

ENSURING THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS THE CAPACITY TO MEET CRITICAL NONPROLIFERATION AND ARMS CONTROL CHALLENGES

This short Report, which is the result of meetings and discussions between a number of experts, focuses on improving the Nation's capacity for dealing with the increasingly complex issues associated with nonproliferation and arms control. It lays out a number of alternative strategies for improving the Government's currently attenuated capacities for effective nonproliferation and arms control action.

I. Introduction

The remaining two major presidential candidates have endorsed the following objectives: (i) **maintaining and strengthening the nuclear nonproliferation regime** and (ii) **pursuing nuclear arms control measures with Russia and others**. Regrettably, what the next President will find is a diminished capability within the Executive Branch to achieve either objective.

The historical leadership role of the United States in nonproliferation and arms control has been severely downgraded and the nonproliferation regime significantly weakened. Along with this overall decline, there has been a loss of valuable expertise and bureaucratic structure diminishing the capacity of the United States to pursue nonproliferation and arms control measures.

Restoring U.S. leadership in these areas will require a personal commitment by the new President. Within the Executive Branch, there will need to be a strong organization to execute policies and be accountable to the White House. This paper looks at key organizational issues that must be met, particularly in the State Department, if the new administration is to meet its nonproliferation and arms control objectives.¹

II. Critical Proliferation Challenges

The 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the foundation for global cooperation in this area. Its primary goal is to decrease the risk of nuclear war by preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. It also obligates the five states which the NPT recognizes as possessing nuclear weapons — U.S., Russia, UK, France and China — to work toward nuclear disarmament. The urgency of dealing with the threat posed by nuclear weapons has been highlighted recently by former senior officials of both political parties — Secretaries of State Kissinger and Shultz, Secretary of Defense Perry, and Senator Nunn — who have called for renewed efforts to work towards a nuclear weapon free world, arguing that **"the world is now on a precipice of a new and dangerous nuclear era."** Their agenda, known as the Hoover plan after the Stanford institute where the group meets, is built around the NPT and focuses on U.S.-Russian nuclear arms control as well as on specific nonproliferation measures. No vision of a nuclear weapon free world or major progress toward that goal can be achieved without an intensive focus on both nonproliferation and arms control.

The remaining two major candidates for the Presidency have called for strengthening the NPT and other elements of the nonproliferation regime and for reducing the nuclear arsenals of the United States and other nuclear powers, and both Senators Obama and McCain have endorsed specific portions of the Hoover plan.³ Any new administration will likely focus on a wide variety of other nuclear-related challenges as well, e.g., Iran and North Korea; protecting against the theft or diversion of nuclear material; strengthening export control and interdiction activities; and developing nuclear fuel cycle strategies to reduce the spread of sensitive