



BI-WEEKLY TREATY REVIEW



12 January – 25 January 2010

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BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (BWC)

High-Level Panel Calls for Biosecurity Improvements

Global Security Newswire, 12 January 2010, <http://gsn.nti.org/>

The U.S. government should divide its list of deadly disease-causing pathogens and toxins into separate categories so that research facilities can implement security measures that correspond to the risk posed by those materials, according to the findings of a high-level panel of experts. (1,098 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Researchers Worried by Biosecurity Proposals

Global Security Newswire, 19 January 2010, <http://gsn.nti.org/>

Some U.S. biodefense researchers are objecting to certain proposals for securing laboratories that handle infectious diseases that could be used in acts of bioterrorism, *Popular Mechanics* reported Friday. (334 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)

Disposal Facility Resumes Destruction of Mustard Agent-Filled Mortars

Chemical Materials Agency, 12 January 2010, <http://www.cma.army.mil/>

Workers resumed processing mustard agent-filled 4.2-inch cartridges (mortars) today as part of ongoing mustard processing operations at the Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (TOCDF). (217 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Chemical Weapons Safety Suit Settled

The Pueblo Chieftain, 12 January 2010, <http://www.chieftain.com/>

[Colorado] State officials and the U.S. Army's Chemical Materials Agency apparently have reached a settlement over monitoring of chemical weapons here. Details of the settlement were not available Monday. (236 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

U.S. Senator Lugar Voted 'Arms Control Person of the Year' for Efforts to Destroy Chemical Weapons in Russia

OPCW, 13 January 2010, <http://www.opcw.org/>

In an online poll conducted by the Arms Control Association (ACA), U.S. Senator Richard Lugar has been voted the "2009 Arms Control Person of the Year" in recognition of his long-standing support for U.S. financial contributions to construct Russia's new chemical weapons destruction facility at Shchuchye. (170 words) [Click here for full text.](#)



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CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC) (CONT.)

New Coalition Aims to Promote Chemical Weapons Disarmament, Nonproliferation

Global Security Newswire, 22 January 2010, <http://gsn.nti.org/>

Dozens of nongovernmental organizations from around the world are forming an umbrella group to help promote the total elimination of chemical weapons and prevent their use by terrorists.

(943 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST-BAN TREATY (CTBT)

How to Protect Our Nuclear Deterrent [OPINION]

The Wall Street Journal, 19 January 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/>

By George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, and Sam Nunn

Providing for this nation's defense will always take precedence over all other priorities.

(961 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

FISSILE MATERIAL CUTOFF TREATY (FMCT)

Conference on Disarmament Opens 2010 Session

UN Office at Geneva, 19 January 2010, <http://www.unog.ch/>

The Conference on Disarmament this morning opened its 2010 session, hearing opening statements from the Secretary-General of the United Nations (in a video message), the Secretary-General of the Conference, and the incoming Conference President. (340 words)

[Click here for full text.](#)

Pakistan Rules Out Fissile Talks for Now: Diplomats

Reuters, 22 January 2010, <http://www.dawn.com/>

Pakistan has quietly informed world powers that it cannot accept the start of global negotiations to halt production of nuclear bomb-making fissile material in the near future, diplomats told

Reuters on Friday. (441 words) [Click here for full text.](#)



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STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TREATY (START)

Jones, Mullen to Russia to Work on Nuclear Deal

Associated Press, 20 January 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/>

In a sign that a new arms deal with Russia may be close, President Barack Obama is sending two top national security aides to Moscow to work on clearing the last obstacles. (344 words)

[Click here for full text.](#)

Russia, U.S. Agree '95 Percent' on Nuclear Treaty: Medvedev

Moscow (AFP), 24 January 2010, <http://www.spacewar.com/>

Russia and the United States are close to deciding their nuclear weapons disarmament treaty, President Dmitry Medvedev said Sunday, ahead of talks to hammer out the new deal due to resume in February. (190 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

TREATY ON OPEN SKIES

Air Force Asset Used to Assess Damage, Needs

States News Service, 19 January 2010, accessed via Lexis Nexis

After a devastating 7.0-magnitude earthquake rocked the capitol of Haiti, Port-au-Prince, last week leaving severe structural damage and an unknown death toll, the Air Force was tasked to provide imagery through the use of an observation aircraft. (484 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

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The U.S. government should divide its list of deadly disease-causing pathogens and toxins into separate categories so that research facilities can implement security measures that correspond to the risk posed by those materials, according to the findings of a high-level panel of experts.

The much-anticipated 149-page report issued late Friday by the Working Group on Strengthening the Biosecurity of the United States also calls for the government to take actions that would lead to changes in the rules governing the handling, storage and management of the 82 "select agents"—pathogens and biological toxins such as anthrax declared to pose a severe threat to human or animal health by the U.S. Health and Human Services and Agriculture departments.

The group was established through an executive order issued in January 2009 by then-President George W. Bush. It was led by the Defense and HHS secretaries and included the top officials from the State, Agriculture, Commerce, Transportation, Energy and Homeland Security departments and other agencies.

"It is the policy of the United States that facilities that possess biological select agents and toxins have appropriate security and personnel assurance practices to protect against theft, misuse, or diversion to unlawful activity of such agents and toxins," the executive order states.

The directive came in response to a wave of security and safety troubles at major disease research facilities. In one high-profile case, the federal government in 2008 fined Texas A&M University \$1 million for failing to inform authorities that its researchers had been exposed to—and in one case, infected by—disease material. That same year, the FBI identified a researcher from an Army biodefense facility at Fort Detrick, Md., as the perpetrator of the 2001 anthrax mailings, which killed five people and infected 17 others. Bruce Ivins—who committed suicide before charges could be issued—was "the most visible manifestation" of the possibility that someone within the U.S. biodefense complex could pose a threat to the nation, according to the report.

The idea of stratifying the select-agent list has been endorsed by many in the bioscience community and embraced by lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

Last year, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.) and ranking member Susan Collins (R-Maine) introduced legislation that

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would require the Homeland Security Department to prepare security regulations for laboratories and divvy the select agents into three tiers.

As of last February, roughly 400 U.S. research entities were registered and about 15,300 individuals were approved to have access to select agents. Facilities that handle the eight to 10 most dangerous materials would, under the legislation, receive the highest security and be regulated by Homeland Security. Health and Human Services would supervise sites in the remaining two tiers. The bill is awaiting a vote by the full chamber.

When considering the select-agent list, "most existing rankings focus on biosafety risk, with less emphasis on biosecurity and biodefense, and fail to consider issues that affect U.S. national security (e.g., selection of an agent or toxin for deliberate release)," the working group's report states.

Biosafety is generally defined as measures intended to prevent the release of infectious agents within a laboratory or the outside environment. Biosecurity involves more active methods to avert biological terrorism or other disease breakouts. The "risk assessments" that would determine how the select agent list is to be divided into security tiers, as laid out by the panel, would be carried out by either the Health and Human Services or Agriculture department. Rankings would be based on an extensive list of criteria, including: communicability through an individual or population; availability of countermeasures; and long-term health or economic impact.

The working group selected the criteria to help mitigate the potential "insider threat" posed by professionals working in licensed laboratories and the threat from other entities acquiring deadly materials from a commercial source, the study says. The report does not specify how many tiers would make up a revised list.

A complex stratification scheme "may lead to confusion regarding what [security] measures to apply to what agents," the panel's analysis warns. Therefore, it is "critical that any stratification scheme be simple and easily implemented."

Those who work with the deadly materials should undergo an evaluation every three year instead of every five, as required today, as well as random drug testing, the panel recommends. The working group also suggested increased monitoring of laboratory staff.

The personnel security recommendations seem to be about "tweaking the current risk assessment system, not imposing a nuclear-style [security] regime, which would have posed a

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bigger problem," said Gerald Epstein, director of the Center for Science, Technology and Security Policy at the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The Pentagon's framework for its biodefense activities is often considered to be the strictest and can include additional investigations, such as credit checks.

The panel's language does not impose a "severe new regime but encourages additional monitoring of personnel in the labs," he told Global Security Newswire.

The report calls on the government to establish a working group that includes federal and nonfederal experts from a number of communities to establish guidance on "suitability criteria" for personnel who seek to work with the hazardous pathogens.

The team proposed by the working group should also consult with experts from the scientific, intelligence and security communities to develop a standard security risk assessment system for use at all facilities that handle the deadly pathogens, according to the report.

Establishing a methodology "will ensure that registered entities are using common approaches to measuring risk and will mitigate the possibility" of insufficient security against terrorism or the accidental release of disease material, the document states.

The working group recommended the federal government identify or establish an entity to coordinate biosecurity activities. Its work could include convening meetings among key agencies to encourage information sharing.

In addition, the government should require sites applying to handle select agents to submit a management plan that identifies key managers who ensure oversight. The government should also provide direction on inventory management and record-keeping requirements for select agents, according to the report.

"There seems to be a genuine effort written in the document to include existing experiences and knowledge" in terms of vetting personnel and addressing physical security, which is "very promising," according to Kavita Berger, project director at the AAAS policy center.

The White House national security staff intends to combine the panel's recommendations with many of the recent biosecurity reports and then hammer out a strategy for biosecurity, according to Carol Linden, principal deputy director for the HHS Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, who served on the panel.

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The Working Group on Strengthening the Biosecurity of the United States earlier this month issued a report that called for implementing security at research sites based on the risk posed by the disease materials used in their work and for instituting heightened personnel security measures. Its recommendations echoed proposals included in legislation submitted last year by the top members of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

"The American Biological Safety Association, the closest thing that scientific research has to a representative agency, has been trying to get its opinion to Congress that these rules are far too restrictive and unnecessary," said one worker at the U.S. Army's biodefense research facility at Fort Detrick, Md. "It is far more effective to have the various labs police themselves; but that opinion has been overwhelmed by all of the publicity about Bruce Ivins, swine flu, bird flu and grandstanding about terrorism."

Ivins was the researcher suspected of carrying out the 2001 anthrax attacks that killed five people. He committed suicide before facing any charges.

The report issued last week called for "continuous monitoring measures (supervisor accountability, self- and peer-reporting)" for researchers working with disease materials and for increased monitoring of laboratory personnel from other nations.

"The bottom line is that almost all scientists here feel that having yet another government bureaucratic entity looking over their shoulder will be extremely counterproductive to science and will gain virtually no results," according to the Fort Detrick source.

The American Biological Safety Association also expressed concerns about laboratories being forced to bear the weight of the security enhancements.

"The concern is that, larger, better-funded universities (for example) will be able to comply with additional regulations, while smaller research entities and public health laboratories will be severely impacted due to budgetary constraints," according to a letter from a committee within the organization.

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Officials suspended processing of the mortars last year (and resumed destroying agent filled bulk containers) when sampling and analysis of the furnace exhaust gas conducted during start-up of mortar operations identified higher-than-anticipated levels of mercury.

Since halting mortar operations, a new \$33 million filtering system, designed to safely capture mercury from furnace exhaust gas streams generated while destroying munitions with elevated amounts of mercury, has successfully completed full-scale performance demonstration tests before Utah state regulatory authorities.

This new Pollution Abatement System (PAS) Filtration System (PFS) uses sulfurimpregnated carbon to capture mercury in furnace exhausts. To ensure maximum safety of the workers, community and environment, mercury-monitoring systems are located at intervals within the PFS filter beds. These mercury-monitoring systems ensure the carbon filters are working properly and complement other emission monitoring equipment.

More than 70 percent of the original mustard agent stockpile (by agent weight) has been destroyed. Planning for the elimination of DCD's [Deseret Chemical Depot] relatively small remaining stockpile of GA (Tabun) nerve and Lewisite blister agent is in progress. Chemical weapons destruction operations at DCD are scheduled to be completed by the Chemical Weapons Convention treaty deadline of 29 April 2012.

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Chemical Weapons Safety Suit Settled

The Pueblo Chieftain, 12 January 2010, <http://www.chieftain.com/>

[Colorado] State officials and the U.S. Army's Chemical Materials Agency apparently have reached a settlement over monitoring of chemical weapons here. Details of the settlement were not available Monday.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment filed suit in federal court asking for closer monitoring of the igloos at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, where 780,000 weapons containing mustard agent are stored. The Army checks igloos quarterly for any leaking gas but state officials said that was not often enough.

Over the years, 568 leaking weapons have been found and put in steel cylinders. Eventually, they will be destroyed, likely in contained explosion chambers. The rest of the weapons are planned to be destroyed through water neutralization.

In December, both sides indicated they had reached an out-of-court agreement and last week, attorneys notified the U.S. District Court in Denver of plans to file for dismissal.

The state still is suing the Defense Department over the deadline for weapons destruction. Acting as the Environmental Protection Agency's designated officer in Colorado, health department officials claim they have the power to enforce a 2017 deadline to get rid of the weapons, which have been determined a hazardous waste.

Last year, U.S. District Court Judge Richard Matsch rejected the state's claims, ruling the federal government has the responsibility and Congress already has set a 2017 deadline (which the federal government says it cannot meet). The state is appealing that ruling.

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"The international vote selecting Richard Lugar acknowledges the Senator's work last year, and clearly celebrates his multi-decade commitment to reducing Cold War legacy weapons," said Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the Washington-based ACA.

The Shchuchye facility will eventually destroy some 2 million chemical munitions and 5,460 metric tonnes of deadly VX, sarin and soman agents, representing about 14% of Russia's entire declared chemical weapons stockpile. OPCW inspectors will maintain a 24-hour presence at the facility until all chemical weapons munitions and agents at the site are verifiably destroyed.

The OPCW Director-General, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, attended the opening ceremonies for the Shchuchye facility with Senator Lugar in late May 2009.

The complete list of nominees for the ACA poll can be seen at <http://www.armscontrol.org/pressroom/2009personofyearvote>.

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New Coalition Aims to Promote Chemical Weapons Disarmament, Nonproliferation

Global Security Newswire, 22 January 2010, <http://gsn.nti.org/>

Dozens of nongovernmental organizations from around the world are forming an umbrella group to help promote the total elimination of chemical weapons and prevent their use by terrorists.

The Chemical Weapons Convention Coalition, in a mission statement, identifies itself as “an independent, international body whose mission is to support” the global ban on chemical warfare materials “with focused civil society action aimed at achieving full membership of the CWC, the safe and timely elimination of all chemical weapons, preventing the misuse of chemicals for hostile purposes and promoting their peaceful use.”

It is among a scant number of such alliances established to support the aims of a specific nonproliferation treaty, said Paul Walker, head of the Security and Sustainability program at Global Green USA. The environmental organization helped develop the coalition and will serve as its hub of operations.

The new group has been years in the planning. Supporters believe it can help raise the profile of the pact in regions where membership and implementation of its rules remain a cause of concern. ...

Representatives from about 35 nongovernmental organizations—most from outside the United States and Western Europe—attended a two-day session last month in The Hague, Netherlands, to prepare the founding document for the coalition. Organizers hope to attract no fewer than 100 groups to the coalition by the end of 2010.

A plan of work through 2012—the year by which all CWC states must have eliminated any arsenals of prohibited materials—is set to be completed in a couple months, Walker said.

Among the planned activities detailed in the founding document is the preparation of a database on all nations’ activities relative to the convention, including whether they have joined and the size of chemical industries that could be turned to illicit activities. The coalition also intends to produce a yearly report card assessing whether CWC member states are instituting the pact’s requirements at the national level.

Tools for achieving the group’s goals will include public meetings, written commentaries, letter-writing campaigns, interviews, analyses and educational programs, according to the founding document. The target audience will be officials at all levels of government.

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Work would not be limited to that sector, though. The coalition intends to prepare an analysis with recommendations for augmenting the nonproliferation value of the inspection program of the convention's monitoring body, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It will also offer "research and expert policy advice" to the organization, its member states and other parties, according to the group.

Success and Challenges

The Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force in 1997, prohibiting development, production, stockpiling, use or transfer of warfare materials such as mustard blister agent and the nerve agents VX and sarin. There are 188 member states, covering 98 percent of the landmass of the Earth.

Three nations—Albania, India and a country that is never officially identified but widely believed to be South Korea—have eliminated their stockpiles of banned materials. Disposal operations are continuing in Russia and the United States, and Iraq and Libya have pledged to destroy their chemical weapons.

"The CWC is often considered to be the most successful of the WMD treaties, and arguably that is the case," according to Angela Woodward, program director for national implementation at the London-based Verification Research, Training and Information Center, which helped establish the coalition. "But there remain certain significant problems with the convention which states parties have utterly failed to deal with, such as noncompliance issues (like 'nonlethal weapons') or instigating the on-site inspection mechanism." ...

Universality of the convention remains a major issue. Just seven nations have yet to join: Angola, Egypt, Israel, Myanmar, North Korea, Somalia and Syria. In that list of nations is one—Egypt—that is known to have used chemical weapons in conflict, and two—North Korea and Syria—that are suspected of housing chemical stockpiles. The Middle Eastern states are probably the most likely to join the convention in the near future, and the region will host the coalition's next major meeting, Walker said. The hope is to persuade participating nongovernmental groups from the area to promote universality and other CWC issues in their home states through contact with the public and private sectors and the media. ...

The group also hopes through a program of outreach to convince Iraq, Libya, Russia and the United States to conduct "safe, sound and timely destruction of chemical weapons," it said in the initial document. It will further seek to "promote the safe and environmentally sound use of chemicals for peaceful purposes."

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Coalition participants might have contacts beyond those possessed by governments who could help push forward the organization's disarmament objectives, Walker said. He also described an effort that might involve some pressure on nations to fully implement the treaty. ...

"Our efforts are really to go into the regions themselves, raise the issues publicly, more so than probably the OPCW and government agencies can, because most of this is all quiet, backroom diplomacy."

The Hague-based verification organization has thrown its support behind the new group. Both the organization and its member states can "benefit from outside voices that can point out faults in the system," said OPCW spokesman Michael Luhan. "There's a lot of things that go unsaid in more formal venues."

The U.S. State Department said it was familiar with the coalition but that it was too early to consider its value.

Walker said the coalition expects to have three to four part-time employees and an annual budget of between \$250,000 and \$300,000 for staff, meetings and travel for coalition participants. The hope is that foundations and convention states will provide the funding, he said. ...

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How to Protect Our Nuclear Deterrent [OPINION]

The Wall Street Journal, 19 January 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/>

By George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, and Sam Nunn

The four of us have come together, now joined by many others, to support a global effort to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons, to prevent their spread into potentially dangerous hands, and ultimately to end them as a threat to the world. We do so in recognition of a clear and threatening development.

The accelerating spread of nuclear weapons, nuclear know-how, and nuclear material has brought us to a tipping point. We face a very real possibility that the deadliest weapons ever invented could fall into dangerous hands.

But as we work to reduce nuclear weaponry and to realize the vision of a world without nuclear weapons, we recognize the necessity to maintain the safety, security and reliability of our own weapons. They need to be safe so they do not detonate unintentionally; secure so they cannot be used by an unauthorized party; and reliable so they can continue to provide the deterrent we need so long as other countries have these weapons. This is a solemn responsibility, given the extreme consequences of potential failure on any one of these counts.

For the past 15 years these tasks have been successfully performed by the engineers and scientists at the nation's nuclear-weapons production plants and at the three national laboratories (Lawrence Livermore in California, Los Alamos in New Mexico, and Sandia in New Mexico and California). Teams of gifted people, using increasingly powerful and sophisticated equipment, have produced methods of certifying that the stockpile meets the required high standards. The work of these scientists has enabled the secretary of defense and the secretary of energy to certify the safety, security and the reliability of the U.S. nuclear stockpile every year since the certification program was initiated in 1995.

The three labs in particular should be applauded for the success they have achieved in extending the life of existing weapons. Their work has led to important advances in the scientific understanding of nuclear explosions and obviated the need for underground nuclear explosive tests.

Yet there are potential problems ahead, as identified by the Strategic Posture Commission led by former Defense Secretaries Perry and James R. Schlesinger. This commission, which submitted its report to Congress last year, calls for significant investments in a repaired and modernized nuclear weapons infrastructure and added resources for the three national laboratories.

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These investments are urgently needed to undo the adverse consequences of deep reductions over the past five years in the laboratories' budgets for the science, technology and engineering programs that support and underwrite the nation's nuclear deterrent. The United States must continue to attract, develop and retain the outstanding scientists, engineers, designers and technicians we will need to maintain our nuclear arsenal, whatever its size, for as long as the nation's security requires it.

This scientific capability is equally important to the long-term goal of achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons—with all the attendant expertise on verification, detection, prevention and enforcement that is required.

Our recommendations for maintaining a safe, secure and reliable nuclear arsenal are consistent with the findings of a recently completed technical study commissioned by the National Nuclear Security Administration in the Department of Energy. This study was performed by JASON, an independent defense advisory group of senior scientists who had full access to the pertinent classified information. The JASON study found that the "[l]ifetimes of today's nuclear warheads could be extended for decades, with no anticipated loss in confidence, by using approaches similar to those employed in Life Extension Programs to date." But the JASON scientists also expressed concern that "[a]ll options for extending the life of the nuclear weapons stockpile rely on the continuing maintenance and renewal of expertise and capabilities in science, technology, engineering, and production unique to the nuclear weapons program." The study team said it was "concerned that this expertise is threatened by lack of program stability, perceived lack of mission importance, and degradation of the work environment."

These concerns can and must be addressed by providing adequate and stable funding for the program. Maintaining high confidence in our nuclear arsenal is critical as the number of these weapons goes down. It is also consistent with and necessary for U.S. leadership in nonproliferation, risk reduction, and arms reduction goals. By providing for the long-term investments required, we also strengthen trust and confidence in our technical capabilities to take the essential steps needed to reduce nuclear dangers throughout the globe. These steps include preventing proliferation and preventing nuclear weapons or weapons-usable material from getting into dangerous hands.

If we are to succeed in avoiding these dangers, increased international cooperation is vital. As we work to build this cooperation, our friends and allies, as well as our adversaries, will take note of our own actions in the nuclear arena. Providing for this nation's defense will always take precedence over all other priorities.

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Departures from our existing stewardship strategies should be taken when they are essential to maintain a safe, secure and effective deterrent. But as our colleague Bill Perry noted in his preface to America's Strategic Posture report, we must "move in two parallel paths—one path which reduces nuclear dangers by maintaining our deterrence, and the other which reduces nuclear dangers through arms control and international programs to prevent proliferation." Given today's threats of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism, these are not mutually exclusive imperatives. To protect our nation's security, we must succeed in both.

Beyond our concern about our own stockpile, we have a deep security interest in ensuring that all nuclear weapons everywhere are resistant to accidental detonation and to detonation by terrorists or other unauthorized users. We should seek a dialogue with other states that possess nuclear weapons and share our safety and security concepts and technologies consistent with our own national security.

Mr. Shultz was secretary of state from 1982 to 1989. Mr. Perry was secretary of defense from 1994 to 1997. Mr. Kissinger was secretary of state from 1973 to 1977. Mr. Nunn is former chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

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Conference on Disarmament Opens 2010 Session

UN Office at Geneva, 19 January 2010, <http://www.unog.ch/>

The Conference on Disarmament this morning opened its 2010 session, hearing opening statements from the Secretary-General of the United Nations (in a video message), the Secretary-General of the Conference, and the incoming Conference President...

In a video message, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said he believed that 2010 could be a historic year for progress in disarmament and non-proliferation. They had seen critical support from leaders of key nuclear weapon States, renewed engagement of the Security Council, and ongoing initiatives from the international community, non-governmental organizations and civil society. Last year, the Conference had broken a longstanding gridlock by adopting a program of work. This year, he urged Conference members to put aside differences and focus on the global interest, in particular, the compelling need for binding legal norms and the vital role of the Conference in building them. He hoped they would agree on a work program as soon as possible, hopefully during this first session.

Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, noted that by its resolution 1887, adopted at the historic Summit in September 2009, the Security Council had called upon the Conference to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. For its part, the General Assembly had adopted, by consensus, a resolution on the Conference, which requested all members to cooperate towards an early commencement of substantive work in its 2010 session. The Assembly had also adopted, again by consensus, a resolution on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT)—for the first time in five years. The Conference should agree on a program of work as soon as possible to resume its substantive work.

Ambassador Abdul Hannan of Bangladesh, incoming President of the Conference, in opening remarks, noted that, despite comments to the contrary, the Conference remained the single multilateral disarmament negotiations forum, and said Bangladesh was looking forward to getting it back to substantive work. As President, Bangladesh would do everything to see that consensus was found at the earliest possibility. ...

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Pakistan Rules Out Fissile Talks for Now: Diplomats

Reuters, 22 January 2010, <http://www.dawn.com/>

Pakistan has quietly informed world powers that it cannot accept the start of global negotiations to halt production of nuclear bomb-making fissile material in the near future, diplomats told Reuters on Friday. The move represents a potential setback for efforts by both the Obama administration and United Nations to forge ahead with what is widely seen as the next step in multilateral nuclear disarmament.

Zamir Akram, Pakistan's ambassador to the UN in Geneva, disclosed Islamabad's position during a diplomatic lunch hosted by Chinese ambassador Wang Qun earlier this week, they said.

"We are not in a position to accept the beginning of negotiations on a cut-off treaty in the foreseeable future," Akram was quoted as saying.

The UN-sponsored Conference on Disarmament (CD) is trying to launch negotiations to halt production of fissile material (highly-enriched uranium and plutonium) and clinch what is known in the jargon as a fissile material "cut-off" treaty or FMCT.

"The question was posed to him quite directly," said another envoy at the lunch, attended by more than a dozen senior diplomats from the 65-member Geneva forum, whose members include Israel, North Korea and Iran.

"There continues to be no indication they are ready to move forward with the negotiation," the diplomat told Reuters. "They feel that the strategic imbalance can only be addressed by further (fissile) production. They've made that pretty clear."

Akram told Reuters on Friday: "We have a position. I will articulate that position when the right time arrives."

"What I said was qualified by certain conditions," Akram added. "There are basic conditions about the nature of the discussions, whether it will be simply a cut-off treaty or take account of the issue of stocks."

Stockpiles of fissile material already held by the five official nuclear powers (Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States) and others will be "germane to the nature of the treaty that emerges", according to Pakistan's envoy.

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“Will it be a simple ban, will it be a simple non-proliferation measure, or can it be a reduction of stockpiles which would mean a disarmament issue?” Akram said.

“Our view is that all critical issues should be on the table first and we should have an understanding of what we will talk about,” he said. “If it is not in our national security interest then of course we can't be part of this process.”

Pakistan only tested a nuclear weapon in 1998, and believes that efforts to ban the further production of fissile material would put it at a disadvantage to longer established nuclear powers, including its nuclear-armed neighbor India, with which it has fought three wars since their independence in 1947.

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Jones, Mullen to Russia to Work on Nuclear Deal

Associated Press, 20 January 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/>

In a sign that a new arms deal with Russia may be close, President Barack Obama is sending two top national security aides to Moscow to work on clearing the last obstacles. National Security Adviser James Jones was heading to the Russian capital Wednesday, and Joint Chiefs Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen was also going, White House spokesman Mike Hammer said. He said the trip is "primarily to discuss the remaining issues left to conclude a new START treaty."

The 1991 treaty expired last month. But Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev agreed last July to seek a new one slashing the arsenals of both sides to between 1,500 and 1,675 warheads each. Talks in Geneva broke for the holidays in December amid lingering differences over verification and missile defense. The talks are set to resume on Monday. Last week, Undersecretary of State for Arms Control Ellen Tauscher told reporters the two sides are "really close to an accord."

U.S. negotiators have resisted Russia's demand to include in the deal a plan for monitoring U.S. missile defense interceptors being deployed in Europe. But Moscow has also been loath to grant U.S. experts access to Russia's data on new missile tests.

A senior official couldn't say if progress had been made on either point. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the nuclear talks, said it was unclear if the trip by Jones and Mullen "could do the trick." ...

The administration has been seeking the new START accord as a major benefit from its "reset" of relations with Moscow.

But encryption of missile telemetry has proven one of the toughest issues to resolve. Current rules forbid encryption, so experts can freely monitor instructions sent from missile ground controllers. "The Russians were pushing to remove that," said James Collins, a former U.S. ambassador to Moscow who's now at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"I would be pretty optimistic we're going to get it signed in the next number of weeks," Collins said. "The vast majority of the work is done."



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Russia, U.S. Agree '95 Percent' on Nuclear Treaty: Medvedev

Moscow (AFP), 24 January 2010, <http://www.spacewar.com/>

Russia and the United States are close to deciding their nuclear weapons disarmament treaty, President Dmitry Medvedev said Sunday, ahead of talks to hammer out the new deal due to resume in February.

"The negotiations are going well, we agree on 95 percent of the issues in the new deal", the Russian leader said, cited by Russian agencies from southern Krasnaya Polyana, adding he was "optimistic for the (conclusion of the) deal".

Russian-U.S. discussions over the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) took place Thursday in Moscow, according to a Russian military and diplomatic source.

Full START negotiations will resume at the beginning of February, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

Negotiators from both sides have so far failed to agree a successor to START, signed in 1991 just before the break-up of the Soviet Union, and which expired on December 5.

U.S. President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart have set a goal of reducing the nuclear warheads stockpile to between 1,500 and 1,675 for each country.

The presidents also agreed that the number of "carriers" capable of delivering the warheads should be limited to between 500 and 1,100.

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Air Force Asset Used to Assess Damage, Needs

States News Service, 19 January 2010, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The following information was released by the Air Force Air Combat Command:

After a devastating 7.0-magnitude earthquake rocked the capitol of Haiti, Port-au-Prince, last week leaving severe structural damage and an unknown death toll, the Air Force was tasked to provide imagery through the use of an observation aircraft.

The OC-135B "Open Skies" aircraft, belonging to Air Combat Command's 55th Wing and stationed at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., is specifically tailored for the enforcement of the "Open Skies" treaty of 1992, which allows unarmed flights over the territory of "Open Skies" signatories for observation of military forces and activities.

On January 16, the aircraft was used for a different type of observation mission: to gather imagery over Haiti for a damage and resource requirement assessment. The aircraft left Joint Base Andrews to fly over Haiti, gathering images for approximately 3.5 hours on wet film before flying to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, where the film was processed, digitized and made available to the public.

The aircraft and crew were a great fit for this mission, said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Mary Bell, mission commander with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency [DTRA].

"Although several aircraft are available for gathering imagery, the OC-135B is a desirable platform because its imagery is unclassified," Colonel Bell said. "We didn't have to revamp our mission in order to support. This is a role we play on a day-to-day basis in our normal treaty mission."

This is not the first time this aircraft has been used after a natural disaster. The observation capability of the OC-135B also proved useful after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, said Maj. Ryan Lubinski, a navigator with the 45th Reconnaissance Squadron at Offutt.

The aircraft is also unique in aircrew demographics. The plane is flown by Air Force personnel, but the observation staff is comprised of military members from every service and civilians who are assigned to DTRA.

"I think it is amazing we have the opportunity to help people that are suffering from the quake," said Staff Sgt. Agne Mileviciute, interpreter sensor operator, DTRA, and winner of the 2009 Air Force Linguist of the Year award. "I hope that we will be able to support Haiti even more."



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Capturing quality imagery over Haiti was not the only concern faced by the crew. Flying in a nonradar environment with several aircraft bringing aid occupying the same air space, the aircraft's Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System proved useful to backup the pilots, Major Lubinski said.

Not all of the aircraft are emitting, so the aircrew had to be especially vigilant in visually looking for any potential hazards, he said.

Within the confines of an "Open Skies" treaty mission the imagery is unclassified, but not for general public release. For humanitarian support, the imagery is releasable and will be made available to the Department of State for use in its overall humanitarian assistance mission and to the public.

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