Strengthening the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)

• Events

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Transcript by:

DARYL KIMBALL: Welcome. We're going to begin this afternoon's press conference on Strengthening the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which is co-sponsored by the Arms Control Association and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

I am Daryl Kimball, Executive Director of the Arms Control Association and publisher of our monthly journal, Arms Control Today.

I am pleased to share the podium with Joe Cirincione, my fellow co-chair for our joint Campaign to Strengthen the NPT, and Senior Associate and Director for Non-Proliferation at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He is a coauthor Carnegie's new report: Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security.

Also with us is Ambassador Robert Grey, former U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, former Acting Deputy Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and a veteran of NPT Review Conferences past.

And we are also very honored to have with us today one of the leading figures on Capitol Hill, in Congress, on security and nuclear nonproliferation issues: Congressman John Spratt of South Carolina, who has been with the Arms Control Association at briefings in the past, and we're glad to have him again today. He is senior member of the House Armed Services Committee and assistant to the Democratic leader, and he is going to be providing us with his perspectives on the
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Nonproliferation Treaty and on the policy measures that he and many of his colleagues believe need to be taken if the nonproliferation system is to be strengthened.

Now, before I turn the microphone over to my colleagues, it's my job to introduce the subject and the problem, essentially why we are gathered here today.

The Nonproliferation Treaty, as many of you know, is the foundation of global efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and reduce the threat of their use. It codifies a three-part bargain. It must be remembered that it codifies a three-part bargain. It is not just a nonproliferation treaty. First of all it says that states without nuclear weapons pledge not to acquire them. It also says that states with nuclear weapons commit not to transfer nuclear weapons and commit eventually to eliminate them. And third, the NPT allows for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology by non-nuclear weapons states under strict and verifiable control. We'll be talking about each of these three parts of the bargain and how we think they need to be strengthened in a little bit.

But first it must be said that the NPT has succeeded in leading several states to abandon their nuclear weapons ambitions. It's made it far more difficult for other non-nuclear weapons states to secretly acquire the material and the technology to build such weapons, and the NPT process has also encouraged action on several nuclear arms control initiatives and led the nuclear weapons states to pledge not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states, also called negative security assurances, thereby reducing incentives for others to seek nuclear arms for prestige or defense.

Now, the NPT bargain has been reaffirmed at the review conferences which take place every five years, especially at the 1995 review and extension conference when the parties - 180-plus parties - agreed to indefinitely extend the treaty. And then once again in 2000, the NPT states refined the goals and objectives of the treaty, including their commitment to the 1997 IAEA model additional protocol for tougher inspections, and through the 13 practical steps on disarmament and the nuclear weapons states' unequivocal commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

But since that 2000 review conference, the NPT and the broader nuclear nonproliferation system have been under serious stress and strain. In 2003, North Korea announced its withdrawal from the NPT. It's restarted a previously frozen plutonium facility and it claims to have manufactured a handful of nuclear weapons. Recent U.S. diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis have been halfhearted and ineffectual.

Three states in turbulent regions remain outside the NPT. Although it will not admit it, Israel possesses nuclear weapons, and regional rivals, India and Pakistan, possess and continue to improve their arsenals. Pakistan's nuclear establishment of course has spawned black market activity that has aided the nuclear programs of Libya, North Korea, Iran, and maybe others. And the Iranian and North Korean programs also underscore the need for tougher international inspections and it underscores the reality that additional countries could acquire the capacity to produce material for nuclear weapons - highly enriched uranium and plutonium - under the guise of peaceful nuclear endeavors, which are protected under Article IV of the treaty and then could, under the current interpretation of the treaty, leave the treaty without automatic penalties.

There is also the problem with the existing global stockpiles of highly enriched uranium and plutonium. They represent another significant threat. Worldwide there are approximately 1,855 metric tons of plutonium and 1,900 metric tons of highly enriched uranium in both civilian and military stockpiles. And these materials remain far too accessible to terrorists as a result of inadequate security in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere.

Compounding these challenges is the problem of the nuclear weapons states' performance on Article VI commitments on disarmament. The majority of the countries that belong to the NPT today are not confident that the nuclear weapons states intend to fulfill their NPT pledge to eliminate nuclear weapons. Today the United States and Russia still deploy over 5,000 strategic nuclear warheads. Planned reductions are not irreversible and are not sufficiently verifiable and would still leave each side with approximately 2,000 such weapons 20 years after the end of the Cold War in 2012 under the Moscow Treaty.
The U.S. and Russia still maintain thousands of strategic reserve warheads and thousands of sub-strategic or tactical warheads, many of which are very poorly accounted for in Russia. And of course China, France, and the United Kingdom each maintain hundreds of nuclear warheads each.

So in the face of these challenges comes the seventh and one of the most important review conferences of the 1968 nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. This is more than just a once every five years conference to evaluate compliance implementation with the treaty. It's a vital opportunity for U.S. policymakers and other leaders to organize broad international support around an effective plan of action to update and strengthen the treaty. But unfortunately, as we'll discuss here today, the U.S. approach is not likely going to help build agreement on such a program of action. At the last three preparatory committee meetings, which precede this 2005 review conference, U.S. officials have pushed for greater limitations on other states while arguing that the United States needs to do little or nothing more on nuclear disarmament.

Some U.S. and French officials have even suggested that their 2000 NPT review conference commitments on specific disarmament measures - also known as the 13 steps I mentioned before - are no longer relevant. This is a dangerous invitation to other states to ignore their important political commitments made at previous review conferences, not the least of which is the indefinite extension of the treaty in 1995.

Where the Bush administration has recognized important problems and taken the initiative, such as the problem of dual-use uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing technologies, they have run into other problems. Like Iran, the United States opposes IAEA Director ElBaradei's proposal for a five-year moratorium on all such new facilities. Instead, the Bush administration is pursuing an approach that would deny new facilities to produce uranium - to enrich uranium or plutonium to those states that have not already developed them while insisting that the U.S., France, Japan, and others be allowed to expand existing capacities.

As a result, today the states' parties of the Nonproliferation Treaty are more divided than ever and the 2005 review conference is shaping up to be a lost opportunity for the U.S. and other nations to help strengthen the treaty.

It doesn't have to be this way. We believe it is vital to highlight all of these problems and realities and to begin to alter them through a more responsible and practical U.S. policy to strengthen all parts of the NPT bargain. Today we're releasing a statement that's supported by over 20 former senior government officials with direct experience on the NPT, including three former Cabinet secretaries, one of whom is good enough to be here today, Secretary McNamara. It proposes a comprehensive balance and effective set of recommendations that would sustain progress and implementation in compliance with all, not just some, of the treaty's objectives, and the statement is in your packet.

The statement, in our view, is a carefully calibrated plan that addresses the complex political realities of the NPT system, taking into account the various positions of key states, and there are many and various proposals and positions that are out there about how to strengthen the treaty. The Arms Control Association and our NGO colleagues have carefully studied these different proposals and ideas and we've produced a comprehensive resource guide, which is also outside and online at NPT2005.org. This summarizes major proposals to date on how to strengthen the treaty and the different positions of different countries, and we hope this is a useful guide to the conference beyond this press conference.

Now, Joe Cirincione is going to be the next speaker. He is going to go over the statements' key recommendations and provide some other perspectives on what is at stake here at this review conference and why this is such an important opportunity.

JOSEPH CIRINCIONE: Thank you very much, Daryl. It's a pleasure to be here, and thank you all for coming to this windowless room on such a beautiful spring day. We won't keep you very long; we'll let you go back outside and pretend to go back to your offices and take a long walk, go get a cup of coffee, go look at the cherry blossoms, but thanks for spending some time to talk with us about the
dangers of nuclear weapons.

Before I get started I want to thank Daryl Kimball for his leadership in putting together this campaign, putting together this very impressive statement and organizing the signatures for this statement. It was kind of you, Daryl, to let me join you in this effort. I want to recognize his leadership and acknowledge that he’s done the majority of work on this very impressive new campaign.

I'm just going to make three quick points and then get out of the way and let people with greater expertise and authority speak. My three quick points are, one, the Nonproliferation Treaty has worked. This is a record of success. In the 1960s, before the NPT, there were some 23 nations that either had nuclear weapons, had nuclear programs to develop such weapons, or were considering such programs. You can find those countries listed on page 19 of our Universal Compliance Study.

Today, counting North Korea and possibly Iran, there are only 10 such countries. We have half the danger that we faced in the 1960s. The cost of the Nonproliferation Treaty and the interlocking network of treaties and arrangements that grew up around that treaty, because of the work of Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives working together for the past 45 years, there were fewer countries in the world with nuclear weapons, fewer countries in the world considering nuclear weapons, and half the number of nuclear weapons in the world that there was just 20 years ago.

The reason we're here today is because that progress, that momentum that has been built up, is now in jeopardy. We are at a nuclear tipping point. The decisions we make over the next couple of years will decide whether that progress continues or whether a new dangerous way of proliferation is launched upon the world. If we mishandle the situation in North Korea, for example, we could set off a nuclear reaction chain that would spread from Northeast Asia around the globe. If we mishandle the situation with Iran, the same could happen in the Middle East. It wouldn't be one new country that gets nuclear weapons in the Middle East; it could be three or four. And if we mishandle this conference, if we don't seize this opportunity at this conference, you could puncture an unrepairable hole in the proliferation balloon.

This is why the high-level panel for the U.N. secretary general said, quote, "We are approaching a point at which the erosion of the nonproliferation regime could become irreversible and result in a cascade of proliferation." That's what makes this conference different from all other conferences. Many of you who have covered this know that we have had conferences without a consensus statement in the past, but then we had the U.S. and Soviet Union working together, the unity of the P-5 to hold things in balance to get over those, or coalitions of nations who were committed to nonproliferation to hold things together. Things are frayed at this point, dangerously frayed, and the danger is that a conference that ends in disarray, that ends without a consensus statement could result in a catastrophic collapse of confidence in the regime. People will stop investing in the regime. You could see the whole thing go bankrupt. You could see it turn belly-up. That's one of the dangers that we face.

My third and final point is the practical steps are readily available to prevent that foreign policy disaster from happening. We list six steps in our joint statement that can be taken at this NPT conference. We recognize that at the conference itself you can't necessarily get agreement that such and such will now become the new rule, but you can have a consensus statement that moves in that direction, that expresses the joint support for these steps, that puts new energy into some of these proposals that are already under discussion. Let me just tick them off real quick.

Number one - completely non-controversial: tougher export controls. Who doesn't think that after AQ Khan that we need tougher export controls? We just passed U.N. Resolution 1540 that commits the nations of the U.N. to develop tougher national export controls. What we need is to make that happen now, to put the will behind it, to turn that sentiment into actual implemented laws.

Number two: the additional protocol. These experiences in Iran and Iraq and Libya have made it absolutely clear we need tougher inspections, we need more intrusive inspections, in some cases coercive inspections, as Carnegie recommended as an alternative to going to war in Iraq. The
agreement that is out there that is developing that now needs to be carried over the finish line is that the additional protocol, these tougher inspections for the IAEA, International Atomic Energy Agency, should become the norm. Every country should adopt the additional protocol. Every country should have the kinds of inspections that Iran has agreed to now. We know much more about Iran's nuclear program now than we did two years ago, thanks in great part to the expanded abilities of the inspectors.

Number three: we need to halt uranium enrichment and other nuclear fuel cycle activities in Iran and dismantle North Korea's nuclear weapons capability. There is agreement about this in most of the leading countries of the world. We need to consolidate this; we need to make sure that no new nation develops uranium enrichment technologies. We outline in Universal Compliance, if you want to stop Iran from getting uranium enrichment technology, it can't be just a country-specific prohibition; it has to be a new universal standard. No new country should have this uranium enrichment capability; not Brazil, not South Korea or any other country that's considering it. There is a glut of uranium enrichment capability in the world. There is no economic justification for a new nation starting such a capability.

Number four: accelerate the implementation of the nuclear weapons states' disarmament obligations. Even in those countries that have conservative administrations, there is a growing sense that nuclear weapons are the weapons of the past; that they serve no conceivable military mission other than to prevent someone else from using nuclear weapons against you. Now, even here in this country we have a debate - some want to adopt nuclear weapons for bunker-buster missions, to dig out holes in enemy fortifications, but that is a minority. That is a minority. Most people recognize that there is a firm barrier between conventional forces and nuclear forces and that we need far fewer nuclear weapons than we have now. We can make progress in this regard. The United States right now has 10,000 nuclear weapons. For what? Russia has about 17,000 nuclear weapons. For what? Clearly we can move much more quickly in this direction and that will help our nonproliferation across the board. As we say in Universal Compliance, our nonproliferation imperatives must drive U.S. nuclear policy right now - must drive nuclear policy. Our desire to have fewer nuclear weapons in the world must be taken up and must inform our own disposition of our own nuclear weapons.

Number five, really quickly: secure all nuclear weapons-usable material in the world today. If you want to stop nuclear terrorism, there is an easy solution: you stop terrorists from getting the weapons in the first place. No nuclear material, no nuclear bombs. It's that simple. We can secure and eliminate all known nuclear explosive material in the world. Fortunately there are government programs in the United States designed to do this; we just have to accelerate them. We need the political will; we need the international cooperation to get this done in the next four years. This is something we can do, and you can feel a push developing to accelerate these programs. The Nonproliferation Treaty can help accelerate those efforts.

Finally, clarify that no new nation can withdraw scot-free from the Nonproliferation Treaty. "Make nonproliferation irreversible" is the way we say it in Universal Compliance. These are real proposals being under consideration by real nations to hold a country that withdraws from the NPT responsible for the violations that it committed while a member of that treaty, to make sure that any material acquired by a country for peaceful purposes cannot be then used by a country that withdraws from the treaty for non-peaceful purposes. There should be a contractual understanding here: if you acquire nuclear technologies while a member of the NPT, you can't just leave and keep using those technologies for weapons purposes. We should be able to get a consensus at the NPT review conference on this fundamental issue, and if we can't get a consensus, we should clearly identify those who oppose it, raising suspicions about their true intentions. If you're not going to agree to this, why not? Why not?

These are the kinds of practical steps that these 23 eminent [signatories] have agreed to. It's my honor to be associated with their sentiments, with their ideas, and with their reputations.

Thank you, Daryl.

MR. KIMBALL: Ambassador Grey?
ROBERT GREY: Someone once asked General Marshall how he could be so resolute during the Second World War, and he said, "Because I've seen things much worse." I don't know if I've seen things much worse in the field I'm working in. I'm going to just review what happened in 1995 and 2000 and contrast it with what's happening now. You've heard a lot of facts. I'm going to give some more but they're going to be very brief.

In 1995 - and I think the difference between 1995, 2000, 2005 is simply American leadership. When we went in in 1995 to the review conference, we had locked up about over 100 co-sponsors supporting the indefinite extension of the treaty. We needed to get more votes and we went out there and got them. We compromised on the Article VI obligations for nuclear disarmament. We accepted, for example, a more rigorous review program to get additional votes, and we also agreed to accept a resolution on a Middle East nuclear free zone. As a result of that we had a balanced outcome. We got agreement, we got an indefinite extension, and we went ahead.

In 2000 we looked at what was heading towards us and we didn't like it. We got together and plotted a strategy. We went out there and sold it in a very difficult process with our nuclear allies, or associates if you want to call it that way - the other permanent four that had the weapons. And we also sold it to a middle power group of people, some aligned with us, some not, and we got agreement. We couldn't have gotten that agreement without American leadership because we had to take the French along and the Russians along, along with Mexico and a few other people. That's a tough sell. But we got a balanced outcome, and if we hadn't taken the role, the French, the Russians and the Chinese would have been sitting there watching us dangle in the wind and wouldn't care. They don't care if there is an outcome. It's we that get the outcomes when we do it.

Now we go into this particular conference, and what we're facing here is a radical departure from past American practice. We have a statement the president issued on March 7th on the NPT in which he stresses over and over again nonproliferation, nonproliferation, nonproliferation, but there is not one mention of our obligations under Article VI to support the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons, which is a future commitment, not a present commitment.

Now, the credibility of this whole thing rests on a bargain, as Daryl pointed out, and if we're not prepared to honor our part of the bargain, or at least make a passing reference to it, it's inconceivable that we're going to get the kind of cooperation we need from the other non-nuclear members of the NPT to agree to strengthening and safeguarding IAEA inspections and other things, and other agreements - their ability to receive this stuff. You can't get from here to there. This is a negotiating process and you can't expect other people to have loopholes that are available to them for the peaceful transfer of nuclear technologies - which could if not strengthen, lead to ultimately a renunciation and addition of a nuclear weapon in their hands - if we're not prepared to accept and reiterate what we accepted in 2000 and earlier, our commitment to seek in the future to ultimately eliminate these weapons. And that's the problem.

The other thing is that across the whole spectrum of arms control, and indeed in other international agreements and institutions, we're seeing a wholesale retreat from any sense that we have a vested interest in a successful outcome, whether it's the invasion of Iraq, backing off of our commitment for a fissile material cutoff treaty, an unwillingness to even contemplate the possibility of ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the building of a ballistic missile defense, the enthusiasm for nuclear weapons in a warfighting role, all of these things erode the credibility of the nonproliferation regime. We can't tell people don't do what I do; do what I say, which is in essence not a viable bargaining position in the NPT, in the United States, the UN Security Council and elsewhere.

I have the sneaking suspicion that one outcome that some people in this administration might be looking for is the Proliferation Security Initiative locked into Resolution 1540 and somehow assuming that gives us the right to take unilateral action on our own to discourage would-be proliferators, and I think that would be a recipe for disaster.

Thank you.

MR. KIMBALL: Thank you, Ambassador Grey.
Representative Spratt, thank you for being here - your view from the other side of town.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN SPRATT (D-SC): Daryl, I want to thank you and Joe Cirincione and Ambassador Robert Grey for the excellent work you've done on this project and for allowing me this chance to speak.

If you recall the first presidential debate last fall, Senator Kerry and President Bush were asked to identify the gravest threat facing the United States and both replied, without hesitation, terrorists with nuclear weapons. Graham Allison has called this a "preventable catastrophe." If we are to prevent such a catastrophe, and we must, any plan must begin with the Nonproliferation Treaty. It's the most effective international tool we have, but to be relevant it has to be made more effective.

The NPT embodies one of the best security bargains we ever struck. States without nuclear weapons pledged not to acquire them. States with nuclear weapons agree eventually to eliminate them, and they also agree to make nuclear technology available to non-nuclear states, provided it's used for peaceful purposes and is subject to inspection.

The NPT marshals the world -[180 some countries] -- against nuclear weapons with a collective force that we couldn't muster on our own, and it provides a framework and a forum for handling the problems that continually arise. The United States has plenty of nonproliferation programs. We need nonproliferation partners and the NPT helps supply them.

When noncompliance is found or cheating occurs, the NPT allows the United States to take action with other states under the auspices of the treaty and not take unilateral preemptive action. In their joint statement, the Carnegie Endowment and the Arms Control Association both acknowledge the importance of the NPT and what it has accomplished, but they recognize that the NPT has to be made stronger if it's to continue being effective. They lay out a series of ideas for bolstering the treaties, and building on their work, we'll introduce this week a resolution in Congress supporting these recommendations as U.S. policy going into the NPT conference for the year 2005.

Our resolution will be to some extent what Joe and Daryl have both already iterated, but nevertheless it will embody these points. We'll call upon the participants in the review conference to, one, establish stronger controls on the dissemination of nuclear weapons technology; two, strengthen IAEA inspections and ratify the additional protocol; next, continue the moratorium on nuclear test explosions and eventually ratify the CTBT, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; next, pursue a verifiable treaty halting the production of new fissile material for us in nuclear weapons; next, refrain from developing new nuclear weapons; next, secure nuclear materials by the strictest standards feasible; next, tighten export controls, national and international, over nuclear materials and nuclear technology; next, clarify that no state can withdraw from the NPT and retain nuclear materials acquired for peaceful purposes; and finally, strengthen the Proliferation Security Initiative.

Now, to the extent that there are points that I've just made that involve concessions on our part, I want to emphasize that these are not unilateral concessions we're calling for; these are reciprocal concessions designed to induce agreement to a stronger NPT regime. These also, I should emphasize, are not new ideas. Many of them were among the 13 steps agreed to at the least review conference in the year 2000. Others, like the additional protocol, tighter export controls, and the Proliferation Security Initiative, are gleaned from speeches that were made by the president over the last year and a half and members of his administration: two former secretaries of defense, one former secretary of state, seven ambassadors and a host of other military and diplomatic leaders have signed onto the Carnegie/ACA letter, which is a testament to the gravity of this problem.

We will carry their ideas and their fervor to Capitol Hill and seek to marshal support for our resolution and for the proposition that the NPT is indispensable protection against the gravest threat we face, but it must be made stronger if we are to keep the world's most dangerous weapons out of the hands of the world's most dangerous people.

Thank you very much.
MR. KIMBALL: Thank you very much, Congressman Spratt, and thank you for once again stepping up to the plate on these issues as you have for many, many years. We're looking forward to working with you on that resolution.

I would also just like to point out that the co-sponsor of that resolution, Ed Markey of Massachusetts, has a statement, that is out on the table, I believe, or it might be in the packet, relating to the NPT and the resolution also.

REP. SPRATT: Daryl, I used "we" without an antecedent to explain who we are. It certainly includes Ed Markey. We think it'll include others. We're negotiating with others or discussing with others their support of this resolution today and through the rest of this week.

MR. KIMBALL: Thank you for that clarification.

So I think you will have gotten our point by now, which is that the treaty needs to be reinforced, but the bargain can only be reinforced if we pay attention to all aspects of it in that it takes stronger U.S. leadership than we see today. And then finally, that this review conference is not just simply a debating exercise but it is a real and important opportunity that cannot be missed, given the enormous challenges the system faces today, and that the success of this conference really needs to be judged on the ability of the states, including the U.S., to harness agreement, to work together on specific additional steps that will strengthen the treaty regime.

We're going to open up the floor to your questions to any one of us here at the table, and go for as long as you have questions.

Yes, sir, and if you could identify yourself, please.

Q: (Off mike) Is it safe to say that the two most immediate and perilous problems are uranium enrichment, as opposed to plutonium, and loopholes in export controls?

MR. CIRINCIONE: Two most important problems? Let me think about this for a second. I would say if you think that the number one threat that the United States faces is the threat of nuclear terrorism - there's lots of problems out there, lots of threats, but number one, nuclear terrorism - then the main way to stop nuclear terrorism is to immediately secure all known supplies of highly enriched uranium.

So in this regard, the spread of uranium enrichment technologies increases the supply available for potential terrorist theft or diversion. Secondly, you could argue the next-greatest threat the United States faces is the development of new - emergence of new nuclear nations. And that develops from countries possibly pursuing these peaceful programs - uranium enrichment capability for fuel rods that could be turned at a moment's notice to uranium enrichment capabilities for nuclear weapons.

So for me personally, the issue of uranium - the issue of the supply of highly enriched uranium in the world and the emergence of new capabilities for producing highly enriched uranium is probably the number one problem that we face. And you say as opposed to plutonium reprocessing - I would agree with that. What were you getting at with that?

Q: (Off mike) - emerge as one the production of enriched uranium and the capability to do it in a whole new class of countries, some of which are highly unstable right now and others where we simply don't have very good relations and where civilian programs could just sort of drift along the way - well, Iran's is hardly drifting along, but could kick up like Iran's is.

MR. CIRINCIONE: Daryl, do you want to add to that?

MR. KIMBALL: Well, the problem of dual-use fissile material production is not a new one. And this came up in the '70s. It's been debated before, but I think what makes this important today is that we're seeing Libya, Iran, and North Korea all acquiring these capabilities, either under the guise of
peaceful uses or through surreptitious means, either with the help of the Khan network or in the case of North Korea, getting the assistance and then diverting some of their plutonium in the early 1990s before the IAEA caught them.

So we see once again the real perils of this reality of dual-use facilities, and we have another historic opportunity to try to reshape the way the Nonproliferation Treaty is interpreted, the way the rules are used, and if we cannot, at this juncture, find some way to reach consensus around limiting these technologies in a way that respects that Article VI right to peaceful uses, then I think we will have missed a huge opportunity that we could pay for down the road.

So anyway, your question, I think I would answer it in the same way that Joe did. I would also say that one of the other most urgent and important problems is the problem of the AQ Khan black market network, which is not yet resolved, in my view.

Q: Isn't that an export control problem?

MR. KIMBALL: It's an export control problem plus it's a problem relating to the fact that we have three states outside of the NPT system, including Pakistan.

Yes, sir.

Q: (Off mike) - Korean Daily News. I'd like to ask about the North Korean nuclear issue. North Korea already withdrew from the NPT treaty, as you know. Also, even though the treaty is - (off mike) - through all five NPT review conferences, there are no ways to make - (off mike) - on nonmembers of the treaty, like North Korea. Could you address that matter?

MR. KIMBALL: If you could just restate that - or -

MR. CIRINCIONE: I understand. So you're saying that even if we reach a consensus at the NPT review conference it doesn't apply to the countries that are not members, such as North Korea. This is something the ambassador might want to address, but North Korea's withdrawal is actually not yet recognized by many of the member states of the Nonproliferation Treaty, and I'm not willing to actually recognize it here. But your point is still well taken.

How do you get North Korea to agree to the norms that the rest of the world is agreeing on? Well, clearly you have to negotiate directly with North Korea. This is a part of the nonproliferation dilemma we face but it can't be addressed solely through a nonproliferation conference. There has to be, through the mechanism of the six-party talks, direct U.S.-North Korean negotiations to try and end - reach an agreement with North Korea where they will voluntarily end and irreversibly dismantle their nuclear weapons program. Then you're in a position to - we admit North Korea to the Nonproliferation Treaty or clarify that it actually never left, but reinstate the Nonproliferation Treaty norms and procedures on North Korea.

I actually believe such an agreement could be reached with North Korea and that one of the principle obstacles we now face is a lack of a clear policy on the part of the United States for actually negotiating a verifiable end to North Korea's programs.

But Ambassador Grey, I was wondering if you had thoughts on that.

AMB. GREY: Well, in 2000 they were very much in evidence at the NPT review conference. I never checked to see if they were behind their nameplate, but they were certainly around and they'll certainly be around this time. And I think if we can get a consensus outcome - not necessarily a final document but a consensus outcome that lays out clearly the lines upon which we have to proceed, that that will induce them ultimately to come in, because clearly South Korea, Japan, China and Russia do not want them to develop a nuclear capability and are working behind the scenes with us to try to bring them along.

So I think if you get a consensus emerging from the entire membership, that'll lead them to hopefully take the right decision, although you never know.
MR. CIRINCIONE: Right, you want to have an outcome that raises the value of the treaty and raises the value of membership, not devalues those.

AMB. GREY: That's right. That's exactly right, and that's what we're going to be striving to do.

Q: Just to follow up, but you don't have enough time to make North Korea follow the international law because the NPT review conference will be held in May, right, so you don't have enough time before that.

MR. CIRINCIONE: That's right; the Nonproliferation Treaty review conference is not going to solve the North Korean problem. You need parallel, independent negotiations and diplomacy to solve the North Korean problem in particular.

MR. KIMBALL: And that is a concept that is embedded in our statement, which is that the Nonproliferation Treaty alone cannot solve all of these proliferation problems because we have tensions in key regions - in South Asia, the Middle East and Northeast Asia in particular, that require work to address the underlying insecurities that are driving these states to contemplate or to pursue nuclear weapons. That's not the only aspect of the problem but the NPT cannot work in isolation.

Other questions? I think we had a couple over here.

Yes, sir?

Q: Thank you. Masa Daso (ph), Japanese Kyodo News. Thank you so much for interesting presentation today. I have a couple of questions. First, Mr. Congressman Spratt, it's good to see you again. I would ask you about your prospect on the passage of this resolution. What - (off mike)?

REP. SPRATT: How does the resolution get handled? It'll be referred to the International Relations Committee of the House. I don't know that we'll have anybody in the Senate propose it. If we did it would certainly strengthen it, but the first step we will take will be to come up with some names, sponsors on it who will attract other support. We will then file it. It'll then be referred to the committee, and it could well be that we'll have a committee hearing. If we get enough supporters, more than 218, more than half the House, then we have a shot, a chance of coming to the floor, but it's not assured by any means.

Q: So far are you confident of getting a 218 vote - I mean - (off mike)?

REP. SPRATT: I think we'll get a respectable number. Having not shopped it, not politicked at all in the House to find out who might be supportive, who might be interested I wouldn't want to hazard a guess, but I think we'll get a respectable number of supporters on this resolution and I would hope more than half the House.

Q: Thank you.

Also, can I ask you, Mr. Kimball or Mr. Cirincione about this resolution statement, especially regarding point number six - (off mike)? How you can achieve this - (off mike)? And also, second question is your statement didn't mention any legal binding negative security assurance. That was pointed out five years ago - (off mike).

MR. CIRINCIONE: I immediately thought of Spurgeon Keeny when you raised your first point because Spurgeon is the one who taught me that it's impossible to amend the Nonproliferation Treaty. It's a very difficult and lengthy procedure. You need the agreement of all the parties to this treaty. So for all practical purposes you cannot change the treaty, and I don't think it would be wise policy to open this up for amendments because we might have ideas of how we wanted to amend it but it would become a free-for-all very quickly.

So the way you would do this is by - the mechanism we propose is by Security Council resolution, that the U.N. Security Council would pass a resolution, similar to the resolution 1540 that has
passed, that would clarify that states-parties to the NPT could not use nuclear technologies acquired for peaceful purposes, while members of the treaty, for non-peaceful purposes upon withdrawal from the treaty. The second resolution would clarify that any state that withdrew from the Nonproliferation Treaty was still responsible for any violations committed while a member state in the treaty. This of course is the situation we face with North Korea where North Korea is acting as if now that it says it's withdrawn that it's no longer responsible for the violations that it committed. That's an unacceptable situation. We think there's actually some very serious interest among some leading nations for these kinds of resolutions and I expect this to become a topic of discussion at the Nonproliferation Treaty review conference. I'd be watching members' opening statements very carefully in the first week to see which nations propose these kinds of changes and how much attention they attract.

MR. KIMBALL: And it might conceivably be an item upon which states reach consensus in a final conference document on that point number six.

You asked about negative security assurances and why we haven't recommended legally binding negative security assurances and have instead called for the reiteration of existing assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states that they will not be subjected nuclear attack, which were made in the context of the 1995 review conference. As I said before, this statement is calibrated for this conference and for what the political traffic might bear, and we felt that it would be most important in the context of the nuclear-weapon states' Article VI-related commitments that, among those commitments, it would be important simply to reiterate those past negative security assurances because since 1995 there have been statements by, in particular, U.S. political figures that have undermined the credibility of that 1995 negative security assurance made by all five of the recognized nuclear-weapon states. So that alone we think would be very important in reaffirming past commitments and the credibility of those past commitments.

I had one gentleman in the back and then we'll move over here. Yes.

Q: (Off mike.) A brief question. Why do you think the administration is lacking the willingness to take leadership? (Off mike) - identify it as a great threat basically?

AMB. GREY: Well, I think that they're extremely reluctant to accept anything on the Article VI question, the ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. And this has been consistent from the time they came into office and even before, that they're very suspicious - I don't think Mr. Bolton and company have ever seen an international organization or an international agreement they're very fond of. And so this is, as I said, a radical departure from 50 years of past practice. And as a result I think our national security has suffered enormously.

Someone remarked on the television the other night that - when I think it was Ambassador Stevenson went to Paris during the Cuban missile crisis and he brought documentary evidence - pictures, photographs - General de Gaulle said very simply, "If the president of the United States tells me it's a problem, I don't have to look at any pictures." I wonder whether that would happen today.

MR. KIMBALL: Congressman Spratt, do you want to hazard into this dangerous question perhaps or -

REP. SPRATT: I don't have anything to add.

MR. KIMBALL: Okay. Well, I wanted to just offer an observation because it goes back to some of our previous comments, which has to do with the fact that this administration is looking at the proliferation problem through a prism that is, I think, unique to this administration and unlike past administrations, which is that the proliferation problem is a problem of rogue states in the possession of the world's most dangerous weapons, not the most dangerous weapons in the hands of many different states. And so you see the administration pursuing policies through the NPT and elsewhere that focus on certain states that are dangerous but not focusing as aggressively on states that we consider to be friendly. And this kind of approach is recognized, is seen by other states as not being balanced and is not, in the context of the NPT, going to produce the kinds of results that we need because it's only through the cooperation of all the states in the NPT that we're going to get
agreement on a new action plan.

Joe, did you have anything to add?

MR. CIRINCIONE: Very quickly, we have a phrase in the Universal Compliance report that says that the success of the nonproliferation regime depends on more resolve than previous administrations could muster and more international cooperation than this administration appreciates. And we've made mistakes in the past; we're making a different kind of mistake now; that this administration emphasizes - and you'll hear this in the U.S. approach to the Nonproliferation Treaty review conference - compliance with the Nonproliferation Treaty. And what they mean by that is other people's compliance with the treaty, and that this can be achieved by greater U.S. resolve to punish people who are not complying. It's obvious to us that in order to get that compliance you need two things: one, you need the cooperation of a large coalition of nations to enforce that compliance; and two, there has to be compliance with the universal standard that applies fairly to all the parties, not a standard that the U.S. imposes.

I believe one of the reasons you're not seeing the U.S. administration pay sufficient attention to this review conference is they value it less than previous administrations. They don't appreciate its importance in achieving the goals that the administration themselves say they have, and that is one of our greatest obstacles in getting a satisfactory - that is, a non-disaster outcome to the review conference.

MR. KIMBALL: Yes, sir?

Q: (Off mike) - Global Green USA. I have a question about the official agenda for the May review. I'm not sure how important it's been in the past but everything in your statement is going to be addressed at the meeting. If there is an official agenda, does it address those things? If there isn't, are we far behind compared to previous reviews, and what is the danger of that?

AMB. GREY: There is no agreement on an agenda at the moment. It's unlikely to be one before the conference begins, and if you begin a conference without an agenda, the outcome is generally chaos.

Q: That's what I was afraid of.

MR. CIRINCIONE: We had a very helpful meeting with Sergio Duarte. The Brazilian ambassador who is going to be the president of the review conference, and he's actually hopeful that he can hammer out an agenda through a series of private meetings before the review conference, but this is the first sign to look for. That will be a sign: do we have a green, yellow, or red light flashing here? Do we have an agenda on the day the conference opens?

MR. KIMBALL: Okay. Secretary McNamara?

SEC. ROBERT McNAMARA: Robert McNamara. Today in the U.S., many knowledgeable people, many experts, do not believe the U.S. has any intention of fulfilling its obligations under Article VI. If the U.S. representatives are questioned on that point in their review conference, as I'm sure they will be, how will they respond? What are their intentions and prospective actions? If they're not convincing, what will the effect be?

MR. KIMBALL: Well, February 3rd the Arms Control Association hosted another session. We had Assistant Secretary of State Steve Rademaker come and address this question. We also had the Brazilian ambassador to the United States there, and they discussed these issues. And essentially what Steve Rademaker said - and I think the U.S. is going to repeat it at the conference - is that the United States does respect and understand its Article VI obligations. They're going to argue that the United States has been making good progress on its Article VI obligations. They will cite the - and it is true - the enormous progress since the end of the Cold War, reducing the operationally deployed stockpiles. They will describe, and it is true, the enormous progress in helping to secure the stockpiles of Russian and former Soviet nuclear chemical, biological weapons. And they will likely say that other aspects of our Article VI commitments that were enumerated at the 2000 review
conference and also in the 1995 review conference were from a different time and we've moved on.

So for instance, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which was a key part of the decision to extend the treaty indefinitely, is something the administration does not support, as is a verifiable treaty to end the production of fissile material for weapons. They are also going to point out that the Moscow Treaty of 2002 does not have additional verification provisions and does not require the dismantlement of delivery systems because the U.S. and Russia have a new relationship.

So this is what they're likely to argue. What they're likely going to get in response is, well, you may make that argument but at the same time the United States has made solemn political commitments at these conferences. The United States has supported these objectives, the test ban, the fissile material treaty, further and deeper irreversible reductions, and you have not respected those obligations.

And so I think it is going to lead to a great deal of consternation, a lot of resentment, and it is going to leave many of the non-nuclear-weapon states to think again whether that decision in 1995 to extend the treaty indefinitely was a good one, and it is going to make it harder for the U.S. to get agreement on some of the very good ideas that President Bush has put forward with respect to restricting the nuclear fuel cycle with respect to getting additional countries to sign onto the additional protocol.

SEC. MCNAMARA: I think it's important to recognize the language of Article VI does not refer to reductions; it talks about elimination.

MR. KIMBALL: And an end to the arms race.

MR. CIRINCIONE: Well, we did hear Secretary Rademaker say, well, it talks about negotiations for eliminations. It doesn't say we actually have to do it.

(Cross talk.)

SEC. MCNAMARA: -- negotiations, and we don't plan to.

MR. CIRINCIONE: (Chuckles.) I know; there is some fine hair-splitting that's going on among some quarters in the administration but I think we're seeing somewhat of a retreat from some of the statements we heard earlier in the year as more of the reality starts to seep in.

AMB. GREY: Well, briefly put, when the president made his statement on March 7th he referred to the Moscow Treaty as evidence that we're complying with our NPT obligations. Well, the Moscow Treaty is not verifiable, it's not transparent, and it's not irreversible, and it's not credible, that argument.

SEC. MCNAMARA: Then it's not elimination.

AMB. GREY: It's not elimination, no.

MR. KIMBALL: Congressman Spratt?

REP. SPRATT: I wasn't there, Mr. Secretary, but as I understand it, in 2000 a number of different commitments had been proposed before the beginning of the negotiations, the review, and these were put deliberately in an additional statement with the recognition that not being text they weren't binding upon the sovereign authority of the United States. However, the other members who were there felt that there was a good-faith commitment to abide by and to seek the fulfillment of these propositions. They simply weren't quite as strict and as binding and as explicit as the treaty itself.

And so, now five years later the commitments in this additional statement have come back to roost on the participants - on the shoulders of the United States at the outset of the next review conference.
SEC. MCNAMARA: Well, correct me if I'm wrong: this treaty, NPT, was signed by a president, it was submitted to the Senate, it was ratified by the Senate; it is today the law of the land.

REP. SPRATT: That's correct.

SEC. MCNAMARA: We are not adhering to Article VI; we don't plan to and intend to. I would assume that's going to be a problem.

MR. CIRINCIONE: I was struck by Brent Scowcroft's comments last month. You know, he was a member of the high-level panel on Threats, Challenges and Opportunities that reported to the U.N. secretary general. And he was at a session at Carnegie and he said he was really surprised in their discussions at the international anger at the failure of the United States to live up to its Article VI commitments. It's often surprising how insulated leading experts - leading officials can be in the United States. They don't really realize how the rest of the world views us, how the rest of the world sees us. This is going to be one of the big clashes at this conference.

MR. KIMBALL: Yes, sir; you've been waiting.

Q: I'm Jeff Johnson. I work for a chemical science magazine - Chemical & Engineering news. I'm just trying to - you've answered parts of this since I had my hand up before, but what would you define as success at this conference? What are your goals?

MR. CIRINCIONE: I would tell you quite frankly, in discussions that we've had with delegates from many nations around the world, leading up to this - and others can give their personal views - I think at this point people want to prevent a disaster. What you want to do is keep the wall intact. Don't poke any holes in this dyke. And so what they want is to end the conference with a consensus statement, and that right now is the lowest-common denominator of success. Beyond that, many delegates are hoping that that statement can point the way toward progress on some of these issues, encourage, for example, the further explanation of ways to prohibit the spread of uranium-enrichment technologies and assure adequate supplies of fuel for civilian nuclear power plants - that kind of phrasing, that kind of pointing to the future.

I was wondering if others might share their views on the conference.

REP. SPRATT: If we could close the nuclear fuel loophole along the lines that Bill Perry and Ash Carter proposed and the president himself endorsed on February 11th at the War College, that would be a great success, but it is also a big encumbrance on the non-nuclear states and I think it's a little wishful to think it can be accomplished but it is a worthy goal to pursue and if we succeeded substantially it would be a big success I think, and worth concessions on our part in order to achieve.

AMB. GREY: I would agree with that, but I have to point out that in the past, three of these conferences didn't succeed in getting a final document, and I suspect that's where we'll end up this time, and if we don't get - any document or any final statement is not good if it retreats from what we agreed to in 2000, and I think we should try to come out - if we can't get a consensus to lead us forward we ought to at least not take steps backwards, and we keep - to use another metaphor - the lantern on the levee so that four years from now we can go in and push again. But success or failure is not judged by getting an inadequate final document; it's by getting a decent one. If we can't get a decent one let's keep our principles on the table so we can come back to them in happier times.

MR. KIMBALL: I would agree with all my colleagues and I would just add that, I mean, what success is not is not - it is not looking at this conference as a meeting through which the United States simply needs to survive, a meeting that the United States needs to simply avoid getting blamed for dragging down. I mean the United States needs to look at this as much more. Because of the many challenges that the system faces, we cannot afford to look at this as an excruciating exercise that we simply need to bear and then we move on to other matters. So that's what success is not.

And I would agree with Joe, the congressman, and Ambassador Grey that we need to try to achieve some level of agreement that ideally reinforces past commitments and in some ways can move us forward, for instance, in reaching agreement that there do need to be new restrictions on the
sensitive fuel cycle activities, but the way we're currently moving, that outcome I don't think is likely.

Yes, sir, over there and then we'll move over here.

Q: (Off mike.) My question is what kind of role do you expect - (off mike) - New Agenda Coalition - (off mike) - 13 steps. So do you think they are still influential to the old countries to get the resolution - (off mike)?

AMB. GREY: Absolutely. They played a crucial role in 2000. They passed a resolution in the General Assembly last fall, laying out some positive steps forward. That's balanced. It's come a long way towards meeting some of the concerns of the nuclear-weapon states and it represents, I think, a reasonable compromise that people could rally around.

So far the nuclear powers have not rallied round it, but I do think that if it's on the table it should be kept on the table and that we shouldn't walk away from it. And if we push too far, that agenda could crack wide open and we could get into a slinging match, which is not helpful. It took six or seven years to get us to where we are now through the efforts of the New Agenda people, and I think they deserve our support and encouragement and I would be very disappointed if they allowed their position to be taken off the table or compromised any further. I think frankly they've gone about as far as they can go. Now it's time for the nuclear-weapon states to go a little bit.

MR. KIMBALL: I would just note that the New Agenda Coalition put forward a resolution at the U.N. last fall that gained a greater level of support than their previous resolutions had, including the support of many of the non-nuclear European states.

AMB. GREY: Eight.

MR. KIMBALL: Eight of them.

AMB. GREY: Eight NATO countries supported them.

MR. KIMBALL: Eight NATO countries. So I think what we're seeing here is we're seeing many of our own U.S. allies expressing their own support for these disarmament measures that are part of the nonproliferation bargain, and that's something also very important to consider in the future.

MR. CIRINCIONE: It's very interesting how, at these conferences, crucial roles can be played by relatively small countries. And we've seen this in the past and I'd be looking at the delegations in countries including Australia, South Africa, possibly Sweden -

MR. KIMBALL: Japan.

MR. CIRINCIONE: Japan - that's not exactly a small country - Japan, as countries who can play a critical role in working - out of the spotlight, working in these meetings that take place away from the microphones to see if you can forge a consensus. Some of these countries are members of the New Agenda Coalition. There's another group called the Middle Powers Initiative that are working, that are already holding meetings, trying to forge some consensus. An interesting development to watch is if the European Union is going to come into this conference for the first time with a unified statement. And what's interesting about that is that there are two nuclear-weapon states in the European Union. So it will be interesting to watch how that statement ends up. I understand the discussions have been somewhat heated so far. So we'll see how that works.

And interestingly, so far there is not a P-5 statement. Often, before a conference opens, there will be a unified statement of the five recognized nuclear powers. As far as I understand it, no such statement is in the works. A P-5 statement could be a very welcome development if it recognizes and reaffirms the disarmament obligations of those five countries. That's the kind of thing the U.S. could be working on right now, but apparently is not.

So all of these developments will be in the mix. All of this will be going on. You'll see a lot of this activity developing next week and then in the final two weeks of April, leading up to that opening
week of the NPT conference, and that's where the rubber hits the road, where senior officials from these different countries will start making their opening statements and you'll get a much better understanding of what the lay of the land is in those first few days of the conference.

**AMB. GREY:** Apropos of that, the Australian parliament and the European parliament have passed resolutions along the lines, the one that ... is going to introduce.

**MR. KIMBALL:** I think we have time for a couple more questions.

Yes, sir?

**Q:** Two questions; a quick one for Ambassador Grey. I thought I heard you say, but I may be wrong, are the North Koreans sending a delegation to the conference despite their announcement that they have withdrawn from the treaty? And second, for Congressman Spratt, Daryl Kimball and Joe Cirincione, they talk about the importance of devaluing nuclear weapons, that these are weapons of the past and that they are sort of political liabilities and not helpful in war planning. How much traction are those kind of arguments getting in your committee?

**REP. SPRATT:** You go first. (Laughter.)

**AMB. GREY:** I can answer very simply. It doesn't make any difference whether they are officially participating in the conference or not. It's the United Nations and they are very much in evidence. I see more of my Pakistani friends at the NPT review conference than I frequently do at the disarmament conference where they are sitting. Everybody that's got a - and the Israelis are quite in evidence too. So a lot of these so-called non-participants are participating actively in that environment.

**REP. SPRATT:** There have always been questions as to whether or not we would indeed use nuclear weapons, particularly in a tactical situation where the strategic integrity of the United States was not at stake. Those questions have probably been heightened since the development of standoff platforms and precision-guided munitions, which make it more compelling than ever to use conventional weapons as opposed to reaching for some nuclear alternative.

When the first Persian Gulf War was over - Desert Shield / Desert Storm - General Horner came back and he was a - at the time a resident of my district because he was commander, 9th Air Force, based in my district, and he said, I have seen the future and it works; I've seen what standoff, precision-guided munitions can do and I think they've rendered nuclear weapons largely obsolete.

And I think there is a sense of that, but nobody is absolutely - they understand it but they aren't yet committed to the notion that they are totally futile. Otherwise, why would we even be talking about a Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator? One of the problems I have that is it renews the notion that there might be tactical utility to nuclear weapons, and I don't think there's ever tactical utility in nuclear weapons.

**MR. KIMBALL:** All right - yes, sir.

**Q:** Israel's nuclear arsenal became an open secret when Mordechai Vanunu revealed it in 1986, and he's currently under indictment in Israel for continuing to talk about its existence. Can you lay out that yet the United States official treatment, I believe, is still to deny the existence - or at least to not address the existence - of Israel's nuclear arsenal, which is now estimated at, what 200 nuclear weapons. Can you address how this is going to be addressed at this -

**MR. KIMBALL:** Bob, do you want to describe how you all dealt with it before?

**AMB. GREY:** It's generally dealt with in the context of a resolution supporting a nuclear-weapon-free zone for the Middle East, and there's a heated debate that goes on. The last time we stopped the clock at midnight on Friday and stayed in there until 10:00 Saturday night trying to sort out the Middle East thing. I must say, I don't know how this administration is going to handle it, but I was intrigued to see on the Internet the other day that the lady that is supposed to be our representative
at the NPT review conference has said, it's the official position of this administration that they support a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Now I've never heard that before, and I don't know whether she was speaking under instructions or not, but I found it very intriguing.

Q: Yet there are several U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, which we voted in favor of. But the United States has never even acknowledged the existence of Israel's nuclear arsenal. Wouldn't that be a good place to start?

MR. CIRINCIONE: I would want to go to the Israeli question last after I took care of the other stuff. I feel let's take care of Pakistan and India, maybe, and take care of North Korea and Iran, and then we'll see. But I sure wouldn't take that - I wouldn't tackle the Israeli one first, no way, not me.

Q: Isn't that what's driving - I mean - what's the current thinking?

REP. SPRATT: You'd never get beyond step one.

AMB. GREY: That's right, I mean you know -

MR. CIRINCIONE: Well, Joe, do you want to -

MR. CIRINCIONE: Let me just remind Ambassador Grey that Secretary of State Colin Powell reaffirmed U.S. support for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East just last year. And many of us see genuine efforts to negotiate such a zone as essential to solving the Iran crisis. It's inconceivable to me that you could get an agreement with the Iranians to end their program without promises that this would be a step towards regional negotiations that would eliminate the chemical and nuclear programs of all states in the region. It's been a long-standing U.S. policy - the problem we've had is that support for pursuing that has been non-existent for about the last ten years, since the talks on this subject collapsed in 1994.

AMB. GREY: I'd be very surprised if we ever agreed to put Israeli's nuclear weapons on the table when we're not willing to even discuss the ultimate elimination of our own.

MR. KIMBALL: I would just say that U.S policy needs to take into account the fact of Israel's nuclear program. Formal recognition raises other difficulties. It could raise other difficulties for other states in the region. And I would agree with Joe that the nuclear-weapon-free zone, or as it has been described by others, a weapons of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East, is an important way forward. And one very specific initiative that Mohamed ElBaradei has pursued, and is pushing right now, is to bring the key states in the region together to have a meeting about how to move forward with this concept, which has been around for some time.

If the United States could give some energy to that ElBaradei initiative in that meeting, that might provide a hopeful sign to the Arab states that the U.S., among other states are serious about that commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

I think that's about all the time we have. I want to thank all of you for being here. I want to remind you that all of the information that we have provided in your packets and more are available on the campaign's website, npt2005.org. And Joe Cirincione, Ambassador Grey, myself, and Congressman Spratt would be happy to answer your questions afterwards, or in the weeks to come as the conference approaches.

(END)

- Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty

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