



# 2011 CARNEGIE INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR POLICY CONFERENCE

## KEYNOTE: RECONCILING INTERESTS

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

### WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS:

**Jessica Mathews,**

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

**Ambassador Celso Amorim**

Former Minister of External Relations, Brazil

Transcript by Federal News Service  
Washington, D.C.

[00:00:00]

JESSICA MATHEWS: I'm Jessica Mathews, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and I have the great pleasure of welcoming those of you to the 2011 Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference. Those of you who have been with us since the first of these meetings, in 1989, and especially those of you who are with us for the first time, welcome. We are so glad to have you.

We're meeting this year in an extraordinary time. The tragic events three weeks ago in Japan, and the still ongoing struggle to cope with them, take us back to the events of 1979 and 1986, reminding us that the most fundamental issues relating to nuclear energy, and to those relating to nuclear weapons and the channels of proliferation that connect them, cannot be put behind us. Nothing can be taken for granted with this technology, we are reminded.

Our thoughts and our wishes go out to the people of Japan, along with our admiration for the calmness, the determination, and the good sense with which they have shown in coping with this disaster. Fukushima puts an extra burden, I think, on those of us here to bring the best of our collective experience, wisdom and creativity to bear on the issues that we'll be discussing for the next two days.

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The theme we chose for this year's gathering is "new actors, new agendas." And let me share with you a few examples – a few thoughts on why we picked this. The global nuclear order, which rests, in large part, on the NPT, was created during the Cold War, of course; was largely the result of cooperation between the two superpowers in a bipolar system. Or, to put it another way, cooperation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, notwithstanding their competition in so many other domains, made the creation of this order possible.

But since the end of the Cold War, the world order has shifted tectonically. States that had seemed peripheral, at least to the major powers, have recalibrated their aspirations and their sense of how they want international relations to function. The developing countries as a whole and particularly the largest and most dynamic of them have become major economic players. They are naturally seeking political influence commensurate with their economic power. We see this symbolized, of course, in the shift from the G7, G8 to the G20.

India, Brazil, Turkey, South Africa, Mexico, Indonesia and several others want a greater say in the management of the global economy, the trading system, and international institutions more broadly. And they have increasing attributes of power to back up those aspirations. They are not new actors in the literal sense, of course. But the weight of their influence is new, and it is growing.

Similarly, as globalization continues to express itself in many ways and economic dynamism grows in regions that in the last century were less influential, the importance of industries and corporations involved in producing electricity grows. There has been much talk, and now growing debate, about the possibilities of renewed expansion of nuclear energy production – the so-called renaissance – including in countries that do not now operate nuclear power plants or have fuel cycle capabilities.

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This is one reason why Carnegie has renamed what used to be our nuclear nonproliferation program and broadened our issue coverage and expertise so that it is now the nuclear policy program. With the addition of Mark Hibbs and other colleagues and projects, we are addressing nuclear energy broadly, not just as a proliferation issue.

As part of this work, and as reflected in the panels and speakers at this meeting, we are increasingly involving experts from private industry. These, of course, are also not new actors in the literal sense. But their presence in deliberations, not only on energy but on proliferation and international security, is relatively new to gatherings like this.

Carnegie has been leading a quiet initiative for the past three years to provide a forum for traditional and new exporters of nuclear power plants to develop voluntary principles of conduct to guide their activities. The aim is to identify and aggregate best practices and norms in the areas of safety, security, environmental protection, nonproliferation, and compensation for victims of accidents. Governments, of course, are ultimately responsible for setting the laws and regulations for both exporting and importing states. But companies can and should do more to build public confidence that when and where nuclear energy is deployed, it will be done in the most responsible ways possible.

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We are also reaching out to new actors in another way. As a result of a project we've been conducting in Pakistan, with support from the State Department, we have been engaging with talented young Pakistani scholars and think-tank analysts there on the issues that we'll be addressing here. We're very glad to have several of these outstanding young experts with us for this conference and for a follow-on meeting with American counterparts that we will be hosting at Carnegie on Wednesday.

As to new agendas, the emergence of new actors and newly influential ones naturally leads to new issues that must be dealt with and to some dramatic shifts in the priority given to issues that have been on the agenda for some time. You all do not need me to elaborate on this so let me just highlight a few of the issues that we will be addressing here more than in past meetings. Most broadly, there is a need to focus more on the shifting lines of tension in the nuclear order, shifting primarily from an east-west to a north-south axis.

We will, of course, continue to focus on the critical issues of the Prague agenda, tackling the traditional, all-too-familiar difficulties between the U.S. and Russia and the challenges of achieving a comprehensive test ban and a cut-off of fissile material production for military purposes.

But today's challenge for strengthening the nonproliferation regime and adapting norms and rules to manage nuclear energy and fuel-cycle development is increasingly about reconciling interests and perceptions that diverge on north-south lines. We will explore these issues starting with our very first plenary, as soon as I remove myself from this podium, and continue with several other panels at this meeting.

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Another new item on the agenda is whether and how deterrence and international security can be achieved, if and when the U.S. and Russia reduce their nuclear arsenals to low numbers – to the hundreds rather than today's thousands. Low numbers would be a point on the pathway to the complete elimination of nuclear arsenals. So if

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that larger, longer-term objective is to be seriously pursued, the separate questions about low numbers need to be more fully addressed and we will begin to do so here.

Third, the global agenda also needs to recognize and seek to understand and manage the interactions between two triangular sets of actors in which China is a pivot. The U.S., Russia and China are in one of these strategic triangles, with each actor's capabilities and doctrines affecting the others. China is also part of a triangle with India and Pakistan. What happens in the first triangle, therefore, directly affects the second and vice versa. These interactions will largely determine the prospects for a CTBT, for fissile material cut-off, for reductions to low numbers and ultimately, for the health of the world order. We have an important panel that is devoted to analyzing these dynamics.

And fourth, for the future of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, which needs to be on the agenda as a more open question than it has been for many, many years. The U.S.-India nuclear deal is the most obvious source of flux in the NSG, but there are others: Pakistan's desire for similar treatment and the possibility that China might seek to export to Pakistan without NSG approval; tensions over whether or not to continue guidelines against exporting fuel-cycle capabilities and under what conditions; and questions about membership in the NSG and whether to adapt – to change the procedures by which it operates. All of these are critically important and relatively new challenges. And we're happy to have an outstanding panel for you on this topic.

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All of this is just a small taste of what we have in store for the next two days. And I will simply close here by thanking all of you for coming. We have great confidence that we will have an engaging, a vigorous, and a serious two days of deliberation. And I look forward to it and to interacting with all of you. Thank you for coming, and we will turn now to the first panel. (Applause.)

PERKOVICH: Welcome. We thought it would be great to start with a conversation and to have that conversation pick up on some of the themes that Jessica just introduced to you. And I could think, actually, of no one better to get us started than Ambassador Celso Amorim, who's been Brazil's longest standing Minister of External Relations, having served first from 1993 to 1994 and then under President Lula from 2003 to 2010. And in that great experience, he's been an innovator in reflecting the theme that Jessica set out at the beginning, of the emerging and growing influence of new major powers on the international stage. And that was the basis of what we wanted to discuss this morning.

Minister Amorim also has expertise in nuclear issues – he's been a permanent representative of Brazil at the United Nations – but long before that, in the Conference on Disarmament. Perhaps if you were there today, it might start working or at least get an agenda. And then since his retirement, *Foreign Policy* magazine has ranked him the sixth among the 100 top global thinkers in 2010, which begs the question, like, well, who are the first five? (Chuckles.)

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AMORIM: I have to see the other 94.

PERKOVICH: (Chuckles.) Yeah, exactly.

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I want to start with particulars, because sometimes you can work from general principles down to particulars, but I think with a group – this audience tends to be pretty wonkish, pretty expert. And so I think often it's better to work from details up to principles. And so in that regard, let's start with the difficult challenge of Iran.

And in May 2010, you and President Lula and your Turkish counterparts went to Tehran and negotiated with your Iranian counterparts to try to reach an agreement on the supply of fuel at the Tehran Research Reactor and for steps by Iran to build international confidence that its nuclear program is peaceful. This was in an effort that had followed on a prior attempted negotiation in October 2009, where there – it was thought that there was an arrangement to ship Iran's fuel outside of the country and then that ultimately did not come to pass.

So you all, in May, did reach an agreement with Iran, between you – Brazil, Turkey, and Iran, and released a declaration to that effect. But as we all know, the terms of that deal didn't satisfy the Vienna group or the G5 plus 1. And so then you reflected upon that. And I want to just read a quote, and then ask you a question.

But after that, you had written, “the fact that Brazil and Turkey ventured into a subject that would be typically handled by the P5-plus-1 and, more importantly, were successful in doing so, disturbed the status quo. The insistence on sanctions against Iran, which effectively ignored the declaration of Tehran, and without even giving Iran time to respond to the comments of the Vienna group, confirmed the opinion of many analysts who claim that the traditional centers of power will not share gladly their privileged status.”

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My question is, after more than half a year, do you still have that sense of, that was what was happening in terms of the reception of the Iran declaration? Or do you think that it was more about the terms of the declaration itself that prompted the rejection of it?

AMORIM: Well, thank you very much. It's a great pleasure being here. Thank you, Jessica; thank you, George.

Well, let me – since you want to be specific, I won't mention the other aspects of disarmament. We'll come to that later on. Well, first of all, let me say that we didn't enter into this venture because we decided to do that in abstract. We are not – Brazil has, let us say, enough problems to deal with. We have ten neighbors, which, in itself, is always a problem. You only have two – I Mean, we have ten. Fortunately, we haven't had a war for 140 years so this is part of our credential in finding peaceful solutions.

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So it's not that we're going around the world looking for problems to solve. But, actually, if I just take a minute – attempts to choose other marks. Let me just mention one. In the meeting of L'Aquila, of the G8-plus-5 or G8-plus-8 – because there were several meetings of this sort – but it was a G8 meeting to which Brazil was also invited.

President Obama actually asked that President Lula help in the dialogue with Iran. He said, well, I reached out and I didn't have a response. And I can't remember because I didn't take notes personally, but it was something like saying, well, Brazil could help in this dialogue in a more general way and saying, even, that it's good that we have friends that can talk to people that we cannot talk to.

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So this is the general thing. Then, after that, we learned about the swap agreement that you mentioned in relation to the Tehran Research Reactor, which was actually a very smart move, I would say, by the West and by the United States itself. I don't know if everyone is aware, but actually, Iran had not asked to make this exchange.

Iran had asked for the assistance of the IAEA to buy fuel for the TRR – for the Tehran Research Reactor, which is, of course, part of the entitlement of the NPT and part of the duties of the atomic agency, if your country is not a nuclear power, to help. You have to say that this fuel, of course – it would not be possible to use it as a weaponizing factor because they are already – well, I don't know why because I'm not an expert – that way, you'll see – but anyway, once they are transformed into fuel rods, they cannot be retransformed into something else. But they do use 20 percent enriched uranium.

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So they asked – they had bought something from Argentina 20 years ago. It's about to finish, and they asked the agency for help to buy it – to purchase, not to exchange. Well, then, I think, in a very smart move – but I think smart in a really positive sense – the response by the U.S. and others, the Vienna group, was okay. But instead of paying me with money, you pay me with light enriched uranium. Well, that was a very clever move because that would take out from Iran a certain quantity of uranium, which would make it, if not impossible, much more difficult, to arrive quickly at the nuclear bomb, supposing that they want that – it's another matter.

So that happened, as I said, around September, October. We received, even, envoys from the United States, who knew that President Ahmadinejad was visiting Brazil in November. By the way, it's very interesting because – I say that because the Middle East is very much en vogue now, of course, for good and bad reasons as well. But very few countries in the world can claim to receive in the same month the president of Iran, the president of Israel, and the president of the Palestinian Authority. So this was, really – all of them came in November.

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But prior to the visit of Ahmadinejad, we received envoys – actually, I don't need to explain much because in the WikiLeaks, revealed that, according to the cables from the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia, it's very clear what they wanted us to do. The American Embassy should impress on us the need to convince Iran to accept the swap agreement, which was this exchange, as I said, of the fuel for light enriched uranium.

And, actually, I received an envoy. I don't want to mention names now. And I was – actually, he gave an argument which was very strong in my opinion, in relation to past attempts in relation to Iran. And he said, well, you have to tell the Iranians that this is very important – this was a U.S. envoy, not an ambassador. Well, I don't know what his post was. It doesn't matter, but anyway, not the U.S. ambassador.

He said, well, you have to tell the Iranians, this is very important because for the first time, we are recognizing – I don't remember if he used the word “right” and maybe he didn't use the word “right” – but we are recognizing the fact or whatever that Iran has enriched uranium. And this, for them, should be a big plus.

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And I agreed with him because all previous attempts, I saw, well, as long as you don't accept the fact that that Iran will have enrichment as other countries, you won't come to an agreement. That was my opinion. But his was a powerful argument, I found, so – and I – if I remember well – probably, there might be some other WikiLeaks

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later on; I don't know – but if I remember well, he even told me, well, we may have even to adapt some of the Security Council resolutions because, somehow, you are dealing with material that was enriched in contravention to the Security Council resolution.

So this was the conceptual background. In October, the agreement was proposed; didn't work. Ahmadinejad came to Brazil. The impression I had, talking to him, together with President Lula, was that Ahmadinejad really had wished to come to an agreement.

But of course, Iran – of course, I don't want to comment on how the society is organized. But it's certainly not a monolithic society; I mean, you can say it's dictatorial or autocratic or whatever you want. Whatever “cratic” depends on the view of each one. But certainly, it's not monolithic.

Ahmadinejad wanted to have a deal and was unable to have it. Of course, the reasons he gave – by the way, one of the first persons to be against the agreement was the leader of the more democratic opposition, Mousavi. He said it would be a capitulation to accept that agreement. So when you deal with these countries, it's not everything black and white. The person who is more liberal internally may be more difficult to deal with internationally. So these are complexities that you will find in foreign policy very often and sometimes, we tend to disregard them.

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But we tried to impress on him the need to do that. Well, it's a long story. I visited Tehran several times. By the month of January, I discovered that the Turkish were doing the same thing. We didn't – hadn't arranged before. I just – because we have good relations with Turkey and once I was invited to talk to Turkish ambassadors and in my talks with Davutoğlu. I find out that the Turkish were doing more or less the same, trying to see how it was possible to operationalize the agreement.

Well, the agreement had three main elements, if I might say that, and one fourth element, which was a formal one. The three main substantive elements were very – I like to mention this because they are very concrete elements. They have nothing to do with intentions, let us say, motivations. One was quantity, the other was timing, and the other was place.

And what was being demanded by Iran – from Iran at that time, October, was that it would release 1,200 kilos of light enriched uranium in exchange for the equivalent amount, which – I think it's around a hundred or a hundred and something – amount of fuel with 20 percent. That should be done outside Iran and that should be done immediately because of course it takes time for the fuel to be produced.

And Iran was saying three things. Well, the quantity is too big: We don't need that much. You know, it's like – I mean, the argument was – they didn't phrase it that way, but I phrase it that way when I had to explain to some people in Brazil. It's like, well, I have a car which will last five years and we will ask – you are asking me to buy spare parts for 10 years. So I don't need that – the equivalent of 1,200. That was the argument, for instance, of Larijani, who is the speaker of the house. I need less: I need 700 or 800. So quantity was one point.

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The other point was timing. And they say, well, it's a question. We cannot – I don't know what, how you call it – treason or whatever – to give our light enriched uranium before we receive the fuel. So it has to be simultaneous. So the second point for them was simultaneity.

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And the third point was – so this is timing, and the third point was the place. The Iranians were saying, well, okay, we can do the deal, but the light enriched uranium – our LEU has to stay in Iran, maybe under IAEA supervision. But they even said – they mentioned an island, which was a kind of free-trade zone or something like that.

So they were insisting on these three points. Mind you, my understanding of how it happened is that in the previous moment, the Iranian negotiator in Vienna accepted the deal. But, probably because of the reaction in Iran – when they talk to us, they say also because the way the media played it in the West and the fact that it was said it would delay the Iranian program for one year and that, of course, made the ayatollahs very angry. So for whatever reason, they backtrack.

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But this was the essence. So we tried to work on that. Well, the fourth element, which I mentioned, which was a formal one, was that because that was always said to us, I mean, both by Americans – North Americans and also by the British and even others. We said, well, it's fine that Iran makes these nice promises to you, to the Turkish, sometimes to the Chinese. But they know whom they should address. There is a specific address in Vienna to whom they should write. So there were three substantive and one formal.

Well, these elements were reiterated. I don't want to go into these polemics now because I'm out of government and I think President Obama just made a very nice visit to Brazil. But these points were reiterated in a letter by President Obama to President Lula three weeks before we went to Tehran.

And so when we went there, our task was to obtain Iran's agreement to these three elements, instead of what they were thinking. So, immediate, without the idea of simultaneity, they agreed they would receive the fuel one year later; the place – they agreed to put in Turkey; and the third point, of course, was the quantity.

And even, I believe, one month or maybe less than one month before that, the foreign minister who fell later on, no longer in government – Mottaki, went to the agency and he said maximum that they could do would be 1,000 kilos.

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Well, we went there. We got the 1,200 kilos, we got the immediate release, and we got it to take place in Turkey. I mention this because these are very concrete elements: place, time and quantity. I mean, I can't think of anything more concrete than that and more verifiable than that. So, it's not a question of their intention. And in the declaration, it said that they would write to the IAEA one week later. And they did.

But unfortunately, for different reasons, the agreement was not considered good enough. I understand there were new questions, of course, because in the meantime, Iran started to enrich uranium at 20 percent and also there was, let us say, the increase in inventory during this period.

But, I mean, according to very – the main point of the agreement that was reiterated by President Obama in writing to President Lula three weeks before – so they're not speaking of something six months before, three months before – with these elements that I mentioned to you, would help create confidence. And really, that is what it was



meant to be. And I never thought that this would solve all the problems of the Iranian nuclear program and all the suspicions. But the first step: we need to create confidence.

We had two reactions which I think are interesting. I could mention many and there are people who, I don't want to mention names because I don't want to put words in their mouth. But from my point of view, they seemed receptive. Some said, well, it's 100 percent what we asked; some said, it's 80 percent but even that would be a good thing.

So that's basically what happened in relation to Iran. I just mentioned two of these reactions. One is ElBaradei, who was the director of the atomic agency at the time that the proposal was made. And he gave an interview to the Brazilian press, which I asked him to confirm specifically because we – in which he said that the agreement was – well, the agreement corresponded to what was essentially asked and it continued to be of great value. And he said if the agreement was not accepted, it's because the countries that proposed it cannot take yes for an answer. That was his reply.

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And even here, people who were involved in this question say, well, it doesn't go 100 percent, but it's 80 percent. I think, among others, John whatever – I have his name here, who used to be in charge of Iran in the State Department.

PERKOVICH: Probably not John Bolton.

AMORIM: Limbert. No, not John Bolton. No, no. Certainly not John Bolton.

PERKOVICH: Just kidding.

AMORIM: Yeah. John Limbert, who said it was 80 percent – whatever, it's 80 percent, 85 percent, who thought it would be a confidence-building measure; we followed what was asked.

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And I must say that most people who were skeptical, they – what they would say, well, the Iranians are cheating you; you will go there and they will not do it. They did it. So, whether they would implement it or not, I don't know.

But this was something that would be very concrete, physical elements: quantity, timing, place. So you could very easily verify.

I think in the meantime, the electoral calendar in the United States had changed. In the meantime, probably, you said you had a – I mean, the United States had a dual-track approach. In the meantime, you got the support of Russia and China through bargaining, actually, in allowing the Russians and the Chinese to do deals that others cannot do according to the U.N. resolution.

So these were changes that prevented us from doing – we didn't do it on our – but I want just to underline that. We didn't invent that. We didn't invent the agreement. And we didn't have the initiative on our own. It was somehow incentivized by the U.S. and others.

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PERKOVICH: Let me gain some altitude on this and ask a broader question because the – one of the principles in the declaration was basically that – first of all, that Iran could – it owned the material and it could pull out any time it wanted, but also that in essence, there shouldn't be sanctions going forward and that this was a position that Brazil has taken in general about the general disutility of sanctions.

And Director General ElBaradei, whom you quoted, said all along that sanctions were counterproductive, weren't a way to solve this problem in Iran. So the question then is –

AMORIM: And got the Nobel Peace Prize.

PERKOVICH: Right. But the question is, in many ways and based on your experience, do you feel that if a country is not complying with its IAEA obligations and others, that the only way to get them to comply, to negotiate, to deal with their obligations is to purely positive inducement?

So in other words, if sanctions aren't useful, what's to keep a country from just saying, no, we're going to keep doing what we were doing 18 years before we got caught cheating? We're just going to keep doing it because, what are you going to do to it? So how do you deal with that?

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AMORIM: Well, since I am no longer in government, I can tell you what I think about it, which I would not have said if I were in government. But I think that maybe sometimes the threat of sanctions may be something that may be of some use. Sanctions are the kind of weapon that works better when it's not used. I mean, it may be there in the horizon, it may be a way of persuading a country to be more cooperative.

And I must say that in my own talks with Ahmadinejad and Mottaki, I have said, well, look, you want to have trade with Brazil. Brazil – we are not in favor of sanctions, but if the United Nations approves sanctions, we'll follow them, and so many other countries that normally would have trade with you – or trade or other sorts of financial or economic – they will follow, as we have been following. I mean, President Lula signed – maybe a little bit – I mean, not very happy. He was not happy and neither was I, but we signed the decree which instituted the sanctions once the Security Council approved them because we follow international law.

But I think once – it's a kind of weapon that, once you put it in use, it makes it useless, in a way, because it tends to radicalize the positions. You tend to justify – I mean, take the emblematic phase of Libya. Libya was 12 years under sanctions by the UN, I believe 10, 12 years under sanctions and nothing happened against Gadhafi. On the contrary, he was more and more seen as a national hero that resisted outside pressure.

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Well, then sanctions were abolished – I'm not saying that to defend Gadhafi at all, but sanctions are abolished, the country became more open, the children of Gadhafi were received here by the secretary of state. Gadhafi himself put his stamp in the Champs-Élysées – I mean, we know all that – and of course, these – you may have whatever moral judgment on that, and I think morals are important, but it's important to have morals politically operationalized.

That's the task of diplomats. The task of diplomats is not the moralizing all the time. It's to have effective results based on moral principles. And the fact is that after you have this opening, well, more people were open to new ideas and you had a revolt that's still unfolding. We don't know what will happen.

So I would say it's not the question that sanctions can never be used, but I think in that particular case, it was a bit awkward. If you say, well, I have three basic conditions. I want them – and this was reaffirmed to us in writing, there's three basic conditions that will create confidence. You have the three conditions accepted and then you say, well, but on top of that, we'll have sanctions. Well, in that case I think you have – morally have to choose your way. And it's fine, I mean, if you choose sanctions – well, not fine, but I mean, I can understand. But you can't really eat your cake and have it at the same time.

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We went in good faith because we thought if that agreement – which seemed impossible even to us, because – no, it seemed impossible, honestly, both in terms of quantity and timing and place. And I already explained, I don't want to belabor on that. It seemed very difficult – not impossible, very difficult. We obtained that. Nobody believed it. I mean, Medvedev would tell President Lula, well, this is Iran's last chance. Sarkozy would tell the same thing, they all would – go there, but that will be last chance.

So we got there, and then of course the sanctions came and they came in a very brutal way, I must say, because it was something that speaks a lot about the Security Council. It was a bargaining between the P5 purely. We learned the draft resolution through an agency, through Reuters, I believe, not from the P5 themselves, and it was the object of bargaining.

Well, Russia got exemptions, China got exemptions. I don't know exactly – Russia read even – I believe it was even an act of Congress by exempting Russian firms from some certain kind of unilateral sanctions. And for other reasons, also – I don't want to tell states it was only that – they finally accepted.

And then you see the contradiction. I mean, even symbolically, at one time – on the one hand, you prevent a country from buying gasoline. On the other hand, you allow it to have a nuclear – if you are concerned with nuclear – a nuclear power plant. I know a nuclear power plant doesn't produce weapons, but you know, even from a symbolic point of view, it's difficult to understand. And to say that these are targeted sanctions, if you prevent a country from buying gasoline, that affects the poor people. It's not only the Revolutionary Guard that use gasoline. So anyway, that's my view.

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But as I said before, the fact that the sanctions are there in the horizon may have helped and may have influenced the attitude of Ahmadinejad. Mind you, the declaration itself doesn't mention the word “sanctions.” Actually, no, this is very important, because at the last discussion we had, we had – well, we had an 18-hour negotiation after months – but anyway, it's an 18-hour negotiation to come to the declaration.

But at the last moment, they still wanted to introduce the word “sanctions” and say, well, there will be no sanctions if we follow that. And I said, well, we can't put that in the declaration, because if we put that in the declaration, you will be taking away the value of the declaration. And they finally agreed, they finally agreed. And

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again, this was an agreement that went to the highest level. I mean, we didn't discuss specifics with the Ayatollah Khamenei but I'm sure he was aware by, let us say, the body language, the way he received President Lula and so on.

So I think this was a missed opportunity. Let me tell you one thing, just to finalize this point if I may: At that time, when – I mean, when the negotiation was proposed, I believe – nobody knows for sure, but it was calculated that Iran had something like 1,800 kilos, so they would give 1,200 and keep 600. When we finalized the agreement, they had something like 2.4 – I don't know how much you needed to have a bomb, but I saw different figures.

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Even people from Israel, which is the most interested country, told me 2,000 kilos. I have also read smaller figures. But in any case, one bomb is not a nuclear arsenal and one country cannot be compared to a suicide bomber. I mean, if they have one bomb, it's not an arsenal.

But in any case, it was 2.4. Now, in the last report I had, it was 3.6. So – and of course, I read, well, we are still interested in working the swap agreement with new numbers. But it would be more and more difficult, because of course, the argument that I said on the spare parts for the used car will play the opposite way.

So anyway, I think it was a missed opportunity. I mean, maybe it was not perfect, maybe – I'm sure we would have to discuss the 20 percent enrichment. And I saw many people in Iran that would be – and I even heard from them directly through the press that they would be prepared to discuss that. Maybe you would have to discuss inventory, but you know, a confidence-building measure is a confidence-building measure. It's to put people around the table, and then you discuss what's left.

[00:39:35]

PERKOVICH: I have to come back to this just because of something you said – the confidence-building that the IAEA and the others have been requesting and then demanding in resolutions for eight years now includes transparency by Iran, answering outstanding questions, coming into compliance with the safeguards obligations.

What did you – were you negotiating at that level of detail or was the idea that you deal with this Tehran Research Reactor, which is kind of a sidebar, in a way, and that that was then going to help motivate the Iranians to deal with the legal issues where they're in noncompliance? And did they acknowledge that that's where this was leading, or did the focus really remain on the TRR?

AMORIM: Well, the focus was the TRR because that's what was asked from us, actually. That was what, as I mentioned to you, the U.S. envoy even mentioned to us the importance of the TRR, because it was the belief that that would open the door to further discussion.

If we want to discuss everything at once, then you don't get anywhere. I mean, you discussed the confidence-building measure, and once the confidence is built, you go further. And I do believe that if you had that, then you probably would be able to go to other issues as well which are certainly more complex because they are not so easy to verify as these which are very, let us say – as I said, they are physical elements.

[00:41:14]

*Transcript Not Checked Against Delivery*

I have – I can tell you something only on – based on impression, and this is an impression, I cannot – I have the impression that there are many people in Iran that find that they have – well, first Ahmadinejad himself is someone – well, my sense was, he's not an ayatollah. He had said many absurd things which we all know and which President Lula even criticized – I think President Lula was probably the only person in the world that could tell Ahmadinejad, well, don't go on saying these things on the Holocaust because they are all rubbish – he didn't say rubbish, but that's what he implied.

But anyway, Ahmadinejad was a populist leader, mayor of Tehran, who was interested in being successful economically. And probably, he felt that the isolation of Iran was something that was creating difficulties for them. That may be an argument in favor of sanctions, I don't know, the ones that already exist.

But of course, he could not look as if he would be weak vis-à-vis the ayatollahs and so on. So I think he was interested in having this agreement. How far would we be able to go later? I don't know.

But the other thing that I would mention is – again, it's an impression, it's an impression of what he told me and maybe tomorrow you'll read something opposite in the press if the Iranians hear what I'm saying – but I had the impression that they really need the international community's assistance to develop their own civilian program. They don't have the capacity, and they somehow acknowledge that.

[00:42:45]

And if you read in the first paragraphs of this declaration, one point in which they insisted very much is that that should help on a cooperative attitude from the international community, or with the international community – between the international community and Iran.

So I think, you know, of course these things you cannot ever be absolutely sure, but it was – the other experience I had with sanctions, by the way, was when I chaired three panels on Iraq long ago. And I saw the sanctions were having no result from the point of view of the weapons of mass destruction, but certainly were creating havoc in the civilian population in Iraq. So these are the two experiences I dealt.

But let me just – because you ask a question – it's not that sanctions are useless and they may not be used, but it's – you have to calibrate them in a proper way. And of course, if the door is open to negotiating, you cannot at the same time shut the door with sanctions.

To my surprise, I must say – my surprise, so I have the humility to recognize that to my surprise, even after the sanctions, the Iranians were still wishing to negotiate. Of course, they wished Brazil and Turkey to be present, which the United States didn't want at all. France said that they would accept, Russia said that they would accept, through different messengers and means. But certainly, the United States would not be happy with that at that time, that kind of enlarged P5-plus-1.

[00:44:25]

So and there were several hints that they would – if they would come to an agreement, that they would stop with the 20 percent enrichment so I think that was, as I said, really a missed opportunity.

PERKOVICH: Let me ask one last question and we're going to open the floor. But – and this question has to do with the broader international order, which affects the nuclear domain, but everything else.

And we know, for example, Brazil has wanted President Obama to endorse it for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, and so on. My question is, in international crises or situations – and the Iranian nuclear file, with all of its violations and its safeguards agreements is a slow-moving one – but then you have the circumstance in Libya, which is moving very fast.

[00:45:26]

And you can have – one can have a sense that sanctions don't work, that force doesn't work, but you can also have gross or imminent violations of injustice, oppression, violence on a mass scale that requires some kind of action and doesn't allow for the protracted negotiations. What's your sense, then, of what a state is to do, what the international community is to do? I mean, I know Brazil abstained on the Libya vote a couple of –

AMORIM: On the no-fly zone, but we voted in favor of the sanctions.

PERKOVICH: Right. And so that's why I want you – so sanctions, sometimes yes, sometimes no – but the broader sense of looking forward in fast-moving problems with states that don't either respond quickly or without pressure. Where are we going with all this?

AMORIM: Well, I mean, let me say, first, unfortunately, you may say unfortunately, life is not very simple, and you cannot have a reply that will correspond to all situations. So you have to look at each situation and take your decision. It's not to take the recipe and just put it there, because it's not like that. In the case of Libya, I think the fact that the civilian population was being massacred or killed or whatever demanded some immediate action. Well, I'm no longer in government, so I can say, again, very freely, but I think we acted correctly in supporting sanctions.

[00:46:54]

I'm not absolutely sure about the sending of the case to the international court, because somehow, you know – I mean, I'm not saying it is so, but supposing that Gadhafi is really, let's say, like a wild monster – I mean, it's better sometimes to leave a way out for the wild monster to go, rather than having an absolute moralistic approach, which makes it difficult for him – makes it impossible for him to go out, and so him or her – in this case, him – so he will react because there is no other way. These are not of the question.

But in any case, we voted in favor of sanctions. We abstained the no-fly zone, probably not so much because of the no-fly zone, but we were – the debate is here. I mean, where are the limits? I mean, where are all the necessary measures stopped? We don't know very clearly. I, myself, was surprised when I saw the no-fly zone being implemented. And when I compared to the no-fly zone that existed in Iraq in related to the Saddam Hussein actions in relation to the Kurds, this time, it was a much broader interpretation of how we do.

I mean, it was pre-emptive strikes, justifiably, maybe, militarily. I don't want to go into that. But it was much broader than the ones that were used even in Iraq, after Saddam Hussein – I mean, between the two wars. So I'm a bit surprised at that. Maybe it was this kind of preoccupation that the Brazilians and the Russians and the Chinese and the Indians and the Germans have. So it was not only a question of, let us say, one emerging country, two others – well, Germany is a democracy, Western democracy in which you won't find any flaws, I suppose.

[00:48:45]

So these were the kind of preoccupations that we had, and even now, as it goes, as it moves on, I see now – today, for instance, the news is that the opposition is making headway. Well, what are the limits – it's an authentic question, I don't know – what are the limits between protecting civilians, which I think is fine, in theory, at least, it depends how you do it – I mean, the famous Hippocrates' norm, first, do no harm.

But anyway, what are the limits between protecting civilians or taking sides in a civil war? What are the limits? I don't know, it's not easy to say. There are – of course, Gadhafi is dictator, authoritarian, whatever. But in any case, there must be civilians on the other side, as well. I mean, how will you protect those civilians if the rebels go on and on and on and on. Which – I mean, I'm not taking sides. I'm not saying who is right and who is wrong, but it's a complex question. And I'm sure that even you here are debating that, because it's not very simple.

But since you mentioned President Obama and the Security Council, let me say one thing, and this has to do with the disarmament and nuclear weapons. I don't know exactly how one would see that, and you know my positions in relation of the broader question. I mention that in two words, if I may: I don't believe that nonproliferation will be successful as long as disarmament doesn't take place. It's Article 6 of the NPT, and you know all that we have been doing to work on that.

[00:50:19]

You have an agency for the two other pillars of the NPT, you have an agency for – the same agency, by the way – for nonproliferation and for peaceful uses. You don't have an agency for disarmament. So maybe it would be a good idea to have an agency – theoretically, to start studying how you – I mean, there are studies by the Canberra Commission, the Global Zero and so on. But they're not really an agency that studies in-depth what are the steps that can take to the disarmament.

But let me say one thing about the Security Council. Well, President Obama went to India and supported India. Brazil is in all respects a country comparable to India. The only basic difference – unless President Obama was wishing to provoke China. I don't know if that was his intention. I don't believe that it was. But if it was not, Brazil is in all respects comparable to India. Of course, they have a bigger population, but we have three times India's territory.

We are both democracies, we are both multi-ethnic, and we are both peaceful. The big difference is that India has a nuclear weapon and Brazil doesn't, doesn't according to the constitution. So what is the reading – what's the signal? One country may look for nuclear weapons for two different reasons, basically – and I'm going to make sure of them. One is security, which I think is wrong anyway because I think it makes you more insecure, having a nuclear weapon. That has been our reason.

The second reason is prestige. Well, if you reward those who have nuclear weapons and you penalize those that don't have – because I don't see any other difference between Brazil and India. India, by the way, I'm very much in favor of what President Obama said in India in Delhi, it's good. But why the difference? Maybe the difference is because we don't have a nuclear weapon.

Well, conclusions are to be taken for the future and I'm no longer in government.

[00:52:05]

*Transcript Not Checked Against Delivery*

PERKOVICH: I have to thank you for that, because it's a great way to begin the questioning, with that provocation. I haven't answered your question, but I'm going to save it. I want to – please raise your hands. And there are some people at the mikes, but I also I want people to go ahead and raise your hands, because we've got mikes can be delivered to you. And why don't we take a couple at a time. This gentleman here. You're going to have to do this faster, thanks. And then while Sinan's getting ready, then there's a lady in the back – in the middle in the back, please. Go ahead.

Q: Sinan Ülgen from the Carnegie Endowment. Ambassador, if you were in your good friend Davutoğlu's shoes, would you consider at any point in time taking the initiative again on Iran, trying to find a solution, or do you think he has also drawn the type of conclusions that you have drawn in terms of the unease that the P5-plus-1 has had with the involvement of Turkey and Brazil in this issue?

PERKOVICH: Rebecca go ahead.

[00:53:24]

Q: Hi, Rebecca Johnson, Acronym Institute. Minister Amorim, this was very, very, very interesting to hear you speak such good sense on these very difficult issues. My question really feeds off your very last comment. You were a very significant player in the New Agenda Coalition leading into the 2000 NPT Review Conference. And I would like your view on what you think that the non-nuclear weapon countries such as Brazil, the major players amongst, if you like, the medium power and larger, non-nuclear weapon countries could do to devalue nuclear weapons, to take away that prestige and security myth that you spoke of and move forward the nuclear-abolition agenda.

PERKOVICH: Thank you.

AMORIM: Yeah, well I'm not sure I got the first – if I were in whose shoes?

PERKOVICH: Davutoğlu.

AMORIM: Ah, Davutoğlu's shoes? If I have – well, you have to ask that question to Davutoğlu. He's still in office, so I'll not answer for him. But we were together in that effort, and what I can tell you – well, if I had the power of seeing the future and knew everything that was going to happen, maybe I would do something slightly different, maybe. Maybe I would not rely so much on what had heard or read in terms of what was necessary. But we did exactly that.

[00:54:59]

I don't think we were naïve. You know, I'm better known actually in the trade negotiations than in disarmament negotiations. And if you tell anyone at the trade negotiations, from Bob Zoellick to Peter Mandelson, that I'm naïve, they will laugh at you. But in this particular case, of course it was interesting to say that Brazil was naïve. I think we are not naïve, and I think the Iranians, up to the point that we had worked with them, acted in good faith. Very difficult negotiations, very, very – you know, it's not simple. But they delivered.

Of course, I don't know if they would go on delivering and if they would implement what they have said. That's another matter. But I think we did the right thing, and probably and unless I would have the power of seeing the future, I would probably do the same thing. I think Turkey might have had its specific difficulties because it's a



NATO member, but on the other hand, it's a neighbor of Iran. If there is a country that is not interested at all that Iran might have nuclear weapons, it's Turkey. So that might bring us to the geopolitical situation in the region, and I can talk about that if you wish.

But first I want to reply to Rebecca, who is my friend from a long time ago. Well, what can we do? I don't know. It's very difficult. First – I mean, I've been twice President on the Conference of Disarmament. It's just a biographical coincidence, but I think it's a biographical coincidence that's bound not to repeat itself because now, with so many members, no one will live enough to be president twice.

[00:56:35]

But I happened to be president twice of the Conference on Disarmament. In the first time, on the first occasion, we were able to create – prepare the ground for the CTBT, and on the second time I – it was posed just after the 2000 NPT conference and we were on the verge of being able to have a working program for the CD.

And in the end, it was China – actually, you know how the Chinese are, they didn't say they blocked, but they say, well, we don't oppose, but we don't agree. And the way the CD works, by consensus, it was not possible. And it was really a pity. And I don't know, maybe the Chinese nowadays regret. And their main point had to do with the missile with space, yes.

So how you can work in that – I don't know. I mean, you have maybe to think laterally and find ways. But I can tell you, if you don't make progress on disarmament, there will always be a danger of proliferation. There will be resentment, there will be questions of insecurity. I mean, if China has a bomb, why India doesn't have – and if India has a bomb, why Pakistan doesn't have? And if both Pakistan and Israel have a bomb, why Iran won't have? I mean, I'm not defending this reasoning, but you can see very easily that it can be made. And you can deplore that, but it's a fact.

So it's only by disarmament. That does not mean that you have to have disarmament immediately, but you have to have a credible program with a timetable. And that's why I mentioned to you and I was discussing with our ambassador here yesterday – I say my ambassador – (laughter) – no ambassador is my ambassador anymore. But anyway, I don't have even a secretary, not to speak an ambassador.

[00:58:12]

But – so I was discussing – and he said – he actually mentioned this idea of creating an agency. And I said, well, comparing with the Chemical Weapons Convention, I say well, maybe it's strange, because Chemical Weapons Convention, first we agreed to ban it – to ban the weapons and then create the agency.

But in a way, it could be good. It could be good to have an agency that would start work because it's not a simple thing. We all know that even if we agree on disarmament, it would take 20 to 25 years, that's the estimate of the Global Zero and of others. And it would cost money, so how will it be done?

So maybe sometimes you have to work out the technical part so that it doesn't become an excuse. So when the political will comes, then you have technical work produced. Maybe that will be something that could be done without going through the consensus-building of the CD, which really – I mean, I've been there twice and I think very differently.

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PERKOVICH: Others, including this gentleman here, can you grab him, and then I'm looking for ladies. Norm, I'll take you if – okay, I might have missed somebody – this gentleman here, on the – right here, on the end, on this first row on the balcony.

[00:59:24]

AMORIM: And I want to listen to your reply to my question.

PERKOVICH: Okay, geography.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, Michael Adler from the Wilson Center. I wanted to ask – you explained very well how you felt you struck a good deal with the Iranians.

And I wanted to ask you, why do you think there was such a disconnect between what Washington thought about it and what you thought about it, given that the Americans felt the goal of the confidence-building measure was to leave Iran with not enough LEU to make the bomb and that the 20 percent wasn't mentioned in the agreement and also that the agreement very strongly reaffirmed that right to enriched uranium, which in the context seemed to fly in the face of UN Security Council resolutions?

[01:00:09]

PERKOVICH: He was asking about the Tehran Declaration –

AMORIM: It's my problem of hearing –

Q: I apologize.

PERKOVICH: – and saying that given that the quantity had changed and gone up and that Iran didn't agree on the 20 percent enrichment and also that the declaration strongly affirmed the right of Iran to do enrichment, which was contrary to Security Council resolutions, weren't these some of the reasons for the U.S. objections?

AMORIM: Well, I don't know, but I think that would not – well, we reaffirmed the right because in accordance with the NPT, there is the right. Of course, you know there were Security Council resolutions, but as I mentioned to you, it was pointed out to me, actually by one of the U.S. envoys, that they would have even to revisit some Security Council resolutions if Iran agreed to the swap agreement, because the swap agreement was seen as something good in itself, because it would deprive Iran of a certain quantity.

And according to the estimates I had, and the best possible estimate was ElBaradei's, I don't see anyone saying that it was still a substantial subtraction at that point. I mean, mind you, that was May last year. Now are one year later, so it was still a substantial quantity which would leave Iran in a very difficult situation to produce a nuclear weapon.

Of course, people may say, well, but they have secret installation – well, okay, but when the – I don't know about that, but when the agreement was proposed, it was because it was thought that the declared fuel, the declared uranium was significant enough to justify an agreement.

[01:01:48]

I think it becomes more difficult by the day to you, because I read today that according to the U.S. strategy, some sort of swap agreement would still be important, even with revised quantities. But I see – the difficulty I see is that I mean, if you take Larijani’s argument – if you take Larijani for his word, I mean, if they only need, according to him, 800 kilos for the lifetime of the TRR, then it becomes more – the disconnect between the quantities that are needed to ensure that they will not make the bomb and the quantities that they say they need for the TRR will become bigger.

So well, you can always imagine other ways of doing that, and I am not in that business anymore. So unless I’m paid for that, there is no reason why I should contrive any new formula. But I think at that time, it was positive. At that time, it could be – it was reiterated by President Obama three weeks before. My god, he doesn’t mention 20 percent enrichment in his letter to President Lula and to Prime Minister Erdoğan. We know it is a problem, but it would be a problem that we would be able to deal later.

[01:03:01]

In my view, once again, the 20 percent enrichment only posed itself because the West didn’t want to sell the fuel to Iran. They preferred to propose this smart deal, which I agreed, smart and good it would be positive. If it had just sold to Iran the fuel that they were looking for, this problem would not have existed.

When I went – I mean, I just mention one thing – in one of my visits to Tehran, I asked President Ahmadinejad, can you come to postpone that for a little bit so that we can – and he agreed. Well, and you know, I spoke about two months, but I was – I think if I had said four months he would have agreed. I said, two months? And he said, well, I’ll do that.

But then you know how the Iranians do it. They didn’t present it as a concession, they presented it as an ultimatum. They said, well, if the agreement is not ready in two months, we will start. So they actually postponed that, but postponed in a way that rhetorically was not very positive. What was the other question?

PERKOVICH: Well, and in fact – well, I think you’re good. This gentleman wants to ask, but let me add – before you do, Norm, you keep talking about, Iran has – and others do – Iran has the right to do this, but the rights under the NPT are conditioned on being in compliance with your safeguards obligations, which they’re not.

So they had the right and they would have the right if they were in compliance, but for these eight years now, they’ve not been in compliance, which is part of the problem, is it not?

[01:04:26]

AMORIM: Well, maybe it was, but maybe then, in that case, we should not have been encouraged, as we were all the time, to propose this deal to Iran, because then the deal itself would be in contravention to the agreement. The deal doesn’t mention the right, but it recognizes the fact. So –

PERKOVICH: Norm?

Q: Just a quick question, Mr. Minister, if you could express what you think present attitudes of Brazil are towards the additional protocol.

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AMORIM: What's the position of Brazil in relation to the additional protocol? Well, again, I'll just give my opinion. I honestly don't see how Brazil will take further steps in relation to nonproliferation before seeing some steps being taken on disarmament. That's the – it's really – I mean, there are different opinions in Brazil about that. There are people who think that we should sign the additional protocol, there are people who say that we should never sign it because we have done enough, and so on.

[01:05:29]

Maybe I have a more nuanced position myself, and I'm speaking only for myself, I'm no longer in government.

PERKOVICH: You don't have a secretary, even. (Chuckles.)

AMORIM: Well, I don't have a secretary, so you see my email with all these mistakes in the English language, so you know that.

PERKOVICH: (Inaudible, cross talk.)

AMORIM: So I think it's very difficult that Brazil – any government in Brazil, be it right wing, the left wing, center, or whatever, would be agreeing to sign the additional protocol if we don't see serious steps being taken on disarmament. There are serious steps, and I – what are the serious steps?

Well, that's difficult to say. We have to start having a program, we start to have the multi-lateralized obligations. Of course, the verification can continue to be bilateral between you and Russia, but you have to start having a multilateral obligation.

Well, if this starts and if this is serious, if it is credible, if the CTBT is ratified, several things like that happen, I think then maybe some sort of additional protocol, which would not impinge on our technological advances for peaceful uses might be accepted. But it would imply these steps on disarmament. Any questions?

[01:06:47]

PERKOVICH: Anybody in the back? Then while some people are thinking more, then let me ask you a question, because on the disarming issue – and some of us who have been working on this for a number of years, we encounter that – and you see it in the Prague speech with President Obama, that in the White House, there may be more interest and more recognition of the potential gain for moving to a world without nuclear weapons. But when you travel, there are other nuclear-armed states that actually are much more resistant to the idea than the United States.

And so I guess my question is, if a non-nuclear weapon state actually comprehended that the greatest resistance is elsewhere – maybe in Russia, maybe in France, maybe in China – would that change the politics of this issue? For a long time it was – assuming that the U.S. was the main resistant actor and it was the U.S. fault and then you could say that – but if people really perceived that the greatest resistance was from Russia or France or Pakistan, would that change the politics of this?

[01:08:00]

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AMORIM: Well, let me just try – Rebecca has mentioned our role of the new agenda and my personal role in this discussion in the year 2000. So I know very well where the resistance comes. And I agree with you, the main resistance does not come from the United States for the very simple reason that the United States has such superiority in conventional weapons that may be for you the nuclear weapons.

I don't know. Of course, I'm making a caricature, but it's almost like the nuclear weapon has become the poor man's weapon, because it's brutal, it's causing a lot of destruction and is not sophisticated. But when I had to deal with that in my view, it was not the United States the main resistance.

But I think you cannot underestimate the leadership of the United States. So if the United States agrees, of course it will not agree to do that unilaterally, but if it agrees, allow me to make the comparison which nobody will like but I'll make: It's like export subsidies. (Laughter.) Export subsidies are the nuclear weapons in agricultural trade. Well, when the United States agreed to move forward, the European Union reluctantly also went and others – South Korea, whatever, also reluctant to go.

And I think the United States has such a – it's such a power of leadership because it's the biggest power in the world, it's certainly the biggest military power, that probably the others would come. I would not – I don't see – I see, of course, France was one of the – who resisted more, more than Russia, actually, when we discussed in the year 2000. Later on, I was not so much involved, so I cannot – not so much personally involved in the negotiation.

[01:09:44]

PERKOVICH: But things don't change.

AMORIM: But things don't change. But I can't see France blocking a general movement, you know, in which it would be alone defending the persistence of nuclear weapons. I can't see that happening. I can't see it, honestly. It would not take the lead, but it will not resist if the U.S.

And then of course Russia and China and of course – I mean, if you go through these plans, I know very well the Canberra Commission because I've been part of that. I don't know so well the Global Zero, but I know that – I mean, of course there is a point in which, let us say, the countries that are like Britain and France should come also in destroying their own weapons. But this is – I mean, if you have a coherent plan, that would come. And I don't see they would be able to resist.

PERKOVICH: Mm-hmm. Anybody else? One last chance for any question –

AMORIM: But you didn't reply to my related –

PERKOVICH: Yes, Ambassador Schaffer, yeah.

Q: Teresita Schaffer. I have a big question for you, Mr. Minister. You've been talking about very specific instances of negotiations that touch on nonproliferation issues, but you've been watching the world in this business for a long time. What, in your judgment, is the biggest nuclear-proliferation danger that the world faces today?

[01:11:16]

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AMORIM: Well, you know, I am not an expert, for instance – I am not an expert in anything, but certainly not an expert in North Korea. And so I don't know exactly how the negotiations in North Korea are going. I am not even an expert on Iran.

But one thing that I would say, not only for nuclear proliferation, but the biggest danger in the world is the Middle East, of course. And one has to pay attention at the geopolitical changes that are taking place in the Middle East. And of course, the Libya case, which is not so much Libya – Libya is not so much Middle East, it's more Africa than Middle East, I would say.

But if you look at the Middle East today, the really important thing will be Egypt. And the changes in Egypt will affect the region in more than one way. Certainly, it will affect the attitudes in relation to Israel. And it's not just a coincidence that the Fatah is now looking for an agreement with Hamas and that Mahmoud Abbas, who never thought of having this kind of contact, is – intends to go to Gaza.

Well, why am I saying that? Because I think the geopolitical in the region is changing. And mind you, both Egypt and Syria – now, they don't have nuclear programs of any importance, as far as I know, but they have not – they are not signatories, or have not ratified, I'm not sure, the Chemical Weapons Convention. So it's not only a question of nuclear weapons, but it's also a question of weapons of mass destruction.

So I think, if I would somehow, apart from the general question of disarmament and nonproliferation which I already alluded to, let us say, the broader question for the whole world – I would really be focusing on a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, because this is really where the things will come.

[01:13:06]

And this is really, again, probably – I mean, if you want to tackle the deeper questions of motivations in Iran and motivations in other countries, this is how we can get there. I mean, and probably to have a conception of an extended Middle East that can involve other countries. I don't know.

And so I think people have to pay attention to that, because Libya is taking the attention – which is natural, by the way, and Libya is very important because we have to discuss conceptual questions of no-fly zone, responsibility to protect, what is intervention, what's not intervention and so on, and all this is very important. But in terms of the future of the Middle East, the country – and I was very happy yesterday to see the rerun of a program with Lisa Anderson. But the country that really matters is Egypt.

[01:13:58]

And this has maybe – I mean, I think what's happening in Egypt is very positive. But if I look at it from the point of view of the United States or even from the point of view of Israel, where I have been several times also, this may be negative, but it also may be positive. It may be negative in the sense, as I just said, that it will not be so clearly pro-Fatah and against Hamas, for instance, and allow even Iranian vessels to go through the Suez Canal.

On the other hand, you may have a more pluralistic and multipolar system in the Middle East itself because Egypt, being more democratic and more representative of its own people, then – I mean, Iran will not stand out alone as the only country, maybe Turkey. But Turkey is, of course, NATO, so it's a little bit different. Iran will not stand alone as the only country that has – Egypt will have more influence.

*Transcript Not Checked Against Delivery*

So you know, the world is complex, and I think one thing that we should learn to do is not to divide the world in good and bad, black and white – I mean, it's more complex, and you have to deal with the complexity of the world if you want to have results. Of course, if you want only to make a moral statement, to have a diploma on your wall, that's a different thing. Then it's very easy.

But you know, politics is the domain of the relative. Religion is the domain of the absolute. And one thing that's not good is to mix the domain of the relative with the domain of the absolute. I am on the domain of the relative.

PERKOVICH: That's a good way – on closing, separation of church and state can apply – (laughter) – everywhere.

AMORIM: Everywhere, everywhere, including in the media, including in the media.

[01:15:38]

PERKOVICH: I was going to say, don't get me started. I want to thank Ambassador Amorim for a wonderful discussion. I want to thank all of you and bring this to a close with a round of applause for you. (Applause.)

(END)