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## **The Vantage Point**

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### **Executive Summary**

A willingness by nuclear-armed states to make binding commitments to move to a Vantage Point—a position of deep reductions in nuclear weapons—from which abolition can be envisaged, mapped and navigated, would begin to restore confidence in the nuclear order. It is a necessary condition for enlisting non-nuclear-weapon states in the cooperation needed to avert crisis and strengthen the nuclear order. Moreover, constructing such a Vantage Point would in and of itself enhance global security because each of its elements would reduce the salience of nuclear weapons, the risks of nuclear war and terrorism, and the probability of proliferation, while increasing the prospects that nuclear energy can be distributed to enhance global development.

It is also a realistic approach for nuclear disarmament in that a nuclear-weapon-free world would have another set of dangers than the one we now inhabit. In eliminating nuclear weapons, and therefore reducing the likelihood of a nuclear war, we also, at the same time, wish also to reduce the likelihood of war *per se*. A more stable world, in which conflict resolution mechanisms can be made to work, in which the threat level against states and peoples is reduced, is going to pave the way for nuclear disarmament and war prevention. Power imbalances will have to be addressed as will other types of security assurances—ones that may indeed provide far greater reassurance than the nuclear umbrella—in which faith has been diminishing significantly since the end of the cold war.

This paper outlines the issues and questions that could take the world to the Vantage Point. We attempt to answer some of the questions that have a general approach, recognizing that many specifics would be hard fought in a negotiation. Relationships are the key. Improved relationships between the US and Russia and the US and China as well as increased trust—in terms of stability and commitment—between all of the nuclear armed states is a vital ingredient for progress.

Today the international interests have not yet converged to agree on and enforce the nonproliferation elements of the Vantage Point: further U.S.–Russian deep reductions; enlisting of all other nuclear-armed states in controls and reductions; a ban on the production of fissile material for weapons; entry into force of the CTBT; a fuel-cycle regime in which high confidence exists that proliferation will not result; a declaratory ban on lending material assistance to unsafeguarded nuclear facilities; agreement on provisions and procedures that substantially improve confidence that states will not withdraw from the NPT; and implementation of the Additional Protocol in all states with nuclear programs.

Non-nuclear-weapon states are resisting measures that they perceive to add discrimination in the nuclear order. Therefore, any new nonproliferation measures must move toward a condition in which the overall nuclear order is more equitable and based on rules that increasingly apply to all states, rather than only to those that lack nuclear weapons or fissile material production capabilities. Non-nuclear-weapon states insist on progress towards

significantly greater reductions in U.S.–Russian arsenals and indications that all nuclear-armed states are prepared to join in a disarmament process before the additional nonproliferation elements of the Vantage Point would be embraced.

Leadership is now needed to bring together representatives of nuclear “haves” and “have nots” so as to explore whether the political will can be created to develop packages of reciprocal moves that advance the conditions necessary for nuclear abolition, recognizing that this must include strengthening of the nonproliferation regime. Some of the elements of a Vantage Point are more or less necessary, more or less debatable, and more or less achievable. Singly and together they deserve full international analysis and debate.

In order to get to the Vantage Point a number of significant actions could be taken in the next few years.

1. Nuclear-armed states could set in place regular working-level and high-level meetings to discuss the steps they could take, in the framework of international security, to create the conditions for moving to the Vantage Point.
2. A ministerial meeting in the UN General Assembly to support the NPT, paying specific attention to nuclear disarmament, would help set the tone.
3. Each nuclear-armed state could launch studies by their think-tanks, academics and security institutions to examine the requirements for their countries’ ability to move to the vantage point.
4. States under nuclear umbrellas could launch studies by their think-tanks, academics and security institutions to examine the requirements for their countries’ ability to move beyond the reliance on the framework of extended nuclear deterrence.
5. Other nuclear–armed states could emulate the UK and Norway in their scientific experiments to learn how a non-nuclear-weapon state could be confident in a nuclear-weapon state’s nuclear disarmament program.
6. A meeting to discuss the results of the studies and experiments could be fixed for 2015 to devise an international action plan to move to the Vantage Point.

We cannot pre-judge what will be the exact shape and detailed content of what will constitute the Vantage Point. What is important however, is that it takes the world to a far lower number of nuclear weapons—in the hundreds rather than the tens of thousands—and military doctrines that have reduced reliance on nuclear weapons unambiguously. Equally important is that the reductions and reduced reliance will transform the security equations in a positive direction, build confidence and trust, and lead us to a point where the path through the forest through to the summit can be seen and the way toward a world free of nuclear weapons will be visible and navigable.

## 1. The problem

*“It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tost upon the sea: a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to standing upon the vantage ground of truth.”<sup>1</sup>*

The nuclear order that evolved from the formation of the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1957 through 1995 when the NPT was extended indefinitely, is in crisis. This order was built upon several pillars. Among them the most important were the establishment of a stabilizing framework to regulate U.S.–Soviet nuclear competition; the enactment of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty with its bargains between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states; and the refinement of rules regulating nuclear commerce, export controls, and technology development.

The pillars of this order are under pressure from five sources that do not have to be elaborated for the Commission:

- Proliferation—including the failure to enforce existing rules—Iran, DPRK—and to implement necessary new rules;
- Inadequate disarmament—the failure of nuclear-armed states to lower the salience and danger of weapons and to demonstrate an unequivocal commitment to eliminate their nuclear arsenals;
- Potential expansion of nuclear industry, including fuel cycle capabilities;
- The non-integration of India, Israel and Pakistan into the nuclear order;
- The doubts that the NSG–India deal raise about the integrity and intentions of the nuclear-weapon states that have led the creation and enforcement of the nuclear order.

Recent interest among some eminent Americans of both major political parties in pursuing the abolition of all nuclear weapons has elicited both praise and alarm. National and nuclear security establishments in nuclear-armed states express the most alarm, echoed more quietly by some officials in states that place a value on the belief in the extended nuclear deterrent provided by the U.S.<sup>2</sup> Insofar as nuclear-armed

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Bacon, *Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral*, Essay, I. Of Truth, in *Essays of Francis Bacon* with an Introduction By Oliphant Smeaton, Pub. J. M. Dent and Co. London and E.P. Dutton and Co New York 1906.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Report of the Secretary of Defense Task Force on DoD Nuclear Weapons Management, Phase II: Review of the DoD Nuclear Mission, December 2008; Harold Brown, “New Nuclear Realities,” *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 1, Winter 2007-2008; Keith Payne, “How Much Is Enough?: A Goal-Driven Approach to Defining Key Principles,” *National Institute for Public Policy*, January 2009. However, the recent letter to the *Times* of London by three British Generals: Field Marshal Lord Bramall and Generals Lord Ramsbotham and Sir Hugh Beach, calling to scrap the British Trident system, suggests that there is dissent in military circles on the wisdom in the current nuclear weaponry.

states cannot be forced to relinquish these weapons, their concerns and those of their allies must be addressed. On the other hand, if the nuclear-armed states continue to dodge the obligations that the rest of the world believes they have—and indeed as the NPT nuclear weapon states have undertaken—to pursue nuclear disarmament, political will cannot be created to restore the nuclear order and strengthen protections against proliferation and to provide rules to enable nuclear industry to expand securely.

In the near and medium-term, therefore, the most practical way to synthesize these competing interests and perspectives is for the nuclear-armed states to move much more decisively towards the goal of elimination. This would demonstrate commitment and good faith—a key phrase with NPT resonance—in upholding the unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament. A willingness by nuclear-armed states to make binding commitments to move to a Vantage Point<sup>3</sup>, from which abolition can be envisaged and mapped, would begin to restore confidence in the nuclear order. It is a necessary condition for enlisting non-nuclear-weapon states in the cooperation necessary to avert crisis and strengthen the nuclear order. Moreover, constructing such a Vantage Point would in and of itself enhance global security because each of its elements would reduce the salience of nuclear weapons, the risks of nuclear war and terrorism, and the probability of proliferation, while increasing the prospects that nuclear energy can be distributed to enhance global development.

It is also a realistic approach for nuclear disarmament in that a nuclear-weapon-free world would have different dangers than the one we now inhabit. In eliminating nuclear weapons, and therefore reducing the likelihood of a nuclear war, we also, at the same time, wish to reduce the likelihood of war *per se*. A more stable world, in which conflict resolution mechanisms can be made to work, in which the threat level against states and peoples is reduced, is going to pave the way for nuclear disarmament and war prevention. Power imbalances will have to be addressed as will other types of security assurances—ones that may indeed provide far greater reassurance than the nuclear umbrella—in which faith has been diminishing significantly since the end of the cold war.

## **2. Elements of the Vantage Point.**

We can imagine many desirable features of a Vantage Point, but here we offer a basic model that could be sufficiently inspiring to win global cooperation in effecting a much more secure nuclear order, and not so ambitious that its implementation seems unfeasible.

Central features of a compelling Vantage Point would be:

*1. A regime of global nuclear force reductions in which all nuclear-armed states are participants. That is, an arrangement under which all possess fewer nuclear weapons than they did, say in 2005, and none had enough to cause global Armageddon. This would include legally-binding agreements and CBMs.*

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<sup>3</sup> Vantage Point: “a position or standpoint from which something is viewed or considered”; “a position that allows a clear and broad view, understanding”, from Merriam-Webster and Webster New World respectively

This could be posited in numerical terms—say, none has more than 300 total weapons. But establishing the basic principles might be more feasible. Numerical limits and ratios among different players would be subject to difficult negotiations as discussed further below. The U.S. and Russia settled on basic parity as a fundament of their nuclear relationship, while both enjoyed and have sought to preserve significant superiority over all other nuclear-armed states. China has accepted disparity between its strategic arsenal and those of the U.S. and Russia, but has demanded much greater parity with these arsenals as a condition of China formally limiting or reducing its nuclear forces. China probably would not accept parity with India. For its part, India has tolerated disparity with China and basic parity with Pakistan, but for political reasons (at least) would be reluctant to accept as a principle disparity in any formal arms limitation or reduction regime, especially as India faces two nuclear-armed adversaries. For these and other reasons, as elaborated below, it is probably not realistic or desirable to envision parity among the U.S., Russia, China, the U.K., France, India, Pakistan and Israel. This leaves open the enormously complex challenge of establishing comparative force levels at the Vantage Point approaching zero. It could be feasible, however, to posit that the nuclear-armed states could maintain more or less the same ratio of total nuclear weapons for the purposes of agreeing a vantage point. In fact, that could be put forward as one of the qualities of this Vantage Point; that to get there requires an acceptance and maintenance of the relativity of the status quo and further reductions towards a zero level would then require divergence from that accepted ratio.

2. *Doctrinal/deployment norms or rules.* That is, at least declaratory commitments not to hold nuclear weapons at precariously high levels of readiness for launch. Transparency measures, data exchanges and routine clarification site visits and other similar confidence-building measures would be significant components for implementation.

3. *Agreement on limitations of ballistic missile defenses*—so that they are not strategically destabilizing to any legally-permitted nuclear-armed state, and rather, potentially only useful to limit threats from proliferant states and to help insure against break out from a nuclear-weapon-free world. Shared threat analysis and cooperative missile defense should be explored as part of the framework of achieving the vantage point and setting the framework for further reductions.

4. *Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in force*—showing good faith with Article VI of the NPT, with the 1995 NPT Principles and Objectives and with previous commitments, including the signing of the CTBT. Adherence to past undertakings is one of the strongest indicators of likely adherence to future commitments, and thus a functioning CTBT has a deeper impact in building confidence in the process than the implementation of the Treaty itself.

5. *No further production of fissile materials for weapons purposes.* This could be through an FMCT, or, more immediately, through confidence-building measures such as moratoria by all states that currently produce fissile materials outside of safeguards, with verification to be negotiated later, for example in the Conference on Disarmament. A more complicated but interesting alternative would be an agreement whereby all enrichment and plutonium separation is conducted only in multinational

facilities under stringent safeguards, and all national fuel-cycle facilities have been closed and/or converted to multinational. This latter alternative would depend on how international proposals on multinational fuel-cycle assurances are addressed, and how quickly such an approach could be in place as the nuclear-armed states head to the vantage point.

6. *A Fuel-cycle regime*—in which high confidence exists that proliferation will not result. Proposals for a multinational fuel-cycle, from the front to the back end of the cycle, are now under discussion. As yet there is no clear, agreed, approach for negotiation or implementation. However, there is interest, particularly from those that are newly-emerging civil nuclear power states, and such a global system would strongly increase confidence in the nonproliferation regime and thus assist the disarmament process.

7. *Declaratory ban on lending material assistance to unsafeguarded nuclear facilities.* This would be a vital step in couching the US–India deal in terms that make it less likely to undermine the whole nonproliferation regime.

8. *Agreement on provisions and procedures that substantially improve confidence that states will not withdraw from the NPT and move to acquire nuclear weapons.* North Korea’s withdrawal from the NPT has certainly been costly to the DPRK government, but further steps to discourage others further down the track are required for stabilizing the regime and encouraging disarmament.

9. *Additional Protocol (or more) is implemented in all states.* Steps towards an Additional Protocol Plus need to be considered. Integrated safeguards, whereby states that provide more transparency and access receive a lessened inspection burden need to be further developed so as to make ratifying the Additional Protocol more attractive.

Some of these elements of a Vantage Point are more or less necessary, more or less debatable, and more or less achievable. Singly and together they deserve full international analysis and debate.

Such analysis and debate should keep in mind two underlying political-strategic imperatives if steps toward a Vantage Point are to enhance global security and facilitate eventual abolition. First, all nuclear-armed states must be invested in the process and contribute to it. The U.S. and Russia must lead, but the vantage point must lie beyond U.S.–Russian reductions alone, and instead must demonstrate the resolve of China, the UK, France, India, Pakistan, Israel (and North Korea) to contribute to the desired new nuclear order. The Vantage Point should embody progress toward an order that will reduce discrimination in the nuclear system and is intended to eliminate not only nuclear weapons but also the whole “haves versus have-nots” nuclear framework of the NPT. Second, the strengthening of nonproliferation rules and enforcement must be an inseparable part of the process—again, because the challenge pertains to the entire global nuclear order. Key non-nuclear-weapon states must contribute too by strengthening global and regional nonproliferation measures and—in certain cases—removing their security dependence on nuclear weapons through alliances and positive security assurances.

### 3. The case for and benefits of the Vantage Point

One way to evaluate the elements of the Vantage Point individually and collectively is to ask whether each:

- helps build confidence in a rule-based, stability-enhancing global nuclear order by reinvesting in the bargain, fulfilling commitments, lowering salience and physical danger;
- deepens commitment to strengthen and enforce nonproliferation;
- advances the co-evolutionary process of improving political–security relations broadly and reducing nuclear dangers—that is, improve and manage big power relations.

We posit for the Commission’s discussion that the net result of adopting these elements of a Vantage Point would be to establish a position where all nuclear relationships have become more stable and less threatening and the pathway to further steps can be seen and be inviting.

A Brazilian diplomat, Achilles Zaluar gives some reason for optimism in this regard if his view represents wider international opinion and not merely a small minority:

“If combined with a firm political commitment toward the implementation of Article VI of the NPT, moving first from ‘thousands of nuclear weapons with high profile’ (today) to ‘a few hundred with low profile’ (an intermediate step toward abolition ...) would present many of the benefits and none of the alleged dangers and risks presented by the elimination scenario. Committing to this agenda of reducing the total number of nuclear weapons globally to the hundreds and taking them out of the foreground of international politics would represent positive change in the direction of the NPT’s ultimate objective. In fact, the change would be so enormous that its consequences would ripple throughout the international system, without the risks that some fear from the tidal wave of going to absolute zero. It would, moreover, provide the international community with a ‘to-do list’ that would take at least a decade—a decade in which the loss of credibility of the non-proliferation regime could be reversed”<sup>4</sup>.

### 4. Getting from here to the Vantage Point

#### 4.1 *The Imperative of U.S.–Russia–China Strategic Cooperation*

The relationships between the U.S. and Russia and the U.S. and China (and perhaps also between Russia and China) will be the primary determinants of movement toward the Vantage Point. If these three states cannot establish bases for strategic cooperation, the desired features of a Vantage Point cannot be established: the salience and number of nuclear weapons will not decrease and the nonproliferation regime will not become stronger and will in all probability, weaken. If they do

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<sup>4</sup> Achilles Zaluar in *Abolishing Nuclear Weapons: A Debate*, James Acton and George Perkovich, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009, forthcoming

cooperate, then it is feasible that the other necessary actors can be induced to take the steps they must take in order to reach the Vantage Point.

The U.S. and Russia admit that they still deploy more nuclear weapons than they need. The rest of the world agrees and expects the obese nuclear-weapon states to shed many more weapons. If the U.S. and Russia succeed in reviving the nuclear arms reduction process and making such reductions verifiable and irreversible, the global nonproliferation regime will gain strength. The roles and status of nuclear weapons in the world will be diminished.

**The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty** is another political, psychological and technological indicator of nuclear weapons' salience. Its future depends heavily on the U.S. and China. Failure to bring the CTBT into force, or at least to establish with high confidence that no state will conduct further nuclear tests, intensifies doubts that nuclear arms racing is finished. (This is the indisputable and clear requirement of Article VI of the NPT, regardless of debate that exists about the nature of the nuclear disarmament obligations under the treaty). The U.S. is widely seen as the biggest impediment to the CTBT's entry into force. Yet, China also has not ratified the treaty. India and Pakistan have neither signed nor ratified it, nor has the DPRK. U.S.–Chinese ratification is necessary to have a chance of inducing India, and therefore Pakistan, to join. Israel has signed and given indications that they would ratify, but was dissuaded by the Bush Administration.

U.S. and Chinese ratification are necessary conditions to impart momentum to bring the CTBT into force. All other interested states could help by encouraging Washington and Beijing to move, and by quietly urging at high levels India, Pakistan, Egypt, Israel and others to clarify that if the U.S. and China ratify, they will follow suit. That is, others should not watch and wait passively, but should press actively.

Similarly, China, Pakistan and India have been major obstacles to advancing negotiations on **a treaty to end production of fissile materials for weapons** purposes, and their resistance relates back to the U.S. and Russia. China's resistance stems from concerns that it cannot afford to cap the potential size of its nuclear arsenal as long as the U.S. is seeking capabilities to negate or severely limit China's capacity to respond to a US strike and hit U.S. targets in the event of war—i.e. to deter a US strike. Missile defenses, long-range precision-strike weapons, and other non-nuclear technologies could undermine the Chinese doctrine of nuclear deterrence. The most obvious Chinese counter-moves would be to increase the size, survivability, and launch-readiness of its nuclear arsenal. A fissile material production ban would limit the first option without requiring corresponding limits on U.S. capabilities against China. Insofar as a fissile material production ban is high on the list of steps that are politically and materially important to build international support for the nonproliferation regime and to limit the nuclear arms race in South Asia, U.S.–Chinese relations currently do not assist this step.

A more expedient step would be to persuade the eight states that currently produce fissile materials outside of safeguards to adopt moratoria on further production of fissile materials for military purposes. The U.S., Russia, France and the UK already have announced such moratoria. China has been reported to have stopped further production, but has not declared such a policy. (Some officials in other governments

privately express doubt that China has in fact ceased production). A Chinese moratorium would mean that all of the NPT nuclear-weapon states would have stopped making additional bomb material. This would in turn strengthen the case for India and Pakistan to establish such moratoria. For India's calculation of "how much is enough" depends on its assessment of sufficiency to deter both China and Pakistan now and in the future. Without limitations on China's future arsenal potential, India will keep its options open. Pakistan would follow suit.

This logic brings the circle back to U.S.–Chinese relations. In assessing how many nuclear weapons it might need in the future, and therefore how much fissile material, China must judge what threats the U.S. may pose to its territory and to its deterrent capabilities. These threats can come from a combination of U.S. nuclear forces, ballistic missile defenses, and other non-nuclear capabilities to threaten China's nuclear forces and command and control. Thus it is likely that China would not commit to end the production of fissile materials without a strategic understanding with the United States that would reassure Beijing that the U.S. will not deploy the capability to negate China's nuclear deterrent.

**U.S.–Russian–Chinese cooperation is a minimum condition for inducing Iran to comply with IAEA and UN Security Council resolutions** to suspend nuclear fuel-cycle-related activities. The reliability of the nonproliferation regime, collective security, and prospects of enforcing a hoped-for ban on nuclear weapons will fall into grave doubt if Iran gets away with refusing to comply with international requirements. Divergences among Beijing, Moscow and Washington in the Security Council give Iran confidence that ultimately it can afford to keep producing fissile material and not fully complying with IAEA demands and get away with few consequences. These divergences, in turn, reflect underlying strategic competition among the three.

Iran's nuclear program should not serve to justify refusal by the U.S., Russia and other nuclear-armed states to move toward the vantage point. Even if Iran cannot be persuaded or coerced to comply with IAEA and UN Security Council requirements, and even if Iran proceeds to acquire nuclear weapons—two separate propositions—there is no reason to think that significantly reduced U.S., Russian and other arsenals would be insufficient to deter Iran from using such weapons. If Iran can be deterred, a few hundred weapons would be no less sufficient to deter it than would be 1,000 weapons. If Iran is not deterrable, the Vantage Point would not make it less so. And indeed, if the nuclear-armed states were to reduce nuclear weapons numbers dramatically, it could be easier to harness the support of non-nuclear weapon states in dealing with Iran.

**Extended nuclear deterrence** also makes the U.S. insist that nuclear weapons are vital and central instruments of its national and global security policies, and China and Russia are the primary actors against which nuclear deterrence is extended by the U.S. today. To reassure Japan and South Korea that they do not need their own nuclear weapons or to build military forces that would appear offensively threatening to others in the region, the U.S. promises to come to their defense if they are threatened or attacked. And to reassure them that the U.S. could get the job done, and do it quickly enough to be reassuring, the U.S. says it would use nuclear weapons against

their adversary if that is what would be required to win quickly.<sup>5</sup> The same has historically been true in Europe through NATO. Indeed, the U.S. thus far has refused to say it would not use nuclear weapons first, in part to reinforce extended deterrence.

Of course, broader issues surrounding U.S. intentions and capabilities affect confidence in extended deterrence. Do allied countries perceive particular U.S. leaders as wise, trustworthy and strong, or erratic, insane, unreliable and weak? Are U.S. military capabilities seen as more robust and available than those of adversaries to be deterred? In the ultimate calculus, would the US Government truly risk its own territory through the use of nuclear weapons in making good a promise to defend an ally? Will the American public support, and therefore make credible, U.S. threats to go to war on behalf of each relevant ally? Do Americans perceive wise and careful leadership—including in the long-term—in the allied country that the U.S. would be protecting by its deterrent? Many other factors go into the construction of an extended deterrence relationship. It is important to understand here that the key “good” that is desired is deterrence and military support, not necessarily nuclear deterrence.

At a minimum, the U.S. must engage its NATO, Middle Eastern, and Northeast Asian partners in new assessments of regional security threats and the various means by which they could be deterred. Such engagement—genuine collaborative analysis and policy consultations—should not start with the assumption that nuclear weapons are “the answer”, but rather from the question: “How do we provide security assurances to you without nuclear weapons?” Options of regional diplomacy, intelligence and conventional defense cooperation, arms control and disarmament, and means other than nuclear deterrence will all be on the table. To get from today’s nuclear deterrence postures to a world free of nuclear weapons requires the allied non-nuclear weapon states to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. After all, they too have all signed up to the nuclear disarmament project of the NPT and have obligations under Article VI too. Indeed, an honest, open attempt to analyze whether and how a particular adversary could be deterred without nuclear threats would enhance the credibility of the nuclear disarmament process and the NPT, and thus support the getting to the Vantage Point.

If relationships among the U.S. and Russia and China—and the neighbors of the latter two—can be made more reassuring, more clearly defensive, then the pressure could be reduced on extended nuclear deterrence. The salience and number of nuclear weapons in U.S. policy could be reduced. Some people worry *today* that major further U.S.–Russian nuclear reductions and the expressed American willingness to seek a world without nuclear weapons would weaken extended deterrence against Russia or China. Yet, the Vantage Point, let alone abolition, will not be reached if the U.S., Russia and China are not perceived as less threatening to each other and their neighbors. As discussed further below, Russia and China also value their nuclear weapons as means to extend deterrence against U.S. conventional military power, too. Thus, the overall security relationships among Russia, China, the U.S. and its key allies will have to be more cooperative to enable the Vantage Point to be reached. If

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<sup>5</sup> If Japan and or South Korea decided to acquire their own nuclear weapons, for whatever reason, the U.S. would probably feel spared of the need to extend a promise of nuclear deterrence over these two friendly countries. This could allow a further reduction in U.S. forces and plans of use. Whether global security would be enhanced or diminished is another question.

this happens, then today's fears about the weakening of extended deterrence would be overtaken by positive events.

The nuclear future will be affected more by **security relationships in Europe** than one would have predicted even a decade ago. In 1994, U.S.–Russian strategic nuclear reductions were well underway and presumed to have considerable momentum. The U.S. remained committed to the ABM Treaty even as it conducted research and development on national ballistic missile defense and deployed theater missile defenses. Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan agreed to transfer nuclear weapons inherited from the Soviet Union to Russia. The Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty had just entered into force and built confidence that major military confrontations would be a thing of Europe's past. Russia's leadership still pledged interest in Western values and sought integration into Western institutions.

Today the U.S. deploys fewer nuclear weapons in Europe than it did fifteen years ago, but the political–psychological weight put on them may be increasing in unintended ways. No knowledgeable person thinks any of the 150 (or thereabouts) U.S. nuclear bombs assigned to NATO would actually be used, in part because these weapons would be delivered (presumably against Russia) by airplanes, which would take more time, add more risk of accident or failure, and be less accurate than using missiles. Some U.S. officials, reportedly including then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, urged removing these nuclear weapons from Europe for the sake of security and cost. Others urge removing them to show good faith and earn credit for nuclear disarmament. Yet certain players in key NATO states do not want the U.S. to remove these weapons, even if they do not say so out loud. At least some Polish, Turkish, German and Dutch officials (among others) still imagine U.S. nuclear weapons on European soil as a way to bind the U.S. to Europe's defense and to deter Russian ambitions and risk taking. Others, especially former officials, as in Germany, argue that nuclear weapons on balance do not add to NATO and global security and urge their removal from NATO's arsenal.

There is a renewed temptation to strain the credibility of nuclear deterrence while avoiding more costly and politically difficult reckoning with NATO obligations to defend all members, including those on the periphery. NATO offered membership to former-Warsaw Pact countries when Russia was poor, weak, and relatively docile. Perhaps NATO publics and leaders did not imagine things could change and the obligations to sacrifice blood and treasure for new allies actually could be invoked. Such bloodshed still remains highly unlikely, but recent events in Georgia and dependence on Russia's energy supplies, and uncertainty over the evolution of Ukraine and its relations with Russia and NATO, have renewed feelings of insecurity. If NATO members, including those nearest to Russia, try to avoid this reckoning by relying on nuclear weapons to dissuade Russia from bullying or to compel it to change behavior in future crises, they will stretch the credibility of nuclear deterrence and invite trouble. They will also send a signal globally that nuclear weapons remain highly salient and are a currency that should be acquired rather than eschewed. They will in fact be undermining the cause of nonproliferation that they espouse. Here again is a domain in which U.S. (and Western) relations with Russia will shape the global future of nuclear weapons.

The question of **ballistic missile defenses in Europe** must be addressed as part of an effort to restabilize NATO relations with Russia and to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons. Indeed, from the perspective of the Vantage Point, Russia's willingness to include "sub-strategic" nuclear weapons in future arms reduction and transparency measures will be affected by its overall perceptions of U.S.–NATO intentions and capabilities, including missile defenses in Europe. Russian experts express willingness to cooperate with the U.S., including on missile defenses, if the intention truly is to dissuade Iran from building nuclear weapons and/or deter it from using them against European targets. But Moscow fears that the underlying purpose of proposed missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic is to form a key element in an eventual global missile defense system to limit Russia's strategic deterrent. This web of concerns must be disentangled to allow movement to the Vantage Point.

The US and Russia have a long-standing comprehension of each other's doctrines and postures in nuclear arms control. Over recent years, the relationship has been thrown out of kilter for a number of reasons and miscalculations on both sides. It is not impossible to repair, but both will have to build trust slowly and carefully again. One of the best ways in which this can be done is through the classic arms control approach, which is tried and tested and can be made to work again.

Ways forward include:

- Extend START-I beyond 2009 for a period of five years<sup>6</sup>
- Begin negotiations for a follow-on treaty to START and SORT that puts in place deep reductions over a period of years and establishes a new verification regime built on, and learning from, that established for START.
- Codify the 1991 Presidential Nuclear Initiatives and negotiate a new Treaty to eliminate battlefield nuclear weapons entirely, or transition to an arms reduction process wherein allowed numbers of weapons are total—including both strategic and so-called battlefield weapons.
- Explore a new strategic arms deal that includes no-modernization of Russian missiles in exchange for delayed deployment of missile defenses until joint deployments can be effected (recent statements from Russia suggest that such an approach may be effective<sup>7</sup>).

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<sup>6</sup> Article XVII of START-I states: "This Treaty shall remain in force for 15 years unless superseded earlier by a subsequent agreement on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms. No later than one year before the expiration of the 15-year period, the Parties shall meet to consider whether this Treaty will be extended. If the Parties so decide, this Treaty will be extended for a period of five years unless it is superseded before the expiration of that period by a subsequent agreement on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms. This Treaty shall be extended for successive five-year periods, if the Parties so decide, in accordance with the procedures governing the initial extension, and it shall remain in force for each agreed five-year period of extension unless it is superseded by a subsequent agreement on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms."

<sup>7</sup> Russia has indicated it may hold off on some of its missile work if the United States stops its plans for fielding missile defenses in Europe. According to General Nikolai Solovtsov, head of Russia's strategic missile forces, "If the Americans give up their plans to deploy the third position area and other elements of strategic missile defense, then undoubtedly we will respond in kind...And an array of programs, expensive programs, will simply not be necessary for us." (Agence France-Press, Dec. 19, 2008, cited in Center for Defense Information, Missile Defense Update #1: Jan. 7, 2009, [http://www.cdi.org/program/document.cfm?DocumentID=4435&from\\_page=../index.cfm#2](http://www.cdi.org/program/document.cfm?DocumentID=4435&from_page=../index.cfm#2))

- Forge a new approach to conventional forces in Europe based on confidence-building measures—recognizing the reality that the CFE Treaty and its follow-on agreements do not provide fully enough for European security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- Begin discussions on joint threat assessments.
- Develop an approach to joint deployments of missile defenses by the US and Russia.

**U.S. strategic relations with China** might have an even greater impact on the global salience of nuclear weapons in the future and the prospects of reducing to the desired Vantage Point. The U.S. has not decided and enunciated that it accepts as a fact of modern life that it and China are mutually vulnerable to nuclear attack and deterrence. Some strategists—a minority—believe the U.S. can and should combine advanced conventional capabilities with ballistic missile defenses backed up if necessary by nuclear arms to negate China’s nuclear retaliatory capability. They argue that it would be immoral and irresponsible for U.S. leaders to leave the American people (and Taiwan<sup>8</sup> and Japan) vulnerable to Chinese nuclear weapons if there were a possible alternative of negating China’s nuclear forces through a combination of offensive and defensive operations.

If the U.S. government and foreign policy establishment conclusively decide and communicate that stability and security are better served by formally accepting and managing mutual nuclear deterrence than by seeking the capability to escape from deterrence, then China should be expected to join arms control and reduction processes beyond those they are members of at the multilateral level. At a minimum, this possibility should be explored with Chinese officials. As an early step in such exploration, Beijing should be asked under what conditions it would be willing to clarify limits it would place on the build up and upgrading of its nuclear arsenal.

This paper discussed earlier how prospects of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and a fissile material production ban are affected by Sino–American strategic tensions and mutual doubts. If the U.S. pursues ballistic missile defenses and other strategic non-nuclear capabilities without having satisfied Chinese security interests in some corresponding way, China will buttress its counter-capabilities as necessary to preserve deterrence. This could include conventional military efforts, cyberwarfare capabilities, anti-satellite capabilities or other means, as well as augmentations of its nuclear arsenal. If Beijing continues with the latter course, the U.S. national security establishment, especially the nuclear weapons laboratories, will in turn cite China’s growing nuclear arsenal to justify halting nuclear force reductions and/or spending to develop new U.S. counter-measures, including conventionally-armed ballistic missiles. A spiraling of capabilities and hostilities is likely to ensue.

Of course, such strategic moves would not occur in a vacuum. If China and Taiwan continue recent-months’ progress in stabilizing their relations and building mutual confidence, the salience of Chinese nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles could be

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<sup>8</sup> Note, we use the designation “Taiwan” as a form of shorthand, fully aware of the “Taiwan Issue”, the “One-China Principle” and the impossibility of using a name that would satisfy all concerns whilst not confusing the reader.

reduced. U.S. perceptions of requirements to deter conflict over Taiwan could also be attenuated.

Other similar confidence-building measures and security reassurance measures could be developed to improve relationships and increase the likelihood of nuclear reductions. Specifically these could include:

- Diplomatic Academy cooperative teaching and student exchange
- Joint doctrinal discussions
- Bilateral discussions on nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation at the ministerial level
- Bilateral discussions on space technology cooperation
- Bilateral discussions (in addition to trilateral discussions with Russia) on missile defenses
- Renewed military contacts and discussions
- Military personnel exchange
- Military exercise observations
- Joint military exercises (for example for the purposes of defending against piracy, or for peacekeeping support)
- Renewed lab-to-lab discussions on nuclear weapons management in a CTBT, on fissile materials management under an FMCT, and on information barriers for verifying nuclear warhead reductions
- Renewed discussions on confidence-building measures such as transparency measures and the arms trade, particularly in small arms and light weapons and sales to entities, including governments, liable to use weapons in human rights abuse.

On the unilateral front, China could reduce the number of short-range and long-range missiles on show at the military parade planned for the sixtieth anniversary of the PRC on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009. Indeed, China could use the opportunity of the sixtieth anniversary celebrations to demonstrate its increasing goodwill to Taiwan.

Likewise, the sixtieth anniversary affords an opportunity for the United States to forge a new relationship with China, based on mutual respect. If the current financial crisis demonstrates anything clearly, it is that we are all increasingly interdependent. Globalization has revealed the global market and the global village to be a fact. Heralding the Chinese New Year in 2009, In a New Year speech, China's Premier Wen Jiabao said

"Taking a broad view of the situation abroad and domestically, challenges and opportunities exist."<sup>9</sup>

The fortieth anniversary of Richard Nixon's presidential visit to China will be in February 2012. On the thirtieth anniversary, President George W. Bush commemorated the new dawn of U.S.–Sino relations by a presidential visit to Beijing. Between October 2009 and February 2012, the U.S. and China could make full use of the anniversary commemorative events to develop a more cooperative relationship in both the financial and security sectors.

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<sup>9</sup> People's Daily, quoted in AFP, 25 January 2009

#### 4.2 *Bringing in the Other Nuclear-Armed States: The Low Numbers Challenge*

The foregoing discussion sketches how U.S., Russian and Chinese policies and relations hold the key to progress toward the Vantage Point. Let's assume that the U.S. and Russia and the U.S. and China *do* adopt policies of explicit security reassurances. They cooperate on arms controls, clarifying that missile defenses in whatever form and number do not enable U.S. domination, etc.

Under these conditions, many observers and disarmament activists and non-nuclear-weapon state diplomats assume that at least the five recognized nuclear-weapon states would then join in a process of negotiating multilateral reductions. It is often said that if and when the U.S. and Russia get to 1,000 total deployed weapons, China would join. But discussions with Chinese security experts suggest that the number would have to be significantly lower, closer to parity with China, before China would enter a nuclear arms control process.

Assuming for the sake of analysis that a formula can be found for encouraging China to join multilateral deliberations on nuclear arms reductions, very difficult questions emerge that have not been analyzed seriously and internationally as they need to be. These difficult questions arise even if there would not be an attempt at the beginning to bring India, Pakistan and Israel into the process (which is discussed below).

- Have American and Russian strategists actually thought about going below 1,000 nuclear weapons? How much of a numerical advantage does each state think it needs over the rest? (Many Americans, for example, assert that the United States should have as many nuclear weapons as everyone beyond Russia combined.) How do they think about triangular deterrence requirements: United States–Russia–China? Does Russia continue to think it needs nuclear deterrence against not only the United States and China, but also the UK and France? Pakistan? How about China: it thinks it needs deterrence against the United States, Russia, and India, but is that all?
- The U.S. and Russia retain thousands of nuclear weapons considered “tactical” in Cold War military and arms control terms. These weapons have not been encompassed in transparency and arms reduction measures pursued by the two states since the Presidential mutual declarations of the early 1990s. Yet, in the post-Cold War world, the distinction between strategic and “tactical” or “sub-strategic” or “battlefield” nuclear weapons has lost considerable meaning—particularly in the context of regional missiles in South Asia, the Middle East and North East Asia. A nuclear weapon is a nuclear weapon. North Korean, Pakistani, and Indian nuclear weapons might be considered “tactical” under the old categorization, due to their small yields, and short range, but this is a pointless distinction—clearly in those regional contexts the missiles are strategic. For the purposes of a Vantage Point before complete nuclear abolition, all nuclear weapons must be included in totals to be permitted. Russia and the U.S. (in consultation with NATO allies) will need to confront the difficult challenge of bringing their “battlefield” nuclear weapons into the reduction process. However, should it prove to be an avenue for quick

reductions—given how many have already been destroyed or stored—then the distinction in the case of Russian and US weapons could be useful.

- Some American strategists who have thought or opined about the subject worry that reductions to mid- to low-hundreds could invite China to race up to parity. Is it reasonable to think that any multilateral negotiations would have to provide assurance against this, and should that be recommended? Would China insist on parity at its numbers? And would India accept disparity with China in a formal agreement? As discussed further below, would Pakistan accept a ceiling on nuclear forces lower than India's? If not, how could India's needs to deter China and Pakistan be reconciled with likely Chinese insistence on disparity and Pakistani insistence on parity?
- What conditions would China, France, and the UK put on entering or completing multilateral negotiations? Would they, for example, bring in conventional military considerations? Doctrinal issues? Transparency requirements that France urges but that China finds unpalatable?

The U.K. has reduced its nuclear arsenal to a point where it possesses fewer nuclear weapons than China. High-level U.K. leaders—civil and military—have made more recent and clear statements in favor of pursuing nuclear disarmament than have leaders of the U.S., Russia, France, China, Pakistan and Israel. The U.K. also has invited other nuclear-weapon states to join it in exploring how verification technologies and procedures could be developed to facilitate nuclear disarmament. U.K. leaders could build on this record by preparing to suggest conditions under which all nuclear-armed states could begin multilateral analyses and consultations to move toward a Vantage Point such as the one outlined above.

France has reduced its nuclear arsenal to 300 weapons, a number larger than that of the other nuclear-armed states excepting the U.S. and Russia. French President Nicolas Sarkozy's April 2007 enunciation of French doctrine states that "our nuclear deterrence protects us from any aggression against our vital interests emanating from a state—wherever it may come from and whatever form it may take." By not tying its possession of nuclear weapons to the possession of them by others, France gives the impression that it seeks to keep nuclear weapons regardless of what others do. While this posture need not impede France from supporting establishment of a Vantage Point like the one described in this paper, it does suggest resistance to the complete abolition of nuclear weapons. However, the letter written by President Sarkozy on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2008 to UN Secretary-General Ban, in his capacity as the Presidency of the EU, suggests that disarmament issues may be gaining importance in France, as in the rest of Europe. France could clarify its position as part of contributing to progress toward the Vantage Point.

- Beyond the five recognized nuclear-weapon states, wouldn't India and Pakistan, at least, have to be involved, given the connections between China and South Asia? How could this be squared with the refusal of some key states to include India, Pakistan, and Israel in official discussions of nuclear arms

control and disarmament because they are not recognized as nuclear-weapon states under the NPT?

- Would the anomalous position of North Korea continue to be addressed through the Six-Party process? Would North Korea's ongoing possession of a small number of nuclear weapons be reasonable cause to block the others from making reductions to low numbers?
- If multilateral discussions were focused on "nuclear weapons," Israel presumably would not participate, given that it does not acknowledge possessing them. Could this problem be finessed if a forum were convened of states that possess unsafeguarded fissile materials, with the purpose of negotiating steps to bring materials and facilities under safeguards incrementally? This is essentially what a fissile material production cutoff would do, and it does not require declaring possession of nuclear weapons.
- U.S. and some UK (and Russian?) analysts worry that low numbers (a few hundred) could invite nuclear use that would not be attempted when high numbers exist. Such assumptions have not been modeled and tested through international discussion. Shouldn't this be done?
- Why would the doctrine of deterrence be weakened at low numbers? What sorts of scenarios would be presumed, and how justified would they be? Are deterrence and stability more sensitive to numbers or to the survivability of forces? How would ballistic missile defenses affect such calculations?
- Couldn't confidence-building measures and arms control ameliorate concerns about instability? What would the elements be? (Limitations or multilateral cooperation on ballistic missile defense would probably be important here.)
- The United States would be very sensitive to erosion of extended deterrence commitments, especially in regard to Japan and South Korea (as would Tokyo, Seoul, and perhaps others. Indeed many such nuclear umbrella states need a way out of the conundrum. They are pro-nuclear disarmament and yet their defense postures have them reliant on nuclear weapons for their security). Presumably these states would be consulted thoroughly along the way, and be part of the new approach and the robustness of conventional deterrence would have to be assured. How should this be addressed?

It is impossible to know in advance how these questions could or would be answered. If the leaders of all these countries were gathering in 2015, to consider, for example, a significant departure in proportionalities between U.S. and Russian arsenals on one hand, and say, China's on the other, it is possible that many people would say "Don't do it. Don't change." If nuclear weapons had not been used between 2009 and 2015, and the U.S. and Russia had more than twice as many nuclear weapons as any potential nuclear adversary, many people, not only in the U.S. and Russia, would wonder how the situation would be improved by moving toward parity with others. Could parity at lower numbers unsettle or at least add instability to a "system" that had managed to avoid the use of nuclear weapons for 75 years?

In any case, none of today's nuclear-armed states (and those depending on them for security guarantees) would commit to major proportional reductions in their arsenals without well-vetted studies by their national defense establishments. And because the envisioned process would be multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral and therefore would involve complex calculations involving changing sets of multiple actors, international analysis and debate would be necessary. If governments don't begin to commission their relevant defense research institutions to begin such studies now, it is difficult to imagine that multilateral negotiations on reductions would begin by, say, 2015.

This is an area where the Commission could make a significant contribution. It could urge the heads of all nuclear-armed states to task their relevant ministries, defense laboratories and think tanks to conduct studies and internal deliberations on these questions in order for plans for deep reductions to be drawn up. Because such studies would entail no immediate commitments to reduce nuclear forces or alter doctrines no acceptable arguments could be made against undertaking such analytical work. The case for such government studies could be made even stronger if the Commission were to urge leaders of non-nuclear-weapon states to credit the undertaking of such work as a demonstration of good will toward fulfilling disarmament obligations. Foundations and governments could be encouraged to support nongovernmental studies and debates in parallel with those conducted by governments, to provide a checking and balancing mechanism and to engage civil society.

The studies could also be scientific and technical. For example, the UK-Norway verification experiments for nuclear disarmament could be adopted by other similar pairings of nuclear-armed state and non-nuclear weapon state. For example, we could propose that the US and Australia team up to carry out work on information barriers; building on and complementing the work of the UK and Norway.

#### *4.3 The Conventional Military Challenge*

Of course, U.S. non-nuclear-capabilities and overall political relations will affect Russia's willingness to reduce below 1,000 total weapons, and China's willingness to stop building up its arsenal. Partly because of the nuclear taboo and mostly because of the efficacy of conventional weapons, the U.S. will continue to develop non-nuclear means to be able to destroy targets to which military planners now assign nuclear weapons. Interest in putting conventional warheads on sea-launched ballistic missiles is an example of this process which some U.S. strategic planners seeking funding to approve.

Yet, unless overall political-strategic relations change, Russian and Chinese strategists will assess that the U.S. seeks to be able to use non-nuclear capabilities to degrade their nuclear forces and command and control sufficiently to reduce the credibility of their nuclear deterrents. With regards to Russia, this is a very remote possibility, and U.S. planners fundamentally recognize there is no escape from mutual vulnerability/deterrence with Russia. But regarding China, the U.S. has not settled on and enunciated acceptance of mutual vulnerability, as noted above. If the U.S. government and foreign policy establishment do not conclusively decide and communicate that stability and security are better served by formally accepting and

managing mutual deterrence than by seeking escalation dominance, then China would be less likely to join arms control and reduction processes.

The implications of advanced conventional capabilities can be put another way. One can imagine scenarios where conventional capabilities substitute for nuclear weapons—and indeed in many respects they already do, and can be a more effective deterrent in that they are demonstrably useable—and thus enable deep reductions and eventual elimination of all nuclear arsenals. But for this conversion to occur, there would need to be more symmetry in the evolution and distribution of new conventional capabilities. There would need to be a framework of conventional arms control and confidence building arrangements. Beyond establishing terms for quantitative force balancing, conventional arms control in modern conditions would have to address qualitative issues that affect balance-of-power calculations. Yet the world has no experience of negotiating limits of the complexity that would be required for U.S. qualitative advantages to be taken into account. Moreover, nothing in the past twenty years indicates that the U.S. would be willing to negotiate the sorts of limitations on the development and deployment of its advanced conventional capabilities, including missile defenses, and space capabilities, that China might seek before it would agree to limit and reduce its nuclear capabilities.

To be sure, the same could have been said in the NATO–Soviet/Russian context a few years before the CFE Treaty. That treaty indicates positive possibilities, but its apparent demise due to changed political dynamics in and around Russia is also a cautionary lesson. In this sense, reviving the overall NATO–Russian relationship, including conventional arms control and confidence-building, is necessary to create conditions for significantly lowering the number and salience of nuclear weapons in Eurasia and beyond.

The issue of conventional military balancing and confidence-building in relation to nuclear disarmament is another area where the Commission could contribute by urging governments to begin relevant analyses and studies.

The focus of such studies should weigh heavily on the side of building trust and confidence in terms of conventional military forces. Bean counting, whilst factoring quantitative and qualitative differences is akin to counting the stars in the sky as a matter of great consequence. Thanks in large part to the economic trade in Europe and its institutions, European countries, however well armed they be, are no longer counting up their neighbor's tanks, guns and planes. This is because, despite centuries of mistrust and devastating wars, they now have built up so much interdependence and confidence in their dealings, it is of no danger to their security if their neighbor is better armed. Indeed, the opposite is true; in being better armed, their neighbor is offering them increased protection through NATO.

Such relationship transformation did not take place overnight, but if the previous half century is considered, it was in some respects done quickly. Of course, one would not expect the same speed of moving from a relationship of mistrust to one of trust vis-à-vis the US and Russia or the US and China, but it is the way to proceed and holds out greater hope for the future than arms control alone.

#### 4.4 *The Southern Asia Pivot: China, India and Pakistan*

India, and therefore Pakistan, will influence whether and under what terms China would enter multilateral nuclear arms control and confidence-building processes. Indeed, much of the global nuclear dynamic can be understood in terms of two strategic triangles. One involves the U.S., Russia and China as described above. The second involves China, India and Pakistan. China is a point in both triangles, which in effect links the two, and therefore implicates the U.S. and Russia in the nuclear calculations of India and Pakistan. In other words, the process of controlling and eventually eliminating nuclear arsenals must be global because of the ways in which the U.S.-Russia-China triangle influences the China-India-Pakistan one, with knock-on effects in Iran, Israel, North Korea, etc. India and Pakistan are more central in this challenge than is often appreciated.

China is reticent to discuss India as a strategic concern or an important factor in determining China's "requirements" for nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Yet China deploys scores of nuclear nuclear-armed missiles against Indian targets. In deciding whether and how to limit growth, let alone to reduce its nuclear arsenal, China would need to know the limits of India's nuclear arsenal (and possible ballistic missile defenses). India in turn would need to factor Pakistan's present and future nuclear capabilities in determining its own requirements. That is, India's calibrations include both China and Pakistan. Beijing, New Delhi and Islamabad have not come close to readying themselves even to discuss these issues officially. Again, China's interest would also depend on its relationships with the U.S. and Russia. In this sense, reconciling U.S., Russian and Chinese relations is necessary before India and Pakistan could realistically be brought into a multilateral nuclear arms control process, but the five original nuclear-weapon states would naturally want to understand early on whether and how India and Pakistan would be willing to join. Prospects of U.S.-Russian reductions below 1,000 nuclear weapons probably depend on how this set of questions would be answered.

#### 4.5 *Why Further Proliferation Should Not Necessarily Deflect Progress*

In positing scenarios for the evolution of U.S. nuclear forces and policies by 2025, it would be tempting to say that if proliferation occurs, the U.S. would not agree to reduce its nuclear forces to "low numbers," for example, 1,000 or below. Yet this is not necessarily the case. The occurrence of proliferation, or the acute threat of it, would probably be a major impediment to abolishing all nuclear weapons, but it need not impede much more significant reductions. Historically, proliferation has occurred rather slowly and if it occurs again, say in Iran and then one or more of its neighbors, the process is likely to take more than a decade. Also, it would take many years for a proliferator to build more than a small number of deliverable nuclear weapon systems. Even in the midst of reductions to the low hundreds of nuclear weapons, the U.S. could maintain massive numerical and operational advantages over any nuclear upstart.

This is not to say that proliferation, beginning with Iran's possible acquisition of nuclear weapons, would not put a political-psychological break on U.S. interest in reducing the salience and size of its nuclear arsenal. The issue is not whether the U.S. with an arsenal of one thousand (or even several hundred) nuclear weapons could

deter and/or defeat one or more Middle Eastern countries newly possessing nuclear weapons. Rather, if such proliferation occurred, especially beginning in an Iran that has gotten away with breaking out of the nonproliferation system, the U.S. and many other countries—particularly in the vicinity of Iran—would lose confidence in international regimes and their enforcement. A growing sense of nuclear anarchy would prevail which would make further reductions in the size and salience of the nuclear-armed states arsenal politically counter-intuitive.

However, the proliferation crises with North Korea and Iran have brought the problem into sharp focus. It is clear that the current international approach has not been as effective as it might have been in preventing proliferation and that there has to be change. A renewed commitment to nuclear disarmament is something that could make a significant difference to the passion that states in the two regions have for the NPT and the prevention of proliferation. A united front against illicit activities—even in the face of failure—could prove to be the single most effective tool in moving beyond this wave of proliferation and preventing the next.

#### *4.6 Commitment to the Vantage Point Can Help Strengthen Nonproliferation Bulwarks*

Disarmament and the strengthening of nonproliferation rules and enforcement are mutual dependent and reinforcing processes. Abolition will be impossible without much greater confidence in bulwarks against nonproliferation. But many states are reluctant to strengthen nonproliferation rules and their enforcement without confidence that disarmament is being pursued seriously.

Today the international interests have not yet converged to agree on and enforce the nonproliferation elements of the Vantage Point: A ban on the production of fissile material for weapons; a fuel-cycle regime in which high confidence exists that proliferation will not result; a declaratory ban on lending material assistance to unsafeguarded nuclear facilities; agreement on provisions and procedures that substantially improve confidence that states will not withdraw from the NPT and move to acquire nuclear weapons; and implementation of the Additional Protocol in all states with nuclear programs.

The specific terms of each of these measures except the Additional Protocol (which is already defined) would require intense negotiations. Negotiation and enactment of each would require significantly increased cooperation among at a minimum the Conference on Disarmament, the NPT States Parties, the IAEA Board of Governors, UN Security Council members, and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. This paper is not the place to flesh out possible terms. As discussed above, cooperation among the U.S., Russia and China is necessary to generate the necessary political will among the required wider circles of actors.

We can observe that non-nuclear-weapon states will resist measures that they perceive to add discrimination in the nuclear order. Put another way, any new nonproliferation measures must move toward a condition in which the overall nuclear order is more equitable and based on rules that increasingly apply to all states, rather than only to those that lack nuclear weapons or fissile material production capabilities.

Exact formulae for negotiating agreement on any or all of the nonproliferation elements of the Vantage Point cannot be specified by a self-selected group of analysts or eminent persons. What's needed is leadership by representatives of nuclear "haves" and "have nots" to explore whether the political will can be created to develop packages of reciprocal moves that advance the conditions necessary for nuclear abolition, recognizing that this must include strengthening of the nonproliferation regime.

Recent international discussions of the Adelphi Paper, *Abolishing Nuclear Weapons*, indicate that non-nuclear-weapon states will insist on significantly greater reductions in U.S.–Russian arsenals and indications that all nuclear-armed states are prepared to join in a disarmament process before the nonproliferation elements of the Vantage Point would be embraced.<sup>10</sup> They feel they have been duped into agreeing a host of measures, with little save the CTBT that has yet to enter into force, to show for it. These conditions—further U.S.–Russian reductions and the steps necessary to enlist other nuclear-armed states in controls and reductions—are assumed in the Vantage Point. A next step could be to ask leaders of key non-nuclear-weapon states whether the disarmament measures entailed in the Vantage Point would encourage them to consider favorably and eventually negotiate (even informally) on the nonproliferation elements it envisions.

#### 4.7 *Might Cost Considerations Help Move Us to the Vantage Point?*

Cost is another variable that might affect U.S. (and other states') nuclear policies up to 2025. The U.S. now spends approximately \$52 billion annually on nuclear security, including nuclear weapons, delivery systems, command and control, intelligence, counter-proliferation, cooperative threat reduction and so on. The U.S. has been putting off major decisions about whether and how to replace its increasingly obsolescent nuclear weapons infrastructure. Replacement will be enormously expensive. Cost will be affected by scale: the size of the planned-for arsenal affects how many replacement weapons need to be built per year, which in turn affects the scale of needed new infrastructure. If the fiscal situation in the next few years is dire, as seems likely, then Congress will be reluctant to invest in renovating the nuclear weapon production complex and more inclined to lower requirements. Work carried out by Willett<sup>11</sup>, Schwarz and Choubey<sup>12</sup> has demonstrated the enormous fiscal costs, environmental clean-up costs and the opportunity costs created by the global nuclear weapons program in exchange for disputed security benefits and the potential for a humanitarian catastrophe. Indeed in a recent letter to the *Times* of London, former Chief of the Defence Staff Field Marshal Lord Bramall, and Generals Lord Ramsbotham, former Adjutant General, and Sir Hugh Beach, former Deputy

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<sup>10</sup> The perspectives of 17 international commentators will be published in the Carnegie Endowment book, *Abolishing Nuclear Weapons: A Debate*, which will be published in March 2009, and available to Commission members at the February meeting in Washington.

<sup>11</sup> S. Willett, 1) *The Costs of Disarmament—Rethinking the Price Tag: A Methodological Inquiry into the Costs and Benefits of Arms Control*, UNIDIR 2002, 2) *The Costs of Disarmament—Disarming the Costs: Nuclear Arms Control and Nuclear Rearmament*, UNIDIR 2003 and 3) *The Costs of Disarmament Costs of Disarmament—Mortgaging the Future: The South Asian Arms Dynamic*, UNIDIR 2004

<sup>12</sup> S. Schwartz and D. Choubey, *Nuclear Security Spending: Assessing Costs, Examining Priorities*. Carnegie Endowment Report, January 2009

Commander-in-Chief of UK Land Forces, argue that the huge cost of replacing the British nuclear weapons system Trident would be better spent on improving conventional forces. As Lord Ramsbotham put it in a television interview: “We come to the question of affordability. There are two definitions of affordability—can you afford it and can you afford to give up what you have got to give up to afford it?<sup>13</sup>”

## **5. Getting started—moving to the Vantage Point**

In order to move ahead on the plan outlined above to get to the Vantage Point a number of significant actions could be taken in the next few years.

1. Nuclear armed states could set in place regular working-level and high-level meetings to discuss the steps they could take, in the framework of international security, to create the conditions for moving to the Vantage Point.
2. A Ministerial Meeting in the UN General Assembly to support the NPT, paying specific attention to nuclear disarmament, would help set the tone.
3. Each nuclear-armed state could launch studies by their think-tanks, academics and security institutions to examine the requirements for their countries ability to move to the vantage point.
4. States under nuclear umbrellas could launch studies in their think-tanks, academics and security institutions to examine the requirements for their countries ability to move beyond the reliance on the framework of extended nuclear deterrence.
5. Other nuclear-armed states could emulate the UK and Norway in their scientific experiments to learn how a non-nuclear weapon state could be confident in a nuclear weapon state’s nuclear disarmament program.
6. A meeting to discuss the results of the studies and experiments could be fixed for 2015 to devise an international action plan to move to the Vantage Point.

We cannot pre-judge what will be the exact shape and detailed content of what will constitute the Vantage Point. What is important however, is that it takes the world to a far lower number of nuclear weapons—in the hundreds rather than the tens of thousands—and military doctrines that have reduced reliance on nuclear weapons unambiguously. Equally important is that the reductions and reduced reliance will transform the security equations in a positive direction, build confidence and trust, and lead us to a point where the path through the forest through to the summit can be seen and the way toward a world free of nuclear weapons will be visible and navigable.

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<sup>13</sup> Lord Ramsbotham interviewed on BBC2’s Newsnight, quoted in the Daily Mail, 16 January 2009.