Obama and President Medvedev on Obama's first visit to Moscow.

Since a certain proportion of these weapons consist of land-based or submarine-based ballistic missiles ready to be launched within a few minutes, the world would clearly be a bit safer if these were put in what the jargon terms "*responsive mode*" with a little more warning time and decision time.

- Control and reduce stockpiles of nuclear warheads and nuclear materials. There is an enormous amount of nuclear detritus left over from the Cold War; not all of it is accounted for and some is insecure and weakly controlled. With new preoccupations about terrorism, there are great fears about access for non-state actors or for illegal trade in these materials. So much greater accountability, transparency and security are needed.

- Strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and implementing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The NPT, which is designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, is up for review in 2010. Strengthening the NPT would mean taking the disarmament pillar of the NPT more seriously and enhancing monitoring of civilian programmes. The CTBT was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996 but it will not enter into force until a sufficient number of potentially nuclear capable states have ratified the treaty.

Not only would these proposals reduce the risks of nuclear accident, mistake, or theft but they would also contribute to a web of treaties and transnational mechanisms for monitoring and verification, which would further enmesh states in a multilateral network that in itself would reduce the likelihood of nuclear threats. They would be a way of reaching what Senator Nunn at a conference on "*Overcoming Nuclear Dangers*" held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome in April, 2009, referred to as the "*base camp*" before ascending to the summit of a nuclear free world. But how would such a summit be climbed?

Most of these proposals have their origins in the period when the new anti-nuclear activists were politicians and when their main concern was to reduce the risks of the nuclear arms race while preserving the capabilities of existing nuclear powers. This was the essence of what were then known as "*arms control*" rather than disarmament measures.

Reductions of American and Russian nuclear warheads will still leave both countries with enough nuclear capacity to destroy the world several times over. The NPT and the CTBT are designed to constrain the development of nuclear weapons by new powers but, in effect, legitimise existing arsenals. Indeed, it could even be argued that by implicitly endorsing the nuclear status of great powers, they represent an incentive for emerging powers like Iran or North Korea to acquire nuclear weapons.

The proposals for securing and limiting nuclear stockpiles are likewise designed to prevent nuclear capacity getting into the wrong hands while protecting the stockpiles of existing nuclear powers. But they cannot, of themselves, prevent the manufacture of weapons grade materials by Iran, say, or, a further example, the export of nuclear know-how by rogue elements in Pakistan.

Arms control proposals are based on a geopolitical statist understanding of the world.

The possession and implicit threat to use nuclear weapons is associated with an absolutist view of state sovereignty. The possession of nuclear weapons implies an absolutist prerogative on the part of states to risk the lives of its own citizens on a massive scale not to mention citizens in other countries without any prior public debate or discussion.

The use of nuclear weapons would constitute an unimaginable violation of human rights and hence the implication of their possession is that states have the right to inflict such an unimaginable violation. In Europe, where most nuclear weapons are still American, it is not even European states that have this absolutist character, it is the American President alone who is allowed to risk the lives of European citizens.

The problem with arms control proposals is that they treat nuclear weapons as though they were part of the normal armory of states, they naturalize nuclear weapons. And yet we cannot ascend to the top of the mountain without changing those fundamental assumptions and without rethinking the implications of possessing nuclear weapons in today's globalised world. The geopolitical framework of arms control proposals is totally at variance with the changing character of sovereignty in a global era. Nowadays we tend to think of sovereignty as conditional, both on relations with other states and respect for multilateral rules of the game and on domestic consent and respect for human rights. It is rather odd, indeed anachronistic, that we have negotiated bans on land mines or cluster munitions on the grounds that these types of weapons inherently violate human rights and international humanitarian law on account of their indiscriminate nature and yet we treat nuclear weapons as though they were legitimate. If we are to reach the summit, we need to put forward proposals that reframe the issue of nuclear weapons as a humanitarian issue and that require courage and leadership on the part of politicians if they are to support them.

It is easy enough to be in favor of ridding the world of nuclear weapons while supporting the maintenance of national nuclear weapons since the final goal depends on global agreement. Even President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad or Kim Il Jong would probably be in favor of the global zero declaration, if asked. The difficult part is how to reach that global agreement. The difficulty here is to pass beyond the impasse.

So, we can imagine three proposals:

- First of all, the threat or use of nuclear weapons should be criminalized. The threat or use of nuclear weapons should be treated as a war crime or a crime against humanity and should be included in the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC). This was proposed by NGOs in the Peace Caucus pressing for the treaty, which established the International Criminal Court, and was supported by the Non-Aligned Movement and by India in particular. In addition the ICRC (the Red Cross) favored a general prohibition on weapons that "*cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering*" or are "*inherently indiscriminate*" (i.e. cannot discriminate between combatants and non-combatants), something which is already part of international humanitarian law. The threat or use of nuclear weapons violates international humanitarian law because of the '*intransgressible*' requirement that a distinction be drawn between combatants and non-combatants.

The final statute establishing the International Criminal Court (the Rome Treaty) however made no reference either to nuclear weapons or to biological and chemical weapons, although it did refer to expanding bullets, poison weapons, poisonous gases and analogous materials, relegating all other weapons to a possible future annex.

Now is the time to revive this proposal. The 1996 International Court of Justice advisory opinion, which found nuclear weapons to be illegal except (on the basis of the Chairman's ruling) in the case of the survival of the state (an implicit endorsement of the state's absolutist prerogatives), should also be revisited.

- Secondly, nuclear weapons should be eliminated area by area. In other words, the idea of nuclear free zones should once again be promoted. There are already nuclear free zone treaties in Africa and Latin America and many countries have declared themselves nuclear free. Those who were active in the campaigns against nuclear weapons in the 1980s will remember the movement to establish nuclear free cities.

In particular, it ought to be possible to call again for a European nuclear free zone. That would mean getting rid of American tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, the British and French nuclear weapons and Russian weapons based in the European part of Russia.

Egypt has proposed a weapon of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East and this should also be explored further.

- My third proposal is specifically directed at Britain. It appears rather absurd to most of us that Britain has been represented by the Iranian regime as the dominant agent directing the current wave of unrest in the aftermath of flawed elections. What it means is that Britain is still considered an important power among the hardliners in Iran.

Why should not Britain use this perception to offer a bargain? Britain could offer to give up its independent nuclear deterrent provided Iran gives up uranium enrichment and plutonium

reprocessing? It is often said that nuclear weapons cannot be disinventured. That is true; but the knowledge of how to make nuclear weapons does not reside in a single individual but in social infrastructure that involves a complex combination of specific skills, knowledge and equipment. And only states have the capacity to build such infrastructures.

Nowadays, the big fear is that terrorists will get hold of nuclear materials and this could be hugely dangerous in places like Pakistan or Central Asia.

But terrorists could not construct their own infrastructure; they would need access to states. Thus the best way to prevent this from happening is indeed to dismantle the global nuclear infrastructure in a way that allows extensive international monitoring and verification.

The prospects for progress are finely balanced. The attitude of the Obama administration is an unequivocal factor of optimism. It is, unsurprisingly, already under attack from the usual sources, but there are many voices in support of Obama's approach.

The NPT review conference will take place over a four-week period in New York in May 2010. This event presents possibly the best opportunity for decades for real progress towards a nuclear-free world. What happens between now and then, not least in relation to Barack Obama's efforts and his need for strong support from countries such as Britain, could determine whether the opportunity is lost or grasped. By the sixty-fifth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world will know.

The US-Russian summits in April and July ended the erosion of the strategic arms control architecture that had gained space during the eight years of the Bush administration.

Russian President Dimitry Medvedev and his US counterpart Barack Obama not only committed their countries to a new round of strategic arms reductions, but also agreed to seek a compromise on missile defense, including joint assessment of potential missile threats and responses.

Critics note that the new ceiling for strategic nuclear weapons that the two leaders are aiming for in the START follow on treaty is only 25 warheads lower than the one set by the 2002 SORT treaty². But the insignificance of the proposed cuts is secondary to the very facts that START probably will not be allowed to expire without a replacement and that the follow on treaty will feature accounting and verification regimes contrary to the policies of the Bush administration, which was averse to negotiating any new constraints on US nuclear forces.

However, while ensuring that strategic nuclear arms remain the subject of verifiable arms control regimes, the two leaders and their negotiators have steered clear of another class of weapons in spite of the latter's formidable destabilizing potential.

Russia and the US still have 2,000-3,000 and 1,000 tactical nuclear warheads operationally deployed, respectively, according to a recent estimate by US think tank Arms Control Association. The two countries also have thousands more tactical nuclear warheads either stored or awaiting dismantlement in line with the unilateral initiatives, which the nations' leaders unveiled in the early 1990s to reduce the arsenals of tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs). These initiatives were political declarations, which are non-binding and stipulate no verification procedures. In fact, the only bilateral arms control accord that regulates Russian and US TNWs is the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), which bans both sides from either developing or deploying ground-launched missiles with ranges of more than 500 and less than 5,500 kilometers. And the future of even this accord is in doubt because Moscow has threatened to abrogate it unless it is internationalized.

Both Moscow and Washington have been discouraged from negotiating a TNW control treaty by a number of issues, including difficulties in establishing effective accounting and verification procedures for tactical nuclear weapons control agreements, asymmetry in US

² The Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Strategic Offensive Reductions (SORT), better known as the Moscow Treaty represents an important element of the new strategic relationship between the United States and Russia, with both parties agreeing to limit their nuclear arsenal to 1700-2200 operationally deployed warheads each. It was signed in Moscow on May 24, 2002. SORT came into force on June 1, 2003 after the Bush-Putin ratification in St. Petersburg, and expires on December 31, 2012. Either party can withdraw from the treaty upon giving three months written notice to the other.

and Russian tactical nuclear weapons arsenals, ambiguity of dual-use delivery systems and even lack of a common definition of tactical weapons.

While these obstacles remain, the Obama administration has stated its interest in making TNWs the subject of US-Russian arms control talks. The US would be interested in launching such talks once the START treaty, which expires in December 2009, is replaced, chief US arms control negotiator Rose Gottemoeller said in May.

The Russian side, however, appears to be less enthusiastic, when asked about the possibility of negotiating a tactical nuclear arms control treaty with the US, Russian diplomats do not rule out such talk, but insist that a deal on TNWs be contingent on a number of other conditions. "When you go to substrategic arms, there will be a lot of other things that need to be entered into the play," Russian ambassador to the US Sergey Kislyak told an April panel, on which he sat jointly with Gottemoeller in Washington, DC.

The issues, with which Russia would like to bundle US-Russian negotiations on control of TNWs, include withdrawal of US TNWs from Europe, internalization of the INF Treaty, constraints on US missile defense, consent of other nuclear weapons countries to reduce their own arsenals and constraints on major powers' conventional forces, including long-range high-precision systems.

One reason why Russia has bundled TNW control with so many issues is that the country's military-political leadership continues to see a number of utilities in maintaining a formidable tactical nuclear weapons arsenal. This is a tactical benefit.

Russia's strategic documents require nuclear weapons to serve as a deterrent against other nuclear weapons states, to respond to large-scale aggression using conventional weapons in situations critical to national security and to deescalate aggression.

Roles of tactical nuclear weapons include equalization in the face of the weakness of Russia's conventional forces vis-à-vis the US and NATO. "*Tactical nuclear weapons [...] are a factor of deterrence against the enormous amount of weapons, which are currently deployed in Europe,*" chief of General Staff Nikolai Makarov said in December 2008.

Russian defense policymakers also would not rule out that TNWs could be used to target US global missile defense. Medvedev vowed in November 2008 to deploy nuclear-capable Iskander surface-to-surface missiles in the Kalinigrad enclave if the US went ahead with plans to build missile defense facilities in East Europe.

When asked if Russian authorities are considering whether to deploy nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad, chairman of the State Duma's defense committee, Vitkor Zavarzin, said "*such proposals are being made.*"

There are also a number of roles, which have not been officially assigned to TNWs, but are considered as options by Russian military strategists. They say that TNWs could be used as a counter-balance to China as well as a deterrent against southern neighbors to demonstrate resolve and localize armed conflicts, change the balance of forces on specific theaters and help maintain combat stability. TNWs also play lead role in creating ambiguity around Russia's actual nuclear potential in what also, arguably, helps to deter potential foes.

However, apart from benefits, TNWs also incur a number of substantial risks and costs for the nations who possess them and Russia is no exception.

They are more likely to be used in case of war than strategic nuclear weapons, given that the chain of command authorizing use of tactical nuclear weapons will be shorter in case of a war. This increases the likelihood of the conflict escalating into an all out nuclear war even though the Russian military counts on TNWs to de-escalate an aggression. They also entrench Russia and NATO in a military stand-off, according to Alexei Arbatov, one of Russia's top arms control experts who has co-written the country's new national security strategy. TNWs are also more vulnerable to unauthorized access and use than strategic nuclear weapons. These external and internal costs and risks associated with keeping TNWs outside the domain of arms control are too serious to ignore. Russia should join the US in negotiating the reduction and control of TNWs with the subsequent involvement of other nuclear weapons countries in this process.

Engagement in such negotiations may not lead to the ultimate elimination of tactical nuclear weapons unless Russia and the US make deep progress toward Global Zero in line with the April statements signed by Obama and Medvedev.

However, even an incremental reduction of these weapons by the US and Russia, if coupled with joint verifiable accounting and improvement of their security, will enhance both nations' security, advancing their joint vital interest in preventing the use of nuclear arms by existing nuclear powers and acquisition of such arms by either nation states or non-state actors.

Perhaps the most important task is to break the link between nuclear weapons and great power status, something that would involve a profound change in global public discourse. But this cannot be achieved just by the advocacy of well-meaning former politicians who are still steeped in statist thinking. We need a new generation of politicians, diplomats and citizens who fully understand what has happened in today's world, where nuclear weapons are fast becoming a metaphor for military power in general.

In today's world, the US and Russia has lost power both economically and politically as a result of military spending. Military force has proved ineffective in Gaza, Lebanon, Iraq or Afghanistan, where it has become evident that as with nuclear weapons, you can destroy, but you cannot persuade anyone to act in the way you want them to act.

Nuclear weapons only represent power if you believe they represent power. Change the mind-set, and that era is at an end. What we need now is proposals that cannot easily be accepted and that force a meaningful debate.

Finally, arms control belongs to an era when an absolutist view of state sovereignty prevailed. We need the courage to move to global nuclear disarmament.

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