

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS MEETING

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW

SPEAKERS:

GENERAL JAMES CARTWRIGHT, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS  
OF STAFF;

THOMAS D'AGOSTINO, UNDERSECRETARY FOR NUCLEAR SECURITY AND  
ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION  
OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY;

ROBERT EINHORN, SPECIAL ADVISER FOR NONPROLIFERATION AND ARMS  
CONTROL, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE;

BRADLEY ROBERTS, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR  
NUCLEAR AND MISSILE DEFENSE POLICY

PRESIDER:

JAMES LINDSAY, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, DIRECTOR OF STUDIES,  
MAURICE R. GREENBERG CHAIR, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

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THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT.

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JAMES LINDSAY: On behalf of Richard Haass and the Council on Foreign Relations I want to welcome everybody to our special briefing on the Nuclear Posture Review.

Two technical pieces of business before we start. One, I believe this conversation is on the record, so everyone should be aware of that. Number two, I ask everybody to turn off their BlackBerrys, other electronic devices. It would be greatly appreciated.

It's my pleasure to introduce our guests today. And I must say first off, I want to thank all of our guests today for taking time out of their busy schedules to come and brief us on this important subject.

Immediately to my left is Thomas D'Agostino, who is the undersecretary for nuclear security at the U.S. Department of Energy and the administrator for the National Nuclear Security Administration.

To his left, as you might have guessed from his uniform -- (scattered laughter) -- is General James E. Cartwright of the United States Marine Corps, who is the vice chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

To General Cartwright's left is Bob Einhorn, special adviser for nonproliferation and arms control at the U.S. Department of State.

And to Bob's left is Brad Roberts, who is deputy assistant secretary for nuclear and missile defense policy at the U.S. Department of Defense and, I am told by my research assistant, a very good professor when he taught at George Washington. (Laughter.) So I've got to give him kudos there.

I believe what we're going to do is we're going to -- Brad's going to make some brief opening remarks and then we'll go to question and answer. And I should let everybody know that Tom has to leave at 9:30 sharp, so when we get to the Q&A, if there are any questions you particularly want to direct Tom's way, we should do those early on so we can get him off to his next appointment.

Without further ado, Brad, it's over to you.

BRADLEY ROBERTS: Thank you. The reason you're seeing all of us is that all of these institutions played an important role in this NPR.

You all know that this was the third NPR since the end of the Cold War. It was different in scope, structure and content from its predecessors, in part because of legislative intent and in part because that's the way it needs to be done.

From the Defense Department's perspective, this was a fully joint civilian-military activity. I was a co-director and had a fellow co-director from the Joint Staff.

We had working groups within the NPR that were co-chaired by, variously, the State Department, the Strategic Command, different parts of DOD and NNSA, all of which generated a lot of content and options for discussion.

This was a DOD-led but interagency review. The result is the report that exists only in unclassified form. There is not a classified version of the NPR. There was not a classified version of the QDR or the Ballistic Missile Defense Review.

This reflects our commitment to not only state clearly for the record our decisions, but also to explain the thinking behind them and have a broad discussion with all stakeholders, domestic and foreign, about the thinking that influenced the policy choices. And that's part of the reason we are all here today.

As a quick survey, how many of you are at least familiar with the executive summary of the report? (No audible response.) So let's then, just for the sake of the third of you who didn't put your hand up, let me just say we've organized our findings around five key policy objectives.

The first is to address the problem of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism. And here the emphasis is on whole-of-government approaches and international approaches to this problem, including fissile material lockdown.

There is there a clear statement of the commitment of the United States to Article VI of the NPT and a list of things that we're doing towards that end, including New START, CTBT, FMCT and the like.

The second main policy objective is to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in the U.S. security strategy. Here there are a number of themes discussed, but the core point is about declaratory policy where we realign the contents of declaratory policy with our understanding of the requirements of 21st century deterrence and assurance.

The third theme, the third policy objective, is to maintain strategic stability while reducing nuclear numbers. This is the section of the report that talks about arms control with Russia, strategic stability with Russia and China, and states clearly our intent to move beyond New START to a follow-on agreement that would address both strategic offensive, non-strategic weapons, and non-deployed -- all three categories. But that's a long-term proposition to follow, entering into force with New START.

The fourth key policy objective is to strengthen regional deterrence and reassurance of our allies, and here there's a theme you will have heard from the QDR and BMDR about the strengthening, tailored approaches to regional deterrence.

And the core nuclear theme there is that we seek, as these -- as states like North Korea and Iran seek to increase their reliance on nuclear weapons, we aren't going to increase our reliance on nuclear weapons. We'd like to increase our reliance on supplementary tools of extended deterrence. But so long as nuclear threats remain for which nuclear weapons are relevant, there will be a nuclear component to this umbrella.

The final objective is to maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal. And here we lay out our policy and strategy for extending the life of existing warheads in the context of a commitment not to produce new nuclear warheads, to seek new military capabilities, or to resume nuclear testing.

We think our approach is fully consistent with the requirements of the bipartisan legislation passed last year calling for a stockpile management plan that would look ahead three decades.

With that, I think, barring any footnotes to my summary from the team, I'm happy -- we should open it up for discussion.

LINDSAY: Okay. Mr. Gard (sp).

QUESTIONER: I'd like to pick up right where you left off on that final objective, and address my question to Tom, if I may.

THOMAS D'AGOSTINO: Certainly.

QUESTIONER: Some months ago, maybe even years, I asked you the question whether you would be comfortable absolutely guaranteeing you wouldn't need to test the RRW. And you said no, you would not be.

Now we have the NPR that says no new nukes, and we have some lab directors that question the JASON report. Would address that and tell me what you think?

D'AGOSTINO: Sure. Certainly.

Let's go back to the statement years ago, and I would say if you ask any technical person if there are any guarantees that you wouldn't have to test in the -- there are no guarantees in these technical fields.

But what we do is put on our best technical judgment. A guarantee is a yes/no, black/white; it's hard to say.

But what you can say is look back on what we've accomplished over the last 15 years with the stockpile stewardship program. It's been remarkably successful.

QUESTIONER: I agree.

D'AGOSTINO: We have been able to address problems in our stockpile that we didn't expect to happen, to show up. Some life problems, classified problems.

And the tools that we had developed at the time and continue to have right now and continue doing experiments on, have been able to address those problems directly. So we have great confidence in the scientific tools and the designers and engineers that continually look at the stockpile.

What we have with the Nuclear Posture Review is a renewed commitment -- not only with words, frankly, but with the president's budget that looks in FY '11 and in the out-years. It says these tools have to be sustained, they have to be revitalized, they have to be reinvigorated.

And that has to be coupled with a national consensus. Because this is what it's going to take for the long term, because no testing is not one of these questions of, can you do it for one year? It has to be done -- or, you have to look well out into the future.

So it's my view that what we have before us in the Nuclear Posture Review marries it very nicely and is very consistent with the president's FY '11 and out-year budget.

And that's what our scientists need to see. They need to know that the country cares about these things. And they didn't get that sense, frankly, a few years ago.

QUESTIONER: How about the lab directors' comments?

D'AGOSTINO: Yes. That's a good point, the lab directors' comments on the JASONS report.

The JASONS put out two reports, and it's always tricky because you have a classified report -- which is the real report, frankly. The executive summary was a short summary of the -- unclassified short summary of what the report said.

The lab directors have said, in the absence of the context of the full report, the unclassified executive summary doesn't portray the full sense of the challenges that have had to happen.

The lab directors and the JASONS are on the exact same page, and I am on the exact same page with the approach that using a life extension approach to maintain our stockpile is the right thing to do. We've had tremendous success in the past, and it has -- it'll have tremendous success out in the future.

Fortunately, we're going to have the opportunity to talk to senators and representatives on the specifics session. We're going to go sit down and, closed-door, and talked to them about the details.

And I'm confident that when we do that, what we're going to see is exact -- very good harmony for technical folks. Because -- and this is the beauty of our system, frankly, is that we have the opportunity to have different technical, independent technical looks at this thing, and we get a chance to figure out where the differences are.

So I'm confident that we're going to end up on the exact same page. I know we are, because I've already talked to them. I just need to somehow try to get this classified discussion in the open, which -- at some point. I don't want to lose my Q clearance, of course. (Laughter.) Do everything short of that.

QUESTIONER: Thank you very much. That was very reassuring.

D'AGOSTINO: Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

LINDSAY: Mr. Courtney (sp).

QUESTIONER: Slightly related, those of us in the defense industry are a little bit more pessimistic about future budgets than, for example, the QDR is.

As you look to modernization of the complex and the budgets you're going to need for the future, you've done very well this year. Do you think you're going to be able to get the support you need for the budgets

in the future, or do you think, for example, the Senate might try to put a safeguard in the START treaty ratification related to modernization budgets?

D'AGOSTINO: Well, I have to be very careful about speculating what Congress might do, because I usually guess wrong. (Laughter.)

But what I would say is you're absolutely right. This is a -- we've laid out a five-year look-ahead. There are some open questions in the out-years, frankly. Do we know exactly how much it's going to take to rebuild a certain facility?

Well, as you know from your experience, the first few years of doing a large project is you spend time doing conceptual -- develop the concept, do the early design development and detail design work, and then you lock in on a cost, scope and schedule.

We're still in those first early phases of these projects. Once we lock in on that cost, scope and schedule, we hope we're going to be in the position -- and it'll be about the FY '12, FY '13 time frame for these large facilities and the work on the stockpile itself. We're going to layer that in into years '15, '16, '17, '18, '19 and '20.

But prior to that, in the very near future, we have a commitment and a requirement, actually, to put forth a 10-year stockpile management plan. And that 10-year stockpile management plan will be done in conjunction with the Department of Defense, and it will get visibility in the National Security Council to say -- this is my view on what it's going to take for 10 years.

And this is a 10-year effort. It's not a five-year effort, frankly. It's a 10-year-plus effort to do that. There're certainly going to be pressures on the administration's budgets out in the future, and it will impact follow-on administrations to this one.

And I know General Cartwright's talked in the past about the stresses associated with large systems that we know are coming due. General, you might want to talk about that for a second.

GENERAL JAMES CARTWRIGHT: Yeah. I think there's a couple of activities out there. I'm not supposed to say these words, but RRW was a concept for the entire weapons complex and weapons.

What we've done here is break down and set aside certain funds associated with the complex, another set of funds and safeguards associated with individual weapons.

So the Congress gets a couple of bites at the apple here that, as does the administration. The first on the weapons side of the equation is that we will look at each weapon, come up with an extension program for that weapon, the costing, the studies that would go with all of that.

When you get past 2A in the study phase of this, it has to go back through the administration, whether it's a refurbishment, a reuse or a replacement; be blessed, be resourced, and then put in against a look by the Congress at that point also of are we doing the right things in moving forward.

That gets put together with the 10-year plan so that they've got somewhat of a contract of here are the things we expect to do and when we expect to do them.

So rather than just saying go forth and rebuild your weapons complex, there are discrete decisions here that will give probably more insight than I think the Congress felt they had before, which I think is a positive thing.

We've got to then perform, both on the complex side of the house but also on the industrial side of this equation, as we go forward. But it'll also allow us to do things smart.

In other words, pick a component that is a common component to all not in the physics package. A battery. Well, we could bring the 1950s-style batteries we've got today. (Chuckles.) We could put a battery into the mix here that would go across all of the weapons, get us at the management -- not at the end item, but at the component level -- and start to do smarter things in this, but lay it out.

So not only is there a 30-year view, but there's a weapon view. And so you can start to take a look at this and understand a smarter way to go at it, from a business case.

Now, I'm not trying to make this look like a pure business case, but we didn't have the transparency that we needed before, nor did we have the dialogue between the senior members of the administration and the senior members of the Congress about where we were going and what we were going to do.

The un-classification of this report sets the standard that this is going to be a much more transparent activity.

LINDSAY: Andrew.

QUESTIONER: I've got two questions, if I may; we're a small group. The first one I'll address to Bob Einhorn.

As I see it, we're approaching the NPT review conference in reasonably good shape, compared to perhaps five years ago.

But the question is, combining the START agreement and the NPR now, are we sort of on the verge of a game changer in the sort of endless argument about Article VI? Or do you think that those countries that keep talking about Article VI are just going to take this as (not key ?), as the French would say, and then just continue on?

How significant -- and what do you hear from foreign capitals, Brazil and Mexico and elsewhere, regarding our posture and how that's going to help us on the Nonproliferation Treaty review?

The second question, very different. Tactical nuclear weapons. Maybe Brad'd like to address this, or Bob, or anybody else.

Are we now moving towards the possibility or likelihood even of serious multilateral negotiations on tactical nuclear weapons, not only NATO, but potentially of significance beyond NATO? Is this going to be in the next -- important part of a next agenda?

ROBERT EINHORN: Okay. Do we have a game changer in terms of what the Obama administration has been willing to do on Article VI?

We don't have a --

QUESTIONER: Sorry. I meant a game changer as seen by the countries who are very concerned about Article VI.

EINHORN: Right. I understand.

I don't think we have a game changer in terms of the attitudes of North Korea or Iran to their programs. But that's not our audience for these moves.

Our audience are the mainstream NPT parties who believe there is a relationship between what we do in disarmament and our efforts to strengthen the regime against further proliferation.

And I think so far, in the last few days, we've heard a lot of positive things, not just about the NPR but about START, our getting back on track to verifiable arms control. And we're hoping this'll give us some altitude as we go forward.

And not just at the NPT review conference, which is going to be one of these agonizing, multilateral events, but beyond that, to take the measures necessary to strengthen the overall regime -- whether it's strengthening IAEA's safeguard system, better enforcement of compliance with the rules, promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy without increasing the risks of proliferation, discouraging abuse of the NPT withdrawal provision, as --

Clearly, North Korea's an example of cheating while a party and then being caught and then trying to opt out of the treaty.

So we're hopeful that what we've been doing in START, commitment to ratify the CTBT, pursuing FMCT and what we've done in the NPR -- especially the new negative security assurance, and we can come back to that later -- I think will give us additional leverage in promoting our agenda.

Let me just say a word about the tac nukes and so forth.

There's not -- we don't say anything about U.S. forward-deployed systems in Europe, and we don't do that because we don't want to act unilaterally. This is an alliance issue and should be dealt with and we should achieve consensus within the alliance.

We have opportunities in NATO over the next year, in looking at the alliance's strategic concept, to talk about U.S. forward-deployed nuclear weapons, and we'll do that. It will begin very soon and continue throughout the year, looking at the Lisbon summit meeting in November.

We have some ideas, but we didn't want to expose them in the NPR process. This will begin.

Whether we'll have a multilateral negotiation, the NPR doesn't deal with that. We haven't addressed it as a government. I'll express my personal view on that: I don't think we're going to have a multilateral negotiation. (Chuckles.)



When we were talking about INF systems in Europe, that wasn't a multilateral negotiation. I don't see it here. And it's not even clear whether the problem of Russian non-strategic weapons is amenable to arms-control kinds of solutions.

QUESTIONER: Fair enough.

LINDSAY: Greg?

QUESTIONER: Yeah, let me follow up with a tactical nuclear weapons question. And I think General Cartwright's the one I want to ask.

Obviously, our forward-deployed systems in Europe are -- it's a political-military issue. And I understand that the NPR did not want to prejudice the discussions underway at NATO.

But if I can just separate the military for a moment, is there a military mission performed by these aircraft-delivered weapons that cannot be performed by either U.S. strategic forces or U.S. conventional forces?

CARTWRIGHT: No. (Scattered laughter.)

QUESTIONER: Thank you.

LINDSAY: You're welcome to elaborate, if you will. (Laughter.) Tom.

QUESTIONER: I guess I'll follow up on Greg's and try again -- (laughter).

I hate to admit it, but it was 21 years ago I was involved in a process similar to this. I think I ran the thing we called the nuclear forces analysis division in J-8, which I guess you don't have anymore. One of our objectives was to get rid of it.

I applaud all of you for getting through the thing. I know how difficult it is to get that many groups and so forth involved in it.

But I kind of note, going back to Brad's objectives that were laid out here, that -- and this is for General Cartwright -- some of the force structure issues that are going to result here. And once you get into it, you kind of recognize how that eventually gets tied into stockpile issues.

It seems like some of the obvious ones have been pushed outside the FYDP, but decisions have to be made inside your 10-year stockpile plan. When do you think you'll readdress that particular issue? And do you see any immediate force structure implications on it?

CARTWRIGHT: I'll talk and then, Brad, if you want to jump in.

My sense right now is that -- we got the signature this morning on START, so that, along with the NPR, now gives us a context in which to work through the myriad of activities that end up being how you'll use the stockpile, what weapons are there.

A couple of things that we said in the posture review was that at the START 1,550, on the warhead count, we would be able to maintain a triad. Okay? Not necessarily in the current construct. And we have seven years to figure out what that looks like as we go forward.

I think each of you know, particularly from an industry standpoint, the Russians right now are in their modernization phase. They're well into it and working their way through what their next 30 years of delivery vehicles and weapons is going to look like.

We haven't really entered it. We're just now starting to get into that side of the equation.

So my expectation -- and I'll be cracking the whip inside of the staff, you well remember from your days - - to take what it is that we have said in this treaty and what it is we have said in this review, along with the missile defense review, along with the space review and the Quadrennial Defense Review, turning that into actual deployments, sites, posture, capabilities that we have today and how we'll apply today's capabilities, but what the roadmap is to the next generation's set of capabilities that match up with the intent of these documents.

And that's where the debate will occur. My expectation is the actual moving through and saying we're going to this site and this many weapons and this kind of targeting policies, et cetera, will be a six-month activity.

The posture and the intent of moving forward to not let anything that we decide today prejudice our opportunities in modernization, my expectation is that'll go through the seven-year period and be the subject of great debate.

Because each time we come forward with the new bomber, the new ICBM, the new submarine, that's going to be an intense debate. And it's going to be a public debate, because generally, on the platform side, it is. And that's going to take us some time to work through.

What we did on the classified side of this review was we did a substantial amount of modeling, simulation, alternatives, what-if strategies, gaming, to start to look at what we might do.

I'll say what nobody wants to say, particularly, inside our institution is it is very difficult to move off of as-is. It's just really tough, culturally, to move off of as-is.

You've got, from my experience, your experience, I've got the guys down in the basement at STRATCOM and down in the basement of the Pentagon. They see the world one way, okay? (Chuckles.) And so this is going to be cultural, as much as it is going to be the technical side of that.

And any manager will tell you that's generally the harder effort to work your way through, is taking the institution and moving it to a different mindset. And I expect that we'll see that very quickly in the six months that we take what we've got here and try to move forward, but even more so in the recapitalization of the platforms and the launchers.

Q So you're starting on it now, but you're looking at it -- you said a seven-year process?

CARTWRIGHT: It is a seven-year, because the treaty says that at the end of seven years you've got to be at all of the targets.

QUESTIONER: (Off mike.)

CARTWRIGHT: And my expectation is the administration is going to deal with a lot more issues.

And this is not over how we get to something below maximum -- say, in the warheads 1,550 or 700 in the delivery vehicles -- is going to be the debate. Getting to the tactical issues, tactical weapon issues, et cetera, how we address that, my expectation is, particularly over the next seven years, this is going to be a debate.

As much as we like to faster in acquisition, the reality of building a bomber, building an ICBM, building a submarine, these are multi-year activities. And as you go through it, there'll be debate, along with the very rapid change in technology.

There are huge technology breakthroughs that are just kind of sitting right here that we -- do you start this year, or do you wait and see if this technology breakthrough is going to happen? We're in that kind of a period right now.

So having the planners understand what the opportunities are in front of them and then what the policy intent is, my belief is there are two very big challenges out in front of us.

One is that in the bilateral construct that we tend to think about today, which was the Soviet Union and the United States, how do you keep the balance -- not from a weapons standpoint, but from a stability standpoint -- with China, Russia and the United States, with China getting at the cutting edge of technology and moving as quickly as they can?

Maybe they don't have the number of warheads today, but you still have to pay attention. And how do you take then the Russian side of this equation, which is a drastic demographic reduction, yet looking at kind of the reverse of the Fulda Gap? They're worried about divisions to their south, divisions to their west. Weapons have a very different meaning to them today than they did in the Cold War.

The Chinese are trying to understand what their threat is and how they're going to handle deterrence, and we're trying to straddle and make sure that we don't unseat this balance.

Breakthroughs in technology are a lot more likely over the next 10 years than they may have been during the Cold War, a breakout advantage-type of breakthrough.

So you have to think about this a little bit different. That's why, for me, it's been so important to think beyond nuclear when you're thinking deterrence. Because I just don't think nuclear is enough, in the broad spectrum of threat that we'll face.

LINDSAY: I know it's coming up on 9:30. Do you have any last comments you want to make before you depart, Tom?

D'AGOSTINO: Sure. Yeah.

QUESTIONER: Tom, could I just ask you to articulate --

D'AGOSTINO: Absolutely.

QUESTIONER: -- a little more on how are you going to present your plan to Senator Kyl, who has been really adamant about the modernization piece?

D'AGOSTINO: Certainly.

QUESTIONER: This is going to involve a strategic communications plan, a public diplomacy plan, et cetera.

D'AGOSTINO: Absolutely.

QUESTIONER: But do you think you can satisfy his concerns?

D'AGOSTINO: Well, it's -- again, as before, it's hard to know what it'll take to satisfy him.

I know what it takes to satisfy scientists and engineers and myself, who kind of straddle that, plus the political and program management side of this. And that is what it's going to take for me, for the lab directors, for the secretaries.

And I think this is what we are starting our way down this great path, frankly, is to get to this national consensus that we do need to maintain our deterrent and we particularly need to maintain our scientific capability.

QUESTIONER: Right.

D'AGOSTINO: Because it's that scientific capability that ultimately, in the end, is going to help us out with potential breakouts in technology that we don't know about.

QUESTIONER: Yeah. That was a really important point that (Haass ?) mentioned, and I think for Senator Kyl that could be very persuasive, especially on the classified side, when you share with him some of the programs.

D'AGOSTINO: Absolutely. I think the --

We spend a lot of time making sure that we have that spectrum of technologies covered. We're always looking in these particular areas. We know how important it is to maintain those.

And the fact that the president has come out and said as long as we have a need for our nuclear stockpiles, as long as other nations have them, he is committed to maintaining them. He is committed to revitalizing the infrastructure, the experimental capabilities, the buildings where these people work.

Much of the infrastructure I've got, particularly the uranium/plutonium infrastructure, literally dates back to the early 1950s. They were designed in the '40s, built and started operating in 1952. So it's going to take us 10 years to get this up. So it takes a sustained effort, and that's what it's going to take.

I think the point I'd like to make is that these are capabilities. People look at this investment that the administration is proposing over the next five years, and frankly, that we're going to extend out to 10 years. People are looking at this investment as, well, this is all about nuclear weapons.

It's absolutely the wrong thing. This is about nuclear security and certainly maintaining the stockpile, and it's a foundational element of developing these scientific capabilities.

But those scientific capabilities that we've developed over the last six decades in the nuclear weapons areas have helped us in nuclear forensics, in emergency response, in nuclear counterterrorism activities, emergency management activities, nonproliferation activities and, frankly, have allowed us to work in over 100 countries worldwide right now with the Defense Department, with the State Department to install radiation detectors, look at protocols, improve security in Russia, former Soviet Union states, and around the world.

It's a big job, there's no question about it. People in the DOE and NNSA infrastructure want to do that job. They think it's important. And they're very excited that they know that they have a president that feels it's important as well.

I think with respect to -- we will never, ever satisfy every member on the Senate. (Chuckles.)

QUESTIONER: Right. Right.

D'AGOSTINO: But we have to satisfy ourselves first that we're doing the right thing. And I believe we believe that's the case.

QUESTIONER: And you have a great opportunity next week, with the summit.

D'AGOSTINO: We have a great opportunity with the summit. We have -- a group of us will be testifying actually next week as well in front of the Armed Services Committees and then the Senate Armed Services Committee the week after that.

So I have three more chances to testify. It's always a lot of fun. (Laughter.) I've already done it four times; we might as well go for seven this year. I'm sure there'll be more.

But that's -- we welcome that, frankly, that opportunity to get on the record with what we believe is the right thing to do. And it will take not just the administration; it will take Congress. We'll have good, open debate. And it will take whoever the next president is x number of years from now, and the one after that and the one after that, in doing it.

So like I said, we have a great opportunity, and it's exciting to be in the program at this point and laying that foundation and that groundwork. So --

QUESTIONER: Thanks.

D'AGOSTINO: Thanks, (Jenny ?).

LINDSAY: Thank you very much, Tom. We promised to get you out of here.

D'AGOSTINO: Thanks again. Thanks very much. I'm sorry I have to run. I appreciate it. Thank you, Bob.

LINDSAY: Dr. Cook (sp), you're next in line.

QUESTIONER: Actually, Andrew Pierre's first question addressed what I wanted to, so I defer.

QUESTIONER: Thank you.

LINDSAY: Okay. Well, we'll go back to Mr. Courtney then.

QUESTIONER: The nuclear enterprise has been a civilian enterprise primarily, since the Manhattan Project, with technology and strategy and other things.

Now, more than ever, people wonder are there going to be enough military stakeholders for nuclear weapons activities? How is that going? Certainly the Air Force, since the (incidents ?), has stepped up.

But do you foresee that there'll be enough stakeholders, and will support broaden beyond where it is now in other areas -- for example, in the Army and that sort of thing -- to see this as an integrated enterprise?

CARTWRIGHT: I think the jury's still out. But from -- at least from my perspective, coming out of Perry-Schlesinger and some of the other recommendations, some of the work that Larry Welch has done in this area, et cetera, that we're doing all of the things that a report would tell you to do -- go down a checklist, put a person here, make an organization here, those types of things.

But at the end of the day, I kind of go back to my earlier cultural question, and the issue is as we go through this activity of taking this review, which -- inside the building we all participate in these reviews, but this one has been so much more open and so much more interagency and so much more inclusive of organizations like STRATCOM, the services and their nuclear responsibilities being part of the decision process.

The idea here is it's kind of the hot, sweaty pile idea. Get them all in here, spend the next six months to translate what we think we heard into where we're going and what it is and who's going to do it and who has what accountability and responsibility in this activity. It's not going to be the same as it was.

The question is do we have, in fact, the incentive structure, the accountability and the responsibilities lined up in such a way, and the underpinning of that that builds the replacement people, builds the intellectual capital? And it may not look like what we had, which'll be the cultural catharsis we'll have to go through.

But it's certainly my commitment to get there. Having the tainted background that I do of being at STRATCOM and now being in this job -- (chuckles). But it's not going to look like what maybe the graybeards want a nuclear enterprise to look like.

I think that there are responsibilities here. You take programs, just simple programs like personal reliability and responsibility programs. My sense is those are going to start to apply to things like missile defense, to things like cyber, to things like nuclear weapons.

Because these capabilities are so broad and so key to the nation that we're going to have to think about them differently and think about the people that we raise in this mindset of tailored, or however you want to express it, deterrence that fits the realm, from influence to 300 ICBMs coming over the pole.

And down at this end, this review spent a lot of time on the capabilities and capacity of the armed forces to handle terrorism, influence, blackmail type of scenarios and what can you do? What can you do at home, what of that can we do overseas?

So I think we're kind of at the edge, so the slate is not completely clean. We know what it takes to be responsible and it takes people and it takes dedication and it takes leadership.

And we're going to have to make sure those elements are in place, but I do believe it's going to look different than it looked in the Cold War.

ROBERTS: May I have a comment?

LINDSAY: Okay, Brad.

ROBERTS: A couple of comments, if I might, to a couple of the questions.

First, on this. Connoisseurs of NPRs will not find the word reliance in this NPR. The last NPR said it was an objective of policy to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons, and the services took the message, as did lots of other actors.

We've said we're trying to reduce the roles and numbers. But where roles remain, deterrence has to be not only maintained but strengthened in the manner of broadening and diversifying, in the way General Cartwright referred to.

So it's a subtle distinction, but it's -- we scrubbed the document. It doesn't anywhere say we're committed to reducing reliance on. We're committed to reducing the roles and reducing the salience of, internationally. But that's different.

So it's a somewhat different message. The message of --

One thing you should take from the panel is -- one thing you may not know about our process. It was roughly half in internal process and then a half in interagency debate.

We didn't prepare a draft and hand it to the president and say, here, this is the right answer. This reflects a phenomenal degree of buy-in across the leadership about --

And there wasn't much horse-trading going on. This was, okay, let's deal with declaratory policy, and then let's deal with the forces and let's deal with each of the discrete elements.

So the reflect isn't -- the result is a set of messages that, unlike in the last administration, no one ever heard except for the main message of reduce reliance. You're going to hear from across this administration and the military side, consistently, a set of messages here.

And I think that's going to have a very different cultural impact on the services and elsewhere.

On the NATO topic, I wish it were as simple. I would put a question back: what targets do NATO's weapons have? Not nuclear. Any weapon in NATO. An alliance that doesn't have an enemy -- (scattered laughter) -- so the argument about where nuclear weapons might be pointed is only a part of the argument.

The theme we carry in the NPR and that we're going to carry forward to Toline (ph) and beyond is that nuclear sharing is what has been essential to NATO, in terms of the credibility of deterrence and assurance.

And the choices NATO makes are interpreted by its members as being reflective of how committed those members are to their Article V obligations. And there are plenty of NATO's members who are worried that NATO would make a choice to abandon nuclear weapons and thus put at risk their ability to do Article V actions.

And so when we've said in our policy goal we are interested in strengthening regional deterrence and reassurance of allies, these are two sides of the same coin, but much more prominent in this NPR than in prior NPRs is this theme of reassurance and assurance. And the --

Where we try and lead NATO -- the president said about NATO, he was there a year ago, to listen and learn and we'll come back to lead. As we come back to lead on this NATO nuclear topic, we're going to bring the messages of burden and risk sharing, because these are essential to the -- uniquely to this alliance.

The NPR talks about extended deterrence in Europe, East Asia and the Middle East. Uniquely to the European landscape is this risk and burden-sharing dimension. And it's a different way of think about the capabilities question.

QUESTIONER: If I could follow up on that?

LINDSAY: Certainly, Andrew.

QUESTIONER: Factor into your thinking, if you would, Brad, Russia. And off and on, but difficult relations with Russia in the security field, but still it's going to be part of the whole game. And -- have a triangle here.

Factor into that, if you would, a German or some other European attitudes towards Russia. And to what extent this question of nuclear weapons around the world, but particularly in NATO, can be discussed in a serious way with the Russians in a way that reaches some general level of agreement, rather than just ships passing in the night, particularly given the changes in Russian doctrine.

And there appears to be increasing Russian interest and reliance upon their own nuclear weapons.

ROBERTS: Well, the desire to engage Russia in the long term and to continue to work, hopefully, for improvements in Russia's relationship with the West, is what informed the first administration decision in this area, which was to seek a successor to START.

Not because -- for the simple reason of seeking additional nuclear reductions, although that in itself is an important objective, but because the process of negotiating, the process of verifying an agreement at a lower level would renew, we hope, an ability on both sides to carry forward the dialogue to tougher questions.

New START is not an end in itself. And we couldn't get to the broader political good without going through the New START process.



But fundamentally, it's up to the Russians about where they choose to go with us next. We have set out a very specific -- we haven't said, here are negotiating positions for ours. We've said we want to continue the reductions process. We accept that that's going to be a much broader negotiation.

We have some things we'd like to accomplish. We know we can't do this in the context of a lot of other things happening. We're committed to strategic stability; are you going to work with us or not?

So I think, my view is -- but I speak from a Defense Department perspective -- that we've laid a very substantial foundation here for going on. But fundamentally, we can't motivate Russia to make those choices. They have to make them themselves.

QUESTIONER: Brad, as a follow-up to that, when the treaty was signed this morning, Medvedev was very clear this depends on our view of missile defense and what will be done in that area.

I have always thought it was an opportunity to engage the Russians on missile defense in some way, and in the NATO context as well, use the missile defense piece to address the political consultation requirements of the alliance in the deterrence contexts that now are being addressed by the burden-sharing role of offensive aircraft systems, essentially.

Can you talk about your thinking in that regard?

And as you approach the missile defense review and this NPR review, you kept these things separate. But yet there's a theme that links these two assessments together. And there's a potential opportunity, I think, for addressing some of the challenges that face us in the future, using missile defense as a tool.

ROBERTS: Well, I'll welcome Bob's thoughts on this.

My view is that I think we've had a healthy diversification of channels of dialogue with Russia on strategic issues. We could reorganize ourselves within NATO to be more effective at this, but I'm not sure that fundamentally it's an organizational question. And that there's --

Even if we preferred to, which we don't, but even if we preferred to, there's no escaping a long dialogue with Russia about both missile defense and global strike capabilities. Because as General Cartwright observed, the technical possibilities of breakthrough and breakout capabilities are there, but the ones that Russia and China most worry about are our possible breakout capabilities.

And if we're serious about meeting their requirements for strategic stability, we need to do a better job than we have of putting all of this together in a comprehensive role and getting off of defensive mode and saying, oh, don't worry, missile defenses aren't pointed at you, and strategic stability is untroubled by our capabilities, and get on to a more solid foundation.

I think we're doing that. The proof'll be in the pudding.

Bob?

EINHORN: Just to add, we've tried to engage Russia on missile defense. We have proposals for extensive cooperation in the area of missile defense.

The Russians haven't been interested, so far, in engaging on that. And not to mention the difficulties of engaging with them on non-strategic forces.

This is going to be a hard conversation. We'll continue to press at the NPR talks about seeking to engage with them on the requirements of strategic stability. We'll do that.

My own guess is it's going to be hard to do that before START ratification. Once that's done, I think we have a possibility of moving forward.

QUESTIONER: Could I draw the three of you out a bit more on the targeting changes, declaratory aspects of the policy, the logic behind it?

And also, your response to what I take to be a criticism, at least from one perspective, that in Prague the president had set the bar very high, and expectations very high, about what was going to transpire on nuclear weapons policy under his administration.

And that the NPR, as written, largely -- to borrow the phrasing of Bruce Blair, my former colleague at Brookings, put it -- ratifies the status quo. Is that an unfair criticism, that there was a lot of windup and very little delivery? (Laughter.)

EINHORN: Yes.

(Laughter, cross talk.)

EINHORN: I can be as concise as the general.

No, I really can't, so I'll have to elaborate. (Laughter.)

Look, back in Prague -- not this Prague; last year's Prague -- the president talked about a balance, reducing the roles and numbers, ensuring the safe, secure and effective arsenal.

This balance has carried through throughout the NPR process. It will remain important. There are a variety of considerations for that. Some are sound, strategic considerations.

We need to reassure our allies for -- because we're committed to do that, but also because for a nonproliferation reason, we don't want them to develop a -- to feel they have incentives to acquire their own deterrent capabilities.

So this is in balance. I think this is a balanced report; this is not a revolutionary report. Some were hoping for more on declaratory policy. Some were hoping that we'd go for a no-first-use approach, say that the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons is to deter a nuclear attack. We weren't prepared to go there.

We believe there remains a narrow range of contingencies in which nuclear weapons continue to play a role in deterring non-nuclear attack. We're prepared to state that as an objective, but not to say we're ready yet. We're prepared to take this important step, I think, in the negative security assurance.

These are -- this NPR points us in a direction, credibly. That direction was pointed toward by the president a year ago, but I think there are some tangible steps in that area.

I think going farther faster would have been unsettling to some of our friends around the world. I think it would be unsettling to domestic audiences as well.

And we -- to be frank, the administration had its sights set on gaining two-thirds of the U.S. Senate for ratification of START and the CTBT. And I think this document will move us toward the goals enunciated by the president without kind of upsetting the apple cart and making this difficult to have further progress.

If we can't get ratification of START or the CTBT, we're in real trouble in pursuing our objectives. And I think this is an evolutionary approach, rather than a revolutionary approach. And I think it's -- in the long term, it will serve our objectives better.

ROBERTS: Can I add another point to that?

If you were going to describe the status quo, it requires also that we characterize a decade of inaction on sustainment of the deterrent; the inability to make a decision in the Congress of any kind in support of any activity in any direction; the hint of a declaratory policy, an elite classified document that was about the -- that was interpreted as a commitment to the early and frequent use of nuclear weapons; a commitment to new nuclear weapons for new military missions.

So the status quo you have to look at rather broadly. And in those other dimensions, I think we are in a place where there is a possibility for bipartisanship -- not broad perhaps, but sufficient to permit sustained activities over a long period of time.

I think we now more clearly signal, whatever you make of our declaratory policy, it is what the president believes. It is what the president would do or believes he would do, and it's consistent with the military advice he would likely get in that circumstance.

So I think the changes may be -- may fall short of what the visionaries had in mind, but they're substantial and real and put us on the right pathway that we think we all should be on, however much we might disagree about the long-term goal.

LINDSAY: Fair enough.

Greg?

QUESTIONER: I have a question about the message in the NPR for Iran. And I guess this is mostly for Bob or Brad.

Correct me if I misunderstand this, but it does seem to me that in this document, the U.S. is saying we withhold the right to use nuclear weapons against an Iran that has no nuclear weapons. And in making this particular threat, we're basically just extending the continuity from the Bush administration that keeps all military options on the table and, whether explicitly or implicitly, also had threatened Iran to use nuclear weapons against Iran that did not have nuclear weapons.

So I guess the way I would end this question is, is this the right message for the Green movement in Iran, for the Brazils and the Turkeys of the world that this U.S., which says it's reducing the role of nuclear weapons, reserves the right to use this weapon of mass destruction against an Iran that does not yet have nuclear weapons?

EINHORN: This negative security assurance was about assuring non-nuclear weapon states, party to the NPT in good standing with the NPT. It was not about threatening -- (chuckles) -- those that are not in good standing.

I know -- the Iranians will try to capitalize, there'll be a lot of Iranian propaganda that this whole thing is about an implicit threat to Iran. It's not about an implicit threat to Iran.

We recognize that countries that have genuinely given up their own nuclear capabilities deserve some assurance. And we believe that in giving that assurance, we can gain some real leverage in persuading them to take steps with us to strengthen the overall nonproliferation regime. And that's why we did it.

But North Korea and Iran are not members in good standing. North Korea does have nuclear weapons. Iran doesn't yet, but it's headed in that direction. And I think the -- if there's a reward, it needs to go to compliant countries.

Now, we made clear in the NPR that countries that are not -- we're not increasing the likelihood of using nuclear weapons against countries that are not eligible to receive this pledge. The countries that are not covered by the pledge are simply not affected by it.

It's not as if we've increased the threat to France or Russia or the U.K. or something like that. And neither have we increased the threat to North Korea or Iran. The situation is simply unaffected.

In fact, what we say in the report is that even for countries not covered by this pledge, the United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons under extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States and those of our allies. So I think that's how it should be seen.

This was not an effort to make new nuclear threats against Iran. But also, it was to demonstrate to the world that we're serious about compliance. If they want to get in the benefits of the assurance, they need to come into -- back into compliance.

ROBERTS: Or we're as serious about NPT membership as we are compliance, because the pledge is also not offered to Israel, India and Pakistan. But it seems like those three countries are in much better shape than Iran, even though Iran is partially in compliance with its IAEA safeguards agreement.

EINHORN: Look, we want countries to be part of the NPT. When the NPT was negotiated in the 1960s, the non-nuclear states proposed that as part of the treaty we give a pledge not to use nuclear weapons against compliant, non-nuclear --

That was -- so 50 years later we're finally accepting their -- we're agreeing to their request.

And I think it's appropriate to limit the pledge to NPT parties. We want to create incentives for countries to remain in the NPT, and I think this pledge helps to do that.

QUESTIONER: A question on de-alerting.

The president campaigned, if I recall, proposing that we de-alert. Is there any reason other than launching on warning for keeping weapons on short-term alert?

One reads in the press that it was -- maybe it's the cultural thing that you talked about -- (chuckles) -- that Defense wasn't ready to go along.

CARTWRIGHT: There are technical issues with how these -- particularly the missiles -- were designed, associated with what you can do in the realm of technical de-alerting.

So you'll see in the report several references to increasing the decision time. Okay? And that is kind of our shorthand for what are the range of things that we might do to increase the president's decision time to look at alternatives, rather than be pushed into a corner?

Other people talk about this from the standpoint of an accidental launch or a rogue or something like that. But what we're looking at here is what is it that we can do to increase the decision time, which increases the opportunity time for alternative measures.

And it talks in specifics, not in generalities, about command and control and the fact that we still are working with both a sensor grid and a command organizational construct that was put together in the '50s and has been held together until now.

And that that, in and of itself, not taking advantage of the technologies today, eats up probably half of the decision time, just working our way through that activity.

So there is a pledge here to revitalize the command-and-control system and the sensor grids to something more like what we have with missile defense, which is, in simple terms, birth-to-death tracking rather than I'll-pick-you-up-as-you-come-over-the-pole-type activities. Okay?

And that's tens of minutes in a 20-minute cycle. It's just -- it's substantial.

But also, to start to think about what are the things that tell us that our adversaries are uncomfortable and are moving in a direction. So we get, well ahead of launch, to start to think about what we can do and how we can understand our adversaries well ahead of any kind of planned launch, et cetera.

The other part that I'd just throw in here because I think it's important is the command-and-control systems that we put together in the '50s -- circuit-based, et cetera -- in the world that we live in of cyber, have vulnerabilities that we have got to go fix. (Chuckles.) You know? I mean, it's just --

And we don't even yet know all of the vulnerabilities that will emerge over -- in this new environment. And people are certainly rightly concerned. So making sure that that system is really telling the national leadership what it is we want it to tell them, not what it is something else or someone else might want to. So assuring and increasing that decision time.

Getting to the hardware side of the equation, we do do open-ocean targeting with our missiles to, first, safeguard, to make sure that what the launch -- that the launch is appropriate and it's going to the right place.

To, second, make conscious decisions about what it is we're going to do, if we decide to launch a weapon; if the president decides to launch a weapon.

Beyond that, it gets very difficult, because of the actual hardware implementation of the weapon systems themselves. So as we go back to this next generation, what are the attributes that we want to have as we start to develop the next generation of delivery vehicles and weapons? This is going to be one of the things that's in there.

A certain individual that is very much a spokesperson for this concept buttonholed me the other night and said, aw, come on, you didn't do enough. Well, okay, give me an idea of what more we really can do. Well, if you spend a couple of billion dollars, you could go --

Okay, is that what you want to do? It won't get here any sooner than the next generation system.

So we're going to spend some time on trying to understand what we can do. We're going to spend some time also, hopefully, in this strategic dialogue with the Russians to start to understand what we might be able to do here to increase decision time, to get these systems into a posture that may be more appropriate for the kinds of deterrents that are more realistic in the environment that we're living in, versus the environment that maybe was.

It's my sense that there are things in the mechanical architecture; there are things in the command-and-control and sensor grids, and there are also activities that we can undertake in shared warning, shared -- understanding what each other's doing, transparency there, that are very doable. We just have to agree on that.

And I go back to the three-legged stool here, though. We need the Chinese to be part of this dialogue too. And I think that's going to be very important. Difficult, but important.

QUESTIONER: What are --

LINDSAY: General Cartwright, thank you very much.

One thing I get graded on as a presider, probably the only thing, is to make sure I end the meetings on time. (Laughter.) So I think we have come to the end of our time.

I first want to thank Chris Tuttle and Thomas Bowman of the Council for arranging this meeting this morning. Second, I want to thank our guests, Brad, Bob and General Cartwright, for taking time out of their schedules to go over here and give us this very interesting brief on the NPR.

So please join me in thanking them. (Applause.) And I suppose you can buttonhole them on the way out with any additional questions. (Laughter.)

ROBERTS: Run!

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