

A photograph of President Barack Obama speaking at a podium in Prague, Czech Republic, in 2009. He is wearing a dark suit and is gesturing with his hands. The podium is decorated with colorful flowers. In the background, a large crowd of people is gathered, and a building with a red roof and a tower is visible. The title "Nuclear Mission" is overlaid in large yellow letters on the right side of the image.

President Barack Obama delivers his first major speech on nuclear nonproliferation in Prague, Czech Republic, in 2009.

# Nuclear Mission

Department implements Prague nonproliferation agenda // *By Alexandra Bell and Erin Harbaugh*

A little more than two years ago, President Barack Obama told a crowd of thousands in Prague, Czech Republic, of America's commitment "to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

The President's multistep, multilayered plan for mitigating and eventually eliminating the nuclear threat, known as the Prague Agenda, may take decades to accomplish, but each of its steps make the United States, its allies and the world safer.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton positioned the State Department for a major

role in implementing the Prague Agenda. For the past two years, under the leadership of Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Ellen Tauscher, the bureaus of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance and International Security and Nonproliferation have been advancing key elements of the Prague Agenda.

## Fundamental Role

AVC led the Department's participation in development of the Department of Defense's 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, which reduces the role of nuclear weapons

in America's defense posture by declaring that the fundamental role of U.S. nuclear forces is deterring nuclear attacks against the United States and its allies and partners.

AVC Assistant Secretary Rose Gottemoeller has also led efforts to reduce strategic nuclear weapons through the negotiation, ratification and entry into force of the New START Treaty with the Russian Federation. The treaty will reduce the levels of U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear weapons and commits both nations to the goal of disarmament.

The Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation

conducted diplomatic outreach for the April 2010 Nuclear Security Summit, where 47 nations and three international organizations met in Washington, D.C., to pledge to take specific steps to prevent nuclear terrorism and secure all vulnerable nuclear materials worldwide in four years. One month later, Ambassador Susan Burk led the U.S. delegation at the successful Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference. The conference produced a final document that included a balanced, consensus action plan to advance the treaty's pillars of nuclear

nonproliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy and disarmament.

“For the NPT and the larger nuclear nonproliferation regime, the Prague speech proved a game-changer,” Ambassador Burk said at the Department’s Generation Prague Conference in March. “It gave a coherent center to our NPT diplomacy, reinforced the U.S. commitment to the treaty and to advancing each of its pillars together, and energized the many parties committed to upholding the treaty.”

The bureau is now leading the Department’s efforts to implement the action plans agreed upon at the 2010 NPT Review Conference and continuing its work on the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program and the ongoing implementation of UN Resolution 1540. By stemming the spread of weapons of mass destruction, these nonproliferation efforts help create the conditions in which disarmament can take place.

## Next Steps

To move the Prague Agenda forward, AVC is working on the next steps in nuclear reductions. These include planning bilateral discussions on further reductions in U.S. and Russian strategic, nonstrategic and nondeployed nuclear weapons, and expanding this process to include other countries. Other Prague Agenda issues include ballistic missile



**Above:** Secretary of State Clinton, center, gathers with Department personnel who supported the 2010 NPT Review Conference. **Below:** Jon Wolfsthal, special advisor on Nonproliferation and Nuclear Security to Vice President Joe Biden, makes a point to the AVC-ISN Generation Prague Conference alongside, from his left, Rose Gottemoeller, assistant secretary of state for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance; Vann Van Diepen, acting assistant secretary of state for International Security and Nonproliferation; and Ambassador Susan Burk, the President’s special representative for nuclear nonproliferation.

defense cooperation, space security and conventional armed forces in Europe.

There is also work to be done on U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the negotiation of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. With such a long “to-do” list, Assistant Secretary Gottemoeller said in a February speech, “Success will require new and innovative approaches to the challenges we face,” in addition to “patient, meticulous and sometimes painstaking work.”

Beyond managing nonproliferation initiatives, ISN will continue working on securing vulnerable nuclear materials and preparing for the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, South Korea. It will also continue developing a new framework for civil nuclear cooperation, so that countries can have access to peaceful nuclear power without increasing the risks of proliferation. A help in this regard is the recently approved International Atomic Energy Agency fuel bank, which will help assure the reliability of

fuel supply and assist countries to use nuclear energy without building fuel cycle facilities.

The work of AVC and ISN on the Prague Agenda calls for cohesive efforts with many other State Department operations, including those of regional bureaus and embassies. For instance, the securing of fissile material is impossible without involvement of sound export controls and careful energy planning, and development and implementation of multinational agreements cannot be achieved without strong U.S. missions in New York, Geneva and Vienna. The nuclear issue is in all corners of the globe and every issue area, from climate change to human rights.

As President Obama said in Prague, “a call to arms can stir the souls of men and women more than a call to lay them down. But that is why the voices for peace and progress must be raised together.”

More information on the bureaus’ work is at [state.gov/t](http://state.gov/t). ■

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