

2013 Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference

The Carnegie Nuclear Policy Program seeks to strengthen the global nuclear order, with the specific aim of reducing toward zero the probabilities of nuclear weapon use and reactor accidents while bolstering both international security and the security of energy supply. This work focuses on four themes: deterrence, nonproliferation, disarmament, and nuclear industry.

The International Nuclear Policy Conference reflects this structure with sessions on specific topics within each of these four broad areas. Of course, there are more challenges, opportunities, and potential paths forward than can be addressed in any two-day event. Rather than focus narrowly on individual problems, therefore, this year's conference seeks to explore these themes as they cut across the field, drawing on diverse perspectives from actors both established and emerging.

Traditional topics, such as North Korea, Iran, and South Asia, do not appear on this year's agenda as standalone subjects because they are addressed in this way daily and weekly in conferences, workshops, journals, and the press around the world. Instead, we have organized this meeting to examine these critically important cases through broader analytic lenses such as the efficacy of sanctions, the implications of regime-change policies for nonproliferation, the lessons of the Iraq and Libya models for potential proliferators, and the future of multilateral nonproliferation measures. Speakers and discussants in the audience no doubt will inject the latest particulars of the North Korean, Iranian, and other crises into these discussions, which we hope will illuminate the broader themes in valuable ways and vice versa.

Some less traditional topics will receive new consideration. For many years, for instance, the humanitarian dimensions of nuclear deterrence have been largely overlooked. The inclusion of international humanitarian law in the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan provides new impetus to raise questions that nuclear-weapon states have found uncomfortable and tended to avoid: Are some types of target sets and targeting doctrines more or less likely to cause humanitarian catastrophe? Is there a distinction—strategic, legal, or moral—between the first use of nuclear weapons and retaliatory use? Yet, the states raising these issues also face questions, most notably, what is a state facing an existentially threatening aggression to do if humanitarian considerations would preclude first (or retaliatory) use of nuclear weapons?

For many in the nuclear policy community, President Obama's April 2009 Prague speech raised hopes for progress on a number of issues, disarmament not least. While some successes have been

recorded—in particular the New START agreement and the nuclear security summitry—much of the Prague agenda appears stalled. The conference will feature several officials directly involved in implementing this agenda as well as views from other states on the degree to which President Obama’s vision can garner sufficient international support to make new progress in coming years. This support is partly contingent on negotiating and implementing specific measures, like the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. But it also depends on the outcome of much broader debates about the balance between nonproliferation and disarmament and whether states are actually prepared to prioritize NPT-related objectives above other competing interests. Plenaries and panels will address this web of challenges and opportunities.

Over the years, Carnegie conferences have sought to hear from new actors or new groupings of actors. And this year, one of the conference panels will focus on “emerging powers,” a loose categorization of countries whose voices are increasingly important on nuclear matters but whose interests were not necessarily represented in the bargaining that established the current regime. Representatives from India, Brazil, and Turkey will explore whether there is a common nuclear agenda among these countries or whether their interests are divergent. They will speak to how these countries would realistically measure whether sufficient progress is being made in the domains of nuclear disarmament, nonproliferation, and energy.

Periodically, the emergence of new technologies challenges conventional thinking. Recently, increasing awareness and use of cyberattacks as well as the demonstration of capabilities to destroy

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objects in space has stimulated a debate about the relevance of nuclear deterrence to these threats. Similarly, the development of new fuel cycle technologies—pyroprocessing and laser enrichment, in particular—has underscored the need to reconsider how to assess proliferation risks. There are many questions on these issues but fewer clear answers. Therefore, the conference will seek to establish useful terms of debate.

When the Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference convened two years ago, global expectations of a new wave of nuclear-power-

technology deployment had just been challenged by a triple meltdown in one of the world’s most advanced and experienced nuclear-power-generating countries. Since then, a score of states that before the accident at Japan’s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station were contemplating nuclear-power development have been forced to reassess in light of concerns about cost, governance, security, safety, waste management, and public acceptance.

Given constraints on energy resources, it is clearer today than after Chernobyl that advanced countries will continue to generate nuclear electricity. But more than at any time in the nuclear age, the technological future of the nuclear industry is uncertain. Nuclear-power-generating countries

now face a number of difficult questions. In particular, what are the costs, safety implications, and proliferation risks associated with the transition to advanced technologies for power generation, fuel supply, and waste management? And will it be possible to create widespread confidence among publics that such technologies will prove sustainable? The conference will hear from government and industry officials and operators on the full range of nuclear-power management, safety, and security issues and how they view the challenges ahead.

One of the major new factors with the potential to fundamentally shift the nuclear landscape is the financial pressure experienced by several of the nuclear-weapon states. As these states wrestle with steep budget reductions, they are debating which strategic capabilities, both nuclear and conventional, ought to be shelved and which capabilities ought to be preserved. One panel will consider this issue in the context of the U.S. nuclear complex. Another will look more closely at how the United States could reduce the role and numbers of its nuclear weapons while still fulfilling its extended deterrence commitments and reassurance goals.

Lastly, the one issue that has probably been more discussed than any other at nuclear gatherings around the world in the last two years is the Middle East WMD-Free Zone. The 2010 NPT Review Conference mandated a meeting of relevant parties to discuss the realization of this goal. That meeting did not happen as scheduled in 2012, and its prospects remain highly uncertain. Rather than focus narrowly on the technicalities of negotiating and implementing “The Zone,” the conference will address the implications of the unprecedented changes in the Middle East that have dramatically altered the political context. In the midst of civil war in Syria, uncertainty in Lebanon and Jordan, political instability in Egypt, Iranian noncompliance with IAEA and UN Security Council requirements for transparency and confidence building, and paralysis in Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy, what is the value and feasibility of focusing on eliminating WMD?

As in past years, the 2013 Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference will serve to stimulate sustained analysis and debate on the major trends and challenges in the field. We hope you enjoy the discussions as well as the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues from across the globe.