

Forcible Repentance: Hostile Nuclear Proliferants and the Nonproliferation Regime

An Interview with Leonard S. Spector

Leonard S. Spector is internationally recognized as a leading specialist and author on the subject of nuclear proliferation, which he has tracked for more than 15 years through his career in government and private research. He has served since 1984 as the director of the Non-Proliferation Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. In this September 1993 interview with CISNP staff member Lee Ann Pingel, Mr. Spector traced the history of US nonproliferation policy with several countries of current interest. The interview has been edited for brevity and clarity.

I would like to begin with North Korea. How are the interactions of the US and IAEA with that country intertwined with the long lag time between its accession to the NPT and achievement of a safeguards agreement?

Well, in 1984 we observed the North Koreans building a research reactor at Yongbyon and became concerned, since it was apparently being done without outside help and would not have been under inspection. We feared this might eventually contribute to a nuclear weapon capability. So at that point we went to the Soviets and urged them to push the North Koreans to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT]. Joining the Treaty would open the questionable facility to international monitoring. As I recall, in order to entice North Korea into joining, the Soviets offered North Korea a deal which included Soviet supply of additional military aid to North Korea and assistance in the construction of nuclear power plants at Simpo. So as of December 1985, when North Korea joined the NPT, it looked as if our anxiety about the suspicious activities there would be eased by virtue of the Treaty being applied.

The next step was to resolve the question of when the actual inspections could begin under the NPT. What happened was that the safeguards agreement that the IAEA initially presented to the North Koreans was the wrong one. In other words, it was a full-scope safeguards agreement based on INFCIRC/66, which allows unlimited inspections, rather than one based on INFCIRC/153, which limits the IAEA's inspection mandate somewhat. So the North Koreans said, "Wait a minute, we're not supposed to get that kind of a safeguards agreement, we're supposed to get one based on INFCIRC/153." It turned out that the North Koreans were right, but they didn't bring this matter to a head until almost a year and a half had elapsed, i.e., until the end of the grace

period to which they were entitled before having to sign the agreement and let the inspections begin.

At this time, then, the IAEA acknowledged its error and sent them a correct agreement, and North Korea then took another year and a half to look at that agreement. By now it was December of 1988—they had joined the Treaty in December of 1985—and still no inspections. The North Koreans then started negotiating aspects of the agreement. For example, they wanted it to make reference to the threat posed by the presence of American nuclear weapons in South Korea.

Meanwhile, in 1987 we had observed construction beginning on a reprocessing plant in Yongbyon. So by 1989, US anxieties had reached an even higher level. In 1989, in an effort to slow the North Korean program, we developed a plan with the Japanese and South Koreans. In return for full North Korean compliance with the NPT, we would offer North Korea a broader relationship and higher-level dialogue. Japan would offer economic assistance, compensation payments for their occupation of North Korea before and during World War II, and eventual diplomatic recognition. South Korea would promise economic aid and developmental assistance. At the same time, both the Chinese and the Soviets became helpful in trying to urge North Korea to do the right thing. At last, in April 1992, Pyongyang signed a safeguards agreement and let the inspections begin.

Thereafter, we had a year of fairly decent inspections, but with discrepancies emerging in reports of what North Korea has actually accomplished in the years when it should have been under inspection. These discrepancies caused the IAEA to call for special inspections in early February of

1993. The IAEA's demand gave North Korea an ultimatum: by March 25 there had to be special inspections allowed at two waste facilities at the Yongbyon complex, or the IAEA would refer the matter to the UN Security Council. Analysis of the kinds of waste from those two facilities would give the IAEA some indication of the extent of reprocessing which North Korea had done in the past. This would allow some of the discrepancies resulting from analysis of the plutonium samples provided by North Korea to be resolved.

That's where things stood when North Korea announced its intention to withdraw from the NPT on March 12. The North suspended its withdrawal on June 11, the day before it would have become effective. There are two schools of thought regarding North Korea's true intentions. The hard-line school holds that, from the very beginning in 1984, all the North Koreans wanted to do was build the bomb, using the NPT and the safeguards agreement as a shield to deflect international criticism and to prevent imposition of sanctions against them. There are a lot of reasons to believe this is the correct view. It fits the pattern of past North Korean behavior, such as making assassination attempts against the South Korean president, detonating a bomb that killed many members of the South Korean cabinet in Rangoon in 1983, and blowing up a civilian KAL airliner in 1988 to make trouble for South Korea prior to the 1988 Olympics in Seoul. Moreover, if the reactor at Yongbyon has been operating since 1986, as the North Koreans say, many observers think that it must have been refueled and that the North may have reprocessed that material and wants to keep that fact hidden. Thus there is good reason for concern, given the kind of country North Korea is and the serious questions about its still largely hidden nuclear activities during the past seven or eight years.

The other, more optimistic view is that there is a power struggle going on in North Korea. The "good guys," or the moderates who want to modernize the country and integrate it with the rest of the world, are prevailing; they permitted the inspections to start. According to this theory, we just have had a sort of relapse now because all the various pressures — the US-South Korean "Team Spirit" military exercise held in February, North Korea's embarrassment of having the plutonium-sample discrepancy disclosed, the global demand for special inspections — were just too much for them to swallow. The hard-liners balked and forced the moderates to take this dramatic step of withdrawing from the Treaty.

Underlying these views are two different assessments of where the North Koreans stand. One assessment, which I believe to be the worst-case scenario, is that they have enough

plutonium to build the bomb, since for all these years they've been operating the Yongbyon reactor, pumping out all this spent fuel from which they've been extracting, bit by bit, enough plutonium for one device.

However, it seems to me that the reprocessing center at Yongbyon was too rudimentary for them to have accomplished very much. It could be that although North Korea did have a weapons program, it simply became diplomatically too expensive to maintain, because they were taking so much heat on the inspections issue, while making so little progress on the program. If this is so, we'll be able to get through this relapse and bring them back into the Treaty. I'm hopeful that this is the case.

Still, it's very hard to tell what the right answer is, and we don't want to appear naive in dealing with this very radical and dangerous country. If we don't get things resolved through negotiations by mid-October or so, we may have to take a harder line, probably in the form of economic sanctions, to get them to open up their nuclear facilities. This may be hard to effect in terms of getting other countries, especially China, to cooperate, but we will have little choice other than to press for stronger measures. We don't have a great hand to play.

Could you tell us a little about your personal experience with the Carnegie visit to North Korea in 1992? What was the atmosphere there?

We never went to the actual facility locations, we just went to Pyongyang. I would say that, well, you couldn't trust anything you saw or heard. First of all, our days were completely structured. We were never alone, except at the guest house, and even there we couldn't be sure how alone we were. For instance one day when we were sitting alone at our dining table, we made some comment like, "This isn't much of a meal," and the next day the food was great.

But the significance of the trip was in that we were able to meet with nuclear officials in early May of 1992, right after they had sent their inventory into the IAEA and IAEA Director General Hans Blix had made a number of public statements regarding the issue.

I think the nuclear official they brought to talk to us was surprised at our expertise about the fuel cycle and other matters. He explained where their uranium had come from, and acknowledged that they had done plutonium extraction. I asked him what their purpose was in doing this. He said

that it was for a breeder reactor program which they planned to have at some point, but insisted that the amount of plutonium was very limited, separated from some defective fuel rods they had removed from a reactor. Apparently they had processed those rods, but the basic core was still in the reactor. This was exactly what the IAEA had been told.

In our initial discussion, all of which was conducted through interpreters, this official had made some ambiguous statements about the facility at Yongbyon. He had implied that there was another, different reprocessing center, and he kept referring to a radiochemical lab. We persuaded them that these points needed to be clarified, so later they brought the official back. It became clear that there was one facility in Yongbyon, which we were referring to as a reprocessing plant and which they were calling a laboratory. This facility they said was not complete.

On the whole, they were surprisingly open. The fact that they brought the official back to talk with us a second time shows that they regarded us as a good, neutral vehicle for relating their point of view to the outside world. Actually, in our trip report, we related what they had told us, but pointed out that they would have to prove some of the more surprising claims, such as that the reactor has never been refueled during all its years of operation.

But we could never be sure what to believe. For example, we noticed that everyone seemed to be very well dressed. Later we found out that we had arrived shortly after Kim Il Sung's 80th birthday and everyone had gotten a set of new clothes. They took us to a department store, where there seemed to be a lot of goods available—not particularly high quality, but usable. But everybody was lined up only behind one counter. It turned out that some other reporters had been in Pyongyang for the 80th birthday, and we learned from them that this was the department store the government opened when foreigners were in town. They would bring in shoppers, give them a coupon for a particular item, like a notebook or a pot — attention K-Mart shoppers! — and everybody would line up for their item, which would give the appearance of people shopping. This was just one episode of the many times when we knew that everything was being faked. Another was when they took us to a kindergarten, where we just happened to drop in at the moment the kids were performing. The whole thing was so staged that you had to be very suspicious.

Even in some of the exchanges with the officials there was an element of feeling that the officials were playing to the microphones. For instance one official, whom we knew was

associated with the moderate camp, suddenly took a very hard line in discussions with us.

At any rate, all this made it very hard to discern the real situation. One member of our group, who had been to North Korea before, said that he saw much less this time of the big propaganda posters. He sensed a change in their earlier defiant attitude of "we're gonna lick the South Koreans" and "we're the part of the Peninsula that's on the move." Now theirs is a much more defensive posture, brought about by the collapse of their economy and the fact that South Korea has won diplomatic recognition from China.

A Nucleonics Week article from March 1993¹ reported that officials from Japan, China and Russia were holding the United States responsible for North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT, because of the restart of Team Spirit and the insistence on special inspections. What is the state of US relations now not only with regard to winning over North Korea, but with these other states as well?

First of all, it was the South Korean government who, in order to look tough during the South Korean presidential elections, pressed in the fall of 1992 to reinstate Team Spirit in 1993 after a one-year suspension. Judging from where things stand in the fall of 1993, it is clear that the North was just using this as an excuse. After the exercise, and the back and forth on withdrawing from the NPT, they are still stalling on special inspections.

Japan and Russia appear committed to continuing to apply pressure on the North to comply with its NPT obligations. The flap over Team Spirit '93 appears to have been a momentary blip. And the same seems to apply to China. As they have favored negotiations with the North rather than pressure, there is a considerable difference in US and Chinese thinking, but the Team Spirit question appears to have been a passing issue.

Ironically, the North is now demanding that Team Spirit '94 be canceled as a condition for further progress on the nuclear negotiations!

How much is the US willing to concede in order to get the desired result out of North Korea?

I gather that within the Clinton Administration there are different ideas on this. One opinion is that we absolutely

should not offer North Korea any incentives to get them to do what they were supposed to do anyhow. We don't want to create the impression that if anyone threatens to withdraw from the Treaty, they can get concessions out of us. I think that we can reiterate the original bargain that we offered North Korea, which is: you want recognition, you want normalized relations, you want investment; you've got to play by the basic nonproliferation rules. We stand ready to hold up our end, but you still have to fulfill your obligations. This approach allows us to offer the olive branch without making major concessions.

So far, all concessions made by North Korea were those they were obligated to make. What would persuade them to build on that process without making the government appear weak in the eyes of its country?

It's not clear. That's what everybody's trying to figure out. Firstly, since North Korea keeps talking about the American nuclear threat in South Korea, we could make some statements implying that we might not continue Team Spirit next year. Secondly, we could have the new president in South Korea underscore, as did the previous president, that there are no American nuclear weapons in South Korea. Thirdly, President Clinton could underscore, as did President Bush, that all US tactical nuclear weapons deployed overseas have been withdrawn, with the exception of certain air-launched systems in Europe. That way the president doesn't have to say specifically that they've been taken out of South Korea. And also, as I've been proposing, he could say that the IAEA ought to be doing special inspections in South Korea anyway, because there are structures there that were built to house nuclear weapons. This would ease North Korea's fears about US nuclear weapons in South Korea and their concern that special inspections are biased in favor of South Korea. This might be enough to convince North Korea that the IAEA has an even-handed policy. Of course, we don't know if this would work. There are groups which say that nothing we do is going to matter, North Korea just wants the bomb.

By now, in the fall of 1993, everything is stalled. The North won't even hold serious talks with the IAEA or the South in order to fulfill the conditions we have set out for further North Korean-US discussions. And special inspections look like a more distant prospect than they did in February.

As much as our nonproliferation policy with North Korea seems to have been running into brick walls from the very

beginning, we were able to dissuade other states who were early proliferation threats, such as South Korea and Taiwan, from their weapons ambitions. How were the situations different?

South Korea and Taiwan were totally dependent on us for their security. In the South Korean case, although few people know exactly what the negotiations entailed, the issue clearly was that if they wanted US security guarantees to continue smoothly, they had better give up their nuclear pretensions. We also offered them a lot of technology for development of nuclear power plants. In Taiwan it was the same sort of thing. We were at a difficult point in the 70's because our relations with China were improving, which made the Taiwanese nervous. It's not clear to me just what we told them, because as our relations with China have improved we have had to keep backtracking on our commitments to Taiwan. But there must have been some secret understanding that we would never tolerate a forcible Chinese takeover of Taiwan, and that China had given us assurances to that effect. Basically, Taiwan simply realized that they would never get away with weapons development. If they took the peaceable road, however, they would gain the much more advantageous opportunity to become an economic power.

In short, we had leverage with both South Korea and Taiwan: we were friends, they were in our camp. On the other hand, North Korea is not. It's very hard to use negative leverage alone. It gives you much less to work with because relations are strained.

What then has been our strategy with South Africa?

The South African case is complicated, because their nuclear policy overlaps their apartheid policy. Thus, it's difficult to disentangle the steps we took to pressure them on their nuclear policy, because some sanctions we imposed were the result of apartheid issues. In 1976 we cut off the fuel supply for their Safari reactor because it was causing too much of a domestic political mess for the Ford Administration, not in terms of proliferation concerns but because of race politics. Later, the Nonproliferation Act of 1978 made illegal the sale of nuclear fuel to any country with unsafeguarded installations. Three countries were affected: India, South Africa and Brazil. In the Indian case we got into a big mess because of previously existing contracts with the Tarapur reactors, but in South Africa cut-off was simpler. This was because Jimmy Carter was anti-apartheid and ready to abandon South Africa. He felt the same way about Brazil's

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horrible human rights record and nuclear weapons program.

This is where we were when the Reagan Administration came in. As soon as they took over, the one great policy that settled over every aspect of American foreign relations was anti-Sovietism. The goal was to roll back all advances in relations and correct the perceived weakness of the Carter Administration. In South Africa this meant building a quiet alliance with the government and providing anti-Soviet military support. We softened up on our anti-apartheid stance. In the nuclear area, I believe we facilitated and even encouraged European suppliers to provide the Koeberg reactors with fuel which we couldn't supply under American law. Throughout the 1980s the dominant factor in US-South African relations was East-West, American-Soviet issues. The Reagan Administration's regional strategy was called "constructive engagement," which was mainly a military strategy against the Soviet threat. Eventually, by the end of the Reagan Administration, this strategy had actually worked. The Soviets had become over-extended and were pulling back, compromising in Afghanistan and southern Africa.

Simultaneous with the Reagan pro-South African policy was a congressionally-mandated anti-South Africa, anti-apartheid policy that led to the imposition of increasingly tough sanctions in the late 1980s.

Eventually, the pinch of sanctions and the end of the Soviet threat after 1989 led to a major change in South Africa. The South Africans themselves had gotten fed up with being isolated. Under the more moderate President de Klerk they resumed relations with other southern African states. Their security situation improved, and the Soviet threat diminished into nothing. With the hard-liners out of office, South Africa was trying to completely change course and reintegrate itself into international society.

There were three things they realized they had to do: abolish apartheid, grant independence to Namibia, and join the Non-Proliferation Treaty. So as far as our nuclear strategy goes, everything just sort of fell into our lap after a decade of quiet — and not so quiet — influence.

The US views its policy in Brazil as a success. Some important factors of that strategy seem to be our granting of economic incentives to turn their focus from weaponization, and being flexible on the matter of signing the NPT by not requiring them to sign it if they adhered to a regional treaty. How important was this use of a softer line in bringing them into the fold?

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Here too, I think other, larger factors were at work. The only reason we made any progress at all is that the country was going through the process of democratization and had ousted the hard-line military leaders, whom we knew had started a nuclear weapons program. You have to remember that in the 1980s when Reagan came in we had a specific policy to embrace the junta in Argentina and the military in Brazil, because we wanted to build an anti-Soviet coalition in this hemisphere. This was no secret. So what we did was put the nonproliferation policy aside. Then we had the Falklands crisis, and the Argentinean military was ousted. The democrats came to power, and they didn't want anything to do with nuclear weapons development. And it was actually the new Argentinean president who made a lot of the advances in getting the dialogue process started with Brazil. The Argentines laid the nonproliferation groundwork, and as democratization proceeded in Brazil, it slowly moved to tamp down the military's nuclear aspirations — and the actual weapons program they had started. In that context, I think we were indeed clever in taking a regional approach.

Regarding Pakistan and India, could you give a brief overview of their early nuclear development? We know that much of it stems from their national security worries vis-a-vis each other. Is that situation comparable to what we see now in the Middle East?

That's a hard comparison to make. First of all, in South Asia there is a third country that has to be added to the equation: China. India considers itself under a Chinese nuclear threat and has refused to enter into nuclear talks with Pakistan because this issue would not be addressed. (India has also refused five-way talks involving Pakistan, China, Russia, and the US, because of the fear that all of the other parties would be aligned against it.)

Nonetheless, an increasingly elaborate set of confidence-building measures is being implemented by India and Pakistan on the one hand, and by India and China on the other. Moreover, Pakistan has frozen the production of weapons-grade uranium. So there are many elements to work with in this setting.

In the Middle East, however, we still have states such as Syria, Iran, and Iraq that are hostile to Israel. They refuse even to recognize it and continue to challenge its right to exist. Iran and Syria have chemical weapons and missiles that can reach Israel, as did Iraq—whose capabilities could be rapidly rebuilt if UN monitoring is discontinued in the future. Iran is also

working to develop nuclear weapons, and Iraq would also pursue this option if given the opportunity. Thus Israel's security environment remains very dangerous.

The Israel-PLO settlement obviously opens the door to a considerable improvement here, but even if Jordan and Syria were to sign peace agreements with Israel, that would still leave Iran and potentially Iraq as serious threats. In this setting it is inconceivable that Israel would give up its nuclear capability. On the other hand, Israel might be willing to participate in global initiatives that left its nuclear arsenal intact, for example, by joining a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty. Eventually, it might also consider participating in a global freeze on the production of fissile material for weapons, but I think this is still a long way off.

Generally speaking, the various components in South Asia will be very hard to bring into an alignment allowing for a nuclear stand-down. But at least its possible to see ideas that might work. In the Middle East, however, major changes appear highly unlikely any time soon.

In the past, some countries have seen conflicts between the US and certain East-Asian countries as the old first-world-versus-third-world conflict. Do you think India sees our current relations with North Korea in that light, or do they regard North Korea as a rogue state and a hostile proliferant whose situation is entirely different from their own?

I think India must have some private thoughts on this issue. Clearly, like China, India wants to deflect pressure from the outside world for it to accept restraints on its sovereign rights, especially in the area of security affairs. And India has been one the few countries to denigrate the NPT openly. Most countries either joined it, or at least acknowledged that it did have some value as a tool for managing international relations. As a result, India is probably reluctant to criticize North Korea for thinking about withdrawing. In terms of the UN Security Council, India is not likely to be an active supporter of strong measures against North Korea. We have to be concerned about India's views, but we can't be prevented from trying to resolve the Korean situation. We have a very serious problem with North Korea, both in terms of a dangerous country developing nuclear capability and also in terms of damage to the nonproliferation regime.

Do you think this will damage the world community's attempt at encouraging a nuclear freeze in South Asia?

If we are successful in containing the North Korean threat, the nonproliferation regime will be strengthened, and India will be more isolated. This could allow for increased pressure on it to reciprocate Pakistan's current freeze on the production of fissile materials, although some concessions from China would be needed to make this work.

If we are unsuccessful with North Korea and the world winds up with a new nuclear state, India may feel that its hand has been strengthened because the third world would have successfully resisted first (and second) world non-proliferation pressures.

All in all, however, I think the two problems — North Korea and South Asia — are largely distinct. Even China sees them in different ways, wanting to avoid a nuclear North Korea, while actually assisting Pakistan's special weapons programs in order to keep India off balance.

Another major threat of proliferation now comes from the former Soviet Union. Some have criticized the United States for rushing to grant financial aid to Russia as a nuclear weapons state, while excluding the defacto nuclear weapons states of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan from similar aid, a policy which may have contributed to the intransigence we're now seeing from some of the republics on the disarmament issue. What is your opinion on the sort of policy we should have taken with regard to the nuclear successor states?

We were in a tough spot; there was no clearly right approach. For a while, of course, we wanted to keep the Soviet Union together—it would have been advantageous to have a partner at the other end of the bargaining table to work with on security issues. Then, when everything came apart, we had to make decisions on whether to recognize the republics as independent, and what conditions to demand in advance. We didn't quite get everything we wanted. We got verbal commitments and letters exchanged about joining the NPT and returning warheads to Russia, but we soon began to realize that we had made an error in concentrating too much of our offerings of positive incentives on Russia. We quickly tried to turn this around, and now I think we have a well-balanced policy. We had a very difficult hand to play; in retrospect there are probably certain elements that we mishandled. But overall I think we managed reasonably well.

If Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk can implement his agreement with Boris Yeltsin under which Ukraine would allow Russia to purchase the Black Sea fleet and to take back all Soviet nuclear weapons in return for Russian economic

concessions, we would have substantial progress. But nationalistic elements in the Ukrainian parliament have rejected the accord. Given the increasing uncertainties about who will govern both countries, I would be very surprised if this agreement is soon implemented. Still, it was a valuable initiative that at least outlines a game plan for progress, if politics permit.

Your article in *Foreign Policy*² entitled "Repentant Nuclear Proliferants" points out that under Article II of the NPT it is illegal for non-nuclear weapon states to manufacture non-nuclear components of nuclear weapons. Why has this not been adhered to in practice?

Well, I don't know. First, it has only really become a major issue recently, as a practical matter. In the 1970s our focus was on controlling the acquisition of weapon-grade materials. But now, while we are continuing to halt such developments, we're also trying to implement the NPT retroactively on countries that already have nuclear weapons programs, like South Africa, Brazil, or Ukraine. In settings like this you have a serious question about the what the country produced during the time when it was not under IAEA monitoring. You want to bring all existing stockpiles of nuclear material under control, but also want to ensure that any non-nuclear components that may have been made for nuclear arms are also destroyed. Here you get into whether the country's continued possession of such components would constitute the "manufacture of nuclear explosives," which is prohibited under Article II of the NPT.

Under the original interpretation of the Treaty when it was drafted, it was pretty clear that possession of such items would be a violation. The interpretation has never been reaffirmed, however, because it never really came up, except perhaps in the case of Sweden, but no one was worried about that case. We need to get this clarified today. Some have suggested that we should establish a committee of NPT parties to flesh out article II, just as the Zangger Committee fleshed out Article III's prohibition on making exports without IAEA safeguards.

You've also mentioned that, in order to make the repentant nuclear states prove their penitence, they should reassign their nuclear staff to dismantle their weapons. Can you report on what progress has been made along these lines?

The point here is that you don't want to have the nuclear weapon design and manufacturing teams continuing their

activities; they need to be disbanded and assigned to other activities. I'm nervous about this. The South Africans claim to have taken such steps, but the situation is less reassuring in Brazil, since the civilian government's control over all aspects of the military's activities is not solid. (It was the Brazilian military that conducted the nuclear weapons program.) In fact, it seems that in Brazil all the specialists that were running the nuclear program are still there. In Argentina I don't see any problem. In Kazakhstan the new state is taking over the old Soviet Semipalatinsk test site and nuclear research center. This probably won't be a problem, but it does put all those assets in the hands of nuclear scientists who could potentially use them to some illicit purpose. South Africa also remains a concern, but at least the government recognizes its obligation to reassure outsiders that its nuclear teams have been reassigned. If the US purchases the country's weapons-grade uranium, or if South Africa dilutes the material to low-enriched uranium, this could help to reassure outsiders that the weapons program is really dead.

I'd like to move now to the role of international organizations in nonproliferation. Some question whether the IAEA can still be effective in today's nuclear environment, or whether organizations like the UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) will be the wave of the future.

Currently, the IAEA is getting political support and can act more aggressively. But if there should be another Iraq-type case where we need a "SWAT team" to pursue investigations in a very difficult political environment, we have UNSCOM as a model. What was remarkable about UNSCOM was its flexibility in gathering all the necessary experts into teams on a few weeks' notice. Moreover, UNSCOM didn't have to worry about which countries had representatives on the teams, there just had to be some degree of equal representation. Obviously there would have to be a political situation where the Security Council would demand action by such a special unit. But it seems to me that we don't need to have a new permanent enterprise to be available in these cases as a substitute for the IAEA. We can create one when we need it. Having done this once, we could do it again.

Additionally, as I understand it, UNSCOM will be working for quite a while because it has to perform a long-term monitoring function in Iraq. There's no reason why the organization's purpose can't later be expanded if needed. There's also no reason why the IAEA can't be given a special mandate to perform special inspections in unusual cases. I don't consider the North Korea case to be an IAEA failure.

Rather, I think it shows a success on the IAEA's part, in that they discovered the discrepancy and demanded special inspections.

Do you think international organizations such as the IAEA and NPT should focus more on the demand side or supply side of the equation? That is, should they be more concerned about imposing export controls on those countries possessing the technology, or on squelching the importers' interest in obtaining it?

I suppose it depends on which organization is under examination. The IAEA has to strike a balance between promoting nuclear energy on the one hand and safeguarding weapons-usable technology on the other, which in some cases can create a conflicting mandate. But it seems to me that the incentive of offering assistance in the development of nuclear energy — an incentive which is also set out in the NPT — is less and less germane today, because interest in nuclear energy has waned so significantly over the past twenty years.

Also, the most popular types of incentives to be offered to states in return for their renouncing nuclear weapons, such as financial aid or debt rescheduling, are being offered by other sources, either individual countries, consortia, or multilateral financing institutions. The IAEA is not in a position to offer these kinds of positive incentives.

Nor can the agency offer security guarantees the way that individual countries can. It seems to me that international organizations like the IAEA, the supplier groups, and other nonproliferation-specific institutions would probably be most successful with regulatory controls and monitoring, which provide deterrence through the risk of detection, rather than trying to offer the positive political and security benefits that would address the demand side.

There is a contrast here with the chemical weapons area, which seems to have an interesting mix: one premise of the Chemical Weapons Convention is that joining the Convention and allowing inspections gives a country relatively free access to a whole spectrum of chemicals. So in that sense, although the Convention is not an international organization as such, it is an instrument that carefully balances incentives and disincentives that are much more relevant today than those in the NPT or IAEA statute.

India and other countries have demonstrated that it is possible to build a nuclear program outside of the NPT and

safeguards. Are the security gains that come from membership in the NPT enough to warrant tolerating a nonproliferation regime which they see as inherently discriminatory?

The basic argument in favor of the Treaty is that it enhances everybody's security, and that a country receives security benefits in return for its participation. The question of why countries stay in is easier to answer for some countries than for others. I suspect that both Indonesia and Australia are pleased that the opposite party is in the Treaty. The same is true in southern Africa or the Korean peninsula. It gives a sense of having a level playing field on which to operate. Whatever the reasons may be, countries are joining the Treaty in increasing numbers, despite its inherently discriminatory aspects.

While in Iraq as part of one of the UN inspection teams, David Kay learned that Iraq decided to stay in the NPT because it determined that membership in the Treaty would in no way affect its ability to pursue a nuclear weapons program. If this is the kind of mentality present in states with weapons ambitions, it would seem that a very strong IAEA would be a severe disincentive for these nations to join the NPT or agree to safeguards. But that would leave them outside the IAEA's jurisdiction for special inspections. Which is better then: to have lots of countries operating under the auspices of a organization with no teeth, or to have an authoritative organization which might scare off potential members?

Definitely not a fair question — let the record show that! I come out squarely for a tougher IAEA. We simply can't have more Iraqs. If the Agency is going to have any legitimacy, it has got to be able to deal with clandestine programs. It seems to have been dealing with North Korea pretty well, which has resulted in the syndrome you described: the North now feels that the shoe is pinching too tight and wants to cast it off.

Fortunately the existing parties to the Treaty, including Iran, Libya, and other questionable adherents, have agreed to the revitalization of the IAEA's special inspection authority. So it looks as if we will not have to confront the question you posed in very many cases. That is, these states are already in the Treaty and, in general, are willing to accept tougher inspections. Countries outside the Treaty may present a different picture. What keeps India, Pakistan and Israel out is not the quality of the inspections they would undergo, but the very idea of inspections. Moreover, if, say, India and

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Pakistan joined, presumably they would want the best possible inspection system, since they would be relying upon it to detect cheating by others.

As we're coming up on the 1995 NPT Extension Conference, could you tell us a little about where the United States' nonproliferation specialists are and how they're approaching the extension?

This situation is one serious organizational headache. The individual people are very competent, very knowledgeable. So I don't think there is any lack of expertise. The problem is that there is no one to marshal all of the NPT diplomacy. In the past this was handled by an assistant director at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), but ACDA was under a cloud for the first several months of the Clinton Administration, and may not get a director until 1994, depending on the pace of the confirmation process. Since this particular NPT conference is much more important than the previous ones were, I would like to see a special negotiator appointed for this particular purpose who already has a fair amount of stature when he or she begins the job. But we need to do this right away, because a lot of work needs to be done. This issue, unfortunately, became a victim of the Transition.

One question that may come up under the new administration is whether to consolidate the US nonproliferation regime. I have reservations about that, depending on which level is being consolidated. But I think that is something to watch. Once the dust settles over North Korea and Russia, they may begin to look at the regime more broadly and make an effort to harmonize and rationalize the different export control systems. Some of that is occurring now, and we may begin to see it on an international basis as well.

Notes

1. "U.S. to Blame for Escalating North Korean Crisis, Asians Say," *Nucleonics Week*, 03/18/93, pp. 1, 9-10.
2. "Repentant Nuclear Proliferants," *Foreign Policy*, No. 88, Fall 1992, pp. 21-37.