



No-proliferación para la Seguridad Global
Nonproliferation for Global Security

International Seminar

Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament - The Future of the NPT

Rio de Janeiro, October 29 and 30, 2009

Full audio transcription *

Keynote Speaker Susan F. Burk The Future of the NPT: A vision of Strengthening and Success October 30, 2009

Marcos de Azambuja: -I would like now to introduce Ms. Susan Burk who was sworn as the special representative of the President for Nuclear Non Proliferation Affairs with the rank of Ambassador since June 2009. She served as first Deputy Coordinator for Homeland Security in the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. She coordinated the Department's handling of cross-cutting policy issues related to homeland security and counterterrorism. She established and chaired the State Department's Homeland Security Coordinating Committee. Also, Mrs. Burk served as Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation and chief U.S negotiator for the Statement of Interdiction Principles. She joined the Bureau of Nonproliferation in 2002 as a Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Nonproliferation Controls. Ms. Burk, you have the floor.

Susan Burk: -Thank you very much Ambassador. I'm trying to get situated. I should also say I have to work on my résumé. I spent 20 years in nuclear nonproliferation and I know many in the room from my past life. The service in the counterterrorism office was a brief break from nonproliferation but I'm back. I wanted to say I was very concerned about following Joe Cirincione, my American colleague in the civil sector, and I actually was going to wear sunglasses and do a little Matrix thing. But after that warm up act of that last panel my blood pressure is racing and I'm going to dispense with the props. So before I begin my remarks, I'd really like to thank the Brazilian Center for International Relation, CEBRI, and NPSGlobal for hosting this event and for inviting me to speak to you this afternoon about the future of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. This has been extraordinarily rich in content and stimulating two days of discussions and the timing couldn't be better.

Having this kind of discussion on this range of issues is terribly important for government and civil society alike. It's important we engage on these issues now in the run up in the remaining six months before the Review Conference. I'm grateful to the organizers not just for selecting such a beautiful setting for this conference, but for calling attention to Latin America's important role in shaping the nuclear non proliferation regime.

Latin America has been at the forefront of the international efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation, starting with the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 67, one year before the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty was concluded. And the US I notice has been a party to Tlatelolco's two protocols for over 30 years and appreciates the contributions Latin America has made in providing a model for nuclear weapons free zones in other regions of the world. It's also important that this conference is here in Brazil. Brazil possesses nuclear technology but it has chosen to steer away from developing nuclear weapons and instead head towards increasing the peaceful use of nuclear energy to help meet the growing demands of the world's 10th largest economy. Since succeeding to the NPT in 1998, or was it 1997? Brazil has seen its international influence grow, a product of its economic and democratic development, not its ability to threaten its neighbors. We want this, not North Korea, to be the model for the future and we are

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very proud of our partnership with Brazil. President Obama's Prague speech gives us a clear goal of developing clean peaceful nuclear power while eliminating nuclear weapons. And we will need to work with countries such as Brazil to make this a reality.

In keeping with the future orienting theme of the Conference, I wanted to focus on the contribution that the 2010 NPT Review Conference can make to our collective efforts to reinvigorate and strengthen the NPT and the broader non proliferation regime. I also note the potential that the Conference has to provide valuable momentum to our non proliferation and disarmament efforts in Vienna, at the IAEA, in Geneva, at the Conference of Disarmament, the CD, and in New York at the United Nations.

As we have heard here over the past two days, the NPT and the broader regime have been under great stress in recent years and their vulnerabilities have been on display for the world to see. We know what these stresses and vulnerabilities are. Growing availability of sensitive nuclear technology as demonstrated by the activities of the network lead by A.Q Khan, the ability of North Korea to withdraw from the NPT with relative impunity, the failure to bring either North Korea or Iran into compliance with the NPT, and the limitations of international safeguards which failed most recently to identify the construction of a covered nuclear reactor in Syria.

These stresses are playing out at the same time that we are beginning to have a serious discussion of two subject of critical importance to NPT parties. First, the path toward a world without nuclear weapons and second the expansion of the responsible use of nuclear power in response to growing concerns about climate change and energy security. Progress in both areas requires the reliable foundation of a robust and stable international non proliferation regime. And herein lies the fundamental relationship between the three pillars of the NPT. While the regime has been tested it remains the cornerstone and I will continue to use that term, although I understand that now there's a lot of other theology here that I will try to internalize. But it is the cornerstone for creating a world without nuclear weapons in the view of the United States. And if we want to see this vision realized, we must redouble our efforts to ensure an enduring and robust regime.

Strengthening the non proliferation regime is an objective the United States has embraced and one of its highest priorities. Both, the challenges to the regime and the opportunities to address them have never been greater. It's clear that we are all here because we share a common vision of the possibilities and the opportunities for the future.

Let me offer some thought on the path to securing a successful outcome at the Review Conference next May. We believe the 2010 Review Conference will be successful if the parties, first, approach it as a serious opportunity to strengthen the Treaty and revalidate its indispensable contribution to regional and global stability and security. And second, if they look beyond their differences, define those areas where agreement on concrete measures to sure up the global regime can be reached now, and if they can also focus on areas where further work and deliberation are needed both to realize agreed steps and to broaden future areas of agreement, even if there is no agreement on specifics possible today.

To ensure the states parties approach the Review Conference as a serious opportunity to strengthen and revalidate the treaty as an overall regime, the United States is prepared to lead by example. We will demonstrate concrete progress towards a goal of a world without nuclear weapons and we will continue to emphasize the critical importance of a stable reliable international nonproliferation regime to further disarmament success. The nuclear danger is one we must all confront together, whether the risk of conflict between nuclear arms states, the spread of nuclear weapons to regions of conflict around the world or the risk that terrorist might acquire weapons and usable materials.

As president Obama said in his April Prague speech, the United States seeks the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons and towards this end is working to strengthen the NPT as the basis for

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international cooperation on non proliferation. Only by recognizing our common interest and acting to meet our shared responsibilities to reduce nuclear dangers, can we achieve this goal together.

The 2010 Review Conference is the most immediate opportunity to renew and reinvigorate the basic bargain by focusing in a balanced manner on all three pillars of the Treaty, disarmament, non proliferation and peaceful uses. These three pillars are integrally related, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Without nonproliferation it would be too risky to expand nuclear energy worldwide and prospects for nuclear disarmament would be slanted. Without disarmament international support for non proliferation would be insufficient to ensure the regime can meet the challenged I have described. And without safe and reliable access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy a key benefit of the basic bargain would not be realized. Our efforts to renew the nuclear bargain require us to reinvigorate the disarmament pillar of the NPT.

In support to our commitment to a world without nuclear weapons the President has said that the United States will reduce both the numbers of nuclear weapons and their role in the national security strategy and we will urge others to do the same. As you've heard already, the United States and Russia are currently engaged in active negotiation in Geneva to conclude a follow on agreement to START. Achievement of a legally binding and effectible verifiable agreement will set the stage for further cuts and eventually a disarmament process that will include all the nuclear weapons states.

The cessation of all nuclear weapon test explosions constitutes another meaningful step towards nuclear disarmament and has long been a goal of NPT parties. President Obama has committed to immediately and aggressively pursue US ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Once ratification is achieved, the Obama administration will work hard with others to ensure that the other requirements for CTBT's entry in the force are met at the earliest possible time. And in the interim, we have reaffirmed our decade long unilateral moratorium on testing and continued to call on other government publicly to declare moratorium of their own.

The US is also committed to seek a new treaty that verifiably ends the production of fissile materials for weapon proposes, a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty or FMCT. This is another long standing international objective. The US looks forward to working with its partners in the CD to include this important agreement and pending that result we have reaffirm our decade long unilateral moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and we are encouraging others to do the same. So the stage is set for important progress on arms control and disarmament. The political will is there.

The goal of the non proliferation pillar of the NPT is to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons. The 2010 Review Conference is an important opportunity to strengthen the implementation of the nonproliferation elements of the Treaty. An overwhelming majority of the nearly 190 states that have joined are bidding by their Treaty obligations, Rebecca Johnson mentioned this.

However, international peace and security is undermined and parties' confidence in the NPT and measures to strengthen it are eroded by those few parties that are not in compliance. Stemming proliferation requires that the international community work together to discourage such violations. Again, quoting the President, president Obama in Prague he said, "Rules must be binding, violations must be punished, words must mean something."

We are currently working on ways to make the cause of violating that Treaty outweigh any benefits and to address non compliance with meaningful consequences. And we believe the Review Conference is an opportunity to make progress on these issues as well. States should perceive or should realize that the perceived benefits of acquiring nuclear weapons are often illusory. When one state acquires nuclear weapons its neighbors may feel the need to do likewise leading the entire region down the path of

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insecurity. Latin America provides a sternly example of the opposite path, of a group of nations achieving greater mutual security by forswearing nuclear weapons ambitions.

The IAEA, as we heard, is the primary tool for verifying compliance and detecting non compliance with the NPT's nonproliferation obligations. And the US is committed to making sure the IAEA has the resources it needs to accomplish this vital mission. Our support for the IAEA is critical in fulfilling our end of the bargain. By assisting others to benefit from peaceful applications of nuclear energy while ensuring the recipients of tactical assistance also uphold their end of the bargain by ensuring that these activities are under safeguards as appropriate.

Parties must work together to strengthen the Agency's safeguard system. Over the years the Agency's membership has adopted additional measures to enhance its ability to verify state compliance with safeguards obligations, in response to events that have exposed weaknesses in the system. The IAEA needs to use all the tools at its disposal; both to investigate clandestine programs and to strengthen assurances that states nuclear programs are entirely peaceful. I will say it now, one of these tools is the Additional Protocol. The United States ratified its own Additional Protocol earlier this year and will continue to encourage its adoption by all states. And I have in my remarks the Director General ElBaradei's quote about the relevance of the Additional Protocol to declare material, but that's already been quoted so I'll skip over that. But we do attach great importance to this new verification tool.

The third pillar of the NPT calls for international cooperation in pursuing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. For many years, nations have used nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in agriculture, medicine, mining, manufacturing and other industries. Nuclear science is vitally important to the continued social and economic development of many countries. This pillar is more important today than ever, especially in light of an increasing interest in nuclear power, as I said earlier, as a response to international concerns about climate change, energy security and sustainable development. President Obama has called for a new framework for civil nuclear energy cooperation so that countries seeking nuclear power can access it more easily and cost effectively without the need for their own fuel production capabilities. The United States is supporting an International Fuel Bank and working with international partners to explore cradle to grave fuel services as the basis for providing reliable and affordable access to nuclear energy without increasing proliferation risks.

To help states overcome the many obstacles they face in pursuing such programs the IAEA has put into place a new program to help states build the infrastructure necessary for nuclear power development. These efforts will help realize the right of every nation that renounces nuclear weapons, especially developing countries to peaceful nuclear energy programs. We believe the NPT Review Conference can validate these goals and recognize the need for further discussion and cooperation.

I have described a number of initiatives, and other steps that the NPT Review Conference will have before next May, steps that can set us on the path towards greater international security and allow us to meet the genuine economic and social needs of countries embarking on, or expanding their civil nuclear programs. Their success is predicated on the assumption that all states, those that possess nuclear weapons and those who have forsworn them, have a responsibility to advance our collective security. The 2010 Review Conference is an opportunity to demonstrate the shared responsibility and I would add that it also is an opportunity to demonstrate the power of multilateralism.

The United States and other nuclear weapons states, bear a special responsibility under the article 6 of the NPT to pursue nuclear disarmament. President Obama has publicly acknowledged that he accepts this responsibility and he's described his agenda for meeting this responsibility and we intend to pursue it with resolve. Non nuclear weapon states, however, bear no less responsibility to work constructively and actively to prevent further proliferation, to help create the conditions for nuclear disarmament, and to ensure safe secure uses of nuclear energy. The responsibility does not end with their decision to forgo

their own nuclear weapon capability and to accept IAEA safeguards to verify their commitments. It must continue through the participation of those non nuclear states in rigorous, collective efforts to impede other countries from acquiring nuclear weapons. This is not a favor to the nuclear weapons states, but a collective responsibility of the international community as a whole whose security and wellbeing is dramatically affected by whether more and more states acquire nuclear weapons.

Though such efforts all states can help create the conditions necessary to achieve the nuclear free world that we seek. So in conclusion let me briefly return to the second point I mentioned in paving the way for success next May. I offered my view that the NPT Review Conference will be successful if states parties look beyond their differences to find those areas where agreement on concrete measures to assure up the global regime can be reached now, and in areas where further work and deliberation is needed so that agreement might be possible in the future.

Since being confirmed in June and taking this position, I have met with more than 50 different governments and counting, to explore and identify opportunities for engagement. While national positions and priorities vary from country to country, what is a constant is a shared commitment to the future of the NPT and the non proliferation regime and the desire to work collectively to advance the cause of nonproliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We've heard it here, many commentators have said this, but the time is right to make progress now in all three pillars of the NPT, the political will is there. We have the opportunity to create real and sustained momentum to reinvigorate our separate but related efforts in Geneva, Vienna, and New York, and elsewhere. The time is right. The 2010 Review Conference is the opportunity to reaffirm and reinforce this vital Treaty. We are looking forward to working with our NPT partners to do just that. Thank you.

Applause

