

## Preface

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This book is a report on an extraordinary conference.

The papers included here were presented at a conference held at Stanford University's Hoover Institution in collaboration with Sam Nunn's Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) on October 24–25, 2007. The topics emerged from discussions of a January 2007 essay in the *Wall Street Journal* in which the many signatories agreed to a central argument for rekindling the bold vision of a world free of nuclear weapons that Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev brought to their 1986 meeting in Reykjavik. It is that a powerful synergy can be developed if the goal of a world without nuclear weapons is linked to the individual actions needed to move the world toward that goal. There is more political force in these ideas if they are considered as one program rather than as discrete entities. Without that vision, which has faded since that dramatic encounter in Reykjavik, measures that could provide greater safety to all the world's peoples have not been pursued with the intensity the times require. As recorded in this volume, the 2007 conference emphasized the importance of these measures.

The papers were prepared by highly qualified individuals, and they were reviewed and worked over by their colleagues and discussed in some detail at the conference. Each writer then had an opportunity to

make whatever additions and revisions seemed appropriate. The result appears here.

Work continues to go forward on all of these steps toward a world free of nuclear weapons, steps which, in and of themselves, are vital to achieving a safer world. Many can—and should—be implemented or acted upon promptly.

The papers develop three main themes: practical ways to remove nuclear warheads from the world's inventories of ready-to-fire weapons and ultimately to eliminate them; methods to manage and control nuclear programs to ensure that nuclear materials are used only for peaceful purposes; and technical, political, and intelligence issues that must be considered in reducing incentives for acquiring nuclear arsenals and in creating a global coalition in support of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The number of nuclear warheads held by the United States and Russia has decreased significantly since 1986, and the number of states that have opted to develop nuclear weapons and maintain them in their arsenals still remains under ten. However, the international consensus that favored fewer, rather than more, nuclear weapons states has eroded. Some states that decided to forgo nuclear weapons, thinking that their national security could be protected without them, reportedly are reconsidering their positions, and more will do so, inevitably, if present trends persist. Moreover, with the global spread of technology, the threat that the world's most terrible weapons might fall into dangerous hands, including terrorist organizations, has grown.

In short, the situation that has developed in recent years is not favorable to nonproliferation efforts. Changing that will require nothing less than a new deal between the states that have nuclear weapons and those states that, for now, have volunteered to forgo their right to acquire them. It also has to be recognized that the path ahead is deeply entwined with, and dependent upon, political cooperation on a global scale and with nations of varying patterns of governance. The vision of Reykjavik is an essential part of the process. Unless this

bold vision is embraced, individual steps along the way are unlikely to be perceived as fair or urgent. Rather, they would be seen as preserving the current situation of a two-tier system in which a small number of states possess nuclear weapons and all others must remain without them. This concept becomes less and less viable as nuclear technology and knowledge spread throughout the world.

Will this task be difficult? Yes, without a doubt. It will be especially daunting to eliminate all non-deployed warheads because the verification challenges are enormous. But with success in reducing operationally deployed warheads to zero on a global basis, the necessary experience and the mutual trust to proceed toward the elimination of all nuclear weapons should develop, making feasible the verification procedures that now appear to be so difficult.

As the world teeters on the edge of a new and more perilous nuclear era, it is crucial that world leaders work jointly to do everything within their power to free the world of the dangers of nuclear weapons. If a nuclear weapon were to be used in our future, it would symbolize a double failure: that we failed to resolve our differences peacefully and that we failed to address decisively the political, diplomatic, and security challenges associated with the most devastating instrument of annihilation ever invented, including keeping those weapons out of the hands of those who do not shrink from mass murder on an unprecedented scale.

Each of us found the conference highly educational and the discussions intense and satisfying. We hope that you will find these papers equally rewarding as reading and simultaneously stimulating as a guide to further work that is vital and necessary.