

EDITOR'S NOTE

What can we expect President Barack Obama to do when it comes to nuclear nonproliferation? Based on his remarks throughout the election campaign, there are high expectations within the nonproliferation and arms control community.

Speaking in October 2007 about the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Obama said he would "strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty so that nations that don't comply will automatically face strong international sanctions."¹ Although Obama did not specify how he would fix the well-known and significant problems with the NPT, he acknowledged that strengthening the treaty must be part of a larger multilateral effort to enhance the global nonproliferation regime. Of course, the NPT does not exist in isolation, so success on this front will depend in large measure on how well President Obama can work with the international community to address long-standing concerns in a constructive fashion.

In the same 2007 speech, Obama declared:

Here's what I'll say as president: America seeks a world in which there are no nuclear weapons. We will not pursue unilateral disarmament. As long as nuclear weapons exist, we'll retain a strong nuclear deterrent. But we'll keep our commitment under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty on the long road towards eliminating nuclear weapons. We'll work with Russia to take U.S. and Russian ballistic missiles off hair-trigger alert ... [and] we'll set a goal to expand the U.S.-Russian ban on intermediate-range missiles so that the agreement is global.²

In a survey by *Arms Control Today (ACT)* released in September 2008, Obama added, "This process should begin by securing Russia's agreement to extend essential monitoring and verification provisions of START I prior to its expiration in December 2009. As president, I will also immediately stand down all nuclear forces to be reduced under the Moscow Treaty and urge Russia to do the same."³

Obama thus endorsed the nuclear-free-world objective laid out most famously by former secretaries of state George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, former secretary of defense William Perry, and former senator Sam Nunn, while at the same time insisting that the United States will continue to deploy nuclear weapons so long as they "exist" anywhere.

Asked in 2007 whether the United States should develop new nuclear weapons, such as the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW), Obama stated, "I do not support a premature decision to produce the RRW," leaving open the possibility that he might support this weapon following a thorough review of U.S. nuclear requirements.⁴ However, in the more recent *ACT* survey, Obama was less equivocal: "I will not authorize the development of new nuclear weapons and related capabilities."⁵

Obama also said that, "As president, I will make it my priority to build bipartisan consensus behind ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty."⁶ Obama therefore seems likely to push for ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Whether Democrats are able to control sixty seats in the U.S. Senate and thus override Republican filibusters on key legislation (as of this writing, the number stood at fifty-nine) will also influence the speed and outcome of future action on the CTBT.

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In the *ACT* survey, Obama also declared, "I will lead a global effort to negotiate a verifiable treaty ending the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes."⁷ However, he did not address how such an agreement would be verified.

Obama has indicated that he would not tolerate a nuclear weapons-capable Iran, saying, "It is far too dangerous to have nuclear weapons in the hands of a radical theocracy. And while we should take no option, including military action, off the table, sustained and aggressive diplomacy combined with tough sanctions should be our primary means to prevent Iran from building nuclear weapons."⁸

A more detailed version of this approach appeared in the 2008 Democratic National Committee (DNC) platform:

The world must prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. That starts with tougher sanctions and aggressive, principled, and direct high-level diplomacy, without preconditions. We will pursue this strengthened diplomacy alongside our European allies, and with no illusions about the Iranian regime. We will present Iran with a clear choice: if you abandon your nuclear weapons program, support for terror, and threats to Israel, you will receive meaningful incentives; so long as you refuse, the United States and the international community will further ratchet up the pressure, with stronger unilateral sanctions; stronger multilateral sanctions inside and outside the U.N. Security Council, and sustained action to isolate the Iranian regime.⁹

Obama's approach to North Korea is also likely to echo the DNC platform, which said, "We will continue direct diplomacy and are committed to working with our partners through the six-party talks to ensure that all agreements are fully implemented in the effort to achieve a verifiably nuclear-free Korean peninsula."¹⁰

The DNC platform also distilled Obama's views on U.S.-Russian arms control and nuclear cooperation, saying:

To enhance our security and help meet our commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, we will seek deep, verifiable reductions in United States and Russian nuclear weapons and work with other nuclear powers to reduce global stockpiles dramatically. We will work with Russia to take as many weapons as possible off Cold War, quick-launch status, and extend key provisions of the START Treaty, including its essential monitoring and verification requirements.¹¹

Unlike most members of Congress, Obama took a significant interest in nuclear dangers and arms control measures, particularly those involving Russia (perhaps not a surprise, given that as a senior at Columbia University, he reportedly wrote a course paper on Soviet arms control negotiations).¹² In the Senate, Obama worked closely with Senator Richard Lugar (Republican of Indiana) on strengthening and expanding the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program. As the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation noted in a 2008 fact sheet:

In August 2005, Obama traveled with [Lugar] to nuclear and biological weapons destruction facilities in the former Soviet Union, where they urged the destruction of conventional weapons stockpiles. With Lugar, Obama introduced the Cooperative

Proliferation Detection, Interdiction Assistance, and Conventional Threat Reduction Act, which passed as part of the Department of State Authorities Act of 2006. [In April 2007] Obama also said, "As President, I will lead a global effort to secure all nuclear weapons and material at vulnerable sites within four years—the most effective way to prevent terrorists from acquiring a bomb."¹³

Addressing the issue of ballistic missile defenses in a July 2007 statement, Obama said:

The Bush Administration has been developing plans to deploy interceptors and radar systems in Poland and the Czech Republic as part of a missile defense system designed to protect against the potential threat of Iranian nuclear-armed missiles. If we can responsibly deploy missile defenses that would protect us and our allies we should—but only when the system works. We need to make sure any missile defense system would be effective before deployment. The Bush Administration has in the past exaggerated missile defense capabilities and rushed deployments for political purposes.¹⁴

A 2008 campaign fact sheet explained Obama's position this way:

[P]ast [missile defense] efforts were both wasteful and ineffective, pursued with neither honesty nor realism about their costs and shortfalls. We must seek a nuclear missile defense and demand that those efforts use resources wisely to build systems that would actually be effective. Missile defense requires far more rigorous testing to ensure that it is cost-effective and, most importantly, will work. . . . Finally, our deployment of missile defense systems should be done in a way that reinforces, rather than undercuts, our alliances, involving partnership and burdensharing with organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.¹⁵

Given the number of significant non-nuclear issues on his agenda, it may take some time for Obama to shift nuclear policy in the direction he desires. But as he surely knows, the world, and the nuclear policy community, are watching and waiting.

Jean du Preez (James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies) opens this issue with an interview with Ambassador Yukiya Amano of Japan, chairman of the 2007 Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2010 Review Conference of the NPT. Amano offers a number of important insights into his advance work for the PrepCom and how he dealt with the urgent issues that confronted him and the PrepCom delegates. His perspective will be useful to future PrepCom chairs and to the chair and participants of the 2010 Review Conference.

Michael S. Malley and Tanya Ogilvie-White (Naval Postgraduate School and University of Canterbury, New Zealand, respectively) look at the renewed interest in nuclear energy in Southeast Asia and at the warnings that this could lead to latent nuclear weapons capabilities by 2020 for at least three states in the region. Although they find no cause for alarm in the nuclear power plans of Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam, Malley and Ogilvie-White advocate the establishment of a "proliferation firewall" around the region, one that combines strong international support for regional nuclear power arrangements with a supply of subsidized proliferation-resistant technology and the development of

shared civilian nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitoring.

Astrid Forland (University of Bergen, Norway) considers an important but little-discussed historical episode during the early 1960s: an interagency debate within the Kennedy administration over whether to rely on persuasion or coercion to convince states to accept IAEA safeguards on bilateral nuclear exports. The outcome of that debate paved the way for the IAEA's central role in the implementation and oversight of nuclear safeguards.

Matthew V. Tompkins (WMD policy specialist with the U.S. government and a former chemical officer in the U.S. Army) investigates Albania's 2003 declaration that it possessed a previously unknown 16-ton cache of chemical weapons. Although Albania was hailed for seeking help to destroy these chemicals, Tompkins asks whether the country's leaders knew about the cache all along and only revealed its existence at a politically advantageous moment. Although the evidence is largely circumstantial, Tompkins questions the motivations of those involved, particularly the Western governments who appear to have ignored open evidence of Albania's knowledge that the weapons existed well before 2003, and the implications of this episode for the Chemical Weapons Convention and nonproliferation regimes in general.

Jeff Lindemyer (Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation) assesses the Bush administration's Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP), the latest U.S. initiative to encourage the spread of nuclear energy while controlling its inherent dangers. Lindemyer surveys the history of GNEP and its predecessors and concludes that the plan, if fully implemented, will not achieve its objectives and will, in fact, reverse the U.S. position against reprocessing established three decades ago and permit the wider spread of technologies that are not proliferation resistant.

This issue also includes reviews of three recent books. Milton Leitenberg (Center for International and Security Studies, University of Maryland) critiques William R. Clark's *Bracing for Armageddon? The Science and Politics of Bioterrorism in America*, and also provides an in-depth examination of the evolution and reality of the bioterrorism "threat." Loch K. Johnson (University of Georgia) considers Michael S. Goodman's *Spying on the Nuclear Bear: Anglo-American Intelligence and the Soviet Bomb*, and explores the successes, failures, and limitations of the intelligence community's efforts to ascertain both Soviet nuclear capabilities and intentions. And John C. Baker (Homeland Security Institute) assesses Dennis Gormley's *Missile Contagion: Cruise Missile Proliferation and the Threat to International Security*, finding it a cogent and urgent warning about the danger to regional stability and U.S. security from the unchecked spread of long-range, precision-guided cruise missiles.

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NOTES

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