

**13. Part One:**  
**A World Free of**  
**Nuclear Weapons**  
*Opening Remarks for*  
*Reykjavik Revisited II Conference*  
*October 24, 2007*  
**Max M. Kampelman**

I want to thank George Shultz, Sidney Drell, and their colleagues at the Hoover Institution for elevating the deep concern about nuclear weapons into a broad national effort to revive President Reagan's serious goal of complete elimination of these weapons.

Indeed, we should keep in mind President Reagan's statement—"for the eight years I was President, I never let my dream of a nuclear free world fade from my mind"—as well as President Kennedy's remark to the nation—"the world was not meant to be a prison in which man awaits his execution."

It is encouraging to note that former Senator Sam Nunn, one of our country's most respected and experienced national defense experts and leaders, has joined his highly respected organization with this effort to restore sanity to the international community.

We obviously have challenges ahead. The drive for sanity must be an international one if it is to be effective.

I recently returned from a week in London during which I met and talked with leaders in and out of government—members of parliament and leaders of the major political parties. Sam Nunn and I both met in Washington with the then-Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett shortly after she strongly identified herself and the govern-

ment of the United Kingdom with our goal. She made clear she reviewed every word in her speech in Washington with her prime minister, and that she had been reflecting the policy of her government.

I have spent a great deal of time talking to a number of our friends in the Bush administration on this subject over the past year. And while I am not giving up hope, I think the realities of the political calendar mean that this issue will reluctantly be left for our next president.

I am encouraged that there are candidates on both sides of the political aisle who have spoken favorably of our efforts. The crucial question for our group is, What can we do to help the next president, whoever that may be, move forward with bipartisan support in our own country?

What is obviously required is leadership by the U.S. toward that goal of zero. And while U.S. leadership is a prerequisite for success, it is also true that to be successful, our leadership must be shared with, and joined by, others, including Russia.

Certainly, understanding the many technical issues associated with this task—in particular, verification—will be important. And I'm pleased to see that verification is a prominent issue for us to discuss.

But as we dive in to the many details of "getting to zero," we must keep in mind the "power of the ought"—that is, the importance of the "vision" of a world with zero nuclear weapons—in mobilizing political support in our own country, and around the world, for this effort. And we should keep in mind that over the past six decades, we have not acted—a reality that we may soon regret.

My personal fear is for the safety of my children and grandchildren. We now know that terrorists are seeking to acquire nuclear bombs and are en route to do so. There is no doubt that we are vulnerable to attack.

We know that there are countries that continue to challenge the notion that we, not they, are entitled to nuclear weapons. And we know that there are today more than 27,000 nuclear weapons in ex-

istence and that 40 countries may at some point be capable of developing nuclear bombs.

Eight years ago, Paul Nitze published an article in the *New York Times*. His dramatic suggestion was simple: “I see no compelling reason why we should not . . . get rid of our nuclear weapons. To maintain them is costly and adds nothing to our security.” His recommendation to us was clear: “I know that the simplest and most direct answer to the problem of nuclear weapons has always been their complete elimination.”

Paul Nitze always understood what direction we as a nation “ought” to be heading. Of course, there are still those who point to the “practical problems” as a reason for not embracing the “ought.” But our own history is filled with examples of the power of the “ought.”

Indeed, we in the U.S. understood the power of the “ought” at a time when our very existence as a nation was at stake. Our founders established the Declaration of Independence and our Constitution as clear goals for our nation—goals we have continually been working to achieve. And they established these “oughts” of independence, freedom, and liberty in an atmosphere of slavery, second-class citizenship for women, and property qualifications for voting.

Nevertheless, our nation has clearly and steadily overcome the original “is” of American society to achieve the “ought.” The pursuit of the “ought” has made our American democracy the country it is whose principles of human dignity have earned respect by peoples all over the world. The power of the “ought” is great, warrants respect, and should not be minimized. Today, a central theme of American foreign policy must be to move the “is” of our present global nuclear peril to a more hopeful “ought” of stability and peace. We must not minimize the pursuit of the “ought.” Our role must be to establish a civilized “ought” for the human race. The abolition of weapons of mass destruction now must be central to that objective.

Consistent with this development, I have respectfully urged that

the president of the United States speak to the people of the world through the General Assembly of the United Nations and propose the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, and that the Security Council work with other states to achieve this end.

The details of how we might work with leaders of other nations to make the pursuit of a world free of nuclear weapons a truly “joint enterprise” is an issue that is on our agenda for tomorrow—and we will get into more detail then. But the elimination of nuclear weapons must be our and the world’s indispensable rational objective—the “ought” for the human race.

It was our President Truman who, at the creation of the United Nations, saw there is nothing more urgent confronting the people of all nations than the banning of all nuclear weapons under a foolproof system of international control. This message of leadership is particularly fitting for today.

So with Presidents Truman and Reagan as our inspiration, let us go forward the next two days in the hope that our next president will embrace the power of the “ought,” and we can move forward and achieve our goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.