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LOOKING FORWARD ON NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL:
Keynote Address: Jon Wolfsthal, Special Advisor to the Vice President for Nonproliferation

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MR. TALBOTT: Before I say a word or two of introduction to Jon, I'm going to do something that is a violation of the position I hold in the program, which is to single out a couple of people, and thereby, inadvertently fail to recognize others. But we have two towering figures in the history of American national security and arms control here, conveniently both in the first row: Max Kampelman, who has -- yeah, let's do it. (Applause)

MR. TALBOTT: I don't need to finish the subordinate clause on either of these guys. And Stanley Resor over here. This is one of the few audiences in Washington where I could say MBFR and you'd know what I was talking about. Okay. You're all part of -- some of you are eating your sandwiches, and that makes you part of the great Brookings tradition of eating and talking at the same time, at least collectively, not individually. And I don't think Jon has gotten his lunch, but you're the main course for us at this event.

I was telling Jon a little bit about the morning session, and it was really terrific, not least, by the way, because of the quality of the questions from all of you. Tom Moore, whose remarks you should spend a little time looking at because they relate to what you and the VP and the President are doing, said that -- called this a nuclear year, and it's a good phrase, and, therefore, I will plagiarize it.

And it's really been a nuclear month, or at least a five-week period, as you all know. Here we are just 13 months after President Obama's Prague speech, and just in the last 5 weeks, we've already had the nuclear posture review come out. The President returned to Prague to sign the New START Treaty with President Medvedev. I can't resist a plug for Brookings, as well. President Medvedev was here right at this podium during the Nuclear Security Summit last month and had quite a bit to say that I found to be reassuring and enlightening about the Russian perspective on the treaties. He seemed to be reasonably confident about its ratification by the way. And we've also had the Nuclear Security Summit, which I already referred. And then on Monday, the NPT Review opened up in New York.

But as a couple of us had occasion to refer to during the morning session, the really tough and interesting negotiations are going to be here in this town on the issue of ratification, and that means not just of the New START Treaty, but also looking ahead to the comprehensive Test

Ban Treaty next year, when the United States Senate is going to have an opportunity -- this is an editorial comment, but we're allowed those around here -- when the United States Senate will have a chance to make an even wiser decision than it made 11 years ago.

And to talk about this whole range of issues, we're lucky to have John Wolfsthal with us. Jon, as I think all of you know, wears two hats, and very important hats they are: director of nonproliferation of the NSC, and also special advisor on that issue to Vice President Biden. He has a very solid background. He, like Rose, is an alumnist of the Department of Energy, and he also has worked on Think Tank Row, two particularly fine institutions that we do a lot of work with here at Brookings: Carnegie Endowment right next door and CSIS. He's been a participant from time to time in our events here at Brookings and they've always been better as a result, and, Jon, we're very glad to have you with us today.

MR. WOLFSTHAL: Thank you, it's a great pleasure to be here this afternoon. I can't resist, Strobe, not only would people in this room know what MDFR is. In a discussion with the Vice President three weeks ago, he threw it out as if everybody in the room would know -- I nodded knowingly, because I was the only person who had, in fact, heard the term and knew what it was. So you're not only in this room I assure you, you're in the White House as well.

Thank you so very much for the introduction. I don't know how to do this without either looking really young or making you seem sort of old, but, of course, many of my first readings were from you on the subject, and being introduced by you means a lot to me personally.

And, Steve, I just want to thank you for the invitation to be here today. It's been very helpful to be working with you over the past several months, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss these issues with you today.

So my charge here today, as asked by Steve and Strobe, is to try and tie some of the many strands of the administration's nuclear policy together, and it's understandable that there's a desire to have somebody do this since we have been very active on a number of fronts all at the same time. There's really been an unprecedented level of activity, at least in my lifetime and the period of my studies, and we've been working over a critical range of issues.

As Strobe mentioned, both the completion of the New START Treaty, the release of

the Nuclear Posture Review, the holding of the Nuclear Security Summit, and just on Monday the start of the NPT Review Conference, it seemed like a good time to actually take stock of where we are, how these pieces are fitting together, and then also to take a very good look at where we still need to go.

So let me just state very simply and firmly at the beginning that the President and his entire administration have no higher priority than making sure that America and Americans and our allies are safe from the threat of nuclear weapons. It is both a constitutional responsibility for the President and a personal priority for the President, and we are sparing no effort, no energy, and no approach to ensure that nuclear weapons do not spread to new countries and the terrorists never get the materials they need to build a nuclear weapon.

In this effort, as the people in this room know all too well, there is no silver bullet. Our efforts are multifaceted because they have to be multifaceted. No one tool, whether international cooperation or sanctions or military force, can achieve this important mission by itself. And that is why we continue to rely on our full toolbox of options to deal with these multiple challenges. There are times when we can, must, and will act alone, but we know that our results will be more successful and more enduring if we lead in international and, indeed, a global effort.

So we hope that our organizing principle is clear for all to see. If there is one major theme, it is the recognition that despite our great power and influence, preventing nuclear threats requires broad international cooperation. This is true for all facets of our nuclear policy. It is true as we work to secure nuclear materials so that a terrorist group cannot steal or buy them; it is true as we work to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in our own arsenal and in the arsenal of other states, including Russia; it is true as we work to promote transparency and stability among nuclear powers; and it's clearly true as we work to ensure that states that violate the rules of the nonproliferation regime face real and significant consequences as a result of their actions.

As Strobe mentioned, in many ways the speech President Obama gave in Prague is a touchstone for this administration. It gives us both an organizing framework and a detailed agenda. And today, just 13 months after that speech was given, the administration has delivered already on a number of the pledges in the speech even as we recognize that we have much more

work to do.

Let me just list a few of the things that we feel that we've made great progress on:

Last month, as Strobe mentioned, President Obama and President Medvedev signed a New START nuclear reduction agreement, and I know that Rose and Tom Moore, and Strobe and Steve all this morning discussed this in great detail. But let me simply make the point that this agreement is not only in America's security interest on its own merits, but we are already seeing how its completion has set a positive tone for the NPT Review Conference in New York. It helps consolidate our leadership in the nonproliferation system. It enables us to work on the very difficult challenges of preparing and reinvigorating the nonproliferation regime and the NPT, which stands as a cornerstone.

We will continue to engage the Senate, and we hope that the long history of bipartisan support for nuclear arms reduction agreements, negotiated both by Democratic and Republican presidents, will be continued by the Senate.

Number 2. In April, we released an historic Nuclear Posture Review. This document for the first time is completely unclassified, bringing out our policies and the direction of our nuclear strategy for the next 10 years and beyond. It sets an example for transparency. We encourage other nuclear states to follow.

The review makes clear that our nuclear capabilities will be dedicated to addressing the major threats we face today: that of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism. And while we are committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent for as long as nuclear weapons are needed for our security and that of our allies, we will work to reduce the number of nuclear weapons we have, the role they play, and to achieve the conditions that will allow us to adopt a sole purpose nuclear strategy, even as we pursue the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, as the President has stated. And I know that this will be of some interest. I look forward to engaging in a conversation on the NPR during the Q&A.

We are also pursuing the President's ambitious but achievable agenda to secure all vulnerable nuclear materials in four years. The historic Nuclear Security Summit saw leaders from 47 countries make an unprecedented global commitment to nuclear security, and we have laid out a

work plan that will enable real progress in keeping nuclear materials off the black market and out of the hands of terrorist groups. And we look forward to the Republic of Korea's hosting of the Nuclear Security Summit in 2012.

We have also made significant progress in isolating Iran over its clear and repeated violations of the nonproliferation system. Having been found in noncompliance with its safeguard obligations and having failed to comply with UN Security Council resolutions, Iran finds it has few friends willing to defend its actions and is facing the prospect of new and tougher sanctions over its nuclear activities.

The statements by the UN secretary general and the IAEA director general on Monday in New York are but a sampling of the kinds of global chorus you will hear over the coming days, making clear that Iran's room to maneuver is shrinking. As Secretary Clinton said, for all the bluster of its words, the Iranian government cannot defend its own actions, and that is why it is facing increased isolation and pressure from the international community. And as my boss, the Vice President, pointed out, the Iranian regime is more isolated domestically, regionally, and internationally than it has ever been. Our actions to date not only make it easier for states to support tough actions on Iran, but harder for states to resist such steps.

And we have also shown North Korea that their proliferation and traditional crisis tactics will not bring them anything other than isolation and economic pain, and that the only path for them is to return to the six-party talks and to resume their denuclearization activities.

Now, this is just a listing, a sampling of the efforts we're taking. Now, my prepared remarks, I won't get into detail on a lot of other steps that we're taking to prevent nuclear smuggling of materials and technology, to improve the ability of the International Atomic Energy Agency to detect illicit nuclear activities even while promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology, our efforts to negotiate a ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, or to ratify and bring into force the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

We are doing all of these and more, and we are doing them not only because they are the right way to protect the country, but also because they are the right way to prevent proliferation, and because it is what the President said he would do when he ran for the office of

President.

Now, this long list of activities doesn't really answer the mail. I was asked to try and tie some of these things together, and I think it's useful to explain that for us these seemingly stovepiped activities are all interrelated. These actions have benefits for our security in an of themselves, but together they create a momentum that is undeniable and equally beneficial for our security. Each step reinforces the others and helps reduce the role that nuclear weapons play today and can play in the future.

And just by way of example, as I mentioned at the outset, it's clear that the completion of New START with Russia has had a positive impact on the start of the NPT Review Conference. Every country that spoke on the opening day of the conference welcomed the completion of New START with the exception -- expected exception -- of Iran. Despite that one predictable omission, it is clear that the concrete steps we are taking to reduce our own nuclear weapons set the right tone for the conference just as it makes possible -- just as it made it possible to achieve some of the tangible outcomes from the Nuclear Security Summit.

So, as discussed this morning, I'm sure it's important to keep and note not only what the treaty does in and of itself for reducing nuclear weapons and promoting transparency with Russia, but what it means for our leadership in the international nonproliferation effort.

Another example of how these pieces are interrelated is how our pledge not to develop new nuclear weapons or add military capabilities to our existing weapons has had an impact internationally. But at the same time we've made very clear at the highest levels our commitment to invest what is needed to maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal.

This not only helps us achieve lower numbers by ensuring that the weapons we retain remain reliable, but it also makes clear to our friends and allies that they do not need to worry about our ability to protect their interest as well as our own. By doing so, we make clear that we will defend our allies in the face of current and emerging threats, including those posed by states violating their nonproliferation commitments.

In so many ways, these puzzle pieces fit together, and the more puzzle pieces we lay down the clearer the signs that we are making real progress. Just Monday, Indonesia, citing the

progress being made in the nonproliferation and disarmament field, announced that they will immediately pursue ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, helping to reinforce the global norm against the testing of these weapons.

No, not every challenge has yet been met. Some will take months and years, and the President himself has said that the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons may not be achieved even in his lifetime. But we are on the right path and making steady, significant, and demonstrable progress.

And so as we acknowledge, even after our nuclear spring -- I hope it's not a nuclear year because I think the pace, if it keeps up at that level, may burn out most of the people in government -- even after that investment in the recent activities we have a long way to go. The New START Treaty, again, which we hope will receive, grow strong bipartisan support by the Senate, is just the beginning of what we want and need to achieve in bilateral nuclear reductions with Russia.

As we have said, even before negotiations of this agreement started, we see New START as an interim agreement that will put us on a strong foundation to pursue deeper cuts, including the tactical nuclear weapon arsenals of both countries. In addition, while we successfully resisted Russian attempts to make New START about missile defense, we welcome discussions with Russia on missile defense cooperation and on the full range of offense/defense issues in the next round of talks.

We are also committed in engaging in a dialogue with China to promote a more stable, resilient, and transparent strategic relationship. We will also not rest until we reverse the nuclear activities in Iran and until North Korea is completely denuclearized.

As we continue to pursue a world without nuclear weapons, we will continue to make clear that we cannot achieve this goal if new states are going nuclear. The burden of making a nuclear-free world rests with all states, not just states that possess nuclear weapons. Just as we have made clear that the NPT is not a favor to any group of states, nuclear weapon states, nonnuclear weapon states, but is in the interest of all states, so, too, is achieving a world where nuclear weapons are no longer needed, and in this effort all states must be full and contributing partners.

Day by day we are working to advance the President's ambitious agenda to keep America safe. Just two days ago we released historic information about America's nuclear stockpile showing the clear progress we have made in dismantling the Cold War's nuclear arsenal. Just today there was P5 statement issued at the NPT Review Conference reaffirming the role of the P5 in achieving and pursuing nuclear disarmament, and even I haven't had a chance to digest all of its parameters, but it's a clear sign that as the old DJ saying goes, the hits just keep on coming. And we continue to see continued progress and momentum on these efforts.

But in the end, the actions need to be directed on the key challenges we face. Since the Vice President and President took office, they work diligently to make sure that the threats of the 21st century are being addressed today. This is clear in the new direction we are taking on missile defense, on the work we are pursuing to dismantle the Cold War nuclear structure, and to shape our remaining limited nuclear capabilities on the appropriate challenges for today and tomorrow as well as in the efforts we are taking to repair and reinvigorate the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the broader regime it supports.

We want to be clear to you just as we've been to our international partners that we know that in this effort there will be setbacks. We know, for example, that it will be hard if not impossible to produce a final consensus document at the NPT Review Conference in New York. Iran and a few other countries will try to block efforts to improve the regime's ability to respond to actions such as those being taken by countries such as Iran.

But the NPT Review Conference for us has never been seen as a finish line; it is a weigh station. It is an event that will allow us to show that the vast majority of states see a less nuclear world as a safer world, and to show that the majority of states want to improve the treaty and the regime it underpins.

We fully expect to see a flood of stories in late May about how the lack of a consensus document is somehow a consensus -- is somehow a setback for our efforts. But we are not measuring success or failure by that yardstick. We will judge it by what countries say at the conference about the regime and what they are prepared to do with us after the conference is over in the months and years ahead. But we take comfort in knowing that we are on the right course, that

we're making real progress in ensuring the security of our country and of its citizens.

Thank you for your attention, and I'll look forward to your questions. (Applause)

MR. PIFER: Jon, thanks very much for covering and giving us that picture of the administration's overall effort at tackling the nuclear challenge.

Before opening up to questions, I guess I'd like to put one question to you. As described in the Nuclear Posture Review, and I think in terms of the various pieces that you talked about, there is something of a pivot now in terms of the orientation of American policy on nuclear arms reductions and nonproliferation away from sort of the traditional reductions with Russia, and before that with the Soviet Union, now really to focusing on nonproliferation nuclear terrorism.

Just in your sense of in terms of generating the sense of urgency in other countries, I think the administration's done a fairly good job making clear that this is now at the top of its priority list. How are you seeing that in terms of our partners around the world, in terms of do they begin to see this as the same sort of a urgent issue that the Obama Administration sees it?

MR. WOLFSTHAL: Well, I think just as, you know, the implementation and the policies that we've laid out in the NPR is part of a transition, you know. We're not simply leaving behind the needs to maintain strategic stability deterrent for ourselves and our allies, but we're in some ways expanding -- and I guess I should speak carefully here -- we're not expanding the role of nuclear weapons, but we are expanding the things that nuclear weapons need to be mindful of as we shape our policy. And we have now pivoted to that new area of nonproliferation and nuclear terrorism.

But at the same time the NPR is not the only vehicle by which we're trying to demonstrate and to get a sense of urgency from other countries. And in that respect I think not only is the response to the Nuclear Posture Review telling, but I think the Nuclear Security Summit is really a clear sign of how that has begun to create some additional momentum.

Imagine what the outcome of the Nuclear Security Summit would have been had we taken a much different direction than in the Nuclear Posture Review. Because of what we were doing for our own security and for its own content, we were able to create a dynamic where you could have multiple countries from different perspectives, nonnuclear weapon states, nuclear

weapon states, countries with nuclear materials, countries without nuclear materials, countries in the nonaligned movement, countries in different alliances all sign onto this global regime.

"Regime" is a strong word, but this global approach to ensuring that nuclear materials are secured, eliminated wherever possible, and that weapons-usable materials are reduced in their usage. And that's something that I think would have been very difficult to achieve if we had not been demonstrating in multiple ways, including the way we manage our nuclear arsenal, that our top priority is nonproliferation and nuclear terrorism. Had we signaled that somehow we were expanding the role of nuclear weapons or had we decided to pursue new nuclear weapons, I think it would have greatly complicated our effort to achieve positive results from the Security Summit. And again, just an example of what we're trying to achieve and, I think, why we see these different pieces fitting together.

MR. PIFER: Now let me open up the floor to questions. Again, please keep questions short and have a question mark at the end, and identifying yourself before posing it.

MR. YOUNG: Stephen Young with the Union of Concerned Scientists. Thanks, Jon, as always. I hope to ask you what I hope is a hard question, following on from what Steve just said that the primary focus of U.S. nuclear policy is now terrorism (inaudible), and coupling that with the fact that in that context you don't need 1,500 warheads to do that job, one would think, and the fact the Bush administration was very clear that the U.S. no longer sets Russia as a reason why we have our arsenal and made major cuts in the arsenal -- obviously, was what Russia did in terms of their NPR -- and this NPR doesn't do that or your NPR doesn't do that and actually says our forces are still sized because of Russia, in my view that's a backward step. Why that backward step? Why are we saying that in this new context?

MR. WOLFSTHAL: The language that Steve's referring to in the NPR is -- and I'll forget the precise words -- but that largely our arsenal is sized, in large part, in response to the size of Russia's arsenal. And I think that's just a recognition that in looking at strategic stability and our desire to ensure that neither country, should circumstances change, could view a situation where they were either vulnerable or where they might be able to see an advantage that there is some benefit to rough parity.

I won't speak to the Bush Administration's approach other than saying for us we want to go to lower numbers; we think that one way to do that is to engage with Russia both in implementing the New START Treaty should the Senate give its advice and consent, and to moving on to further and deeper reductions. And we think that there is a considerable room to run in going to lower numbers, assuming that we're able to bring other countries with us.

And I think that gets to my point that it should not be a shock to anybody here that the United States is not going to eliminate all of its nuclear weapons unilaterally. That has never been what the President has talked about. It is the desire to lead an international effort to create the conditions where we can adopt a sole purpose strategy for our nuclear weapons and to eventually lead the world in eliminating all nuclear weapons. But we can do our part, we can lead it, as the President said, but we need other countries to play their part as well.

As so our relationship with Russia and as we go down our relationship with other countries that have nuclear weapons have to be a part of that calculation.

MR. PIFER: Okay, back there?

MS. KELLERMAN: Thanks. Michelle Kellerman with National Public Radio. I had a couple of questions about Iran, one just broadly. Why do you think sanctions will make a difference? There have already been three rounds.

And, second of all, what's the status of the Teheran research reactor deal Ahmadinejad made clear this week that the ball's back in your court?

MR. WOLFSTHAL: Again, no surprise to anybody here. Our strategy has never been just to achieve sanctions. Our strategy is to make clear both through diplomatic engagement, if possible, but, if necessary through the application of sanctions, that Iran has an opportunity to return to compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its obligations, and to engage with the broader national community.

And, unfortunately, Iran has chosen to ignore our diplomatic approaches and to fail to respond to them in a constructive way. And we believe that now that we have to pivot, unfortunately, to engage in an approach that uses sanctions to convince Iran that there's a penalty to pay for actions and to encourage them to actually return to the negotiating table in a serious way.

So will it make all the difference in the world? I don't think we have the answer to that. We know that we have tried diplomacy. That has not been successful yet to date. We are now pursuing the sanctions approach. We believe that that will have an impact; it's already having an impact inside Iran, and we want to change the calculus of the Iranian leadership and bring them back to the table, and we think that right now sanctions is the right way to motivate them.

In terms of the Teheran research reactor, Iran claims that they have accepted the terms of the deal, but they have not. In Geneva last year, or earlier this year they said that they would accept the terms which would require them to ship out their stocks of LEU and then at a point later, probably a year after that material was fabricated into fuel plates, to receive fuel in return.

The President was very clear that the value of that agreement was as a confidence-building measure, that if Iran was prepared to give up its stocks of LEU and buy time to build confidence if their intentions were peaceful. What they are talking about now is a straight swap which we believe -- and it's not a question of our belief, it's clear -- would not remove that material for any length of time and therefore it doesn't build the confidence that Iran needs to build and, therefore, is not an acceptable counterproposal. That was the basis of our deal; that was the one that the countries we've been working with signed onto and, despite the statement of the Iranian president, it is up to Iran to accept the terms that they accepted previously and that they've now rejected.

MS. GUNTER: Linda Gunter with the NGO, Beyond Nuclear. I'm one of the people who don't know what the outcome that you mentioned in the beginning stood for, maybe the only person, because I'm a little bit on the outside of the arms control environment, and for that reason maybe can hold onto a little bit more idealism as well.

But there seems to be an inherent contradiction which I wanted to ask you about in the way this discussion is framed in terms of the language that's used. On the one hand, there's a discussion about needing nuclear weapons, the need for nuclear weapons, how many do we need? And that word "need" comes up quite a lot.

And then on the other hand, there's the talk about how we achieve a world free from nuclear weapons which seems to contradict the idea that anybody at all needs nuclear weapons.

And the second part of the discussion that seems to be so intellectually confusing or contradictory is this idea of deterrence. But, on the one hand, we say, well, we have to have nuclear weapons as a deterrent since this is what's worked before, and, on the other hand, we need to get rid of them. And it seems from a common sense point of view patently obvious that if no one had nuclear weapons, then we'd be a lot safer than using them as a so-called deterrent, which, you know, I happen to think is a myth to stop other people from using a weapon which essentially is only useful if you never use it, which sort of raises a question about whether it even qualifies as a weapon at all.

So I'm just curious to know, you know, how you accommodate these two contradictory clashing philosophies.

MR. WOLFSTHAL: I miss Dupont Circle. You actually get to think about these broad issues, and this is why I valued my time in think tanks, and I hope one day to return to think tanks.

I mean, I understand the point you're trying to make, and, unfortunately, whether you realize it or not, by being here you're now part of the nuclear geek crowd, so, you know, welcome. And I'm sure there's a Brooking paper in MDFR that we can dust off and hand over.

I think the key missing piece in your question is time. We are transitioning from a world where there is a consensus -- maybe not a consensus, but a broad majority -- of thinkers, politicians, elected officials in the United States who were convinced that we needed nuclear weapons to defend ourselves and defends our allies. And our allies felt that we needed to have nuclear weapons to defend ourselves against what was seen as the Soviet intent, and stated intent, to dominate the world. That was the nature of the Cold War balance.

We are still moving away from that, and I think Rose's point that we need a term other than the "post-Cold War world," but we are still living with a Cold War overhang, and we are working day by day to try and get rid of that hangover, that shadow. And that's part of what you've seen over the past several weeks and months. When we talk about no longer needing to threaten to use nuclear weapons against countries allied with nuclear weapon states, that the big -- one of the big changes in the Nuclear Posture Review, that our new statement is that we will not use nuclear

weapons against nonnuclear weapon states in compliance with their Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations.

It's clearing out that old and we think no longer relevant approach to deterrence which said you needed to have nuclear weapons to deter all these conventional attacks and other types of threats that we faced. We're working assiduously to narrow the range of issue where we feel we do need nuclear weapons in order to make sure that we and our allies are protected when we want to keep making progress in that area.

The Vice President, in a speech at the National Defense University in February, said that we are going to increasingly shift -- and the QDR also makes this point -- increasingly shift the burden of deterrence away from nuclear weapons and to other capabilities, not just military, but including military means -- missile defense, advanced conventional capabilities, because we want to move away from a world where nuclear weapons are seen as being needed.

So I don't view it as a contradiction. I view it as a transition, and one where we're in a difficult period and where we are going to have debates over what is the appropriate number, what is the appropriate role of one where we feel we've moved out in a new direction and one that we feel has at least the potential to go somewhere where the United States is much safer through a world where there are no nuclear weapons.

MR. PIFER: Back in the red (inaudible).

MS. BINDI: Hi, I'm Federiga Bindi. I'm a senior nonresident fellow here at Brookings. I have three very quick questions, the first related to Iran. Don't you think that having started to talk about sanctions before the time line for the diplomatic talks expired was somehow harming the diplomatic talks?

And the second question, don't you see a contradiction between on the one side asking the Iranians to comply with the TNP while they have not formally broken yet, and on the other not doing anything in having Israel and India and Pakistan being part of the TNP. So I'm wondering whether you are working on that side.

And the last question, if I understood well your comments before, you're already assuming that the revision conference will somehow fail. Is that correct?

Thanks.

MR. WOLFSTHAL: Let me take them in reverse order. No, I don't think that the NPT Review Conference is going to fail. The point I was trying to make is that, having been in Washington now for -- four review conferences? -- four, that every five years there are stories that are written, and they judge success or failure by whether there is a consensus final document. And that is, I think, a poor measure of success given where we are today.

What we want and what we expect is that the vast majority of countries will talk about the need to restore the regime and the vitality and the relevancy of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the regime. And if we, as we've already begun to see, hear that chorus, then we think the treaty will be successful, particularly if that leads to action down the road and steps that we will take on a broad range of issues, whether it be on promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, whether it is on encouraging and promoting broader steps toward disarmament, and, yes, on reinforcing the need for countries to comply with their obligations.

So I don't think it's going to be a failure. What I was saying is that we will judge it by a different yardstick. That may or may not be successful, and, obviously, the people that only tune in every five years it will be like, okay, did you get a document? No. Okay, gee, then what was it for? But we think it's more complicated than that.

In terms of, you know, whether we can ask Iran to comply with the treaty despite the fact that there are countries that are not in the treaty, I think that they're completely unrelated. Iran signed the treaty voluntarily. They complied with the treaty for a long time and then they violated their safeguards obligations. They have been found in noncompliance with their safeguards obligation by the IAEA Board of Governors.

They are currently in noncompliance with UN Security Council resolutions. They are not in noncompliance and they're not in violation because Israel, India and Pakistan are not members of the NPT; they are in noncompliance because they were hiding significant elements of their nuclear program that had to be declared in under inspection to the National Atomic Energy Agency and because they have not answered questions that the Agency has posed to them for several years.

Do we think that the NPT should be universally applied? Yes. The P5 statement released today talks about wanting to achieve universalization of the NPT. We are interested, as the President has said, in building the peace and security of the world without any nuclear weapons, not just for countries that are NPT nuclear weapon states, but for all countries. So I don't think there's a contradiction there at all; I think that the two are completely separate.

I think to the extent that Iran wants to point at countries that are not in the treaty, that are not judged by the same yardstick, I think it's another sign that they are trying to deflect attention from their own noncompliance.

As Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said, the onus is on Iran. It's not on the United States. It's not on countries that are not members of the NPT. It's Iran who has taken these actions and needs to take other actions to come in compliance.

In terms of the timeline and whether or not talking about sanctions somehow poisoned the diplomatic process, I think if you believe as I do that the President and our government was sincere, as we have been from the beginning, about wanting a negotiated solution with Iran, then you can't really believe that somehow a discussion of whether sanctions will be appropriate or beginning to engage in discussions with allies about what those sanctions might look like if needed to poison the process.

I mean, you have to judge and look at the two countries and their behavior, and you have to make up your own mind about whether you think the United States and President have been sincere in our efforts to negotiate a solution to Iran's activities. I know that we have been, and I think that's been clear for all to see, and I think you can judge Iran's behavior for itself.

MR. WEITZ: Thank you. Richard Weitz, Hudson Institute. A question about the administration's policies towards China. I notice in the NPR there was some discussion about delegations treated dialogue and stability talks and so on. In terms of the formal arms reduction process, when you're thinking about what might follow the New START Treaty, if it is ratified by the Senate, are you thinking about how you might engage China either formally, although we know their position, as you have to get down to their levels before they would consider that, or some other unilateral arrangements.

And then, secondly, with respect to the Korea situation, it seems to be has not got as much attention at the conference, at least in terms of what's being covered in the media, as the situation in Iran. I wasn't sure if the administration has given any, or advised any of its thinking on that, perhaps go for a comprehensive approach as this is the sub-Korean government's thinking, or some other new approach. And somewhat related, I'd be interested in how you're thinking about that.

Thank you.

MR. WOLFSTHAL: Thank you. On China, we haven't given a lot of thought to how we take what we have been doing for many, many years, first with the Soviet Union and with Russia, and broadened that out.

The President talked about in Prague wanting to broaden out the arms reduction process, but -- you know, I can't believe I'm saying this in front of Strobe and others in this room who, you know, literally wrote the books on this -- you know, arms control is not just about reducing a missile, blowing up a silo, cutting up a bomber. It's about transparency and predictability and accountability.

And before we can get to a situation where we can engage with China in any kind of formalized arms reduction process we need to engage with them in a dialogue on what they view their nuclear weapons as for, how many they intend to have, how they want to deploy them, how they control them.

We have great, because of the arms reduction process, great visibility and great understanding about how Russia views these issues and, as a result, we can engage in a reduction process knowing that there's predictability. We don't have that with China, and that's something that we will continue to engage with them on. We have proposed and pursued military to military talks for some time. We have proposed and engaged in track 2 discussions, track 1-1/2 discussions, track 1 discussions, but we have not yet been successful, and that's part of a process we intend to continue.

In terms of Korea and whether we need a new approach or whether, you know, it's gotten the attention and needs to at the NPT, you know, indirectly there's obviously going to be discussion of North Korea at the NPT Review Conference, particularly as it deals with withdrawal and

whether or not countries can violate the terms of the treaty and somehow be absolved of their violations by withdrawing from the treaty. We don't think countries should be able to abuse their withdrawal positions.

But we don't think we needed approach. We have an approach that we know can work, and we're not going to engage in a process where North Korea can find some other way out of that box. North Korea has one path before it. This is what the members of the six-party talks, minus North Korea, have agreed to.

If they come back to the six-party talks, we engage in the full range of discussions that North Korea has themselves said that they want to engage in, but that path has to lead through denuclearization. And we have seen time and time again, and having working in North Korea on the agreed framework, during a very cold winter, you know, we've been -- we've seen this movie before. And any time we try to reshape the playing field, North Korea takes advantage of that, resells us the same horse, and we simply are not going to play that game.

MR. PIFER: In the front?

MR. WOLFSTHAL: I think we're going to get to the CTBT questions now.

MR. PIFER: Do you think so?

MR. KIMBALL: It's not about that.

MR. WOLFSTHAL: Oh, okay.

MR. KIMBALL: Daryl Kimball with the Arms Control Association. Thanks for being here, Jon.

As we know, success on ending reducing the nuclear threat doesn't just depend on U.S. leadership, it depends on others. And one of the ways in which that will likely play out, as you know, is at the review conference whether the states can make progress on one of the key issues that led to the extension of the treaty in '94, the Middle East resolution, the WMD-free zone in the Middle East.

Now that it appears are though they've reached an agreement on having three subsidiary bodies to discuss these issues, it looks as though there will be discussions in this regard.

Based on my readings, my soundings, it looks as though the U.S. approach in this

and the P5 approach combined with Egypt's approach, which is now chairing the NAM, a group could lead to some practical -- agreement on some practical steps forward.

Could you just explain -- because I've run into a lot of misinterpretation about this issue and the U.S. position -- what the U.S. view is on this subject and why -- why you think this is important for the NPT as a whole?

MR. WOLFSTHAL: I will be careful because I am not -- of course, I'm not the point on many of these issues, but I'm definitely not the point on the negotiations up in New York, and you know these people as well as I do, Daryl.

You know, just let me state a couple of basic things which is, one, the United States stands by our past statements at NPT Review Conference, and we stand by the resolution from 1995 that we, as the other parties in the region, support a weapons of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East. But we also recognize that that cannot take place, cannot be fully implemented out of a context with what is happening in the region. And that's something that has to be considered as we engage in this process of determining how to make progress towards that goal while at the same time not letting it be a hindrance to ensuring that the treat remains viable and can be reinvigorated.

And so we are engaging, as a number of other countries are, in discussions on how to pursue the implementation of the weapons-free zone in the region. Just as we have announced our support for other nuclear weapon-free zones, we continue to support the Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone. But it's really beyond my capability to sort of give you a sense of exactly where we're going to end up.

I think in a broad context our point is very simple. There are going to be a number of specific issues that are on countries' minds whether it be Egypt, or Indonesia, or South Africa, or Russia, or whomever. They're important issues, but they have to be subsumed under the broader goal that we believe most if not all countries share, and that is that the NPT be reaffirmed, that the norm of nonproliferation be reinforced, and that the ability to detect and respond to violations of the regime be pursued.

And so we're prepared to work with all of our partners on these other issues, important as they are, as long as we keep in mind that larger goal within the treaty.

That's sort of a non-answer, and I apologize for that. It's just not something that I have, you know, full authority on.

MR. PIFER: I don't even need the mic. Is CTBT a question mark?

MR. WOLFSTHAL: Yes. Exclamation point. Next question.

So, as Strobe was kind enough to note, I wear two hats, and my one hat for the National Security Council is working on the CTBT. That's my full NSC responsibility. We're fully committed to the treaty. We believe it is in the security interest of the United States, and we believe that reinforcing the norm against the testing of nuclear weapons is in the interest of all countries.

We would like to see the treaty ratified and to have it entered into force at an early date. We were extremely pleased at the statement by Indonesia and the leadership that they have shown that they will not wait on U.S. ratification before ratifying the treaty themselves, and we call on all countries to ratify the treaty as soon as possible.

We are also very mindful that, despite now 18 years of evidence that we can maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal without nuclear testing, and 18 years of evidence that we can detect other countries' activities, particularly nuclear explosive activities, that we have to educate and work with the members of the Congress to give them that same comfort level.

In today's environment, we don't think that's going to happen tomorrow or the next day. We also know that we have the immediate priority of ratifying the New START Treaty. We hope that the process of gaining the advice and consent of START will be extremely helpful in bringing a lot of senators, many of whom have never dealt with an arms control treaty before in their times in the Senate -- remember, it's been some time -- that we will improve their comfort level with the process. And as Under Secretary Tauscher talks about, we'll rebuild the muscle memory in terms of how to go about this debate and this discussion.

We also believe that we have a very important job in doing our homework. It has been a number of years, throughout the entire Bush Administration, where we haven't looked at a lot of these technical issues: what -- how has our verification capabilities improved over the last 11 years? They have demonstrably, but we have to quantify that.

How has our ability to maintain our arsenal improved over that time period? I'm very comfortable that the secretary of energy, the head of NNSA, and the lab directors will all be extremely strong in their stockpile stewardship program and state clearly that they do not need nuclear testing to manage the risks inherent in maintaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal.

So while I'm optimistic that we will gain ratification, we don't have a time line right now because part of it is doing our homework, part of it is getting New START done, and part of it is seeing what the political dynamics of the Senate are. But we hope that once New START is completed we can move on to really engaging on this in a serious way.

MR. PIFER: Could I maybe have a quick follow-up?

MR. WOLFSTHAL: It's your house, you can do what you want.

MR. PIFER: Another set of initials, it's not quite an acronym, but it's more contemporary than MBFRs RRW. And a number of us were next door at Carnegie when then secretary of defense, now Secretary of Defense Bob Gates spoke about the CTBT, and it was in a week, I think, of the election. And you're obviously already getting a lot of questions on that issue.

Could you just give us a sense of the answers that you're providing?

MR. WOLFSTHAL: I was fortunate enough to be in the room in October of 2008. For those of you that weren't there and don't have this burned into your memory, what then and current Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said was that we would not be able to maintain an effective arsenal without either a new weapon or the resumption -- excuse me, without testing or nuclear modernization. He did not say we needed a new weapon to maintain an effective arsenal.

Our response to that is in the forward to the Nuclear Posture Review where Secretary Gates states very clearly that the investments we are requesting and the life extension program planned that we have laid out in the NPR to him represents as credible modernization plan that both implicitly and explicitly, we believe, answers the question of whether or not the plan we have laid forward which will not develop new nuclear weapons, which will not add military -- new military capabilities to our existing to our existing weapons, but will simply extend the lifetimes of our current arsenal, exploring on a case-by-case basis the different technical options available to us,

including reuse, refurbishment and replacement, that that represents a credible modernization plan.

And we have already shown, I think, in the testimony from State Department, Defense Department, and NNSA, and the Joint Chiefs on the Nuclear Posture Review, shown that everybody is very, very comfortable with that approach, including the laboratory directors. We have to make that case. We have to explain why we're comfortable with that, and the senators themselves have to be comfortable with that, not only for the issue of START -- because we do believe start needs to be viewed on its own merits -- but we think this is the right thing to do regardless of whether we have the CTBT or START treaty. For today, the United States needs to maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal. We believe this is the best way to do that, and we need to make sure that we are explicit in engaging with members of the Senate, and the broader Congress and the policy community, and explaining why we think we're comfortable with that and why we think that's the right way to move ahead.

MR. GIBBONS: Thank you. Yes, Mr. Wolfsthal -- Dan Gibbons, by the way -- I'm wondering about the strategic approach that the administration is crafting to move towards global zero in the long term. We know that we have a deterrent relationship vis-à-vis Russia that probably will need to be evolved in order to have significant reductions in weapons, and presumably some extension of that reduction process would be necessary to accomplish a significant, similar significant, reduction with other states.

But how many states are required to consider that a global non-deterrent environment which would be a world without war kind of thing would be the way to get there? Or is it possible that we can get there prior to the worldwide peace situation?

MR. WOLFSTHAL: As I said in my remarks, pursuit and achieving a world-free of nuclear weapons is not simply an issue for the nuclear weapon states alone. I can't list for you all of the different steps that we would have to achieve in order to pursue or get to a world without nuclear weapons because I don't think anybody claims to know exactly what that world looks like. But I can give you a couple of examples of things that we know we will need to achieve, not only will all of the countries that have nuclear weapons have to be able to give up those weapons and to feel comfortable doing so, but countries that have weapons-usable materials have to agree to either

eliminate those materials or to ensure that they are so well monitored and cannot be diverted without, if not timely immediate detection, that the other countries are comfortable that they don't need to be acquiring nuclear materials as a hedge in -- you know, we're sort of backing in a guns-of-August situation.

So, you know, the verification requirements would be extreme. The government, the United Kingdom has been engaged in an effort on that which I think is extremely useful, one that the United States supports, and I think you'll be -- in the NPR we talk about needing to invest in advanced research and develop on improving our verification capabilities. So we recognize that there is a tremendous set of hurdles that we would have to achieve. But at the same time we recognize that a world without nuclear weapons is a world that is inherently safer for the United States and for all countries.

No U.S. official has ever said, nor would I want to give you the impression, that in order to get rid of all nuclear weapons we have to change human nature and eliminate the prospect of war. We're not trying to create a -- set a goal that is so difficult to achieve that it makes the pursuit of a goal meaningless. We believe it is achievable, and we believe it is not only achievable but necessary. And it's one that we're going to continue to work on aggressively throughout this administration.

I think they were saying one more question.

MR. PIFER: Back there in the back. We have time for this question and then one more.

MR. POMPER: Hi, Jon.

MR. WOLFSTHAL: Hi, Miles.

MR. POMPER: Miles Pomper from CNS. Question: The administration has taken a number of steps, as you noted, in the NPR and in other measures that respond to the nonaligned movement's criticisms about Article 6, such as the movements on negative security assurances, disclosure of the arsenal, and so on.

My question is, do you see any reciprocal measures coming from the other P5 states? I mean, how much effect -- and how much effect do you think this would have on advancing

the nonproliferation goals of the United States and the other P5 states if you don't see those kind of reciprocal measures?

MR. WOLFSTHAL: I'm sort of -- it's nice to see you, Miles. I'm sort of reminded of the line in *Casablanca* where, you know, he says, "Round up the usual suspects." It's nice to see you (inaudible) here, friends who I don't get to see that often anymore.

You know, we were very clear in the NPR that we're taking these actions because they're in our security interest, and we do think that they have a positive effect on the global nonproliferation system. We're not in a position where we're going to try and dictate to other nuclear weapon states what they should do. We do believe that countries that have nuclear materials as well as nuclear weapons need to make sure that they are protected at the highest standards capable, highest standards possible. So we do think there are certain global responsibilities that countries have.

But we're not going out and telling Russia that, oh, yeah, by the way, you should do this in order to make sure the NAM is happy. Those governments speak to members of the nonaligned movement as often as we do, if not more often. And we believe it's up to them to decide what's in their own security interest.

But I think if you look at what other countries are doing, particularly other nuclear weapons states like Russia, like France, like the United Kingdom, and we hope soon like China, that there will be a positive impact on reinforcing the nonproliferation regime if all of the nuclear weapons states are taking steps to reduce the role the nuclear weapons play in their security thinking.

And so Russia, by signing the New START Treaty, they have helped add to that dynamic. The U.K. initiatives over the past several years has been an important building block in that momentum. As we've said, we think one of the outliers is China. We want to engage with them in a dialogue that we think would be extremely helpful, not only in terms of their own security, but in the broader nonproliferation regime, which China is a member of and a supporter of. But again, we're not going to tell other countries what they should do in order to reinforce a nonproliferation regime. I think they have a very clear sense of that themselves.

MR. PIFER: Okay, we have time for one last question.

MS. MACKBY: Hi, Jon, thank you for being here. It's Jenifer Mackby, CSIS.

I just wanted a follow-up question on North Korea. I was at the NPT for the last few days, and you know the secretariat has a list of states' parties, and there's an asterisk next to the North Korea thing. It has announced its withdrawal.

But is there a unified theory among the three depositaries as to its status?

MR. WOLFSTHAL: I hear your fight there. I want to talk to Joe, my, you know, my astronomy expert on, you know, unified field theories. And I think that focusing on whether North Korea is or is not currently a party to the NPT is not a particularly useful debate to engage in. The tactic used by past presidents of taking North Korea's nameplate and sort of putting it in their pocket as if they are somehow just going to take that off the table, you know. I don't know what I would do if I were ever elected to the president of the NPT Review Conference -- not likely to happen -- but, you know, I think it's much more important that we focus in on what happens the next time a country tries to withdraw.

North Korea has a particular set of challenges, ones that we're trying to address through the six-party process. The end goal that is where North Korea is a full and compliant member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. But I think the debate, the legalistic debate of whether they are or are not members, whether they are able to exercise the withdrawal provisions while they're in violation of the treaty is a legalistic one. I know I'm not qualified to respond to, and one that I don't think helps in pursuing a more robust regime.

MS. MACKBY: Well, just to follow up, I'm just wondering, because it obviously has repercussions from the NPR discussion on security assurances and so forth.

MR. WOLFSTHAL: There is no question, whether you think that North Korea is or is not a member of the NPT, that they are not in compliance with their nonproliferation obligations. Even if I were to take the NPT out of it, they are not in compliance with the North/South Denuclearization Agreement. They are not in compliance with other agreements they've signed, including the Six-Party Agreements, and so there's no question, we have said publicly, that North Korea would not be eligible for the negative security assurances that we have issued in the NPR.

MR. PIFER: Jon, you covered a lot of ground. Thank you very much for joining us

today. It's been a great job.

MR. WOLFSTHAL: Thank you very much. (Applause)