Workshop on Deterrence in a Changed World
Annenberg Conference Room
Hoover Institution
May 16, 2012

Summary Report
By
Peter Jones

As part of its ongoing work to explore issues surrounding the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, the Hoover Institution held a one-day workshop on deterrence. This report will capture the main themes of the presentations and discussions (see attached agenda). As the workshop took place under the Chatham House Rule, names will not be used in this report, except for the names of the presenters in each session, which are identified anyway on the agenda.

During the introductory session, it was pointed out that the title of the workshop was 'Deterrence', not 'Nuclear Deterrence'. A plea was made for the workshop to not fall into the trap of automatically linking the word 'nuclear' to 'deterrence'. This was seen as important in that one of the issues to be considered by the workshop was whether and how deterrence can work on the way to a nuclear-weapons free world, and also what role there would be for deterrence in such a world. These are serious questions and are often overlooked.

Reassessing the added deterrent value of nuclear weapons

The main workshop paper was then presented by its author Benoît Pelopidas. Realizing that he did not have sufficient time to cover the entire paper, the author focused his comments on what he characterized as the three persistent objections to nuclear zero as a policy goal, which he held to be myths that need to be squarely tackled by advocates of zero. These myths were held to be:

- That the absence of nuclear weapons in the world would increase the likelihood of conventional wars between the larger powers (the 'nuclear weapons have kept the peace' argument);
- That reducing the size of the US nuclear arsenal will affect the ability to offer a credible "nuclear umbrella" and therefore lead to further nuclear proliferation; and

- That dictators will keep their nuclear weapons in order to assure regime survival and that the international community will not be able to disarm such dictators.

On the first issue, the author maintained that there is no proof that the likelihood of wars between the large powers will be increased in a world without nuclear weapons. It was pointed out that the 'Nuclear Peace' is a hypothesis, which has somehow acquired the status of fact in many people's eyes – but it has not been proven that nuclear weapons are responsible for the long period of peace between the Great Powers of the world. There are alternate explanations, which are explored in the paper itself, and which are never given a proper analysis by those who subscribe to the nuclear peace argument. One also has to recognize that we will never reach a definitive answer to this question, contrary to the confidence of the proponents of the 'Nuclear Peace' hypothesis.

Furthermore, it was argued, we now know that the Cuban missile crisis was defused not through the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons, but through luck. And this is only the most famous example. Throughout the nuclear era, it has been commonly believed that nuclear weapons forced leaders to act with greater caution, but we now see that this has often been true only after they had initiated a course which took them close to war, and that nuclear weapons may have been partly to blame for the initiation of this course of action, either because they made the leaders more confident than they should have been or because the perceived needs of 'deterrence credibility' caused leaders to take actions they might not have otherwise taken. Finally, the author pointed out that 'the long peace' has actually not been all that peaceful, particularly if one lived in the developing world. So, the question shifts from: "would war return in a world without nuclear weapons?" to "would war be more likely in a world without nuclear weapons?" and the paper argues it would not.

On the second point, the author argued that decreasing the size of the nuclear arsenals of the world will not necessarily increase proliferation risks around the world. The historical record shows that proliferation is actually relatively rare, and warnings about it have been routinely wide of the mark. Most countries do not proliferate but rather find other ways to meet their security challenges. They think beyond what the author calls the 'nuclear straitjacket', *ie* either a national nuclear deterrent or extended nuclear deterrence as their ultimate security guarantor.

Moreover, the author refuted arguments that retention of additional nuclear weapons by the US helps to prevent proliferation as the US is in a position to extend deterrence to others, thereby obviating their need to develop them. There are several examples of US allies or friends developing their own nuclear weapons, despite the fact that they had a close security relationship with the US (e.g., Britain and France) and cases of renunciation of nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons ambitions in spite of the lack of a "nuclear umbrella" (e.g., South Africa, Libya, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Brazil, Argentina for example). The major credibility problem of extended nuclear deterrence remains and nuclear weapons are not well suited for the new security challenges like deterring terrorists from getting and using nuclear weapons.

Finally, as to the argument that dictators will keep their weapons options to assure their regime survival, the author recognized that this argument is a subset of a broader argument about the "equalizing power" of nuclear weapons for conventionally weaker powers. He maintained however that this specific argument needs to be rebutted because it provides a conversation stopper for the opponents of the goal of zero. The vision of a world with only a few dictatorships possessing nuclear weapons is scary enough to lead people to disregard the goal of zero once and for all. So, to counter this argument, Pelopidas pointed out that nuclear weapons do not protect dictators from coups, popular uprisings and destabilization campaigns by non-state actors. The consequences of a world with one nuclear-armed regime, he suggested, are not serious enough to give up on the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

The author concluded his introductory comments by noting that these three myths demonstrate that we are overconfident about the supposed 'lessons of the nuclear age' as demonstrating a firm 'causal relationship' between the existence of nuclear weapons and the maintenance of peace and stability. In referencing the five ways out of the 'nuclear straitjacket' which were developed in his paper, the author stressed in his comments the one about the need for advocates of nuclear zero to re-frame the discussion. Up to now, it has been framed as a discussion between 'realists' and 'utopians,' with the predictable consequences that those advocating zero have been portrayed as well-meaning utopians and placed in a weaker position where they always have to re-establish their realist credentials. It is necessary to re-frame this away from, for example, a debate between 'zero or proliferation by rogues' and towards a debate over 'zero or perfect safety and luck until the end of time'. If such a shift in the discourse can be made, the

discussion will become one over whether humanity can count on being lucky forever or decide to design a safer world, adapting to new international realities. No world is risk free; the question is: which risks are citizens willing to take?

In discussion over the paper, it was pointed out by one participant that we should not discount the effect of incremental change as the world moves towards zero. Confidence and trust will be built over time, thereby making it easier to get to zero as we go along. This should be argued in the paper as a means of demonstrating that the process itself will have virtuous consequences. Too often, opponents of zero manage to describe a scenario whereby a comparison is made between today's world and a world without nuclear weapons as if the transition will be made instantaneously. By such a comparison, advocates of zero can be made to look utopian. Reference needs to be made to the fact that the process of getting to zero will develop its own reinforcing mechanisms. It also will proceed in a sequence of steps, with later steps being impossible in the current environment, but becoming possible in the new environment created by the earlier changes. This is one reason many people see "zero" as impossible – it is from our current vantage point, but is not once we start moving.

Another participant pointed out that nuclear weapons are also seen by some as necessary to assist in deterring chemical and biological attacks in some circumstances and this must be addressed in the paper. There are arguments that can be advanced to deal with this, but they must be made. The same commentator went on to say that the question of whether a nuclear free world would be a world with more conventional arms races and wars, and would this necessarily be better or worse, needs to be more squarely addressed in the paper.

The author of the paper responded to these comments by pointing out that he agrees with the idea that disarmament as a long term process will create new conditions, and actually alludes to it in the paper. Similarly, a convincing case against the idea that nuclear weapons are needed to deter chemical and biological attacks has been made by other analysts and the paper refers to it. The obstacles to change are based on over-confidence in nuclear deterrence, neglect of non-nuclear forms of deterrence and underestimation of the adverse effects of deterrence itself as a strategy. He noted that he cannot replace the certainty that nuclear deterrence is the solution by another one. The point is precisely to challenge this certainty and insist on the fact that it will never be possible

to reach certainty on these matters *a priori*. Therefore, in view of the terrible destructive power of nuclear weapons and the risk of use either by accident or because of misperceptions, it should be up to their advocates to demonstrate that these weapons have kept the peace, will continue to do so without ever failing and that their disappearance would necessarily lead to a less stable world.

Another participant suggested that the author elaborate more on possible explanations for the 'long peace', such as Pinker's argument about growing revulsion to violence. Yet another said that more emphasis should be given to the problem of how to establish a new global norm whereby those who may seek to acquire nuclear weapons in a zero world, will be 'deterred' from doing so. This may be accomplished through a combination of diplomacy, conventional military capacity and other factors, including the fear of becoming a pariah state if caught cheating in a supposedly nuclear-free world.

The NATO countries

The next session began with a joint presentation by Steven Andreasen and Isabelle Williams which began with the statement that the NATO countries recognize that there is no military purpose or credibility to the alliance's tactical nuclear weapons; they are entirely political instruments, and, even here, their value is debated. Newer NATO allies see them as a politically useful sign of the alliance's determination to defend them against a one-day resurgent Russia. Others, including Germany, see them as political liabilities, both in terms of their domestic politics and what they believe should be the alliance's broader diplomatic goals.

The alliance has committed itself to nuclear cuts, while also committing itself to remaining a 'nuclear alliance.' However, the implications of detailed discussions over these goals are believed to be so difficult for alliance unity that the internal machinery to handle such a discussion has yet to be set up within NATO and is being avoided. Meantime, the costs, both financial and political, of these weapons are rising and there is a growing belief that the status-quo cannot be maintained. President Obama's Prague goals have been adopted by the alliance, but the President has also said that any US move to alter its stockpile of tactical weapons in Europe cannot be unilateral and must enjoy consensus in alliance councils. Given differing views over the political utility of nuclear weapons, this results in an effective stalemate as to how to move forward.

The presenters believed that the answer must lie in placing NATO's tactical nuclear weapons in a much larger Euro-Atlantic framework than would be permitted by a debate purely over the future of these weapons alone. Such a framework would rest on an enhanced set of understandings intended to underpin the foundation of the trans-Atlantic security guarantee in the absence of US nuclear weapons on the ground in Europe, and new understandings with Russia about European security. Issues such as how the larger US deterrent would be available to the alliance and missile defense will also feature in all of this, amongst many others.

In the discussion, there was debate over whether and how decisions to update the existing NATO tactical nuclear weapons will play out. Some noted that decisions have been made to modernize the tactical nuclear force and acquire dual-capable variants of new delivery systems. Others noted that, while these decisions have been made on paper, they will be expensive and many of the spending decisions have been pushed back. It was also noted that some key allies, such as Germany, are making decisions by implication in terms of announcing their intention to shut down the base where these weapons are stored in their country, and not to acquire dual-capable variants of the new Typhoon fighter. The presenters pointed out that it is understood within NATO that, if the Germans dropped their nuclear assignments, several other allies will find it very difficult to keep theirs.

It was also pointed out by one participant that the key Russian fear is not BMD, but rather NATO's extraordinary tactical air capability, which the Russians see as a significant threat to their forces in the European region. The Russians link the retention of their tactical nuclear forces to NATO's tactical air and will not agree to reductions or elimination until they receive some assurances that this tactical air capability will not be used to effectively disarm them. A suggestion was made that the Russians be admitted to some of the air traffic control systems being set up to monitor and deploy NATO's tactical air capabilities so that they can monitor the situation, thereby reducing the risk of a misunderstanding.

In conclusion, it was noted that two groups of allies will have special requirements in terms of reassurance if NATO is to significantly reduce, or even eliminate its reliance on tactical nuclear weapons: the Baltics; and Turkey. For the Baltics, one participant felt that US 'boots on the ground' will be the only thing that will provide them with the required assurance if NATO

tactical nuclear weapons are withdrawn from Europe. For the Turks, their concerns are as much about possible threats emanating from the Middle East as from Russia and mechanisms will have to be found to provide assurances in these contexts as well.

As a final point in this discussion, one participant gave his opinion that the European allies may evince signs of unease and disquiet at having US tactical nuclear weapons on their soil, but many more of them will be deeply uneasy about their complete withdrawal than might be supposed from their public statements. Another expressed concern that the public and political debates over the INF deployments of the 80s might be about to be revisited, whichever way decisions about NATO's nuclear modernization go, with little positive impact on alliance solidarity.

Russia

Carrying over from the previous discussion the presenter, David Holloway, noted that Russia is "going the other way" from mainstream Western thinking in terms of decoupling nuclear weapons from deterrence and security thinking. Moscow is using classic language about nuclear weapons and stability from the Cold War and President Putin has made statements to the effect that nuclear weapons make Russia a Great Power and assure its sovereignty. Others pointed out that as Russia's conventional capabilities decline and nationalism rises, nuclear weapons become ever more important as signals of Russian 'greatness' and 'invincibility'.

Subsequent discussion revealed that there is a sense in Moscow that the nuclear zero campaign is designed to de-legitimize the weapon that Russia believes helps to define it as a Great Power. This is happening at a time when Russian politics is going through an internal crisis of legitimacy (even if Putin will never admit this), and its resource-based economy is stagnating, along with its population. There is thus considerable resistance to the idea of embracing far-reaching changes in a field where Russia can still compete and feel the equivalent of the US – nuclear weapons.

Moreover, signing far-reaching agreements with NATO and the US to radically re-shape European security towards a non-nuclear and more cooperative future may undercut a political trend in Moscow towards accentuating Russian nationalism by resurrecting the idea of a 'threat from the West'. In this context, it was pointed out that the Russian suspension of their observance of the CFE conventional treaty has not been dealt with and is being assigned a low priority in

Washington.

The presenter also noted that, though Russians will often discuss their nuclear concerns in the context of the US and NATO, their real long-term concern is China. Though relations with Beijing are relatively smooth today, there is deep concern that this will not always be the case. There are longer-term 'structural' concerns for Moscow in terms of population and development ratios that are going the wrong way, and border and resource disputes that have simmered for many years.

China, North Korea and North East Asia

The presenter on China, Michael Gerson, began by noting that China should be a 'natural' for discussions about nuclear zero, having subscribed for many years to a doctrine of 'minimum' deterrence and embracing 'No First Use' as a basis for its nuclear force. It is crucial, however, to look carefully at how the Chinese think about nuclear deterrence. They define deterrence as being able to 'intimidate militarily' and see this as being the objective of powers which could be hostile to China, such as Russia and the US. They therefore see themselves as practicing a form of 'counter-deterrence', or counter coercion. In this sense, they see their nuclear weapons as essential to prevent a situation whereby they will be blackmailed by a superior force.

A similar cultural difference exists over the issue of transparency, which will be critical as the world moves towards zero. Westerners tend to see reciprocal transparency as a 'good and necessary' condition for arms control and disarmament. Both sides must display transparency in equal measure. The Chinese see it as the responsibility of the larger country to be more transparent in order to reassure the weaker that 'intimidation' is not being contemplated. The weaker state, China, can then reciprocate as it becomes more comfortable. This understanding of transparency is obviously going to be very difficult for the US to accept.

Behind these cultural issues, the presenter believed that there are some specific concerns on both sides. For China, there is a concern that the US will attempt to lock China into an inferior position. Meanwhile, some in Washington fear that US-Russia reductions will create a circumstance in which China can one day 'sprint' to parity. In terms of the evolving US-China relationship, there is also a concern amongst some in the US that China's attempts to develop

‘access denial’ and cyber war capabilities will eventually change the conventional calculus between Beijing and Washington in ways that will make the US reluctant to consider reductions in nuclear weapons.

As to the way forward, the presenter made three suggestions. First, he did not believe the United States should attempt to force its definitions of nuclear concepts like deterrence and strategic stability on the Chinese. Statements like “the Chinese don’t understand these terms”, “the Chinese don't understand deterrence,” and “we need to teach them what these concepts mean” are too commonplace and are not helpful for the US-China relationship. China has long thought that the West, and particularly the United States, has talked down to China. Attempting to teach China the ‘correct’ way to think about nuclear weapons will only rub them the wrong way and be viewed as further evidence of US arrogance.

Rather, the presenter suggested that the United States and China need to be very clear about what they mean when they use these terms. While it certainly would make things easier if we had similar views and definitions of these terms, in the end it doesn’t really matter whether we have the same definitions as long as we each know what the other means when the terms are used and discussed. The Academy of Arts and Sciences US-China nuclear glossary is an important step in this regard.

Second, the United States should consider direct talks with Beijing about deterrence and nuclear reductions. There are already the strategic stability dialogues that were proposed in the 2010 NPR, but it is not clear whether these dialogues also cover issues of deterrence, arms control, and eventual abolition. There has been a lot of talk about bringing China into multilateral arms control negotiations. A multilateral process is certainly important, especially given Russia's concerns about China, but it could be that China would be more inclined to eventually participate in multilateral agreements if the whole effort were kick-started with bilateral discussions; US-China bilateral discussions might actually incentivize Russia to join and be a productive member of the process for fear of being left out.

Finally, as a practical idea for getting things started with China, the presenter recommended thinking about the possibility of including China in US-Russia nuclear inspections for New START. The point here is that since China has never participated in any meaningful way in

nuclear arms control, and since inspections are an integral component of verifiable arms control, giving China observer status in a few inspections would begin socializing Chinese officials to what arms control looks like in practice. This would provide Beijing with more insight into the practical aspects of arms control, and hopefully be a pathway for China's participation.

On North Korea, the presenter, David Straub, believed that the North Koreans know that the US and its allies will not start a war against them; their primary reason for developing nuclear weapons has to do with their strategic calculations of regional politics, not regime survival. Moreover, the North has the functional equivalent of a deterrent even without nuclear weapons in that they can attack Seoul conventionally and destroy it quickly. Thus, the presenter believed that the oft-repeated line that the fall of Saddam and then Gaddafi taught the North Koreans that they must have nuclear weapons to prevent an attack on themselves is not true. What these incidents taught them is that they must retain an iron control over their own people and not rely on anyone else for survival.

The real reason for the North's development of nuclear weapons is that it needs an instrument for political and material trades. They continue to believe that Korea must be unified and that their system is the only acceptable one. But they also know that their economy has failed and therefore hope to intimidate the US and the South to remove sanctions on the DPRK's terms and to allow the North to gradually rise up and take over – to intimidate the US into ceasing to be a factor on the Korean peninsula. The presenter characterized this as "a rational idea, but based on a delusion."

Even so, it was the presenter's belief that the North will not give up nuclear weapons unless and until it has changed fundamentally. In the meantime, it is important for the US and other actors to try to maintain dialogue with the North; both to try to convince them of the error of their thinking and of the West's desire for peaceful relations. The presenter supported two recommendations advanced in the main conference paper: it is worth showing the North Koreans that their nuclear weapons are more of a liability than an asset because foreign statements have a bigger impact than Pyongyang is willing to admit; international effort towards zero should move forward even if the DPRK is the last to disarm because the North Koreans care about the survival of the regime and know that the US conventional power can put the regime at risk if it uses its

nuclear weapons.

In the discussion a number of themes were considered. One participant noted his view that the Chinese have a different view of "the logic of risk" than others do – they are willing to accept being placed in a situation of vulnerability to a theoretical first strike (something the US would never accept) in order to avoid an arms race. They do not believe a first strike will really happen and realize that they could not 'win', much less afford, an arms race with the US. They thus want what the participant called an "accommodating relationship" with the US, but do not know if the US does.

One participant then asked a question as to how China views North Korea's nuclear activities; is Beijing concerned when the North develops and tests nuclear weapons? Is Beijing concerned about the possibility of a North Korean collapse leading to 'loose nukes'? The presenters, and others, believed that China is somewhat worried by these developments and possibilities, but not too much. It was pointed out that China and North Korea share a goal of reducing the US as a factor in regional relations, and this means that any differences they may have over specific issues will be downplayed between them. One participant also gave the opinion that China has an interest in relations between North Korea and the US being tense, so long as they do not boil over to conflict.

A participant asked whether China's actual force structure supports its claim not to want a first strike capability. The presenter replied that, in terms of the open material, it is generally accepted that there is a retaliatory capability only. During the second Bush Administration there were concerns at the classified level over apparent construction of tunnels in which missiles could be moved around as possible evidence of a desire to develop a first strike capability, but this has not blossomed into a major concern.

Finally, a participant asked what the implications of deep cuts to the US arsenal, absent major changes in the regional security situation, would be for Japan and South Korea. In subsequent discussion, there was a generally supported view that both of these US regional allies will accept such reductions up to a point.

South Asia

The discussion over South Asia revealed that this is probably the most dangerous region of the world in terms of the potential for eventual nuclear use, and certainly the region which has the greatest potential for a nuclear arms race. The presenter, Scott Sagan, described the Kargil conflict as a most serious shock for those who believe that nuclear weapons make conventional conflict impossible. It was clear that the Pakistani civilian leadership had lost control of the situation and the military leadership had badly miscalculated – believing that nuclear weapons made the region 'safe' for limited conventional conflict. It has also had a significant impact on India's willingness to 'trust' Pakistan in terms of considering whether to 'take risks' to promote nuclear stability in the region, much less reductions. Meanwhile, India's 'Cold Start' doctrine, though of questionable actual military reality or consequence, has convinced Pakistan that the threshold between conventional and nuclear conflict must be set low if India is to be deterred, particularly as Pakistan has no faith in India's 'No First Use' policy.

In the subsequent discussion a number of themes were touched upon. Pakistan's determination to induct tactical nuclear weapons into its order of battle is the most dangerous aspect of the situation. While there are some similarities between Pakistan's situation and that of NATO during the Cold War, as an inferior conventional power trying to deter war through the introduction of the possibility of an early resort to nuclear weapons, participants in the workshop believed that Pakistan is in no way comparable to NATO in that its civilian leadership has much less control over the situation and its military and intelligence services have historically proven to be more prone to risk-taking.

In addition to concerns over possible nuclear confrontations, this was also held to be the region of the world where a nuclear 'arms race' is most possible. One participant gave his view that such a race is not presently underway, but the conditions are in place for it. In particular, the scientific community on each side, and particularly in India, is fascinated with exploring new technologies, such as MIRV and BMD and there do not appear to be political actors prepared to expend the capital to stop them, or a strategic community willing to develop the rationales, necessary to counter their arguments.

Against these negative trends, it was noted by participants that overall India-Pakistan relations are going through a relatively positive phase. This is being expressed in policy terms in a

tentative warming of economic and trade relations. While a welcome trend, there appears to be little if any desire on either side to extend the positive developments on the economic front into a warming of relations more generally, or in the military sphere. Indeed, in this sphere, distrust and suspicion continue to be the most powerful factors on each side. This is somewhat more so on the Indian side; perhaps as a legacy of Kargil. There is a seemingly endless debate in India over whether Pakistani overtures are evidence of a 'strategic' or a 'tactical' move. The latter is defined as a concern that Pakistan knows it is in a difficult situation and has decided to make a few concessions until its overall situation improves, when it will return to an aggressive policy of confrontation – usually via proxies staging terror attacks in India. The Pakistan side has expressed some frustrations at this, and challenges the Indians to test Pakistan's willingness to make real peace.

One participant asked if the subject of Kashmir is still at the bottom of everything; could improvements there make a difference in terms of the danger of a nuclear arms race? Several people agreed that this may have been the case a few years ago, but wondered if this was still so. A fear was expressed that the dynamic of the strategic confrontation has reached a point where its own logic has taken over and will impel it forward no matter what.

Another participant asked if there is an understanding in South Asia of the consequences of nuclear war. It was noted that the nuclear tests of the 1950s conducted by the Soviet Union and the United States had galvanized public opinion and led to agreements on nuclear tests; is something similar not happening in South Asia? Discussion revealed a sense that the thinking of South Asian governments has not reached a point where agreements are possible, and the wider public on both sides, while concerned to some extent about nuclear issues, is more concerned about the dangers posed by the other side's alleged perfidy. There is also a fear that one cannot trust the other side to keep its agreements or be able to control itself in a crisis.

Middle East

In beginning this session, the presenter, Peter Jones, noted that the discussion paper outlined in the first session was concerned with global zero, but that real zero would likely only be achieved in the context of various regional issues being addressed. The Great Powers can reduce their holdings to a certain point, but total elimination of all nuclear weapons will require regional

disarmament in several areas of the world. Along with South Asia, the Middle East is going to be one of the most difficult. That said, the Middle East also demonstrates that, when discussing zero, the journey is, for now at least, the key, not the end-state; the journey itself can begin to affect positions. This is key to progress in the Middle East.

The presenter then argued that in trying to determine whether regional conceptions of deterrence can be made more amenable with the goal of zero, we almost immediately run up against the fact that the Israeli concept of deterrence is very different from that which exists between most nuclear countries. Israel conceives of its deterrent as a shield behind which it can engage unilaterally in military actions against others whenever it feels it must. Israel's conception of deterrence therefore requires that it be the region's only nuclear capable state, whereas classical deterrence posits two nuclear armed states deterring each other. Thus, when Israel argues that it is unwilling to be placed in a situation of having to deter another nuclear capable state, it is, to at least some extent, saying that it refuses to accept the reality of an antagonistic regional state over which it does not retain an overwhelming and unilateral advantage. This is not the same thing as deterrence, as usually understood.

Thus, when we talk about changing the arguments over the relationship between deterrence and nuclear weapons as a way to encourage the move to zero, the presenter argued, we must confront the fact that this logic does not hold in the case of Israel, and, therefore, in the Middle East. That country has a different concept of deterrence, and it is not one that encourages it to consider the renunciation of nuclear weapons capability. In fact, for Israel, being the only regional state to possess nuclear weapons is not a precondition to renunciation of them; it is a necessary state for Israel's idea of deterrence to work.

The key to regional disarmament is thus the creation of a regional peace which will permit Israel, over time, to revisit its idea of deterrence. This is the Israeli official position, but there is no time frame for its realization, and only the most general of conditions have been elaborated. The Arab countries, notably Egypt, are not prepared to wait for regional disarmament until Israel feels ready. There is thus a danger that the current attempt to begin a regional disarmament

discussion, in the context of a resolution passed at the 2010 NPT review conference will founder on this difference, as did the last attempt in the 1990s. Instead of taking the view that this process should be a long one, as it has been in every other region where NWFZs have been achieved, there is a danger that long-standing differences will cause some to demand quick progress.

The argument over whether deterrence can be useful to assist in regional disarmament is perhaps more applicable to the case of Iran. If the present talks lead to a situation whereby Iran keeps a residual nuclear capability under safeguards and agrees to go no further than a certain point, the international community will have to rely on a combination of verification, diplomacy and conventional deterrence to keep Iran from being tempted to try to sprint the final distance to a weapon.

A participant asked if the Supreme Leader's 'fatwa' against nuclear weapons should be taken seriously. Another replied that it probably means the Iranians cannot spring a nuclear weapon as a complete surprise (assuming they could) or risk being seen as hypocritical. But fatwas can be reversed if circumstances are held to have changed. In the meantime, there is no religious injunction against preparing to 'defend oneself'. Therefore, if it wanted to, Iran could clandestinely get close to a weapons capability without breaking the fatwa.

Arms Control and Deterrence

The presenter in this session, Edward Ifft, said that the key issue is how we answer the question, 'Can we produce a world without nuclear weapons in which deterrence works at least as well as it appears to now?' Moreover, can we be confident that zero really means zero everywhere? The presenter believed that arms control can help to answer these questions, but it will take time.

The presenter noted that the use of nuclear weapons to deter the use of CW and BW is a critical issue, made somewhat less challenging by the fact that arms control regimes exist which cover those weapons. The presenter also noted that reductions down to approximately 1000 deployed weapons would be valuable and could be verified under current arms control models. Moreover, the current force structure (the triad) could be maintained and it would not be necessary to bring in regional nuclear countries. If we add tactical nuclear weapons and the stockpile issue, then

current arms control verification models will not be sufficient.

In discussion, one participant noted that BW is not really covered sufficiently well under current arms control as we do not have a workable verification protocol. Moreover, the conventional dominance of the US will become an issue for many countries as one moves closer to zero. Another participant agreed with this statement, adding that "if the US is not prepared to constrain its conventional superiority, then it is going to have to figure out creative ways to reassure people".

Another participant noted that relying too much on the current arms control paradigms and models may not be helpful; START began as a negotiation aimed at reducing nuclear weapons, but its requirements now provide a logic to those who want to maintain higher numbers than would otherwise be necessary.

A discussion then took place over the budgetary aspects of nuclear weapons. Some pointed out that they are relatively inexpensive compared to conventional forces and therefore believed that the financial argument in favor of deep cuts will not be compelling. Others took a different view, arguing that nuclear weapons and delivery systems are still expensive in themselves, and are seen to be of declining military value. The need to replace a number of US delivery systems over the next decade, and the fiscal stringency which is going to exist for many years, provides an opportunity for those who favor deep cuts to make an argument.

Ethical aspects of deterrence

In a far-ranging discussion of the ethics and deterrence, it was noted by the presenter, Tyler Wigg-Stevenson, that most conceptions of ethics and war stress the need for weapons to discriminate between combatants and civilians, and do so in a way which is proportionate to the harm which brought about the conflict in the first place. Though bodies such as the Conference of Catholic Bishops made an uneasy accommodation with nuclear weapons in the Cold War, most ethicists have never been able to reconcile their vast, disproportionate destructive capability and the imperative to discriminate between civilians and combatants. [My reading of their 1983 Pastoral Letter is somewhat different. They do make "an uneasy accommodation with nuclear weapons" but hedge that in a number of ways.]

The presenter also cautioned that we should not fall into the trap of thinking that, because we

have managed the practice of deterrence for many years without a nuclear war, possession of the weapons themselves has become ethical. Saying that nuclear weapons have 'kept the peace' for many years (if it is even true, which is disputed), does not make them moral. People should learn to remain at peace without these weapons.

If nuclear weapons must continue to exist for some time yet, the only stand that approaches a moral one is to adopt a no use policy. This has obvious implications for discussions about deterrence.

Bishop William Swing continued the presentation by pointing out that when humankind has created a means of destroying human life on this planet, this possessor race of humans becomes more than a master race: humans become as gods. The wielders of this ultimate power, he suggested, will insist on keeping, expanding and modernizing their prerogative regardless of boom times and times of global financial meltdown. And all of this will be based on a few startling assumptions: that there will be no accidents which can't be repaired, there will be no bad decisions which will trigger disaster, and due to our deterrence capability there will be no countervailing power that will arise to threaten the equilibrium of our benign dominion.

The presenter characterized the relationship of mankind with nuclear weapons as a story of Biblical proportions, about God and the created order and the ability of humans to make decisions. He said that among the Bible's first stories is the one about Adam and Eve. They were banished from Paradise because of disobedience or what later was described as "original sin." Original sin is about human beings having a predisposition to make some choices that are self-destructive. Good people, bad people, all of the children of Adam and Eve (in mythical terms) have a tendency to choose something that eventually leads to great pain and suffering. This is part of the Biblical understanding of our DNA.

Who is good enough, consistent enough, just enough to make the decisions about when to unleash a nuclear holocaust? "Whoever is without sin cast the first stone." The Bible is clear that human beings are created "good." But the Bible is quick to add that humans maintain a habit of using freedom in self-destructive ways.

Are human beings essentially bad or essentially good? For the presenter, the answer to this

ancient question will come from the way that human beings answer the nuclear weapons question. If we reduce them to verifiable zero, humans are good and God's experiment of life on this planet goes on. If we continue to trust in the perfection of those who wield our nuclear arsenals, humans are bad and God's experiment on this planet will be nullified.

Finally, the presenter observed that there are agencies and commissions and organizations throughout the world which work tirelessly for the abolition of nuclear weapons. So what is missing? We have to go down deeper he said. Under the statistics, the jockeying, the politicking, the symposiums, the writings, and the financial realities--underneath is a human conscience, a story, a values system, a myth, a spiritual instinct, a moral imperative, a collective shame and fear and hope. If we could somehow mine this rich mother-lode of authentic humanity, then we could help the world move toward urgency and momentum in getting to zero.

Conclusions

In the concluding session, several points were made. It was generally agreed that, to the extent that a blind faith in the deterrent effects of nuclear weapons prevents an objective assessment of the purpose of those weapons, international peace and security is being undermined. This is, in fact, the case in South Asia. Engagement with Pakistan is particularly important so that theories about nuclear deterrence do not lead to an uncontrollable military confrontation. In the Middle East, Israeli concepts of deterrence require policies that imply preventive strikes to ensure that other states in the region remain non-nuclear weapon states. The best and only hope of escaping from a constant struggle between opposing views of security in the Middle East is to engage in a step by step process to build confidence and create conditions for peace between Israel and its neighbors. The situation in Northeast Asia is unique, being largely shaped by the idiosyncratic nature of the North Korean regime. Deterrence may not be the principal reason for the pursuit of nuclear weapons by Kim Il-Sung and his descendants, but rather a sense that possessing them gives the regime the international status and leverage it craves.

In all three of these regional cases, only a resolution of persisting conflicts will create the conditions for ending reliance on nuclear weapons but that outcome can be influenced positively by a climate of world opinion that increasingly regards nuclear weapons as a source of danger rather than of safety. Perhaps most importantly, the continuation of these persistent regional

security issues should not be used by the established nuclear powers as an excuse not to embark on deep cuts in their arsenals, even if they might not be prepared to consider going to zero without resolution of these regional security issues.

As regards the permanent members of the UN Security Council, each recognized by the NPT as a nuclear-weapon state, attachment to the idea of nuclear deterrence (or counter-coercion in the case of China) remains strong in each country, perhaps most of all in Russia. The three Western nations appear willing to engage in talks aimed at reducing dependence on nuclear weapons as a central feature of deterrence. China may be key in determining how far the nuclear weapons states can go in cooperating among themselves to create the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons. If these nations can create a joint enterprise with the common purpose of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons other nations may be willing to join in and world public opinion may tilt toward an expectation that the era of nuclear deterrence may be ending.