



A Race We Can Win

The World Can – and Must – Build a Stronger Security Framework

by Mohamed ElBaradei

Nuclear proliferation and terrorism represent the single most important threat to global security. Yet fundamental differences of opinion remain on how to deal with this ever growing menace to our survival. Should we opt for diplomacy or force? What are the relative merits of collective versus unilateral action? Is it more effective to pursue a policy of containment or one based on inclusiveness?

These are not new questions, by any measure. But they have taken on renewed urgency as nations struggle, both regionally and globally, to cope with an extended array of conflicts, highly sophisticated forms of terrorism, and a growing threat of weapons of mass destruction.

In a real sense, we are in a race against time — but it's a race we can win if we work together.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the global anchor for humanity's efforts to curb nuclear proliferation and move towards nuclear disarmament. There is no doubt that the implementation of the NPT continues to provide important security benefits — by providing assurance that, in the great majority of non-nuclear-weapon States, nuclear energy is not being misused for weapon purposes. The NPT is also the only binding agreement in which all five of the nuclear-weapon States have committed themselves to move forward towards nuclear disarmament.

Still, it is clear that recent events have placed the NPT and the regime supporting it under unprecedented stress, exposing some of its inherent limitations and pointing to areas that need to be adjusted. The question is how do we best move ahead to achieve the security we seek?

Seizing the Opportunity

Clearly, the world has changed. The key features of the international security landscape have been altered significantly over the past two decades. Whatever value the concept of

nuclear deterrence may have served during the Cold War — as the volatile currency on which the standoff between two superpowers was balanced — they have now become the ultimate “elephant in the parlor”. For the five countries recognized as nuclear-weapon States under the NPT, their nuclear arsenals are increasingly becoming either a focal point for resentment or cynicism among the nuclear “have-nots”, or worse, a model for emulation for States that wish to pursue clandestine WMD programmes, hoping that this will bring them security and status.

It is the height of irony that, in today's security environment, the only actors who presumably would find the world's most powerful weapons useful — and would deploy them without hesitation — would be an extremist group. A nuclear deterrent is absolutely ineffective against such groups; they have no cities that can be bombed in response, nor are they focused on self-preservation. But even as we take urgent measures to protect against nuclear terrorism, we remain sluggish and unconvinced about the need to rapidly rid ourselves of nuclear weapons.

Why? The answer, in my view, is that the international community has not been successful to date in creating a viable alternative to the doctrine of nuclear deterrence as the basis for international security.

Nuclear weapons will not go away until a reliable collective security framework exists to fill the vacuum. The aftermath of the Cold War should have served as the logical lead-in to such an effort. The resulting changes to the international security landscape have been obvious; it is only that we have not acted to adapt to these changes.

If there is any silver lining to this dark cloud, it is that the window of opportunity is still open. The latest efforts to counteract Iraq's phantom weapons of mass destruction, to unveil a clandestine nuclear-weapons programme in Libya, to understand the extent and nature of Iran's undeclared nuclear programme, to bring North Korea back to the NPT regime and dismantle any nuclear programme they may have, and to prevent nuclear terrorism have all brought

worldwide attention to bear on issues of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear security.

That energy is ours to harness. If we are ever to build a global security culture based on human solidarity and shared human values — a collective security framework that will serve the interests of all countries equally, and make reliance on nuclear weapons obsolete — the time is now.

Building a Collective Security Framework

The question remains, how? Whose responsibility is it to create this collective security framework? Is this an initiative for policy makers? The UN Security Council? The scientific community?

The answer, of course, is that it will take all of us. Progress must be made on all fronts — political, scientific and societal. We must all take the responsibility for action.

Reliance on nuclear weapons is a recipe for self-destruction. I find it encouraging that people from all sectors of society have been coming forward with proposals on how to address the challenges of nuclear proliferation and nuclear arms control. In my view, this could be the beginning of a much needed discussion on security — and we should do all we can to stimulate this dialogue, move it forward, and keep it in public focus.

On the political and policy front, leadership must be focused on restoring and strengthening the credibility of multilateral approaches to resolving conflicts and threats to international security — conflicts and threats ranging from preserving the environment to ensuring respect for human rights, working for sustainable development, and controlling weapons of mass destruction — which, in our globalized world, can only be resolved through a collective and multilateral approach, in which competing interests and powers can be contained and harmonized. The system of collective security hoped for in the United Nations Charter has never been made fully functional and effective. This must be our starting point.

For some years now, efforts to achieve Security Council reform have been mostly focused on the question of whether additional countries should be given a permanent seat. In my view, such a change would be helpful in making the Council more representative of today's global realities, and in removing the current correlation — in that the same five countries recognized under the NPT as nuclear weapon States hold the five permanent seats on the Security Council.

But for the Security Council to take the leadership role for which it was designed, its reform must be focused on

more than issues of membership. The Council must be able and ready to engage swiftly and decisively in both preventive diplomacy and enforcement measures, with the tools and methods in place necessary to cope with existing and emerging threats to international peace and security.

This should include mechanisms for preventive diplomacy to settle emerging disputes within and among nations. The genocide in Rwanda and the appalling situation in Darfur, where 10 000 people are dying every month, are two prime examples of the lack of early and decisive intervention by the Security Council.

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The Security Council should also have, at the ready, “smart” sanctions that can target a government without adding misery to its helpless citizens, as we have seen in Iraq. The Council should have adequate forces to intervene in the foreseeable range of situations — from maintaining law and order, to monitoring borders, to combating aggression. And yes — in my view, the Security Council should be able to authorize collective pre-emptive military action when the imminence and gravity of the threat merit such action.

Increasing the effectiveness and relevance of the Security Council is an essential step towards a functional system for collective security. Such a system is the only alternative to the reliance that some nations, including nuclear weapon States and their allies, now place on nuclear deterrence — in a “good guys versus bad guys” approach that inevitably leaves some nations seeking to achieve parity. A functional system for collective security is the only alternative to the current hodge-podge of approaches to addressing security issues — ranging from inaction or late action on the part of the international community, to unilateral and “self-help” solutions on the part of individual States or groups of States.

With a viable system of collective security in place, policy makers and political leaders may find it easier to make progress on the nuclear arms control front, such as bringing into force the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and negotiating an internationally verifiable Fissile Material (Cut-Off) Treaty.

Setting Benchmarks for Security

In my view, every effort should be made, starting at the 2005 NPT Review Conference and continuing in other venues, to agree on benchmarks for non-proliferation and disarmament. These benchmarks should include: urging all States to bring the additional protocol to IAEA safeguards agreements into force; tightening and formalizing the controls over the export of nuclear materials and technology; working towards multilateral control over the sensitive parts of the nuclear fuel cycle — enrichment, reprocessing, and the management and disposal of spent fuel; and ensuring that States cannot withdraw from the NPT without clear consequences, including prompt review and appropriate action by the Security Council. The international community should also work rapidly to reduce the stockpiles of high enriched uranium and plutonium around the globe, and to strengthen the protection of existing nuclear material and facilities.

An essential benchmark will be that a concrete roadmap for verified, irreversible nuclear disarmament, complete with a timetable, and involving not only the NPT nuclear weapon States but also India, Pakistan and Israel, is at last put in place.

Not long ago, the foreign ministers of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden spoke out jointly, saying: “Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are two sides of the same coin, and both must be energetically pursued.” Thirty years after the enactment of the NPT, with the Cold War ended and over 30 000 nuclear weapons still available for use, it should be understandable that many non-nuclear-weapon States are no longer willing to accept as credible the commitment of nuclear-weapon States to their NPT disarmament obligations.

In my view, we have come to a fork in the road: either there must be a demonstrated commitment to move toward nuclear disarmament, or we should resign ourselves to the fact that other countries will pursue a more dangerous parity through proliferation. The difficulty of achieving our ultimate objective — the elimination of all nuclear weapons — should by no means be underestimated. But at the same time, it should not be used as a pretext for failing to start the process of drastic reductions in existing nuclear arsenals, and simultaneously to explore the development of collective response mechanisms that will be needed against any future clandestine nuclear proliferation efforts.

Joining Forces for Change

I would also like to emphasize the role of scientists in advancing non-proliferation and disarmament objectives, and the responsibility for action that lies with the scientific community. Science brought us the atom bomb. And if we are to rid ourselves of nuclear weapons, we will need an equally intensive effort on the part of scientific research-

ers — to develop innovative tools for nuclear verification and mechanisms for reducing the proliferation potential of nuclear material and technology.

In the area of nuclear verification, for example, advances in environmental sampling and analysis techniques are enabling IAEA inspectors to determine, with far greater precision, the nature and origin of individual particles of uranium — and thereby to help us detect undeclared activities. Satellite imagery technology and advanced information analysis techniques have also broadened the range of inspection capabilities. And in the long run, science may be able to develop additional innovative ways and means to neutralize the impact of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons is a legacy we all share, and ultimately, every concerned citizen also shares the responsibility for action. In countries ranging from the most powerful to some of the least developed, the voice of the citizen is increasingly a force in the political debate. It is vital that we engage individuals from all sectors of society in a public dialogue on international security — to remind them of the continued danger of nuclear war, to explain to them possible alternatives, and to offer avenues for involvement. We must continue to develop and refine proposals for action, to bring them to the attention of governments and opinion leaders, and to promote public discourse on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament that will become too forceful to be ignored. Efforts to develop proposals that aim to move us away from a reliance on nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence have never been more urgent or more relevant.

Rethinking Our Security

For centuries, perhaps for millennia, security strategies have been based on boundaries: city walls, border patrols, and the use of racial and religious groupings or other categories to separate friend from foe. Those strategies no longer work. The global community has become interdependent, with the constant movement of people, ideas and goods. Many aspects of modern life — global warming, Internet communication, the global marketplace, and yes, the war on terrorism — point to the fact that the human race has walked through a door that cannot be re-entered.

Yet with all the strides we have made to connect on many levels, we continue to think disconnectedly on others. We think globally in terms of trade, but we continue to think locally in terms of security. We cherish our connectivity on the Web, but turn away from solidarity in matters of extreme poverty. James Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, recently pointed out, “There are about 800 million hungry people in the world today, about half of them children” — yet the governments of the world spent \$900 billion on armaments last year. Could it be that our priorities are skewed?

7 Steps to Raise Security

In a recent essay published in the *Financial Times*, IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei outlined his proposal for seven steps to raise the world's security. He said that three phenomena — the emergence of a nuclear black market, the determined efforts by additional countries to acquire the technology to produce the fissile material useable in nuclear weapons, and the clearly expressed desire of terrorists to acquire weapons of mass destruction — have radically altered the security landscape.

“The system itself — the regime that implements the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — clearly needs reinforcement,” he said.

He called on States meeting at the NPT Review Conference in May 2005 to pursue seven steps to strengthen world security.

1 Put a 5-year hold on new facilities for uranium enrichment and plutonium separation. There is no compelling reason for building more of these proliferation-sensitive facilities; the nuclear industry already has more than enough capacity to fuel its power plants and research facilities.

To make this holding period acceptable for everyone, commit the countries that already have these facilities to guarantee an economic supply of nuclear fuel for bona fide uses. Then use the 5-year hiatus to develop better long-term options for managing these technologies (for example, in regional centres under multinational control).

To advance these ideas, Dr. ElBaradei has engaged a group of international nuclear experts, and their proposals will be put forward at the May Conference.

2 Speed up existing efforts, led by the US Global Threat Reduction Initiative and others, to modify the research reactors worldwide operating with high enriched uranium — particularly those with metal fuel that could be readily employed as bomb material. Convert these reactors to use low enriched uranium,

and accelerate the technical research on how to make high enriched uranium unnecessary for all peaceful nuclear applications.

3 Raise the bar for inspection standards by establishing the “Additional Protocol” as the norm for verifying compliance with the NPT. Without the expanded authority of this protocol, the IAEA’s rights of inspection are fairly limited. It has proven its value recently in Iran, Libya and elsewhere, and it should be brought into force for all countries.

4 Call on the UN Security Council to act swiftly and decisively on the case of any country that withdraws from the NPT, in terms of the threat the withdrawal poses to international peace and security.

5 Call on all States to act on the Security Council’s recent resolution 1540, to pursue and prosecute any illicit trading in nuclear material and technology.

6 Call on the five nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT — to accelerate implementation of their “unequivocal commitment” to nuclear disarmament, building on efforts such as the 2002 Moscow Treaty between Russia and the US. Negotiating a treaty to irreversibly ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapon programmes would be a welcome starting point.

7 Acknowledge the volatility of longstanding tensions that give rise to proliferation — in regions like the Middle East and the Korean Peninsula — and take action to resolve existing security deficits and, where needed, provide security assurances. In the case of the Middle East, call on all parties to pursue a dialogue on regional security as part of the peace process. One goal of this dialogue would be to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapons-free zone.

“None of the foregoing steps will work in isolation. Each requires a concession from someone. But with leadership from all sides, this package of proposals will create gains for everyone,” he said.

This is a mindset we must change. In this century, in this generation, we must develop a new approach to security capable of transcending borders — an inclusive approach that is centred on the value of every human life. The sooner we can make that transition, the sooner we will achieve our goal of a planet with peace and justice as its hallmark.

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