

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS IS A STEPPING STONE TO NPT DISARMAMENT OBLIGATIONS

ROBIN COLLINS (WORLD FEDERALIST MOVEMENT – CANADA)
CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATIONS, MARCH 9, 2005, OTTAWA

Summary: The Global Partnership Program is an excellent Canadian initiative, launched at the G8 in 2002. It is an important part of our nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) obligations towards WMD non-proliferation, and it reduces the threat of terrorists accessing nuclear, chemical and biological materials. Canada cannot do it all. We can, however, do more to ensure sustainability of the GPP objectives: expand its capacity by finding or leveraging significant increases in immediate funding, broaden outreach to win over new partners, and support civil society feed-in. However, without complementary achievement on the disarmament front, the GPP effort may be tossed to the side by competing nuclear re-armament agendas.

The Family of Threat Reduction Programs

There is near consensus about the utility of eliminating the unnecessary burden posed by that subset of global WMD inventory considered to be “surplus to defence requirements” in Russia and the Newly Independent States (NIS). This portion of the problem, in essence, is the target of the Global Partnership Program.

How should we grade the relative risks of the different weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, biological and chemical?¹ And how do we grade the comparative risks of mass destruction weapons in the hands of the nuclear weapon states and NWS-wannabees on one hand, and in the hands of terrorist groups, on the other? Are the risk assessments ad hoc or opportunistic? While these are apt topics for a separate discussion, they still provide an important broad context for judging success of the Partnership Program. The same is the case for the GPP’s older sister, the American Cooperative Threat Reduction Program/Nunn-Lugar initiative, and its newer cousin, the Global Threat Reduction Initiative. The GTRI, a Bush administration project launched in May of last year, is tasked with familiar goals, and including the development of a “comprehensive global database to identify and prioritize nuclear materials and equipment of proliferation concern not being addressed by existing threat reduction efforts.”² The GTRI was welcomed by the IAEA and placed in perspective by Dr. ElBaradei,³ when he said that the program “is a continuation and extension of initiatives that the IAEA, the USA and others have been working on for many years, and with renewed intensity in the past couple of years, to address nuclear security around the world.” It is less clear whether this new initiative by the Americans is an attempt to upstage G8 efforts, to improve progress and robustness of the programs through overlap, to insert renewed US leadership into the disposition front... or all of the above. It doesn’t much matter, as long as the newly minted enthusiasm results in practical outcomes.

Accolades are owed to Canada’s GPP effort; but now it is as important to sustain the GPP in case the bottom drops out of American administration commitment to their new GTRI. The track record of the renewed Cooperative Threat Reduction program continues to advise caution and Canadian leadership is still seen as that of an honest broker in many regards.

How serious are we about eliminating “highest risk” sources of nuclear (and WMD) proliferation? One indicator: How much is being spent on these programs compared to countervailing defence and nuclear weapons programs?

¹ See for example: Joseph Cirincione et al., *Deadly Arsenals*, available on the World Wide Web at: http://www.ceip.org/files/pdf/Deadly_Arsenals_Chap1.pdf; Joseph Pilat, “The New Terrorism and NBC Weapons” in *Hype or Reality, the “New Terrorism” and Mass Casualty Attacks*, 1997, Alexandria: The Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute; Joseph Cirincione, “A Global Assessment of Nuclear Proliferation Threats”, WMDC, 2004. Available on the web.

² “The mission of the GTRI is to remove and/or secure high-risk nuclear and radiological materials and equipment around the world that pose a threat to the United States and to the international community. This initiative will comprehensively address all vulnerable nuclear and radiological materials throughout the world and secure and/or remove these materials and equipment of concern as expeditiously as possible.”

See: http://www.energy.gov/engine/doe/files/dynamic/264200491138_Vienna_GTR_Fact%20Sheet_FINAL1_052604%20.pdf

³ http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/News/2004/GTRI_Initiative.html

Short-sightedness

None of what follows in this commentary is meant to suggest that ‘more money for disposition and less money for nuclear weapon programs’ would be sufficient to reverse current political trends, nor that Russia does not pose significant obstructions to the process. But like it or not, the *level of U.S. commitment* to funding has been a primary stimulus to, or an anchor dragging on, WMD disposition goals. A decade ago, in 1996 (post-cold war; pre-9/11) it was stated that:

[T]he sums of money the United States has devoted to its overall efforts to cope with the Soviet nuclear legacy are mere pittance relative to the magnitude of the stakes involved or to the size of the U.S. defense effort... It is spending several billion dollars per year trying to develop missile defenses that, all agree, will be imperfect at best. But during the period **from 1991 to 1995, only \$400 million per year – less than 2/10ths of one percent of the defense budget** – has been devoted to a program aimed at permanent elimination of most of the nuclear weapons that once threatened targets in the United States, and at preventing the spread of Russian nuclear weapons and materials to hostile forces that might use them against the United States. Moreover, only a fraction of this annual \$400 million has been allocated to enhancing nuclear security in Russia.⁴

Have times changed much? In 1998 Stephen Schwartz of the Brookings Institute (with a group of well-respected collaborators) published the *Atomic Audit: The Costs and Consequences of US Nuclear Weapons Since 1940*. They found that between 1948 and 1996 U.S. nuclear weapons could conservatively be estimated at having cost a total of \$5.5 trillion, a largely unknown number until this audit.⁵ What kind of money is that? “\$5.5 trillion stacked tightly in bricks made of \$1 bills would be enough to build a wall 8.7 feet high around the equator.”⁶ Perhaps 10% of that total was spent directly on the actual production of nuclear weapons, with the remainder allocated for infrastructure, missile and bomber delivery technology and construction, targeting and control, defenses against nuclear attack, destruction of waste and dismantling.

Today, fifteen years after the end of the Cold War, U.S. nuclear weapon cost estimates are in the **\$40 billion per year** range, with close to \$7 billion of that portion in direct spending (\$6.5 billion was spent in 2004). The US administration requested \$6.81 billion for 2005 -- twice the average annual cost during the Cold War. The total military budget request was \$420.7 billion for 2005.⁷ A ballpark number for equivalent Russian program spending: According to the Federation of American Scientists in 1999, “Russia spends approximately 10% of its defense budget on its military nuclear complex. This money (US\$3 billion)⁸ is sufficient neither for the maintenance nor for destruction of its nuclear weapons.”⁹ An atomic audit for France estimated that nuclear weapon (full) costs were in the range of 1.5 trillion francs for the entire French nuclear weapon program through 1998 (approximately US\$300 billion).¹⁰

However, from 1992 through 2004 (thirteen years), the United States spent only \$9.2 billion¹¹ on its cooperative threat reduction programs (CTR), working with other countries towards dismantling and securing weapons of mass destruction

⁴ Graham Allison et al, *Avoiding Nuclear Anarchy: Containing the Threat of Loose Russian Nuclear Weapons and Fissile Material*, MIT press, Cambridge, 1996, page 127-129.

⁵ Atomic Audit: The Costs and Consequences of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Since 1940, Stephen Schwartz, editor, Brookings Institute 1998.

Online: <http://www.brook.edu/fp/projects/nucwcost/weapons.htm>

⁶ <http://www.brook.edu/fp/projects/nucwcost/passell.htm>

⁷ <http://www.nrdc.org/nuclear/weaponeers/weaponeers.pdf>

⁸ Presumably this is direct spending on nuclear weapons only.

For U.S. military budget comparisons, see: <http://www.globalissues.org/Geopolitics/ArmsTrade/Spending.asp#USMilitarySpending>

⁹ <http://www.fas.org/faspir/v52n2.htm#russia>

¹⁰ <http://www.obsarm.org/publications/livres/livreaudit.htm>

¹¹ Included among the outputs of this funding were the destruction of 500+ intercontinental ballistic missiles, nearly 500 submarine-launched ballistic missiles, 125 bombers, 25 strategic submarines.

(\$5.5B for NW, \$3.7B for CW and BW in Russia).¹² The Department of Defense is currently requesting the same budgetary allotment (\$9.2 billion) to fund missile defence for this year alone.

Comparing U.S. expenditures in this way may suggest that American administrations do not take the non-proliferation and disarmament project seriously enough. The CTR program had its origin in the fears generated by the Moscow coup in 1991, when the risk of loose nukes became more prominent. The House of Representatives even attempted (unsuccessfully) to halve the CTR in 1995-96. Currently, the CTR is facing a significant crisis, relating to liability provisions. The possibility exists that “a key U.S.-Russian agreement governing major parts of the agenda will neither be ratified by the Russian parliament nor extended by the U.S. and Russian governments when it is due to expire in June 2006.”¹³ As notes Christoph Bluth, “[c]learly there is a conservative element in the US legislat[ure] which is critical of all forms of arms control and financial support for Russia. Moreover there is a sentiment that assistance for nuclear dismantlement frees funds for strategic arms modernization in Russia, suggesting that the United States is supporting the maintenance and development of Russian strategic nuclear forces”¹⁴. It is difficult to see how this latter interpretation can be avoided in the absence of irreversible, rapid, concurrent disarmament on all sides.

Christoph Bluth in year 2000 writes (and I think many others concur with) this assessment of the US Cooperative Threat Initiative:

“The programme has so far fundamentally failed to deal with the risks that it is supposed to avert. Thus only a relatively small proportion of Russian weapons grade fissile material are covered by the modern materials protection, control and accounting facilities...the risk of the diversion of material is as high as it was when the programme started, if not higher [...] The programme has not been funded at an appropriate level, it was not pursued with nearly enough urgency, and political conditions remain attached that inhibit its work and that have the potential for closing it down...” (Bluth: page 182-183)

These are among the strongest reasons why the Global Partnership Program needs to be sustained and expanded. The Canadian face of the international effort is a political plus whether or not the US program falters.

According to a more recent study,¹⁵ the size of the U.S. non-proliferation budget sends a disturbingly clear message, which is that “the scope of efforts to control the threat posed by unsecured nuclear warheads, material, and expertise should not expand”. None of these criticisms would be as interesting *if the nuclear weapons budgets were pinching off, and the disposition funding level was commensurate with the urgency of its program goals.*

Commitment to threat reduction programs, however limited, nevertheless has been welcomed at the G8 and at the Security Council (Resolution 1540, adopted 2004) and in the General Assembly (Resolution 57/68 adopted December 30, 2002). Without the Nunn-Lugar program, the modest successes would have taken even longer. The process enhances U.S. (and global) security, without doubt.¹⁶

The Global Partnership Program budget over ten years, as proposed at Kananaskis in 2002, is *up to* \$20 billion, with spending directed to a very ambitious range of WMD projects: nuclear, chemical and biological; disposition, safety controls, conversion, re-employment, etc. Canada has offered \$1 billion dollars over ten years; the US (by far the largest contributor)

¹² Securing the Bomb: An Agenda for Action, on-line at http://www.nti.org/e_research/cnwm/overview/2004report.asp; see page 83.

¹³ Kenneth Luongo and William Hoehn, “An Ounce of Prevention” in *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, March/April 2005, pages 28-35.

¹⁴ Christoph Bluth, The Nuclear Challenge: US-Russian Strategic Relations After the Cold War, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000. (See page 133).

¹⁵ Securing the Bomb: An Agenda for Action, published in 2004 by the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), a think-tank sponsored by Ted Turner among others, page 85.

¹⁶ See Jason Ellis, Defense by Other Means: The Politics of US-NIS Threat Reduction and Nuclear Security Cooperation, Westport, Praeger, 2001 (Page164-167)

has offered \$10 billion, about \$1 billion per year. Other contributors include the European Community, France, Germany Italy, Japan, UK, Russia (\$2 billion), Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland. The door remains open to others.

At Evian, in June 2004, the G8 reiterated that:

“the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, together with international terrorism, [is] the pre-eminent threat to international peace and security...

“We strongly support UN Security Council Resolution 1540, calling on all states to establish effective national export controls, to adopt and enforce effective laws to criminalize proliferation, to take cooperative action to prevent non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and to end illicit trafficking in such weapons, their means of delivery, and related materials. We call on all states to implement this resolution promptly and fully, and we are prepared to assist them in so doing...

Payback Time

Completion of the disposition of Russian (and NIS) WMD materials will remove a significant obstacle (many suggest the *most* significant obstacle)¹⁷ to closing off WMD access to potential state users, terrorists and states that sponsor them. Progress must not end with disposition of Russian and NIS materials. ***When this program is complete, shouldn't other NPT obligations weigh in even more heavily?***

There is, unfortunately, no guarantee that success in one threat reduction arena can be relied upon to induce acceleration of the disarmament process. As Alexei Arbatov points out:

“the cessation of the Cold War in principle removed the main impediment to cooperation between [the US and Russia]. Nevertheless, rather than turning to further disarmament steps, the United States, no longer worried about the Soviet threat, has turned its attention instead to such pressing concerns as new states pursuing nuclear weapons and the discovery of a nuclear black market”.¹⁸

Potential nuclear weapon powers (or terror groups) will be more impressed not by deep cuts in nuclear weapon arsenals by the U.S. and Russia, but change in the “**role of nuclear weapons in their nuclear policies**, their views on the practical applicability of nuclear weapons, their nuclear force modernization plans, and their attitudes toward arms limitation and reduction agreements”.

Not every aspiring nuclear weapon state fits the mould of course. While it is true that a change in the "role of nuclear weapons" in the nuclear policies of the U.S. and Russia would help non-proliferation efforts, it is no less true that the pursuit of nuclear weapons capability by Iran and North Korea is very much internally- and regionally-driven and demands responses far more complicated than we may have previously thought.

Despite these difficulties, or because of them, Canada should insist that Global Partnership Program success becomes a stepping-stone towards fulfilling our other NPT (disarmament) obligations.¹⁹

¹⁷ Gregory Koblenz, "Pathogens as Weapons," *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 2003; (continued) James Adams, "The Dangerous New World of Chemical and Biological Weapons", in *Terrorism with Chemical and Biological Weapons, Calibrating Risks and Responses*, 1997, Alexandria: CBACI; Kurt Campbell, et al (editors), *The Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider Their Nuclear Choices*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, 2004. (See page 341.)

¹⁸ http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2005_01-02/Arbatov.asp

¹⁹ This is the same theme taken up in the Security Council discussion that in 2004 produced Security Council Resolution 1540 on countering proliferation of WMD. Brazil, Chile and Germany stated on record that the resolution could have been enhanced with additional references to disarmament. NPT, "Article 1: Each nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; and not in any way to

Recent Good News

- Global Partnership Program successes are numerous (and addressed by other panel speakers).
- In November 2004, Congress eliminated the budget request by President Bush for research into a new generation of nuclear weapons, including low-yield atomic bombs and earth-penetrating warheads (bunker busters), as well as site selection funding for a new nuclear pit facility (nuclear triggers for thermonuclear warheads).²⁰
- A proposal supported by the Pentagon and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, to cut funding for the Cooperative Threat Reduction program by 10%, was overruled by the White House in January of this year (2005).
- Bush administration officials indicated in December 2004 that the US is accelerating its efforts to secure 600 metric tons of fissile material in Russia, so that the work would be accomplished by 2008. 70% of the upgrades are complete; “close to 80% would be secured by the end of 2005.”

To-Do Shortlist

- Set new more aggressive targets for the disposition of nuclear weapons materials. Complete the job of “identifying, securing and removing nuclear materials from all vulnerable sites within four years.”²¹
- Draw up an equivalent mechanism to chase down black market fissile material that has already escaped safeguarding.
- Expand the list of partners and funders in the GPP partnership.
- Ensure that GPP success spins off into progress on NPT disarmament obligations.
- Fund credible civil society WMD-monitoring efforts.
- Civil society organizations need to do a much better job of publicizing partnership program successes.

Version 3, April 3, 2005

Note: Thanks To Fergus Watt and Simon Rosenblum for comments on an earlier draft.

assist, encourage, or induce any non-nuclear-weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or control over such weapons or explosive devices.”

²⁰ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A5554-2004Nov22.html>

²¹ Perkovich et al. Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security, CEIP March 2005, available on-line; See also Kurt Campbell et al. Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider Their Nuclear Choices, Brookings Institute, Washington, 2004 (page 340); Kenneth Luongo and William Hoehn, “An Ounce of Prevention” in Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, March/April 2005, available on-line at: http://www.thebulletin.org/article.php?art_ofn=ma05luongo

Appendix: links to related documents.

An Ounce of Prevention

http://www.thebulletin.org/print.php?art_ofn=ma05luongo

Assessing the Costs of Other Nuclear Weapon States :

<http://www.brook.edu/fp/projects/NUCWCOST/AppendixD.htm>

Estimated Minimum Incurred Costs of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Programs, 1940-1996 (A)

<http://www.brook.edu/fp/projects/nucwcost/figure1.htm>

Estimated Minimum Incurred Costs of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Programs, 1940-1996 (B)

<http://www.brook.edu/fp/projects/nucwcost/figure2.htm>

Estimated 1998 US Spending on Nuclear Weapons

<http://www.brook.edu/fp/projects/nucwcost/curspend.htm>

CTR Scorecard

<http://www.ceip.org/files/projects/npp/Powerpoint/Warner%20BFG/sld015.htm>

Cut in funds for securing nuclear materials rejected

http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2005/01/07/cut_in_funds_for_securing_nuclear_materials_rejected/