

## Wording Paper Proposal – Nuclear Posture

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My review of this topic literature suggests that we are fortunate to have a general, if somewhat undefined, sense of the basic dimensions of what would make a good resolution. The bulk of the literature seems excited about the prospect of an administration willing to consider substantial changes in the future role of US nuclear weapons. I would suggest that we could provide an effective starting point for many debates with the following resolution:

*Resolved: That the United States federal government should substantially change its nuclear posture to be more consistent with its nuclear disarmament commitments.*

I will provide an explanation for one possible approach by defining each both of the central aspects of this proposition 1) Changing nuclear posture and 2) consistency with disarmament commitments.

### Why Change Nuclear Posture?

Any effective resolution should allow affirmative teams to discuss issues of reducing the size of the US nuclear arsenal and change its overall mission or status. It is working from this list that we begin to experience challenges to crafting a specific wording. The controversy paper lists a variety of items including de-alerting weapons, reducing stockpiles, changing targeting doctrine, as just some of the direct actions that could be taken. Once the list is expanded to include some of the negotiated approaches (such as for a Fissile Material Ban or the next round of reductions with Russia) it is clear that there are a number of distinct approaches. There may be merit for other approaches to consider listing out the optimal policy mechanisms, but there is also a value in looking to the terms that the defense community uses to categorize these policies.

The controversy paper discusses the possibility of using the phrase reduce reliance on nuclear weapons as the central action. There is certainly merit to the phrase, but it also comes with some of the same risks that will be present in just about any topic wording - more aggressive and less aggressive military policy and doctrine can both be rationalized as making nuclear weapons less important, reducing our reliance, reducing their use, etc. This tension was highlighted during the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review under President Bush.

Andrew Grotto, Center for American Progress & Joe Cirincione , Ploughshares Fund, November 2008, “Orienting the 2009 nuclear posture review: A Roadmap,” Center for American Progress, p. 26 [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear\\_posture.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear_posture.pdf)

The NPR settled on 1,700–2,200 operationally deployed warheads, which marked a reduction of around two-thirds in the operationally deployed force. That figure was codified in a May 2002 agreement with Russia called the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, or SORT. (Some senior officials, such as then-Deputy National Security Advisor Hadley, reportedly supported even deeper reductions, perhaps by several hundred, but were deterred by the prospect of a battle with then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld). **Senior participants in the 2001 NPR genuinely believed they reduced the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy.** In his foreword to the NPR report submitted to Congress, for example, Secretary Rumsfeld announced that “the U.S. will be

less dependent than it has been in the past on nuclear forces to provide its offensive deterrent capability.” But many countries, ranging from Russia to members of the NAM, judged the precise opposite when portions of the NPR were leaked to the press in early 2002. The NPR called for “greater flexibility” in the planning, development, and use of nuclear weapons, including the development and possible use of tactical nuclear weapons against rogue states such as Iran and North Korea. It also singled out China and Russia as possible targets for nuclear operations. Finally, the NPR divided U.S. strategic capabilities into three rhetorical categories described as the “new triad”: nuclear and conventional offenses, defenses such as missile defense, and a responsive nuclear weapons manufacturing and surety infrastructure. The intended goals of this formulation were to signal a reduction in the salience of nuclear weapons to U.S. strategic policy and to boost the profile of missile defense.

**Aside from the emphasis on missile defense, these developments did not mark a significant change in nuclear weapons doctrine from the Clinton administration’s posture.** The United States already considered the listed countries as possible targets for nuclear operations, for example, even if it hadn’t said so publicly. But the Bush administration’s aggressive unilateralism—particularly its withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and its new doctrine of preventive war—created an interpretative context for the NPR’s clumsily blunt language that led China, Russia, and many NAM countries to interpret the posture in the worst possible light. The “new triad” formulation, for example, was widely criticized as blurring the distinction between conventional and nuclear forces. And the administration’s ill-advised proposals for developing new tactical nuclear weapons such as the so-called “bunker buster,” which senior NPR participants viewed as enhancing deterrence (as opposed to supplementing conventional military operations), dramatically reinforced this interpretation.

This may appear disheartening that this bidirectional concern exists in nuclear policy, but it should give hope that there is a larger conceptual framework of nuclear weapons policy that can be used to measure both the type and nature of policies. Fortunately the congressional mandates nuclear posture review (NPR) provides an excellent foundation to help with these wording challenges . During the upcoming season the third such nuclear review after the end of the Cold War will be completed. Regardless of the topic wording, this largely classified (but usually partially leaked) document will influence the political reality and the debate topic. These recommendations will influence how the Obama administration will begin to adjust nuclear policy. We have an opportunity, in both timing and language, to utilize the nature of this review to help frame the topic. In essence, the debate community is interested in evaluating potential changes to the US nuclear posture and we have a solid foundation to examine just what that includes. In the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act we see an outline of the types of relevant issues that would be included in such a review of nuclear posture and thus the foundation for our upcoming season.

Andrew Grotto, Center for American Progress & Joe Cirincione , Ploughshares Fund, November 2008, “Orienting the 2009 nuclear posture review: A Roadmap,” Center for American Progress, p.

22 [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear\\_posture.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear_posture.pdf)

“Revised Nuclear Posture Review” (§1070 FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act)

(a) REQUIREMENT FOR COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW.—In order to clarify U.S. nuclear deterrence

policy and strategy for the near term, the secretary of defense shall conduct a comprehensive review of the nuclear posture of the United States for the next 5 to 10 years. The secretary shall

conduct the review in consultation with the secretary of energy and the secretary of state.

(b) ELEMENTS OF REVIEW.— The nuclear posture review shall include the following elements:

- (1) The role of nuclear forces in U.S. military strategy, planning, and programming.
- (2) The policy requirements and objectives for the United States to maintain a safe, reliable, and credible nuclear deterrence posture.
- (3) The relationship among U.S. nuclear deterrence policy, targeting strategy, and arms control objectives.
- (4) The role that missile defense capabilities and conventional strike forces play in determining the role and size of nuclear forces.
- (5) The levels and composition of the nuclear delivery systems that will be required for implementing the United States' national and military strategy, including any plans for replacing or modifying existing systems.
- (6) The nuclear weapons complex that will be required for implementing the United States' national and military strategy, including any plans to modernize or modify the complex.
- (7) The active and inactive nuclear weapons stockpile that will be required for implementing the United States' national and military strategy, including any plans for replacing or modifying warheads.

This categorization includes every major affirmative area included in the controversy paper and it does so in a way that is conceptually straight-forward. The nuclear posture of the United States is comprised of the number of weapons and delivery systems, their role in deterrence, targeting, and how they would be modernized. At the same time, there are efforts to define the posture itself, rather than the scope of the review, that may provide some conceptual narrowing for some of the potentially controversial margins of the topic.

William J. Perry, Chairman, America's Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, May 2009 [http://www.usip.org/strategic\\_posture/final.html](http://www.usip.org/strategic_posture/final.html) p. 19-20

The design of the nuclear posture must follow from an understanding of the strategic purposes it is intended to serve. In the prior chapter the Commission argued that the international conditions do not now exist that might permit the United States and the other nuclear-weapon states to relinquish their nuclear arsenals. What purpose then do they serve today? And how should an understanding of purpose guide their design? It is important to begin here with a definition. The nuclear posture consists of the following elements:

1. The arsenal of operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons.
2. The arsenal of forward-deployed tactical nuclear weapons.
3. The triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems (land-based missiles, sea-based missiles, and bombers).
4. The delivery systems for forward-deployed systems (including both submarine-launched cruise missiles and aircraft equipped to carry both conventional and nuclear payloads, called dual-capable aircraft).
5. The stockpile of warheads held in operational reserve.
6. A stockpile of fissile material appropriate for use in warheads.
7. The associated command, control, and intelligence systems.
8. The infrastructure associated with the production of all of these capabilities, without which the force will not remain viable, both physical and human.
9. Declaratory policy specifying the role of nuclear forces in U.S. military and national security strategies.

In addition, both the United States and Russia also possess a large number of nuclear weapons

awaiting dismantlement.

The nuclear posture is the dominant but not the only element of the U.S. strategic military posture, which also includes protection capabilities, including missile defenses, and non-nuclear means of strategic strike. The focus of this chapter is on items 1-5 in the above list. We note that the United States continues to classify specific numbers associated with items 2 and 5 on this list.

In this ready for debate definition by former Defense Secretary Perry we see a clarification of items that may be part of the larger strategic military posture but not directly part of nuclear posture, such as non-nuclear weaponry. While the debate about the role of missile defense will likely be controversial under many topic wordings, we now can begin to see a conceptual outline that includes the basic categories of arsenal size, delivery systems, stockpiles, command and control, infrastructure and declaratory policy. In both of these definitions we find a basic term 'nuclear posture' that represents the core of what we are trying to define and, because of its prevalence in policy literature, allows us to seek out modifying terms that can help it represent our larger vision of the topic. As the Grotto evidence noted, not every change in nuclear posture is the type of action that we envision as topical, it becomes important to modify changing US nuclear posture with a goal based statement that provides the clear directional sense intended by 'reducing reliance on nuclear weapons.'

Fortunately, the policy community is gearing up for the nuclear posture review by producing scholarship that immediately lends itself to this task. Consider this series of recommendations from a recent article in Strategic Insights under the heading, "A Possible 2009 Nuclear Posture,"

Maj. Scott Weston, USAF, Strategic Insights, December 2008, "Preparing for the 2009 Nuclear Posture Review: Post-Cold War Nuclear Deterrence and the 2001 NPR Debate", p. 10 <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2008/Dec/weston2Dec08.pdf>

As stated previously, the difference between the broad minimal deterrence camps is not solely in numbers of weapons.[97] The first focus of a minimal deterrent NPR would be in the explicit removal of nuclear weapons from all forms of deterrence except that of deterring nuclear attack. The best way to do this would be to again reform the strategic triad designating a deterrence, strike, and infrastructure arm. The deterrence arm would contain nuclear weapons as well as ballistic missile defenses. The first would have the role of deterrence by punishment, the second, deterrence by denial. The strike arm would consist solely of conventional weapons capable of achieving strategic effects. The infrastructure arm would be uniquely focused on the conventional weapons infrastructure and given the goal to achieve all missions with conventional weapons that were filled previously with nuclear weapons.

The minimum deterrent NPR would, like the 2001 NPR, have to have the number of final nuclear warheads dictated by political treaty and verification regime established by the President between the current nuclear capable nations. Without that groundwork being accomplished, this suggested NPR would be politically impossible. The NPR would lay out the process for elimination of surplus nuclear weapons above the number designated for minimal deterrence. A number in the low hundreds would be chosen along with the elimination of the air arm of the nuclear triad. Nuclear bombers and dual use fighters would be eliminated from the arsenal as well as a massive reduction in ICBMs and missiles aboard nuclear submarines. A blueprint for a largely dispersed ICBM force of along with sufficient submarines to ensure that the needed number of missiles was always available for use would be spelled out in the new NPR.

This new NPR would also explicitly state the intention of the United States to declare a "no first use policy" and to abide by the new nuclear disarmament treaty, NPT, and CTBT. It would also spell out how U.S. nuclear forces would be ensured mission capable under these treaties.

Weapons laboratories would be directed to find conventional methods to defeat hardened targets, and other missions that nuclear warfighting had envisioned. Finally, the posture of U.S. nuclear forces would be explicitly spelled out. Nuclear weapons would not need to be on high alert due to the hardened nature of nuclear silos and the dispersion of nuclear submarines which make them survivable in any first strike. Warheads would not be mounted on ICBMs and additional safeguards would be added to SLBMs in accordance with a verifiable international norm likely also spelled out in the nuclear disarmament treaty.

After all this work, what would be the expected benefits of changing over to this type of nuclear posture? If the underlying assumptions of the minimal deterrence camp are correct, this policy should see a period of unprecedented international cooperation. Beginning with the treaty, the verification regime, and enforcement measures, all nuclear powers would have to open up and become transparent to the disarmament protocol. This would aid in preventing proliferation by deemphasizing the utility of nuclear weapons and increasing international accountability.

Deterrence should be strengthened overall as decision makers in Washington will have a better perspective on the true limits to U.S. military influence instead of an unrealistic picture of being able to use nuclear deterrence for all occasions. If the nuclear arsenals were able to be reduced to the minimum deterrent level and verified, then likely the international regime would be strong enough to take the next step of full nuclear disarmament.

This laundry list may be a lot for any single affirmative, but it is precisely the type of advocacy literature that has, and will be written, about how the nuclear posture should change. It also helps us develop a baseline for what is a change from past practice. Unlike list approaches that may require specific change statements for each type of action (i.e., initiate new negotiations, further reduce stockpiles, change targeting doctrine, etc.) there is a conceptual whole of nuclear posture that authors measure changes against. Major Weston notes how the 1994 NPR did not offer dramatic changes to nuclear posture.

Maj. Scott Weston, USAF, Strategic Insights, December 2008, "Preparing for the 2009 Nuclear Posture Review: Post-Cold War Nuclear Deterrence and the 2001 NPR Debate", p. 6 <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2008/Dec/weston2Dec08.pdf>

All of the above described camps have existed in one form or another since the beginning of the Cold War, yet the ever present crisis of Soviet aggression placed the broad deterrence camp in the lead of U.S. force structure even if policy had not quite explained the logic of nuclear warfighting. As the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union collapsed there was a great deal of uncertainty about the shape of the new political world order. In this environment it is perhaps unsurprising that the **first Nuclear Posture Review, conducted in 1994, did not dramatically change U.S. nuclear policy from the broad deterrence camp orientation it possessed during the Cold War.**[64] But by the time of the next posture review in 2001 it was clear that the conditions of the Cold War had not returned. As the Clinton administration wound down there was renewed hope for significant change by those advocating minimum deterrence and nuclear disarmament.

It is important to consider that we should be eager to provide some flexibility for the selection of these proposals, as long as they provide some core negative strategies. It seems likely that the Obama administration will make at least some progress, perhaps substantial progress, in reducing reliance on nuclear weapons during the season. Self-selecting only some of these mechanisms before the season begins places a great burden that we accurately predict how the status quo will evolve during the season. If, for example, Vice President Biden is successful in his task of persuading his former Senate colleagues to vote for the CTBT it would dramatically influence what, right now, may be commonly seen as the core of topical action. This is not idle speculation.

Arms Control Association, April 5, 2009, "Arms Control Association Praises Obama's Commitment to a Nuclear Weapons Free World" <http://www.armscontrol.org/print/3616>  
(Kimball = Arms Control Association Executive Director)

"The political conditions for the ratification of the CTBT are more favorable than at any time since the Treaty was opened for signature in 1996. As a result of the 2008 election, roughly 60 Senators already likely support the CTBT. The technical and security case for the test ban are stronger than ever. With consistent and smart presidential leadership, securing the necessary 67 Senate votes for ratification before the end of 2010 is possible--and necessary," said Kimball, who led NGO efforts in the run-up to the Senate's brief debate and highly partisan "no" vote on the CTBT in 1999.

Instead of trying to include only those mechanisms that may not pass on their own, we should seek to define the status quo as a larger category of both weapons and doctrine. Such an approach not only allows teams to adjust as polices change, it also provides the opportunity for changes to be measured against the new status quo. In segmented approaches actions taken under one mechanism, say de-alerting, may not influence the nature of topical action through another mechanism, say stockpile reductions or fissile bans, but this unified approach of nuclear posture provides at least the option for such topicality debates.

In short, nuclear posture is a phrase with statutory reference, commonly used by authors in the field, and inclusive enough to offer a wide range of topical actions. Combined with a statement of directionality, this mechanism offers an elegant means of framing the essential controversy.

### **Why consistency with disarmament commitments?**

When first starting this work I was very much taken aback by even the suggestion that disarmament would be mentioned in the topic. I wondered, "isn't this about nonproliferation?" The more I review the literature (which was well framed by the controversy paper) it becomes apparent that a large part of the global gaps of opinion is that much of the world believes that until the Nuclear Weapons States (NWS), most notably the US begin evaluating the issue as one of disarmament the problem is intractable. The United Nations has made clear that this framing must begin from the perspective of encouraging national compliance explicitly as part of disarmament campaigns.

Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs - United Nations, 29 January 2009, Sixth Meeting of the Berlin Article VI Forum New Imperatives and Openings for A Nuclear Weapons-Free World, Rathaus Schönberg, Berlin, Germany, "KEYNOTE ADDRESS: New Imperatives and Openings for A Nuclear Weapons-Free World" p. 4  
<http://www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/HR/docs/2009/2009January29BerlinARTVI.pdf>

In terms of new openings, therefore, I would like to see two developments. First, I would like to see a genuine commitment by states currently possessing nuclear weapons both to affirm without reservations their intention to eliminate them and to undertake specific concrete steps to advance that aim, including steps that are consistent with widely accepted multilateral standards of transparency, verification, and irreversibility. Unilateral actions are fine, as are declaratory statements, reductions in active deployments, and other such steps, as long as they are

demonstrably taken in order to advance the disarmament objective, and performed in a way that satisfies these agreed multilateral standards, rather than just specific domestic constituencies.

In other words, states must “internalize” their international commitments to disarmament, through integrating them into domestic laws, policies, budgets, and relevant domestic institutions. Disarmament needs a national infrastructure, especially within states that possess nuclear weapons, and this would include the establishment of government offices with official mandates to promote and to implement disarmament activities. The absence of the word “disarmament” from official statements, organization charts, and government business cards points to the work that lies ahead.

For individuals more interest in the concrete utility of these terms, support for the upcoming NPT Review Conference appears largely contingent on the ability of the US to make progress with its disarmament commitments.

Lawrence Freedman, Professor of War Studies at King’s College London, 2009 , “Abolishing Nuclear Weapons: A Debate” Eds - George Perkovich & James M. Acton, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, p. 141-2

If nuclear capabilities were confined to a few, by-and-large-stable and not-too-reckless great powers, that would be one thing. But we have passed that point. Hence the widespread view that a determined effort to hold the line is not enough: There must be a determined effort to roll back the nuclear age. At the very least, the recognized nuclear powers need to agree to go to the review conference with proposals for conspicuous measures that would go some way toward **meeting their obligations** under the NPT’s Article VI “to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.” In the past, this has been handled by the nuclear powers insisting that their demonstrated faith has been very good indeed and pointing to various measures as moves in the right direction even if **in practice they barely do more than tinker at the margins of nuclear relationships.** The problem is not that the nuclear powers are in breach of a binding promise to disarm; the legal requirement was never more than best efforts. **It is more the impression of cynical disdain, as the nuclear powers insist that the non-nuclear-weapon states strictly follow treaty obligations while showing indifference to their own.** Solemn undertakings delivered by junior officials and backed by no more than lists of relatively minor activities and discussions will no longer suffice.

When authors describe the aggressive nuclear doctrine of the last eight years, it is common for them to do in specific language of a failure to adhere to these commitments.

David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, February 5, 2009, “A New US Approach to Nuclear Disarmament” [http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2009/02/05\\_krieger\\_new\\_approach.php?krieger](http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2009/02/05_krieger_new_approach.php?krieger)

For the past eight years, under George W. Bush, the US has made scant effort to fulfill its NPT commitment to nuclear disarmament. In 2002, Bush pushed through a bilateral agreement with the Russians, the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT). The treaty calls for reductions in deployed strategic warheads from approximately 6,000 each to between 1,700 and 2,200 each by the end of the year 2012. It is a three page treaty with few details. The treaty places no limitations on reserve stockpiles and has no timeline and no provisions for either irreversibility or verifiability. On January 1, 2013 the treaty ends and, unless it is extended, both countries may redeploy their reserve weapons or new weapons to any level they choose. Bush also

withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) in 2002, opening the door for deployment of ballistic missile defenses and space weaponization. The Bush administration developed contingency plans for the use of nuclear weapons against seven countries, including states thought to be non-nuclear weapons states at the time. In addition, the Bush administration threatened preventive use of nuclear weapons and sought continuously, albeit unsuccessfully, the development of new nuclear weapons with new functions. It also sought unsuccessfully to replace the existing nuclear weapons in the US arsenal with a new warhead it called the Reliable Replacement Warhead. The Bush administration also undermined the non-proliferation regime by its arm twisting in support of the US-India nuclear deal, which gave special nuclear preferences to a state that never joined the NPT and developed nuclear weapons outside the framework of the treaty. Overall, the Bush administration appeared more concerned with assuring the reliability of its nuclear warheads and the financial profits for US corporations on nuclear deals than it was with the security of the American people or the stability of the non-proliferation regime.

The close relationship between the goal phrase of the proposed resolution and the mechanism phrase offers significant help when students will research the topic. Used in this fashion, consistent functions to modify the type of change in nuclear posture.

The Cambridge Online Dictionary explains

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=16401&dict=CALD>

consistent (AGREEING) adjective [after verb]

in agreement with other facts or with typical or previous behaviour, or having the same principles as something else:

What the witness said in court was not consistent with the statement he made to the police.

We do not consider his behaviour to be consistent with the holding of a high-ranking job.

These new nuclear postures then would have to provide evidence of agreement with the disarmament commitments, most clearly articulated in the NPT. Because the NPT already provides the foundation for this claim, it is possible to have topicality debates based directly in what it means to have policies specifically consistent with that regime.

Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs - United Nations, 29 January 2009, Sixth Meeting of the Berlin Article VI Forum New Imperatives and Openings for A Nuclear Weapons-Free World, Rathaus Schönberg, Berlin, Germany, “KEYNOTE ADDRESS: New Imperatives and Openings for A Nuclear Weapons-Free World” p. 3 <http://www.un.org/disarmament/HomePage/HR/docs/2009/2009January29BerlinARTVI.pdf>

This brings me to the “openings” for action, the second theme of this meeting. All of them stem from one very simple proposition—namely, that a country’s behaviour should at the very least be consistent with its agreed international commitments. Each of the most difficult obstacles we face today in achieving greater progress on nuclear disarmament relates in one way or another to a mismatch between agreed goals and committed means. What do I mean by this? The objective is very clear: literally every state has in various ways endorsed the goal of global nuclear disarmament. Most have done so by means of their membership in the NPT, and the rest have registered their support through policy pronouncements and votes in the General Assembly on disarmament resolutions. The problem therefore is not the need to clarify the goal once again and ad infinitum thereafter. The common goal is already clear: non-possession. This is not a mere “vision” but a specific objective, intended to strengthen international peace and security, and to advance the broader, ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament. I am of course encouraged every time I hear national leaders or former statesmen affirm their attachment to this goal, but in reality they are just re-iterating national commitments and pledges that have

already been made. Much more interesting are the means that they are proposing to achieve that goal.

In the realm of openings for action, therefore, the real challenge remains in the domain of means rather than ends. These means include the full gamut of instrumentalities that are available to national governments—individually and collectively—to achieve their agreed goals. They include national budget allocations, policy directives, domestic laws, the establishment of implementing institutions with specific disarmament mandates, military doctrines and training protocols, investments in research and development, and other such steps to ensure that a country's behaviour is consistent with its international legal and policy commitments.

This type of evidence helps us to appreciate that affirmative plans possessing bi-directional elements, such as aggressive weapons posture or procurement, are not abstract considerations. The international community has heard these exact kinds of specious logic and instead provides standards like non-possession to help referee these interpretations. It also lends itself to specific evidence for a wide range of affirmative plans. The following is example of how lack of progress toward a Fissile Materials Control Treaty is offered as a failure to meet commitments made at the two most recent NPT review conferences.

Jim Wurst, Arms Control Today, December 2008, "UN Sets Ground for Future Disarmament Battles" [http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008\\_12/UN\\_disarmament](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_12/UN_disarmament)

The UN General Assembly committee dealing with nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament issues ran a wait-and-see session in October 2008, with progress perhaps stymied by the upcoming presidential transition in the United States. The session, which ended four days before the U.S. election, debated and voted on 58 resolutions. Under the umbrella of nuclear disarmament, the committee usually considers numerous drafts on specific issues—such as operational status, security assurances, and nuclear-weapon-free zones—and three comprehensive, omnibus drafts each year.

Each session, countries or groups of countries present draft resolutions on a broad range of disarmament issues, including nuclear, biological, chemical, and space issues; conventional arms such as land mines and cluster munitions; as well as on the machinery by which the United Nations debates these issues, such as the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (CD). After three weeks of debate on the issues and the drafts, each draft is considered with the goal, usually unrealized, of adopting resolutions by consensus. The majority of drafts on nuclear issues usually pass with large majorities.

Three omnibus drafts on nuclear disarmament were introduced in the Disarmament and International Security Committee, also known as the First Committee, by the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), the Nonaligned Movement (NAM), and Japan. There were slight changes in the language of previous years; nearly all of the additional phrases focused on the nuclear-weapon states' responsibility to eliminate their arsenals under the Article VI disarmament provisions of the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).

The NAC, comprised of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sweden, continued its annual practice of presenting a draft reaffirming the international community's commitments to the NPT and the decisions taken by its nearly 190 states-parties at its once-every-five-years review conferences. In introducing the draft, Ambassador Leslie Gumbi of South Africa said, "The NAC continues to view these issues of nuclear disarmament and nuclear nonproliferation as being inextricably linked, and wishes to stress that both therefore require continuous and irreversible progress."

The text entitled "Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Accelerating the Implementation of Nuclear Disarmament Commitments" had the most changes of the three omnibus drafts. Paragraphs were added elaborating on the responsibilities of states-parties to the NPT and the preferred outcome for the remainder of the current NPT review process. For the last two

years, states-parties have been preparing for the next treaty review conference in 2010 and will hold their final preparatory session in April.

One addition, for example, calls on the nuclear-weapon states to "accelerate the implementation of the practical steps towards nuclear disarmament" agreed to at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 Review Conference. These measures, in particular the 13 practical steps agreed to in 2000 and a 1995 resolution calling for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, have for the most part stalled. The 13 steps include negotiations on a fissile material cutoff treaty (FMCT), which is stuck in the deadlocked CD, and cuts in strategic and nonstrategic nuclear weapons. More broadly, the United States and France have been walking back from the 2000 commitments, calling them out of date and "suggestions" rather than commitments. Another addition called on the 2009 preparatory committee meeting to "identify and address specific aspects where urgent progress is required" to reach a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Finally, the various affirmative plans can draw upon this common language to help explain the internal links to the nonproliferation debate. As the recent Center for American Progress report advocating changes in the nuclear posture makes clear.

Andrew Grotto, Center for American Progress & Joe Cirincione , Ploughshares Fund, November 2008, "Orienting the 2009 nuclear posture review: A Roadmap," Center for American Progress, p. 4  
[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear\\_posture.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/nuclear_posture.pdf)

The second proposition underlying the bipartisan consensus is that many countries consider **U.S. compliance with its nuclear disarmament obligations** under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT, **a precondition before supporting additional U.S. nonproliferation initiatives that are vital to countering 21st century nuclear threats.** These threats are characterized by the diffusion of nuclear materials, know-how, and technology—much of it with a civilian dimension—to state and non-state actors enabled by globalization and economic development. In the words of secretaries Shultz, Kissinger, Perry, and Sen. Nunn, "Without the vision of moving toward zero [nuclear weapons], we will not find the essential cooperation required to stop our downward spiral."<sup>2</sup>

## Conclusion

There are certainly other valuable approaches to wording this topic. My goal was to explore if Jessica's suggestion of 'nuclear posture' would be an improvement over the original concept of nuclear reliance. I believe that this short review offers a beginning of the justification for using the term that the Congress and Defense Department utilizes to change policy in this area. Not only does nuclear posture allow us to unify the mechanisms and allow an evolving baseline for topical action it also lends itself to the critical modifier of disarmament obligations. I do not believe that such a wording would resolve all debates about the exact boundaries of the topic, but what it would do is allow those topicality debates to occur in the center of the policy literature so that both sides can draw upon the rich contextual history of this current NPR as well as past reviews. I invite feedback and I strongly suggest we consider this basic proposition for the wording ballot.