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EVENT TRANSCRIPT

The Global Nuclear Order – Build or Break?

Wednesday, April 28, 2010

JAMIE SHEA: Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. If it's a competition between nuclear weapons and sunshine in Brussels, sunshine always wins. But for those of you who are sacrificing some sun rays for at least the next hour and a half or so, I can guarantee you that you will be richly and deservedly rewarded because the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has, once again brought together a first class panel of experts on a topic which has always been at the top of the international agenda, and never more so at the present time.

First of all I'd like to thank you all for coming, and I'll introduce myself – my name is Jamie Shea from NATO, and I have the privilege of having been invited by Fabrice to be the moderator for this evening. And moderator, of course, means not only introducing the speakers, but doing my best to provoke a good Q & A debate session afterwards with our three experts. The privilege of the moderator is also to be able to make some introductory remarks. I've never passed up this opportunity and I won't do so tonight either, but I'll be brief.

A couple of days ago, when I doing a little bit or reading to at least be able to ask the right questions this evening, I came across a quotation from guess who, Winston Churchill – his bust may no longer be in the White House Oval Office, but his spirit lives on. I came across a speech that he gave to the House of Commons in November 1936, where he said, I quote – I can't do the accent, Churchill was not a cockney Englishman unfortunately – he said "...The era of procrastination, of half measures, of soothing and baffling expedience, of delays, is coming to a close; in its place we are entering a period of consequences" – I like that; "a period of consequences."

I imagine that all of you, experts or not, in the era of proliferation, looking at where we are today, probably also believe that we are entering a period of consequences. We seem to be at a crossroads where, within the next couple of years, we either go to a world characterised by more and more nuclear weapon states, and more and more proliferation, horizontal as well as vertical, or a world which finally, painfully, slowly, starts to work towards the increasing de-legitimisation

of nuclear weapons as an instrument of security, makes it harder for new nuclear powers to come into existence, and which goes towards President Obama's vision of a Global Zero, or a world without nuclear weapons.

I think that one of the things that we want to tease out of tonight's debate is whether, or at least which vision is the more realistic one, and what is likely to happen in the years ahead. I think that also, we are aware that we are in a period where the move towards more and more nuclear disarmament, more and more control of proliferation, more and more international standards and rules, that golden age of the 1990s, if you like, is coming to an end.

Just to recall, the 90s were a period where the NPT picked up more and more members – I think it's 189 today, it became virtually a universal treaty in the wake of the first Iraq War, and we're discovering the weaknesses of the IAEA, the additional protocol was invented, the IAEA was given additional means. We had new treaties, chemical weapons, the comprehensive Test Ban Treaty – even if not ratified by the United States. We had, in the wake of the Gorbachev era, arms controls agreement ongoing between the US and Russia. We had many countries, France for example, with the missiles on the Plateau d'Albion, the nuclear submarines, the US and even Russia making unilateral steps to forgo certain capabilities.

We had some success in freezing the nuclear aspirations of many countries – Libya more recently, but South Africa, Iraq – although Iraq, of course, in the wake of the UN Inspectors after the conflict – even for a while North Korea before it quit the NPT Treaty in 2003, but since the end of the 90s I think there is a general public impression that, Messieurs les Experts, rightly or wrongly, that things are not going so well.

The NPT Review Conferences have become increasingly embittered with the division between the nuclear haves and the nuclear have nots. I mentioned the North Korean case of actually leaving the Treaty, we've had Iran, Syria – obviously your comments on this may be not violating the NPT Treaty per se, but at least being economical with the truth when it comes to transparency and allowing the inspections to take place.

We've had the India, Pakistan nuclear programmes and, of course – and I think Mark Hibbs is going to comment on this – the problem that Mohammad Al Baradei famously described as the nuclear Wal-Mart, the AQ Khan network with the possibility that nuclear weapons would no longer be the monopoly of constituted states, but could fall into the hands of terrorist organisations. Would that lower the threshold for their use?

I think the questions that we want to try to get at this evening is what can we do about all of this? Should we be pessimistic that the regimes that we've tried to build up over the last half century are unravelling? Can the NPT Review Conference mark a time when we can begin to reverse that process and put in a stronger rules based system?

I think what is interesting is that there are now straws in the wing [or wind?] which suggest that the empire is fighting back, or if you like the international community is now seriously gripping this issue, and trying very hard to think a way ahead.

For example, we have these hard headed strategists who, as far as I know, were never in the campaign for nuclear disarmament in their misspend youth, like Henry Kissinger or George Shultz or Sam Nunn, actually saying that what used to be idealistic – in other words a world without nuclear weapons – is in fact now a realistic strategy and should be followed.

We have the Obama vision, we have the US and Russia with the Start Agreement, a follow-on to Start, resuming reductions. We have the Nuclear Posture Review of the United States, which suggests that the US is leading the way towards to, not giving up its weapons yet, but at least limiting the circumstances in which they might be used, particularly to focus on other states with nuclear weapons. And although it's a little bit wobbly, we at least seem to be holding the international consensus among the major powers in dealing with Iran and moving towards sanctions.

The question I think I'd like the panel to consider as they make their remarks and then engage the discussion – is this enough? Do we need to do more? What can we do more over the next few months? In other words, how do we balance, if you like – and I think this is very much a dilemma for the NATO countries – on the one hand the belief that, well, there are going to be nuclear weapons in the world for a long time to come, and therefore always hang to nurse for fear of getting something worse, let's hang on to ours – but balanced against that they need to show leadership in the disarmament and non-proliferation field.

I think the second problem we face, the second dilemma in the alliance at the moment is, on the one hand, we want to continue efforts at prevention, but rather as the same with climate change, we also need to think about mitigation. What if the prevention doesn't work, then what sort of mitigation should we start looking at, missile defence in particular? This is a very difficult, vast debate; I imagine it's difficult even for experts.

What we're going to do tonight is have three separate presentations, by three distinguished members of the Carnegie Nuclear Policy Programme. We'll first listen to Pierre Goldschmidt who will address, I think, these issues through the prism of Iran. Pierre is well known here because he has the nationality of this country. He's now a senior associate at Carnegie, but all of you will know him as a former Deputy Director of the IAEA, where he was responsible for safeguards.

Then I will turn to Shahram Chubin who is also a senior associate in the same programme at Carnegie and an expert, not only on proliferation but terrorism and the Middle East – we've heard you before on many occasions, particularly on the Middle East – you're associated with the Department of Defence, RAND Corporation, and the United Nations, or have been in the past – so you have vast experience – you will also, I think, address the issue of Iran and the NPT.

Then we'll change the optic slightly by turning to Mark Hibbs, also senior associate – I don't know, Fabrice, if you have any junior associates, but you have good senior associates – where you have been looking very much at nuclear safety and security issues in the wake of, particularly the Summit in Washington, with a focus on Asia, and I'm told more recently, Turkey, which is an interesting case.

Those are the three panellists; I'll ask each to go for ten minutes. That will give you bags of time to think of difficult questions to ask them, and then we'll go with the Q & A and the discussion until around 6:30. So Pierre, lead us off, please.

PIERRE GOLDSCHMIDT: I was asked to share with you some thoughts which have not been generally discussed yet, about Iran and the future.

The adage, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, rings true in most cases. This precautionary principle constitutes, in particular, the very basis of nuclear safety. Unfortunately,

it has not been given sufficient weight when it comes to protecting against the risk of nuclear proliferation.

The case of Iran is particularly relevant. Effective deterrence requires convincing others that the cost to them of taking an action one wishes to prevent is far greater than any benefit. However, once such an action has been committed, such as North Korea testing a nuclear device, reversing the situation is much more difficult, if at all possible, than preventing it in the first place.

This is why it has often been recommended, including most recently by the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, the ICNND co-chaired by Gareth Evans, to accept the idea that Iran should be allowed to continue enriching uranium below 5% U-235, under strict and intrusive IAEA safeguards. A major difficulty with this proposal is that the international community cannot simply ignore the repeated calls by the IAEA Board of Governors and legally binding UN Secretary Council resolutions, requiring Iran to suspend all enrichment related, and other sensitive nuclear activities.

The main objective of these Security Council resolutions is to obtain Iran's full cooperation with the IAEA in order to enable the Agency, without further delay, to provide to the international community an assurance that all nuclear material and activities in Iran are exclusively for peaceful purposes. However, to reach such a conclusion, in the light of Iran's past deception and concealment efforts over many years, Iran would have to fully implement measures along the lines of the Temporary Complementary Protocol that I have previously proposed, and which goes beyond the provision of the Additional Protocol.

To move along the lines recommended by the ICNND, the Security Council would have to decide that, for as long as the IAEA Director General can report that Iran is fully and without interruption, implementing that Temporary Complementary Protocol, the continued production of enriched uranium up to 5% U-235 would not, per se, be a cause for new sanctions. This would represent a major concession to Iran which should be acknowledged, as such, by China and the non-aligned states. It is, however, likely that a number of western states will raise objection of principle to such a compromise, and I expect that we will see more of the same.

Let's face it, when dealing with Iran's nuclear programme the international community has always been one step behind. Over the last few years Iran's parliament and leadership have, on a number of occasions, threatened that Iran could withdraw from the NPT. Most recently, in February this year, Iran stepped over the implicit red line of enriching uranium beyond 5% U-235. It is easy to guess what the next provocative move could be – producing high enriched uranium, by enriching to a level exceeding 20% U-235, for example, to 63% U-235 under the pretext of fabricating radiation targets for a more efficient production of technetium 99 used for medical radiodiagnostics. Iran is very creative.

In other ways, as well, Iran may be coming closer to crossing a red line signalling efforts to acquire a nuclear weapon's capability. The February 18th, 2010, IAEA report on Iran, I quote – raises concern about the possible existence in Iran of past or current undisclosed activities related to the development of a nuclear payload for a missile – unquote. To prevent the Iranian nuclear crisis from escalating it would be advisable to clearly define the red lines and the consequences of crossing them.

The best way would be for the Security Council to adopt a resolution under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, deciding that if Iran were to produce high enriched uranium, to separate plutonium, or to notify its withdrawal from the NPT before the IAEA is able to draw the necessary conclusion

about the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme, then a number of strong and well defined sanctions would automatically be applicable and implemented without requiring a further UN Security Council resolution. This should also be the case if Iran is found to proceed with nuclear weaponisation activities, or were to divert nuclear material.

The merit of such an approach would be to make Iran responsible for any negative consequence of its decisions, knowing in advance that it cannot count on any UN Security Council permanent member's right to veto. It could help any part of the Iranian leadership or civil society that is not determined to reach a nuclear weapon's capability at all costs, to make a more compelling case to follow another course.

No country, including Russia, China and Turkey, has an interest in Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. All should, therefore, be willing to support a preventive resolution entirely contingent on Iran's future actions. It would also set a valuable precedent to discourage any other states which may otherwise be tempted to follow suit.

To be sure, there is no precedent of the UN Security Council adopting a resolution requiring automatic sanctions if a state undertakes certain actions. This makes it hard to do so in this case, but it is not a valid reason for not trying. There always needs to be a first case to establish a precedent, and the purpose for establishing the case this time is certainly justifiable.

Iran has been ignoring for more than three years legally binding Security Council resolutions, and refusing to comply with IAEA resolutions for more than six years. Its recent actions have increased the threat to international peace and security. Ensuring that the economic cost to Iran will be severe, swift and certain if it crosses the red lines signalling weapons intention is a far better course for the international community than the option of a military action or acquiescence in weapons production.

On the other hand, if against all expectations Iran adopts a cooperative attitude that has been requested by the IAEA and required by the Security Council for so many years, Security Council members, and others, have promised a wide range of benefits, including the normalisation of diplomatic relations, the provision of nuclear power technology and other technical assistance, and the abolition of trade and investment barriers. Thus far, Iran has unfortunately shown little interest in converting the P5 Plus One offer that was made an annex to a UN Security Council resolution, into a binding and long term multilateral agreement.

George Bernard Shaw has stated that, I quote – the only thing we learn from experience is that we don't learn from experience-unquote. The way a disunited P5 Plus One has been managing the North Korean and uranium nuclear file seems to prove him correct. The international community should not wait passively for Iran to carry out previous threats to produce high enriched uranium, and even to withdraw from the NPT. A legitimate and verifiable preventative Security Council resolution, as proposed, while representing a major concession to Iran should be more effective and easier to adopt than any post facto curative measure. Thank you.

JAMIE SHEA: Thanks very much. We'll go directly over to the next speaker – Shahram, please, the floor is yours.

SHAHRAM CHUBIN: Thank you, Jamie. Ten minutes is not a long time and what I want to do is signal to you what I'm trying to say ahead of time. I think Iran may well be a lost cause, and I think we may have to start preparing to live with it, with a nuclear capable Iran. That's not to suggest by any means that I'm comfortable with that notion, or that I'm advocating that we

acquiesce in it – I think we should continue with strategies to prevent it. But I honestly think, that after eight years, several Security Council resolutions; three or four, two sets of packages from the P5 Plus One, and innumerable initiatives from countries like Russia, we've gotten absolutely nowhere.

There are four reasons, or four sets of reasons why I think we've failed. There are four sets of reasons I would put forward – one is Iran is more determined than ever; two, the failure of the international community that goes along with what Pierre was mentioning; three, I would say there are inherent difficulties given the Iraqi precedent – and I thinks that's very important if you look at the Iraqi precedent; and four, there's a certain ambiguity or difficulty about what the west is trying to do.

Let me go through it briefly. Iran is more determined – since June of last year the regime has marginalised the moderates, become more monolithic, has also become more brittle and vulnerable, but it's also more determined, and I think it's more determined because it has less to fall back on in terms of legitimation. They can't really say they represent the people; people are out on the streets, or lots of them are, so the nuclear issue is a domestic legitimation element, and it always was but it's got more important.

Secondly, the failure of the international community – the Security Council has failed to enforce violations of the NPT, or its safeguards. A major reason for that is that Russia and China have been playing games, I think, and basically preferring the strategic leverage of an anti western Iran to non-proliferation. I think their real aim is to tie the United States down on this issue, and they've have considerable success, and now they're being imitated, to some extent, by countries like Turkey and Brazil who are posturing as being brokers or bridges. But in fact, I think, are doing much more than that – they're demonstrating their own importance, their impartiality and their independence, and I think there's a certain amount of mileage in both countries in defying the Yankees.

International reactions are very difficult. China says let's give diplomacy more time. Russia says let's avoid the energy sector and let's not hurt the Iranian people. Not mentioning Israel's nuclear weapons annoys Mr Amr Moussa. Threatening consequences annoys Mr Baradei; not threatening consequences annoys the French. Emphasising missile defence upsets the Russians, and I dare say the Chinese. Not emphasising missile defence upsets new Europe. Consulting Russia and China dilutes the results, yet without United Nations Security Council resolutions it's difficult to convince the Germans. Planning for a possible nuclear Iran can be seen by some as accepting a nuclear Iran, and seeking to engage Iran is seen by some self-proclaimed Republican realists at wasting time – as if they have an alternative – and seeking to de-emphasise nuclear weapons in the US is, and has been seen by some people in the US as weakening US defences, while seeking a grand bargain with Iran upsets Saudi Arabia, Israel and Russia. So the international community is not terribly united on these issues or to get there.

The inherent difficulties are two – one is Iraq. If you go back, or if you remember – cast your mind back to the Iraqi thing – this has made it very difficult to get public support I think for Iran, even though Iran is clearly a different case. The intelligence manipulation, or the intelligence failure about WMD, the exaggeration, the emphasis on the evilness of Saddam Hussein, the blurred goals, whether disarmament or regime change, was the game.

The emphasis on how unpopular the regime was and being accepted as liberators, even the experience of sanctions which Saddam Hussein managed to make painful for the population without being painful for himself, is carried over to the sudden reluctance – in public opinion,

anyhow – [unclear] sanctions that might hurt the people of Iran, as if it's the same thing. And particularly, the focus on Bush used to say that Saddam Hussein acted as if he had something to hide – well, he did have something to hide; he was hiding the fact that he didn't have anything as the Duelfer Report showed, and the Iranians are exactly the same case.

The Iranians act as if they've got something to hide. Well, do they have something to hide? This is where inspections are useless because the more inspections we had in Iraq, the less certain we were that we knew everything. In order words, inspections will not satisfy you. If it's a big country you can have the most intrusive inspections you want, but if you don't trust the leadership no amount of inspections will reassure you. That was clear in the Iraqi case, at least for the Anglo Saxons – that they didn't trust inspections as being an answer, and I think, in the case of Iran much the same. It's very hard to imagine, to craft a policy vis a vis with the legacy of Iraq behind us – I think it's very hard to get people to see this as different.

Then there's the ambiguity – what ambiguity is that? There are two things really – what would constitute a smoking gun if Iran wants to get up to the threshold of a nuclear capability and not beyond it? At what point do you have definitive proof to mobilise the Security Council? What does it have to do? It's not testing, it's weaponising somewhere in some lab over there, as far as you can see the fissile material is still below what's required for a nuclear .... It's very difficult to see what would constitute a clear case of a smoking gun.

The second is, as Fred Iklé said years ago, after detection, what? Which is okay, you've detected a contravention on the other side – this was in the East, West context – what do you do? They're breaking the Treaty, what do you do? Do you attack them? Do you dump the Treaty? Let's assume we could agree on the smoking gun – would China and Russia… first they wouldn't agree on what the smoking gun is, they keep letting these red lines go as Pierre said – and secondly, would they agree on what to do about it, because right now they're saying let's have another ten years of negotiation.

The inherent difficulty is that the US government has moved from a nuclear weapons Iran is unacceptable, to a nuclear weapons capable Iran is unacceptable. It's perfectly understandable – you will have read the Gates Memorandum where he says, basically, what do we do if they get so close to the threshold that they can break out overnight – so there's an inherent problem here as to what constitutes total unacceptability, and then what do you do about it.

Let me just conclude, I have a couple of minutes. I think there are a lot of steps – basically, policy, sanctions, inducements, the threat of force on the table, possible grand bargains down the road or possible new packages – all of these are intended to buy time. Buy time for the Iranians to change their mind, not to reverse their programme – I don't think anyone expects that they're going to… they might stop the programme but they're certainly not going to reverse it, their cost calculus has to change. It seems to me unlikely that this regime is going to change its cost calculus in the next four or five years.

I haven't listed all sorts of arguments why my argument may be wrong – I left that for discussion, what could change things – but it seems to me that assuming that they are going this way and that you cannot do much about it, but you should try, what sorts of measures should you take to reduce the consequences without, as I say, accepting?

We've seen it, and the US government is trying to do it. First it's done the unilateral things like try to de-emphasise the utility of nuclear weapons, reduce its arsenal, and so on. Maybe it hasn't gone far enough, it's got a long way to go, it's not even sure that Congress will go along with

some of these – CTBT, for example, hasn't been signed, and so on. Clearly, there are things that should be done on the Article 6 track and on the unilateral track to de-emphasise nuclear weapons.

Secondly, it seems to me that you should not exaggerate the value of and importance of nuclear weapons, or the consequences of Iran getting nuclear weapons – the reason is very clear, that if you do exaggerate them it will convince the Iranians they've got something. Whereas doing what the US is doing, which is trying to extend security guarantees and deterrents and defence, increasing the defence capabilities of allies in the region, to dilute the consequences, is important.

I think it's very important not to draw red lines that are about as lasting as lines drawn in the sand, because in the last eight years the west has been drawing red lines and retreating from them so rapidly that it makes your head swim from the notion that Iran was not entitled to have any nuclear technology, including a reactor, to now the notion that Pierre's talking about which is that, yes, maybe some enrichment is acceptable.

What I'm saying is let's not draw any more red lines we're going to walk away from – better, just drop the red lines because the credibility of deterrents later on it will be diminished by this behaviour – and I think that's very important. The sorts of things you're doing now will affect how much of a deterrent you can provide to Iran. If you support Hezbollah we'll get really angry; well, you've been rolling over every time we do something so why should we believe you on that, so make sure these red lines are not drawn.

I think you shouldn't encourage Israel's exaggeration of the consequences. I'm not saying Israel is paranoid, I think Israel has every right to feel insecure about a regime that acts and speaks this way, and acts the way it does in the region – but I think that indulging Israel in its fear that a nuclear Iran is somehow a threat, an existential threat to Israel is sheer nonsense – most Israelis know it as well. It's a threat to their security certainly, through Hamas and Hezbollah, but it's not an existential threat, and won't be by a long, long chalk. Quite apart from what the Iranian's intend, which I don't think they intend to mess with Israeli's at all, that's a diversion, Israel is a wonderful argument for selling this thing to the Arab street. It has absolutely nothing to do with Iran's strategic motivations – so don't threaten nuclear weapons, of course.

Finally, the last point – people talk about containment and deterrents – of course, it's not that easy, it wasn't that easy under the Soviets. With the Soviets, there were mistakes, near misses – but I think the parallel is this, that what finally changed was an evolution in the Soviet Union, and of course in Eastern Europe, society changed. You had a General Secretary who came along, who realised things had changed and, basically, made the decision peacefully to change, although he didn't realise he was going to lose control..

The best hope in Iran is for change. It won't come suddenly, it won't come next week, but minimising the impact of whatever it is they get, holding out the possibility of better treatment if they change their behaviour and their programme, and waiting for time – that's the parallel. I think the Soviet parallel is basically you have to make sure they can't get any strategic benefits from going down this road, that you don't have to threaten them to make them accelerate their programme, to increase the number of the bombs, or take hostages in the region, but you simply show that you're… this is a long term proposition, Iran isn't going to go away as a strategic problem, and it needs long term, sustained thinking. Thank you.

JAMIE SHEA: Shahram, thanks for that, for a very interested, detailed, very political analysis. It shows, certainly, the contradictions in trying to formulate a unified policy very well. We'll go to

the final speaker, Mark Hibbs, who is going to take a slightly different tack on nuclear security and safety issues – Mark.

MARK HIBBS: Thank you very much, Jamie. I'm just going to take a little bit of a broader approach to this issue, pointing out that the debate on Iran that's been going on in the background of the discussion that we've had now from our co-panellists here, has led to a focus by Iran but also by the non-aligned movement at the IAEA on Article 4 rights to nuclear cooperation, trade and development.

We will see that the acid test of the debate on Iran will come to a head at the NPT Rev Con at the beginning of next week through to the end of May. Iran, which has claimed throughout that its rights to uranium enrichment are guaranteed under Article 4 of the NPT, has been joined by other developing country states in the NPT in deflecting pressure to have sanctions.

There is a chorus of disgruntled NAM and developing country states who will be attending the meeting in May, and they are not only going to make it difficult for the P5 and the western group to pursue, indirectly, the Iranian issue in the review conference, but they are also going to have a profound effect on other issues which are being framed through the mirror of Article 4. One of these is the issue of nuclear security, which we've seen already come up at the Nuclear Security Summit this month, and will also come up again at the NPT meeting.

It should be pointed out that because the NAM and developing countries, more generally, strongly objected to efforts by the Obama Administration and others, to get an agreement on summiteers at the NSS on binding commitments, because they so strongly and successfully objected to this, we are going to see, in effect, very little attention at all to the issue of nuclear security at the NPT Rev Com.

I think there are a few people who believed that because the NSS meeting was held that would somehow give a shot in the arm to the issue of nuclear security at the Rev Con – that's not going to happen, again, in a large part because of what happened in the interaction between the Obama Administration and the non-aligned group in moving towards that Summit.

The Security Summit established, once and for all, that there are very strong limits on how much traction the nuclear security agenda is going to get in the scope of the NPT. Going back to what happened during the PrepComms for the Rev Con beginning in 2007, there were very constructive proposals being put forward by the EU, particularly in the area of nuclear security.

These endorsed important conventions, including the Security Council Resolution 1540, they endorsed the amended Physical Protection Convention, there were other endorsements the EU states supported. This is very important – they supported a comprehensive and mutually reinforcing approach to nuclear security which would move forward to create a real regime where you would have institutions, you would have cross connections of all of these individual efforts.

Then finally, in 2009, Prime Minister Brown announced that he wanted to see nuclear security set up as a fourth pillar of the NPT. This was reiterated by Secretary Clinton, also in 2009, and it looked as if this initiative was going to gain some support in the US, but as I said, because the NAM group so strongly reacted against more commitments and more responsibilities in this area through the NPT, the fourth pillar idea was, in effect, abandoned by the United States before the summit meeting was convened, and it has basically been dropped.

The advocates of nuclear security coming out of this meeting are on the defensive. Their critics are getting support from important states outside of the NPT. India and Pakistan are in this group, and the NAM basically sees nuclear security as a ploy by the United States to inhibit their peaceful nuclear activities, again, referring to Article 4.

What we had was intense political opposition by the summit parties to any binding commitments – some countries agreed to a pot pourri of individual national undertakings, but basically, at the Rev Con this issue is going to disappear. I think the most optimistic outcome coming out after the NSS would be an endorsement of 1540, an endorsement of an amended Physical Protection Convention, maybe also of the International Convention on Suppression of the Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, but that's about as far as it will go.

In my view, the polarisation of this issue by the NAM coming out of the debate over safeguard verifications in Iran, has meant that an opportunity was lost by the advocates of nuclear security, including the EU and the US , to explain and demonstrate to the non-aligned movement and other developing countries, that a stronger nuclear security regime is in their national interests. You'll recall that the NAM states, in many cases, complained that more safeguards, more verification, more attention on non-proliferation and nuclear weapons, has nothing to do with the developing countries – it's really a matter for advanced nuclear states and the threats they pose to each other.

In fact, the absence of strong, robust, nuclear security practices in developing countries and NAM countries, has left us with a track record of fatal accidents where people died because radiological material was not well confined, it wasn't secured. Many of these countries want to have nuclear power programmes in the future and these accidents spread fear in the populations in these countries which is going to make it more difficult for them to develop nuclear power programmes from the ground up.

This rhetorical debate has poisoned the well, and has made it very, very difficult for the nuclear security agenda to move ahead. That being said, at the NPT security issues are not going to be in the forefront also because they don't have an international institutional frame of reference. They're not connected to the NPT directly, there is no binding treaty, the IAEA has a very limited role in this field, it has no implementation role, and we see a lack of support and enthusiasm by many of the NPT states on these issues because they've got nowhere to go to address them.

At the working level, between the EU, the United States, the IAEA, on the one hand, and the NAM countries, on the other hand, on nuclear security issues there's a lot going on. There are transfers of technology, there's technical assistance, and the United States and the EU are contributing to this, but at the decision making level, at the political level in these countries that message isn't getting through. There's a disconnect between the real work that's going on in the developing countries, assisted by the EU, the United States and others, and the rhetoric which is going on at the top poisoned by this debate over safeguards in Iran, which is preventing the nuclear security agenda from moving ahead.

In the long run what do we see here? A few years ago the IAEA convened a group of experts and advisors to look at the future of the IAEA. These people proposed a massive increase in resources, including financial resources for the IAEA. Again, the NAM and developing countries rejected this out of hand, they did not support it, on the eve of facing in the 21st century perhaps a different suite of nuclear threats which are going to have to be addressed.

In the past, in the 1960s and 1970s the IAEA instituted a system of safeguards based on accountancy and trust. After the first Iraq War we learned that Iraq had a massive crash programme outside of safeguards, to develop nuclear weapons. That triggered a response at the IAEA to shift its focus on nuclear threats away from routine accounting of nuclear materials that are declared, and towards programmes that are undeclared.

This shift in safeguards orientation is ongoing, and we're seeing countries participating in this now pressing the IAEA harder to allocate resources further away from routine surveillance and accounting, and towards these undeclared activities and clandescent activities. Both the NAM states and important advanced nuclear states are objecting that there are insufficient funds and resources to spend more on verification. The EU and Euratom are also pressing the IAEA in this regard.

Now we may be moving into a third phase where the nuclear security advocates are saying that if we're going to have less money to spend, we should shift even further some of these resources towards addressing threats in the 21st century that we have not seen before. In parallel with efforts to shift its safeguards focus, the IAEA has made the effort to establish that countries are in compliance, generating greater confidence that all declared nuclear programmes in these countries are peaceful, and the advocates of nuclear security are now suggesting that resources saved by not carrying out routine safeguards in states where the IAEA is confident should be devoted instead towards the emerging threat from terrorists and other non-state actors.

JAMIE SHEA: Mark, thanks very much. We've had three very substantive inputs, and what we will do now, of course, is give you an opportunity to speak. I think the best way to do it, given the time we've got available, is to proceed in batches of three – so three questions or statements, then I'll give the panel a chance to respond. Obviously, if you want to put your questions to a specific member of the panel, please make that clear, and then time permitting we'll have another round and another round, until it's time to wrap up.

And of course, as always in Brussels, if you could tell us who you are and where you're from, at least in terms of institution, that would be useful for our panellists. Already I see a familiar hand is up; there is a microphone so thanks, go ahead.

GAURI KHANDEKAR: My name is Gauri Khandekar, I was a student at the College of Europe and now I'm working at the European Parliament; I'm from India. My question is Pakistan as a country went through a lot of turmoil during the period when President Musharraf left and there was no credible government. Internal security was very poor, and then it continues to find itself in one of the most volatile geopolitical regions in the world, and the Taliban came in very close proximity to Islamabad recently, as we have seen. Why didn't Pakistan figure on top of the International Nuclear Security agenda, more than Iran because, arguably, we can say that Pakistan does pose an immediate threat to international security?

JAMIE SHEA: Thanks; good to see you again, and thanks a lot for that. Who's next? I've got a few really nasty questions up my sleeve, but you don't want me to use them, so go ahead yourself.

STEPHEN RISTIC: My name is Stephen Ristic, I work at the WMD Centre at NATO. My question is more geared towards Shahram or Pierre, but whoever can take it. Whether they're pro-regime or opposition, we've seen that the population generally has had widespread support for Iran's nuclear programme. If we take this programme as a matter of national pride, whether

the most [unclear] effect or respect because of a development issues, have inducements and sanctions in these elements been a waste of time from the beginning, or not?

JAMIE SHEA: Thanks a lot for that. Fabrice, you wanted to come in too?

FABRICE POTHIER: Fabrice Pothier, from the Carnegie Endowment. I have a question probably for Shahram and Pierre about nuclear Iran. To what extent a nuclear Iran might change the strategy calculus of the regional powers – I'm thinking particularly of Egypt, Turkey and also to an extent Saudi Arabia? Then more for Pierre – to what extend will a nuclear test free agreement or ban in the Middle East be again a changer for the current situation? Thank you.

JAMIE SHEA: Fabrice, thanks a lot. Shahram, many of the questions were in your direction – so first you, then Pierre and then Mark, and then we'll have another round.

SHAHRAM CHUBIN: I won't mention the Pakistan case; I'll leave that perhaps to Mark. Iran's nuclear programme has the support of the vast majority of Iranians in the sense that they support Iran's right to nuclear technology. There are great divisions within Iran about confronting the international community, not engaging them, and blatantly provoking them, and there's absolutely no discussion within Iran about whether Iran has rights to get nuclear weapons, or to go towards nuclear weapons. I want to very clear on that. This is a mistaken notion that the Iranian government, this particular Ahmadinejad government, has tried to push to people.

If you look at the last article I wrote, and in about a page I described all sorts of things they've done, the government, that suggests they don't think they have popular support for it. They've never debated it, they've never talked about the costs, they have forbidden the press from mentioning any of the criticisms coming from abroad, they've portrayed it as a question of, a clear case of technology denial to keep the Islamic Republic backward.

In those terms everybody agrees that nobody should do that, okay, so that's not a problem, but the issue really is that it goes beyond that. The issue is what sort of programme, at what cost, how to deal with international concerns, should you try and give them more access, why destroy certain sites, for example, when they come under suspicion from the inspectors and so on. The premise, I think, has to be qualified.

The second point is that, of course, western policy has played into the Iranian regime's hands, and I alluded to that. Under the Clinton Administration the policy was that Iran has no right to any nuclear technology, full stop. Well, the Iranians said, look, we signed the – this was before [unclear], before they were in non-compliance with their safeguards agreements – they said, look, we've signed the Treaty, we've taken on obligations, we have certain right, and certain of those rights means that we have access to technology through the IAEA and elsewhere. First you say no reactors; then you say, okay, reactors, yes, but no enrichment; now, basically you're saying there may be some enrichment.

Of course, western policy has fed the Iranian government's capacity to manipulate its population and it's paranoia about it. Not all Iranians would want to have access to first line technology, they believe that they're an ancient country with the right to a certain amount of status and respect. Although I think that many friendly western commentators often forget to remind the Iranian government that if they want the respect due to an ancient civilisation, maybe they ought to treat their own population with a certain amount of respect, as well, and I think the Chinese play the same game all the time, as well.

On your question – of course, that's what I think is really important. If the implication of what I said is correct, that basically the horse has bolted the barn, the question is how to minimise the consequences for the NPT in the region – that's the key issue. One, is don't overstate the importance of Iran and what it can do with – I didn't say nuclear weapons announced; I said a nuclear weapons capability on the threshold – don't exaggerate what it means. Try and buttress other people's security, try continuously to get the Iranians to move back from it, and as I said, to negate it.

I think that is the issue, and as you say, Turkey and Egypt particularly, would be in a position to react. Egypt because of its frustrated ex-leadership roles in the region – it's no longer a leadership role, but it used to be. Turkey because of its new nationalism and its new desire to play a role as a medium power. Saudi Arabia I think too, but Saudi Arabia has a long way to go – it doesn't have any nuclear capability.

People say Pakistan might give it to them but that's a bit of a long shot, given the fact that if it does that it would then be faced with… Iran would not be very happy if Pakistan gave nuclear weapons to Saudi, and then Pakistan would have two nuclear weapon states on its borders.
Since most of Pakistan's energy is focused on India I don't think they're going to accommodate Saudi Arabia because that would complicate their life in the Gulf. It is a problem; it's a long term problem. It won't happen in five years but the other major powers will draw their conclusions about the NPT, draw their conclusions about the Security Council and draw their conclusions about their need for security or status.

JAMIE SHEA: Thank you. Pierre, do you want to pick up?

PIERRE GOLDSCHMIDT: On Pakistan, why don't we speak more about Pakistan and less about Iran? It's because these are two completely different issues. I think there are many publications about the risk of Pakistan's nuclear weapons falling into the wrong hands, and clearly it's a very insecure region today. Pakistan is not a member of the NPT, and therefore it's not an IAEA topic, it's a security issue, so it's dealt with separately and it's not part of the NPT Review Conference either; it's not on the agenda, but Mark will say more about that. It's a real problem; it's a real threat.

Fabrice has provoked me about a nuclear test free zone in the Middle East. You know that initially in 1974 Iran and Egypt took the initiative of promoting a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East, and since 1980 every year the UN General Assembly has agreed, by consensus, including Israel, on the target of a nuclear weapons free zone, which later became a weapons of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East.

Egypt has been citing the fact that there has been no progress for 30 years on this issue, as a reason for not considering any measure to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and in particular for not signing and ratifying the additional protocol, which is crucial for the IAEA to be able to give the necessary guarantees.

I think that, for the EU in particular since we are in Brussels, but also for many other states, to insist that a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East is a priority, and that it must be achieved immediately is counterproductive. It is counterproductive because it's giving false hopes. We can discuss a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East, but we must recognise that it means only one thing: Israel joining the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state. This is what it means; nothing else, so there is one loser and all the others are winners.

This can only take place in a different environment, and when we speak about reaching a world without nuclear weapons, when you reach the 200 weapons level in all nuclear weapon states, then you start looking at this issue seriously. It is necessary to show that you can make progress, concrete progress, not only talking about reaching that far away objective, and this is why I think it would be interesting to consider whether it makes sense to promote the initiative of a nuclear test-free zone in the Middle East, which essentially means all the countries in the region ratifying the CTBT. All the countries should win; Egypt would be reassured that Israel does not go further, doesn't test a nuclear weapon; for Israel it would also give an assurance that Iran is not going beyond that red line; so Egypt, Israel and Iran, objectively, would benefit from such a nuclear-test-free zone.

However, for different reasons, none of them is going to suggest that; Egypt because they reject anything which is less than a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East. They have been advocating this for so long, 36 years, and now are not going to consider anything less than that. Israel will probably not consider it favourably because they will consider that it's a distraction from the real issue, which is the Iranian nuclear programme. Iran will not engage in such a nuclear-test-free zone because they cannot even talk to Israel, which they don't recognise. So you are in this strange situation, that something which is in everyone's interest will not be proposed by those who would benefit most.

The question is, shouldn't other states, the EU in particular, and Turkey, which want to play a role of mediator in the region, take the initiative and say, let's try, as a first step, to establish a nuclear-test-free zone in the Middle East? That's the answer to this very difficult question. Thank you.

JAMIE SHEA: Mark, do you want to add [tape break] or any other topic and then we'll have a second round?

MARK HIBBS: Yes, on Pakistan. Iran was not a player at the summit so they didn't figure. Pakistan was a player and, as Pierre suggested, the issue in Pakistan, at the summit as well as outside the summit, is the situation regarding Pakistan's strategic nuclear assets.

During the run-up to the summit, there was a great deal of concern about how the Obama administration was going to play this, because in recent months there's been a lot of discussion about whether there would be a US role for increasing the security of those assets in Pakistan. That has engendered in Pakistan an almost existential angst that the US would go into Pakistan and take its nuclear weapons away.

The Pakistanis have become allergic to any discussion about the security of their nuclear assets, which led, I think, the summiteers on the western side, particularly those who are engaged in discussions with Pakistan, with China, with India, Afghanistan and Russia about addressing security issues in South Asia to be rather reluctant to push that issue to the brink at the Nuclear Security Summit. These issues are under discussion already and they're subject to a very delicate security dialogue that's going on between the US and Pakistan right now; so there was a reason to keep it off the agenda.

I'm given to understand that in the closed door meetings that took place during the summit, Pakistan, supported incidentally by India, expressed concern that addressing nuclear security issues would inhibit their nuclear weapons security by moving into the strategic area, somehow

preventing these countries from acting autonomously in their nuclear weapons deployment. So the Pakistanis made it very clear they did not share the entire agenda of the meeting.

JAMIE SHEA: Mark, thanks. I said we've got time for Round Two, so wants to shoot first? Over there, please, sir, and then, Alex, you're next.

LOUIS-VICTOR BRIL: Yes, sir, I am Louis-Victor Bril from the European Commission; I'd like to have your reaction on three questions. First, let's make a few parallels between Iran's case and other cases; first I will say about the pride. I have heard the Pride word, I remember that in the 70s in some of the nuclear weapons states it was a real pride to have them, let's say, France, for example; let's say, the race between US and Russia was based, not mainly but partially, at least, on the feeling of pride in their population. So I will be very happy to have some of your reaction on that.

Secondly, about Russia; if Russia today would not have nuclear weapons and would have a seat in the Security Council, what it would be on the strategic importance of Russia? Let's think, I would say, on the negative side here; it means this can be an input for understanding what Iran may want to achieve by trying to acquire capacity to make a nuclear weapon.

The third part of the first question is: let's examine those countries which have abundant the acquisition of nuclear weapons; South Africa is well known, but there are other ones, and Brazil and Argentina have ceased their race towards that. However, for example, Brazil is very conscious to have those, let's say, proof that they are able to master nuclear deterrents, not speaking about enrichment, but speaking about their ability to launch satellites or to have a nuclear submarine.

So this is my first question. Let's compare with other countries along these…

JAMIE SHEA: Sorry, your question is actually brilliant, but if every one of your questions is broken down into three sub-questions we're not going to have much time.

LOUIS-VICTOR BRIL: Sorry, the two questions [?] are not broken.

JAMIE SHEA: Forgive me, and I'm certainly not being rude, but if you could present your other two questions as simple questions that would be good, and then we have other people asking as well.

LOUIS-VICTOR BRIL: Now very rapid; the fact that Pakistan does not belong to NPT does not make it less dangerous than Iran, in absolute way. I'd like you to elaborate a little bit on that.

My last question is that we cannot regularise those who have acquired a weapon outside of the NPT, of course, for the time being – what do you think about the possibility to regularise with all the courts necessary, inside the development of a new FMCT which is taking place now? Thank you.

JAMIE SHEA: Thank you very much for those questions. Alex, please?

ALEX PAPAIOANNOU: If I have the time, very quickly – Alex Papallon [?] from NATO. Three very brief questions on Iran internal politics…

JAMIE SHEA: With no sub-clauses.

ALEX PAPAIOANNOU: Not at all, or one question with three sub-clauses, if you'll allow. First of all, let's imagine that Mousavi was allowed to win the elections last June, how would this affect Nuclear Programme? The second, which is related, is: to what extent does Ahmadinejad have any control on the Nuclear Programme, and how seriously should we take his statements, let's put it like that? Finally, is brain-drain an issue delaying the Nuclear Programme right now?

JAMIE SHEA: Okay, Alex, thanks very much for three succinct questions. Looking at the clock, we're obviously not going to have time for a third round, and therefore, as this will be the final chance, does anybody else want to ask one, single question? Please, go ahead.

SPEAKER 1: [Inaudible] from the Commission. This is one thing on the subject, a simple question; this is actually [?] If Ms. Ashton was at the opening – what should she say?

JAMIE SHEA: Thank you, that's an extremely good question. Hopefully, we'll be able to write your draft speaking notes for you this evening. Fabrice, what did you want to say, something brief?

FABRICE POTHIER: Yes. I just wanted to ask particularly Mark about the non-aligned countries and whether their current position on all those issues are driven by real concerns about the NPT, or whether they're also driven by high politics and a certain breed of anti-Americanism or anti-Westernism, which we start seeing emerging, both in Asia and also in Latin America. Thank you.

JAMIE SHEA: I apologise for this, but I also cannot resist just one question, which is on Iran. We have, obviously, the United States, which historically wants to limit the number of nuclear powers in the world because the Nuclear Club is a prestigious club and, therefore, the more people that join it the less prestigious it becomes; secondly, of course, because proliferation could lead to a much more dangerous world.

What about the attitude of Russia and China, particularly as it comes out of the Iranian dossier; are they less concerned about proliferation? Do they see it as less of a threat to their security? Are they more egalitarian, thinking that it's good that everybody should have The Bomb, or that the consequences would not be as grave as the US believes, or is it really a question of, as somebody implied, that they're playing this game because it's a good way of sticking it to the United States?

As it gets to the end game, and they see that Iran is really getting close to acquiring a nuclear weapon, they suddenly think, wow!, it's fun to poke the United States, but at the end of the day is it really in our interest to have a nuclear-armed Iran, and therefore, they'll rally, if you like, to a more hard line of sanctions, etc, even if it's at the eleventh hour? That's the question. Sorry, but I couldn't resist – forgive me.

We've got 15 minutes for the smorgasbord of final questions; we'll reverse the order: Mark, would you like to go first this time?

MARK HIBBS: Okay. It is historically driven by real concerns about the future of the NPT; there's no question about it. These concerns go back many, many decades, but we have in fact seen polarisation of this issue in recent years. The NAM, which has been active in Geneva and active in New York for many years, only very recently established a chapter in Vienna. This happened at the end of a long very negative relationship, in many respects, between the United

States under the Bush administration, and the IAEA, led by Mohamed ElBaradei. I don't have to reiterate the milestones of that relationship, but it would be fair to say in fact that high politics are extremely important here in this.

As I said before, at the working group level, there's a lot of interaction between western states and NAM states to address technical issues, but at the high level of politics, the decision-makers don't get it, they don't have any of that information; they're driven by a rhetoric which is somewhat self-reinforcing.

Shahram was saying that in fact one of the issues that may be contributing to this is the fact that Egypt in recent years has been losing power in the region and it's possible that the Egyptians may be relying on this rhetoric to maintain their status quo position vis-à-vis other states in the Arab world. There's no question that we've seen a deterioration of relations between the west, the EU, the United States on the one side, and many of these actors on the other side. We're seeing that in Turkey; Turkey is a country which has a nuclear energy ambition. It's not clear, however, where that programme is going to develop. At the same time that Turkey has tried to start a nuclear power programme it has taken some decisions affecting high nuclear politics which have displeased members of the P5.

Turkey has not been cooperating with Western members of the P5 on the issue of Iran and sanctions. The case of Turkey is just emblematic here in this regard, but I think it could be said that a great deal of damage was done to the climate in the Board of Governors and at the NPT Review Conferences and PrepComs in general by the confrontation between the Bush administration and the IAEA Secretariat. There is no question that the NAM perceived Bush as moving in a unilateral direction, ignoring their concerns; the US was no longer perceived as being committed to the three pillars of the NPT, the interest in disarmament was eroding.

After 9/11 , President Bush launched an initiative to try to dissuade non-nuclear weapon states in the NPT from obtaining technologies for uranium enrichment and reprocessing. This was a very good idea, which, unfortunately, in translation was portrayed as a matter of preventing countries from developing their technological wherewithal. That became magnified by the NAM in the debate during the whole Bush era, and it played out right until the end, until 2009, when proposals were put on the table by the IAEA. They were in fact very beneficial to the NAM states, offering to set up a fuel bank and a system of guarantees to make sure that if supply of nuclear fuel would be cut off to them, they would have access to nuclear fuel regardless of political actions taken by their adversaries.

These were all very good actions, but because the climate during the Bush era was so poisoned, right to the end, into 2009, the NAM states failed to approve the fuel bank proposal and the IAEA to this day is dealing with the legacy of the poisoned relationship between the US government and the IAEA during that period.

JAMIE SHEA: Thanks for the [tape break].

MIKE HIBBS: Oh, yes!

JAMIE SHEA: …but the fewer you're on, so the more Shahram has to answer; so remember your colleague.

PIERRE GOLDSCHMIDT: Well, although Shahram is certainly going to deal with the question about Mousavi and Ahmadinejad, I will just state what I think. I think if Mousavi had

won the election, it would have changed nothing, for Iran's nuclear programme. On the contrary, I think Europe would have thought that it's much easier and better to deal with him and give more time to diplomacy; but I think Mousavi would have been unable, even if he wanted to, to make any concession; because it would be for him a political suicide. So I think we would have thought that it's better but it wouldn't have been.

What's the role of Ahmadinejad? Well, I think, of course, Ahmadinejad cannot decide on the Iran's nuclear policy alone - clearly not. He can express the official view in different ways, and I think the way he has expressed the opinion on Iran's nuclear programme, on denying the holocaust, on aggressing Israel, has been in fact very counterproductive. So yes, Mousavi would have done that much better and the programme might even be further advanced than it is today, but I'm curious to hear what other speakers will have to say.

Concerning Lady Ashton, it's too late to ask the question; you had to do that earlier, she's leaving after tomorrow for New York.

The FMCT and Pakistan? The problem with the FMCT and Pakistan blocking in fact any progress on the FMCT is, partially~~,~~ at least, a reaction to the US/India deal which clearly favours India, and the Pakistanis say, as long as the FMCT doesn't deal also with fissile material stockpiles, we are not going to agree on anything. We know that this is a non-starter, because if you want to progress step-wise you need first an FMCT saying, we stop new production of weapons material and leave for later the question of reducing the stockpiles, which is a much more difficult issue. We can all understand Pakistan's position. It is a consequence of the Indian exception that was even agreed by the NSG, which is a terrible mistake.

Jamie, your question is extremely difficult - are Russia and China less concerned than the US about non-proliferation in non-nuclear-weapon states?

JAMIE SHEA: It's difficult.

PIERRE GOLDSCHMIDT: It's a difficult one.

MARK HIBBS: The frame of references, too [?].

PIERRE GOLDSCHMIDT: If I had to say yes or no, I would say, yes, they are less concerned and they see short and medium-term advantages in playing it the way they are doing. One interesting thing about Iran is that the interests of Russia and China are opposite. Russia would see benefits if Israel were to bomb Iran, because that for sure, first, would push the barrel of oil above $200 a barrel, which is the thing China fears most; so there they have opposite interest. Also Russia would likely be called to play a mediator role in the Middle East, which it would love to. So from a cynical point of view, some people in Russia, in the short-term, may not wish to see any solution there.

For China, it's different. China, on the contrary, doesn't want sanctions against Iran because they don't want to undermine their oil supply and gas supply from Iran, and so it's a question of protecting their investments and supply guarantees. The EU is very cautious because, also, they have economic interests in Iran.

In North Korea we've seen the failure of China to block their nuclear weapons programme. For China having North Korea with nuclear weapons and the regime remaining in place, is better than having the regime fall and a unified Korean Peninsula which would be under the South

Korean and US umbrella. As long as the US is supporting Taiwan, China is going to support North Korea whether or not they have nuclear weapons.

So it's very complicated. Thank you.

SHAHRAM CHUBIN: They don't value non-proliferation as much as they value bilateral relations, and that was also true of the United States when it turned a blind eye to Pakistan when Afghanistan was invaded. Having said that, I think that China must be concerned about proliferation in Japan; it's not completely oblivious to proliferation, but in the short-term I think they're much more interested in a bilateral relationship and the tie-down with the US. I don't think there's a grand strategy of multi-polarity, promoting multi-polarity in that sense, so I think it's much more short-term.

On other precedents and status and so on, I'm surprised you want to justify what some people have or are doing to justify what other people do. Brazil might think it'll get status from having nuclear capability, perhaps it does; all I know is that these three countries, Israel, France and Britain, who must wonder what on earth they have nuclear weapons for - Israel in a sense has provided the alibi for the Iranians to go down that road.

Israel is conventionally strong, when it down this road it wasn't; it was really in danger, it felt in danger of being thrown into the sea by 100 million Arabs. Subsequently, we found out that Israel could defeat the Arabs with the help of American arms, conventionally, but it has no answer to the various intifadas and insurgencies that take place and nuclear weapons are virtually useless in any contingency you can think of, except other nuclear weapons, which they've provoked, in a sense, or they've justified.

England and France, they've been looking around for a Russian alpha-nuclear weapon since the end of the Cold War. Britain, even today, Clegg and others argue that we're not spending money on the regular forces, which will be used, and do we need a Trident, do we need three Tridents, how much will be spent on the nuclear programme, what's it for, who's it against, and so on and so forth.

So I really don't think… it's very hard once you get there, to give it up; there's a sunk cost, there are institutions, there are bureaucracies and so on, but I don't see the argument that because some countries have gone down the road and come back, or that France and Britain… and Britain had the Top Table argument, as you'll remember; the argument for nuclear weapons was that Britain wanted to sit at the top table. France's argument was after Suez having been ditched by the Americans; they didn't want a repeat of Suez, they wanted to go down that road. You may recall France was the primary provider of Israel.

I don't see that, let's say, erroneous policies… and if you think, as I do, that a world without nuclear weapons is desirable - it may not be easily achievable, but it's desirable - then I don't think opening the door to new entrants is a good idea, and I don't think that drawing parallels between what other people did before, which were mistaken, to justify what other people should do now is very helpful, intellectually helpful or practically helpful.

I'm not going to get into the discussion of what difference it would make if you had the so-called moderates or the greens in Iran as opposed to the current group; I think it would make a lot of difference. It would make a lot of difference. Again, it's a question of how you formulate it; you're asking the Iranians to stop their programme – they won't stop their programme; are you asking them to become your servants, because they're democratic, quasi-democratic – they're not

going to, they're going to be very difficult customers, whoever runs the country; but you would have more assurance of a responsible, transparent system in the critics of the regime that you hear, whether it's particularly Karrubi and Mousavi and Khatami, than you do under the current system. That's what it's all about.

It's not about technology; if it was about technology, we'd be raking Japan over the coals. It's about trust, transparency, reassurance. We have no assurance what the Iranians are going to do, what they say, based on the record of their behaviour and their actions. If they change that behaviour and actions, one could imagine that certain technologies which we don't want them to have now would be permissible. I've always believed that this is - I'm not a fanatic arms controller - this is an issue of politics; it's an issue of trust and transparency and behaviour.

If Iran was a status quo power, taking responsible positions in the region rather than trying to kick the west out and benefit from conflicts, if it were, I won't say on the west's side, I'd say an independent state of a certain responsible policy, one would have far fewer worries about enrichment, how close they are, how far they are. This is what it's about.

So, yes, politics make a lot of difference and the people who want an accountable government and an honest government, in the sense – I don't mean of financial…

SPEAKER 2: …corruption, and an honest representation [tape break]…

SHAHRAM CHUBIN: …wrong, and one of them, apart from oil price slides… I'm sorry, I haven't answered your question about defections or brain-drain; there are things that might slow the programme down, that might change the cost calculus, but in my view, a change in the supreme leaders – a supreme leader leaving, dying – will create a real impetus for the Iranians to make a decision; they're very bad at making decisions; and one of the decisions might be on this as well.

JAMIE SHEA: Shahram, Pierre, Mark, I think on behalf of everybody, thank you very much. I'd also like to thank Fabrice, and, Fabrice, your colleagues, your team at Carnegie for organising tonight's event, producing three extremely interesting speakers. That's not said with protocol in mind; that comes from the heart as well as from the head, even more from the head than from the heart.

I'd also, of course, like to thank everybody for coming this evening. I said at the beginning, you had to sacrifice one and a half hours of the most rare and precious commodity in Brussels, sunshine, but I think you'll all agree with me that it was worth it; I've learned a lot, I'm sure you've learned a lot as well. Thanks again for giving us your time, and could we have a round of applause for the three speakers? Class dismissed!