



What the Commission Report says on:

ACHIEVING NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION: OVERALL STRATEGY

In meeting the risks of nuclear proliferation two broad, and complementary, sets of strategies must be pursued. On the supply side, the task is to make it as difficult as possible for states to buy or build weapons, through a variety of policies designed to inhibit access to the necessary materials and technology. On the demand side, the task – in many ways even more important to get right – is to persuade states they do not need or want nuclear weapons in the first place.

Limiting the Supply of Weapons, Materials and Technology. All are important, but none should be pursued in isolation from demand side strategies, nor is much traction likely to be gained for these supply-side measures if major efforts are not simultaneously made to ensure that those with nuclear weapons move toward disarmament.

Strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The critical non-proliferation (as distinct from disarmament) needs here are to make more effective the safeguards and verification, and compliance and enforcement, provisions of the treaty, and to strengthen the associated institutional machinery of the International Atomic Energy Agency. [Discussed in Section 9 of the report.]

Strengthening non-proliferation disciplines outside the NPT. This means appropriate support for, and strengthening where necessary, the myriad of proliferation-related institutions and arrangements not premised on NPT membership, including informal mechanisms like the Nuclear Suppliers Group and Proliferation Security Initiative. It also means finding ways of bringing the NPT non-members into a framework of equivalent obligations and commitments. [Discussed in Section 10.]

Banning testing. The critical need here, as discussed in Section 11, is to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty finally

into force and guarantee the continuation of the informal moratorium that has been generally observed since 1998.

Limiting the availability of fissile material. The immediate priority here is to negotiate and bring into force a treaty to verifiably ban the further production of high enriched uranium and plutonium for weapons purposes. [Discussed in Section 12.]

Securing loose weapons and material. As discussed in the context of counter-terrorism – but with application also to basic non-proliferation objectives – the objective here is to achieve complete implementation as soon as possible of the cooperative threat reduction and other programs that have been designed, with worldwide reach, to secure from theft or other unauthorised access dangerous weapons, material and technology. [Discussed in Section 13.]

Nuclear energy management. The objective here is progressive achievement of multilateralised fuel cycle arrangements, proliferation-resistant technologies, and other measures designed to reduce the proliferation risks potentially associated with the expansion of civil nuclear energy. [Discussed in Sections 14 and 15.]

Limiting the Demand for Nuclear Weapons. Most states do not in fact need either more constraints or more persuasion to be comfortable with their non-possession of nuclear weapons. There are a number of reasons – which tend to be mutually reinforcing – why the demand to acquire them is likely to remain limited. They can be summarised as *normative* (the concern simply to do, and be seen to be doing, the right thing); *practical* (the lack of financial, technical and human resources to be able to even contemplate a nuclear weapons program, and/or the absence of a perceived nuclear or other existential threat of a kind which could conceivably be deterred by

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possessing nuclear weapons); and *political* (strong domestic political opposition, or perceived diminished international standing, if nuclear weapons were to be pursued).

There is an important group of states who *have* felt the need to consider acquiring nuclear weapons in the face of what they have seen as possible nuclear or other existential threats, and who have had the capacity to do so, but who have chosen not to because their practical security needs in this respect have been met by an “extended deterrence” umbrella provided by an alliance partner. There can be no doubt that the extended deterrence offered by the U.S. nuclear umbrella has been a major reason over the decades why states in Europe and North East Asia, in particular, have been willing to forego a nuclear weapons option even when perceiving themselves to be very vulnerable to nuclear attack. And in constraining the demand for nuclear weapons it will continue to be very important for allies benefiting from such extended deterrence to feel confident that their security is guaranteed (although it does not necessarily follow from this that a nuclear response should be available for *non*-nuclear threats: narrowing and limiting the role of nuclear weapons is a crucial step on the path to disarmament.) [These issues are discussed in Sections 3 and 6.]

So long as some states have nuclear weapons, however, there are other states who will be tempted to follow that path. Limiting their demand for nuclear weapons means understanding why they might think they need or want them;

assessing whether any of their concerns have an objectively rational and defensible foundation; being as responsive as possible to those that do; and meeting those that may not with persuasive arguments that the would-be proliferator would be either no better off, or significantly worse off, going down that track.

What is involved in being responsive to legitimate security concerns will vary with each situation, and require case by case assessment of both legitimacy and response options. The latter include diplomatic and other support for conflict prevention and resolution, positive security assurances (that the state in question will be supported by allies, a regional organization or immediate reference to the UN Security Council in the event of an attack upon it) and negative security assurances (guarantees of non-intervention generally, or the non-use of nuclear weapons specifically).

Recommendation:

Nuclear non-proliferation efforts should focus both on the demand side – persuading states that nuclear weapons will not advance their national security or other interests – and the supply side, through maintaining and strengthening a comprehensive array of measures (addressed in following recommendations) designed to make it as difficult as possible for states to buy or build such weapons.

[Section 8, Rec 4]