SCOTT SAGAN: Thank you very much. I’m Scott Sagan from Stanford’s Center for International Security and Cooperation. George Perkovich began this conference this morning by giving all nuclear powers a very poor grade with respect to honoring Article VI commitments and with respect to the roles and missions that nuclear weapons are envisioned to play. There’s been an enormous amount of attention paid in the non-proliferation community and broadly on the United States and its strategic plans and policies. Far less attention, at least in the United States, has been placed on the future of nuclear weapons in China, France and the United Kingdom.

So I’m particularly pleased that we have a group of scholars and diplomats who will be able to help us understand the future of nuclear weapons in those three countries and also, since Harald Mueller comes from Germany, the perspective of a non-nuclear weapon state, but a non-nuclear weapon state that happens to have some nuclear weapons on its soil. What are the nuclear postures of these countries? How are they evolving in response to changing international threats? Are current planned future policies in compliance with Article VI commitments? How will nuclear doctrines develop in response to terrorist threats and the danger of nuclear proliferation elsewhere in the world?

I’ve asked our four speakers to be brief and have threatened to take off my shoe like Nikita Khrushchev and pound the table if they go over 12 minutes. We’ll see if that deterrent threat really does work, or whether we will practice disarmament here.

We’re going to have – in order to show that we will be brief in our initial comments, I am not going to introduce them except by their names and their organizations, because all of you have their bios in your package.

We’re going to have Bruno Tertrais from the Foundation for Strategic Research speak first, then Li Bin – Dr. Li from Tsinghua University. Third we’ll have Harald Mueller from the Peace Research Institute in Frankfurt, and lastly, Mr. Hugh Powell from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Again, their bios are in your sheet. So please, let’s turn immediately to Bruno.

BRUNO TERTRAIS: I think if George Perkovich was going to grade France, he would probably give it a G or an H. (Chuckles.) Here’s the quick tour, before I get to the future, because the best way to predict France’s future nuclear posture is to look at the current situation because the French are so conservative in these matters.

So, nuclear weapons for France have three main functions: life insurance against a major threat, protecting against possible blackmail from a regional power, in particular when there is a military intervention, in particular, abroad when we want to protect our territory, and third, it’s a more political function. You know, it’s not what you call
prestige. I think the word prestige – I’ve never heard the word prestige in any discussion in Paris about French nuclear weapons. I think it’s really a thing of the past. Now it’s the idea that nuclear weapons are the only way that Europe will gain a strategic autonomy – that’s something that the French think very important today and for the future.

The nuclear threshold’s what – the French use this expression vital interest and it’s code word for you know, the nuclear threshold. You know, vital interest does not necessarily mean the same thing in France as it does in the – well, the U.K., I believe, now uses the same expression. The core vital interests are left undefined, but they – the core defined by political authorities as population, territory and sovereignty – there was a lot of comments when Chirac made his nuclear policy speech in January 2006 when he made a reference to terrorism. And my understanding is that it’s very clear that only state-sponsored and clearly state-sponsored major terrorist attack would be a concern.

No first use is categorically rejected. When France gave its negative security assurances it qualified them strongly, and the French government says, well, you know, there’s always the right of self-defense as recognized by Article 51 of the UN Charter, which overrides any other statement anyway. And the language now is pretty close to what the Americans and the Brits usually say about what the response would be to a WMD attack. Well, the standard language today is well it could be conventional or, quote, “of another nature,” end quote.

There is limited flexibility in the doctrine. There’s this notion of final warning, which would be threatening the adversary with a limited strike, probably on military targets to restore deterrence and then if the adversary did not back off we would give it -- well, how do you say here? The whole enchilada? (Chuckles.) That’s unacceptable damage strike, which is exerting threatening damage commensurate with the stake of the conflict, threatening centers of power for a regional power – and, quote, “damage of all kind” for major powers.

A relatively new feature of French nuclear policy is that they consider that all their nuclear weapons are, quote, “strategic.” They don’t have non-strategic or tactical nuclear weapons anymore. There’s only one category of system, and the idea – besides the fact that they’ve dismantled all their short-range system – the idea is that you know, more than 60 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, any country threatening or using nuclear weapons, it could not be an act of, quote, “tactical” or “non-strategic” nature. It would be, you know, an extremely important, of course, act, so there has to be a strategic nature. That also means that there’s no particular category of systems. You know, it’s not SLBMs for major strike and aircraft for limited strike. All components can be called upon for any kind of planning.

There is a fairly important now multinational dimension in the sense that the French increasingly take into account the fact that they are part of a political union and are less and less reluctant about talking about the fact that their nuclear weapons are also there to protect their allies, including in the NATO context. That’s a dimension that was always present one way or the other, which has developed significantly since the end of
the Cold War. There is an interesting question which I’m sure the French government wants to leave open and unanswered. In public rhetoric, there’s now that reference to our nuclear force also protecting allies. Now which allies is this reference to? Europe, NATO or maybe also our Gulf allies, because there are some defense commitments – French defense commitments in the Gulf – which is a question that needs to be asked when one talks about the possible future deterrence of Iran. But that’s, of course – well that was a question mark.

Now a quick glance on the interaction between doctrine and force planning. The French talk about sufficiency, which is more or less the equivalent of what others call minimal deterrence based on, you know, assured second-strike capability. No counterforce – the French usually don’t do counterforce – and there would be only one strike after the final warning. The policy rests on four SSBNs, several squadrons of aircraft, and there’s now more flexibility introduced in the arsenal. An interesting and not very well known feature which has been made public by the chief of defense staff last year was that there was a political decision – a deliberate political decision – to limit the yield of warheads so that there cannot be any blurring of the threshold between nuclear and conventional weapons. That was a deliberate political decision. I guess it’s more or less the equivalent of the Spratt-Furse amendment, except that it was a presidential decision. This was previously highly classified, but it has been decided to make it public.

And when you compare the French policy to the British and American one, I’m fond of saying that I think there are much more similarities than generally acknowledged. In fact, I think the policies are very different – I mean, American nuclear policy and French nuclear policy are very different, but when you get to the core of the doctrines, they are not that different. So I think, in fact, in the past 20 years, there has been a lot of mutual influence through dialogue and cooperation, besides the fact that, as is often the case in defense planning, technology often drives the doctrinal dimension.

Now, what happens now? This is – well, this is the new guy with a buddy. [Pictures of Sarkozy and George Bush.] This was his first day at the office – on the left-hand photograph. So, different style, new generation, clearly, and much more at ease. See that big smile on his face? Much more at ease was the current American president than his predecessor. He is less familiar with nuclear deterrence issues – much less familiar than Chirac was, but his presidential campaign language was, in fact, very traditional, so he’s moving cautiously on this. He spoke about life insurance for the nation, ultimate guarantee against proliferation, says that we need to have discussions with our EU partners to have an increasingly European deterrence, and we will also need to have a full-scale nuclear posture review.

So, this is all very classic. He’s fairly lucky because he doesn’t have any major decision to be taken during his mandate, meaning there are no major programs that are coming up. The major decisions were taken a few years ago, and there’s no technological horizon that needs to be – well there’s no technical decisions that he will have to take. If he takes any decision in the nuclear realm, it would be his own choice.
It’s not like we have to replace – to make a decision on replacement. There’s no equivalent to the Trident replacement decision for the duration of his mandate.

So, I don’t think you will see any drastic changes one way or the other during the next five years – it’s a five-year’s mandate now. However, it’s a fact that all French presidents have left their mark on nuclear policy, so I don’t see why this president would be an exception. So he would want, at some point between now and 2012, to lay his own personal mark. It’s also remarkable – I mean it also has to be taken into account – that he’s the first true post-Gaullism president simply because of a generational effect. So that means the whole Gaullist heritage is less present in his political culture – in his own political culture – than it was for his predecessors.

So that makes me say that there are four possible changes that you could see coming: perhaps a slight force reduction, certainly more openness towards missile defense, probably increased European dimension, and that includes also possibly more cooperation with London and Washington. These are the four directions in which I see Sarkozy possibly going in the next five years.

So, to recap, no drastic change to be expected. French nuclear policy tends to be fairly conservative. The natural trend is conservatism. There is still a domestic consensus on nuclear policies, so that means there is no domestic political pressure for change. The cost today has been considered bearable, even though you know, the military always complained that we spent too much on nuclear weapons, but that happens everywhere. But it’s still considered bearable. It’s $2.9 billion Euros a year these days. Future drivers for French nuclear policy include, well the Iranian nuclear crisis and the future of the NPT of course, the political evolution of Russia and China, our own domestic budgetary situation of course, EU politics and European defense and security policy, and finally, the NATO context and missile defense plans in Europe.

And finally I will leave you with a last line which is part of a piece that was published in the Non-proliferation Review, along with ones on nuclear policies of China, the U.K., Russia, the United States. When you look at the long-term, these are the five different scenarios that I see for the French nuclear force. Continuity, a joint French-British force – that’s for beyond 2012. This is the range of possible future. A fully European deterrent would assume that we would have a federation. We’re far from that point. Deliberate disarmament – that is, suppression of at least one component -- we have two components now. And what I would call structural disarmament that is failing to finance the replacements of one of the two components, in particular the air force which is – you know, most French see the SSBN force as being the backbone and the aircraft as being as like a supplement.

I don’t think that’s the case, but at least you could decide well we’re not going to plan on a replacement for the airborne component, so that’s a form of structural disarmament. But hey, if I had to place my money on one of the five, I would say – for good or bad – I would say that the likeliest future at this point in time is the first scenario; that is, continuity. Thank you.
MR. SAGAN: Thank you very much. Doctor Li.

LI BIN: I’m going to talk about my observations about Chinese nuclear strategy. The reason I’m going to talk about this is because we have problems in our standing Chinese nuclear strategy. The first problem is that some Western scholars misunderstood the research on Chinese nuclear strategy by the Chinese scholars. I will explain that later. The second problem is that always, there are some predictions about Chinese nuclear development. I’ve always heard that people say China will develop 200 or 400 – (inaudible) – nuclear warhead in the next five years, and then after the next five years – no, it’s not true. The next five years, China will have 1,000 or something. But that never happened, so we need to answer why. The third problem is that some people always try to challenge no first use commitment. They always try to redefine that. This is bad. I will explain why.

I want to identify several problems in our standing Chinese nuclear strategy. The first problem terminology cause problems. Chinese nuclear deterrence is translated into weisu (ph) in Chinese. Unfortunately, weisu in Chinese does not mean deterrence. (Laughter.) Weisu means coercion. It means to force someone to yield to you. That is what weisu (ph) means. So in China, we always say – (inaudible) – or counter-deterrence, but actually it does not mean counter-deterrence. It means counter-coercion. That is the real meaning of Chinese nuclear strategy I will explain later.

In the last several decades, we were taught that the deterrence theory is the best theory about nuclear weapons, so I receive – (inaudible) – training. And there, I believe that minimum nuclear deterrence should be the strategy of China, but now I believe I’m wrong – I was wrong. So, I believe that China’s nuclear strategy is counter-coercion.

So what is the difference between minimum deterrence and counter-coercion? Deterrence – the theory of deterrence – is based on rational choice. You make your enemy to understand that their attack would cause retaliation, so they would stop. But the theory for counter-coercion is paper tiger theory – Mao Zedong’s paper tiger theory. That is the same as the nuclear taboo theory in the West. That is, no country would really use nuclear weapons. So for deterrence theory, nuclear attack is the number one threat, but for the counter-coercing theory, the number one threat is nuclear coercion, not nuclear attack.

So for deterrence, we need some nuclear weapons that – the number we need should meet the – (inaudible) – criteria to generate an acceptable damage. But if we’re on counter-coercion, the most important thing is that you have the capability. It doesn’t matter how many nuclear weapons you have. For deterrence you want constant alert, but for counter-coercion, you do not need that. So, there are some more differences between deterrence and coercion. For deterrence, if deterrence fails, then a nuclear attack comes, but if your counter-coercion strategy fails, then that just means that your rival become more aggressive. That’s it.
So the consequences of the failure of deterrence is very serious, but for counter-coercion, that’s bad, but not as serious as deterrence. So, to respond to the failure of nuclear deterrence, the only option is to launch nuclear retaliation. But for counter-coercion, you just need to resist a more aggressive diplomatic or combination of actions.

So now, let me summarize China’s nuclear strategy. This is not a declared Chinese policy. This is my observation. First, China has a small number of nuclear weapons. I have evidence to support this. China has very few types of nuclear weapons. I have evidence to support this. I also believe that China has a strategy of rolling deployment. That means that the deployment stops when the technology is mature. That is so different from other countries. For the United States, the deployment begins when the technology is getting mature. In my country, the deployment stops when the technology is getting mature. So this is a very vital difference, but I do not have evidence to support this. I will see, if we can find the counter-evidence then I am wrong.

The Chinese nuclear weapons have always put off alert – that is the warheads are kept separately from the missiles. China has evidence for that. The last point is that China has a late retaliation launch strategy. That is China launch retaliation one week after we receive nuclear attack. I have evidence for this. So this is China’s nuclear strategy.

MR. SAGAN: You’re within time.

DR. LI: I will explain a little bit about no first use. For me, the only possible force use I can imagine is last resort. I do not quite believe that countries can use nuclear weapons in other situations. So, for me, no first use is much more credible than forced use. Always, some scholars ask me or ask Chinese colleagues – they say no first use is not credible. But now, I feel that the forced use – they said no first use is incredible. No, my feeling is that forced use is incredible. So, any attempt to define the boundary of no first use would weaken the nuclear taboo. It’s not good to say this define the boundary of no first use. That’s not good.

So, for these reasons, I could say that China just commits a common norm. For other countries, they do not commit no first use. They have to follow that, given they do not commit a no first use. So they may expect some more coercive power. That does not have the national security. I may want to skip this.

I want to talk a little bit about China’s nuclear future. I believe that the Chinese nuclear policy is still on the same track. Maybe there are some minor changes. The first change is that China may develop a few more ICBMs, and China may develop a few submarine launch – (inaudible). I’m not so sure for the second part. The Chinese nuclear weapons will still be off alert but if the United States or some other countries keep tracking Chinese mobile missiles, China might feel uncomfortable. So, there are some inactive factors that may drive China to reconsider its nuclear strategy. I do not want to read that one by one, but you can see –
My conclusion is that China’s nuclear philosophy and its strategy is unique among that five nuclear weapon states. China’s nuclear future is still on the same track. We do not have to worry about that much, but we should know that China is facing challenges.

MR. SAGAN: Thank you very much, Dr. Li. (Applause.) Now we have Harald Mueller from Frankfurt Peace Research Institute. Harald.

HARALD MUELLER: Thank you, Scott, and thanks to the convenors for allowing me to speak on this distinguished panel. I feel greatly honored, but at the same time bewildered, because I’m sitting as the citizen of a non-nuclear weapons state together with three people who in one or the other way have to defend the nuclear weapon policies of their countries, and I was thinking what sort of strategic doctrine armament plans and the rest shall I defend. I was wondering whether the convenors had in mind a bomb in the basement somewhere in Berlin, but I can assure you there is none, and because there is none, I have no PowerPoint presentation because I have nothing to show. Now if you talk about the nuclear weapon developments and doctrines of the three smaller nuclear weapon states, I think it is impossible to discuss this completely out of context with what the two big nuclear weapon states are doing. And from time to time, I will come back to this connection.

Now, before I start my comments, let me just categorically state that I’m convinced that what the nuclear weapon states are doing has an impact of how non-nuclear weapon states think about nuclear weapons. That nuclear weapons activities by the nuclear weapon states have no impact whatsoever because all these proliferators think only in regional terms is a red herring, and I’m quite willing to give you about 100 references to prove it. But let me just, in abstract terms, state the four ways in which this influence takes place. First of all, nuclear weapon states are in a very significant way shaping the security environment in which non-nuclear weapon states have to exist and to make their military plans. Secondly, the continuing possession of nuclear weapons projects the military and political utility of nuclear weapons. Third, the maintaining of nuclear weapons shows them as symbols of status. And fourth, because all of this runs counter to Article VI of the NPT, the non-proliferation norm as a threshold over which proliferators have to jump is seriously weakened.

Now, if you look at doctrines of developments and doctrines of statements of NATO’s three nuclear weapon states, the U.S. included, I would just boldly put forward that these are open invitations for other countries to follow suit. In the U.S. draft Joint Nuclear Doctrine of March ’05 that mysteriously appeared and disappeared on the internet three particular striking rationales for nuclear weapons used, inter alia, were announced, I quote, “to counter overwhelming adversary conventional forces for rapid and favorable war termination on U.S. terms, to ensure success of U.S. and multinational operations.” Now this envisages a considerable conventionalization of nuclear weapons and implies a strong threat to all those at uneasy terms with the United States. And in many ways, this trend to conventionalize why one is reducing and allegedly deemphasizing applies to our two European partners as well.
We know President Chirac’s famous statement of January ’06. The president said that the vital interests of France are safeguarded by nuclear deterrence including, and I quote, “safeguarding our strategic supplies.” Now if you translate that into everybody’s language, for a Persian Gulf adherent, it means either you supply the gasoline for my Citroen or I might be willing to nuke you – which is not a very nice message.

Prime Minister Blair, in his answers to questions from Parliament, recently also used the term “vital interest”, which is, of course, a very vague term under which you can fill almost everything and anything, unless it’s denied, so that it’s really a sort of bad thing to say if you want to dissuade other folks from going forward on the nuclear road. But there’s even something better in the speech Prime Minister Blair gave in December 2006 to the House of Commons in justifying the decision to go forward with renewing the British nuclear deterrent. It reads like that. “Our independent nuclear deterrent is the ultimate insurance when the one certain thing about our world today is its uncertainty.” Now, since the future is always uncertain – if it is not, we call it the past – since the future is always uncertain, and uncertain for everybody, this justification for nuclear weapons also applies to everybody, and it is, again, an open invitation to follow suit. And I have to say after the most beautiful speech of the foreign secretary at lunchtime, I could not square the speech with this sort of statement.

Now, NATO’s policy on nuclear weapons also provides valid arguments for countries considering nuclear proliferation. The Alliance says that the use of nuclear weapons is extremely remote, but of course, it keeps the option of using them first. In the Alliance’s Strategic Concept of 1999, it reads “to protect peace and to prevent war of any kind of coercion, the Alliance will maintain for the foreseeable future an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces spaced in Europe and kept up to date when necessary. The Alliance’s conventional forces alone cannot ensure credible deterrence. Nuclear weapons make a unique contribution in rendering the risk of aggression against the Alliance incalculable and unacceptable. Thus they remain essential to preserve peace.”

What does this sermon tell anybody who does not have nuclear weapons, and might be in a situation where it does not spend 75% of the world military expenditure and has no real enemy against which nuclear weapons are of real use. What does it tell?

Now, I think that neither Russian nor Chinese nuclear policies are completely explainable without a look at U.S. strategic developments. It appears to me that they mainly react to perceived threats, potential threats emerging from the conventional superiority of the U.S., the doctrine of integrated convention, and nuclear long-range attack forces, that is, “prompt global strike”, the emerging missile defense system, and the fear that the U.S. might also place weapons into space. And I wonder whether you can really put a cap on their weapons development until this particular fear is somehow mitigated.

Let me talk about Germany in that context. In many ways we are now sitting on the fence, watching with concern and a certain helplessness what our nuclear armed allies
are doing. It was quite different during the Cold War when the extended deterrence guarantee was part and parcel of our security, but after the end of the Cold War, things have changed profoundly. German governments have made three efforts since 1990 to get something moving. First, there was a proposal to install a nuclear arms register made in 1994. Second, there was the suggestion to move to a non-first use policy made in 1999 and, third, an invitation to reconsider the deployment of nuclear weapons on European territory was made in 2005. It was each time rebuffed and after that German governments went under the table and shut up.

Now if you ask today any German politician from the conservatives to the greens what the nuclear weapons of our French or British allies are for the most likely response is something like, this way they feel better, which is not really a strategic rationale, but it’s widely believed that these weapons are without a strategic rationale, but, of course, we as Germans would never confront them up front because they are old friends and close allies.

It is interesting to look at the new German white book on defense which was published in December 2006 after a 12 year effort to get a new one. In this, you have a sort of lackluster repetition of an endorsement of NATO’s nuclear strategy combined with a commitment to work for complete nuclear disarmament, which for a German defense white book is unheard of, and a deafening silence about the role of the German air force in the whole NATO nuclear posture, even though some German aircraft are still tasked to carry nuclear weapons in case of a war where NATO would employ them.

So all that points to a very strong de-emphasis of nuclear weapons in German defense doctrine; and if today Washington would approach Berlin and suggest that these weapons would be withdrawn from German soil, I don’t see any strong resistance to such a suggestion. People with a stake in these nuclear weapons on German soil are very, very few. It’s a few people who like to sit in NATO’s nuclear planning group with nuclear weapons in Germany because they believe it gives them a bit more impact, and it’s a few pundits in the air force, but not many because the air force, as a whole, would rather want to get rid of this mission and to turn the aircraft to more mundane things where they are really needed. According to public opinion polls, the vast majority of the population is against these weapons but doesn’t know that they exist.

The dilemma between the German desire for renewing the disarmament process and the German desire to live in harmony with the United States, France, and Great Britain appears insoluble as long as our three nuclear-armed allies don’t turn around their policies. Now let me just conclude with what I believe is a bold proposal which has no chance of acceptance, but I make it anyway.

NATO is the hugest agglomeration of military power the world has ever seen and I see no rationale for nuclear weapons, which NATO really has strategically. I think, therefore, that NATO’s three nuclear weapon states, with the support of their non-nuclear allies, should offer complete nuclear disarmament achieved by discrete steps within 30 years, provided all nuclear possessors join the process.
It would be a parallel negotiation track, one – among the possessors of nuclear weapons – would deal with the benchmarks for the process and with mutual verification, and a multilateral one which would deal with multilateral verification, as far as it is applicable, and with enforcement. NATO would offer the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from NATO non-nuclear weapons states and a no first-use doctrine for the interim. NATO led by the United States would offer to all those joining the new treaty the inclusion in a global missile defense network with a full sharing of technology. If the offer is taken up by others, security will improve for everybody. If not, NATO cannot be blamed for the lack of nuclear disarmament and this, at least, would be something new. Thank you.

MR. SAGAN: Thank you very much, Harald. And finally we have Hugh Powell from the Foreign Commonwealth office who will, in his speech, answer all the questions that Foreign Secretary Beckett left unanswered in her lunch address.

HUGH POWELL: I can’t help feeling I’m receiving a bit of a hospital pass today. It’s only three months since the U.K. government set out detailed views on all this in a white paper, which I suspect many of you have seen, and it’s barely an hour since my own foreign secretary updated you all on the U.K. position. Furthermore, I have to follow three distinguished speakers all of whom are not constrained in the way that I am as a serving government official. So to coin a Greenspan phrase, I guess I should warn you, if I turn out to say anything particularly new let alone clear, you’ve probably misunderstood what I’ve said – (laughter).

Let me deal briefly with the specific exam questions. First, how is U.K. nuclear doctrine developing in response to changing international threats? It rather depends on what is really meant by the confused and abused word doctrine. But the simple answer is that the rationale for maintaining a U.K. nuclear deterrent has evolved. It is an insurance against serious future risks, not a response to a direct current threat that combines intent with capability and those risks revolve around the potential of and from new nuclear weapons states as much as from existing ones. The principles, however, governing U.K. nuclear deterrence are unchanged, which is unsurprising because there is nothing in this changing profile of international threats, that might require us to do anything other than to be able to threaten the minimum amount of damage required to deter nuclear blackmail or aggression by others.

I won’t go through the five enduring U.K. principles, which you either know or can easily read in our white paper, but let me make two specific points. First, deterring state-sponsored terrorism is not a change in U.K. doctrine. We’re deterring states, not non-state actors. We are simply making clear that there is no fundamental difference between types of delivery platform. Arming a sponsored terrorist group has the same effect and carries the same responsibility as firing a ballistic missile.

Second, clarifying, let alone changing, doctrine is rarely worth the hassle. We took the simple step of dropping the term, sub-strategic, to make clear that the threshold
for any use of U.K. nuclear weapons, whatever the yield, is strategic and hence extremely high. And we maintain a posture of only one submarine on patrol allows us to maintain a minimum number of warheads. There is no point in having a deterrent unless it is credible; to be credible, it needs to be survivable. We choose to achieve that through a comparatively undetectable, and so invulnerable, platform, rather than through higher numbers and readiness levels with different platforms. And we think that is a, if not the most disarmament-friendly posture, not least because we have shown it is compatible with further cuts in warhead numbers.

There is, however, one development rather than change worth noting. Forensics – the capability to identify precisely the source of a nuclear attack – is becoming an increasingly important element and overall posture. The threat of retaliation can only be credible and hence deter if others know we can be confident of demonstrating who is responsible for the attack.

Is this U.K. policy in compliance with our NPT commitments? Of course it is. I won’t bore you by running through the legal arguments and compliance with Article VI and the laws of armed conflict for that matter or by name checking what we are doing on those of the 13 steps relevant to the U.K. Again, you can read all about it in our White Paper. Suffice it to say that the U.K. continues to make progress on disarmament, that maintaining our deterrent is compatible with such progress, and that my foreign secretary’s speech has, I hope, injected into a debate that too often stagnates in the realm of principles, some much needed Nike doctrine – what really makes a difference with disarmament is just doing it.

However, the compatibility of having a deterrent with disarmament obligations does bring me onto the one debating point I want to make. As a question for today, the title of this panel presents a patently false choice. As the U.K. and others have shown, we can both deter and make progress on disarmament. But at some point in the future, disarmament will not be able to progress further without undermining effective deterrence. And I suspect the tipping point is when warhead numbers have reached the absolute minimum required to be a credible disincentive against potential aggressors.

As Michael Quinlan and others have argued, getting to no nuclear weapons is fundamentally different to getting to only a modest amount or de-emphasizing them; not least because of the need to manage the growing incentive for others to acquire them as the relative impact of entry into the nuclear weapons market increases. So getting beyond minimum deterrence and onto zero will require a step change in the non-proliferation regime too. Indeed, non-proliferation and disarmament will become technically, not just politically, linked together, and near the zero point we’ll reach a singularity when disarmament, deterrence, and non-proliferation, in the sense of managing latent breakout abilities, will become essentially the same thing. So I’d argue that the title of this panel supports one of the key points my foreign secretary was making – to get to the deterrence or disarmament point we need to understand in advance the political and technical science of non-proliferation regimes at a subatomic level. Hence the importance of the study, I would argue, being launched by the IISS.
MR. SAGAN: Thank you very much. I am known as being a deterrent pessimist, and yet my threat to take off my shoe and pound it at the table if you went over 12 minutes was a successful threat today, so I will have to re-evaluate my sense of what is a credible threat. I’d like to ask all of you, if you have a question, please to raise your hand so that you don’t have to stand in a long line and I’ll have a microphone sent over to you. If you could get to the gentleman on the right here first? And please identify yourself and your affiliation, to whom you are addressing the question, and please do ask a question. If you make a long statement and say, isn’t that right, question mark; that does not count as a question. Please.

Q: Okay, my name is Mike Yahiliga (ph); I work for the W assembly in Paris, and I’d like to put a question to Mr. Tertrais. It’s about his remarks on a possible European dimension of French nuclear weapons. And I would like him to elaborate a little bit on this, how could this – how could this actually look like, a more European dimension, and is it going to happen within ESDP, which so far does not include deterrence and mutual defense? Is it about sharing of cost, and thus do you expect that other European nations are willing to share the cost for the French nuclear weapons? Or is it about information sharing which, as far as I know, if it happens today it’s only within NATO context. Thank you very much.

MR. TERTRAIS: Answer?

MR. SAGAN: Please.

MR. TERTRAIS: Okay, given the current state of the European integration process, I think it’s absolutely excluded that we’re talking about cost sharing, absolutely excluded. Likewise, I don’t think it could happen in an ESDP form – European Security and Defense Policy for those of you who are not familiar with EU-speak – I don’t think it will happen in a formal EU context because managing such sensitive issues at 27 is very difficult. I think it would happen only with interested countries. It would be an informal process. In the current institutional framework there are only two things that I think are really likely or possible.

One, is for the French and perhaps the Brits, and perhaps simultaneously, and perhaps in a coordinated way, to say more explicitly and more clearly that their nuclear forces are also there to protect the common interest of the European Union. That can be done in a – I think that politically there is no major obstacle to say – it is just about agreeing on the wording, the phrasing. I think this is possible. If not, it’s possible for the French to say it unilaterally; it would not be a problem. I think it would be better if it was the French and the Brits together, but there is no obstacle for saying it.

The second thing, which I think is possible, is to have some form of consultations on nuclear policies -- not on nuclear use -- consultations on nuclear policies involving those EU countries who are interested in participating in such talks. I don’t think the ambitions for Europeanization of nuclear deterrence should be set too high.
MR. SAGAN: There is a woman with a green jacket on raising her hand in the back.

Q: Thank you very much. My name is Patricia Lewis, I’m the director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, and I’d like to thank all the panelists for all their excellent contributions today. In terms of deterrence, I think the issue is about use and credible use. Something can only deter if you are prepared to use it, which is why I think we’re getting to the point now where we’re interested in nuclear disarmament because nuclear deterrence is becoming almost unthinkable – when, how could they ever be used? And therefore conventional deterrence, I think, is probably where we’re heading.

My question is, what do the panelists think of the concept that was outlined in the WMD commission, the Blix Commission report, which was launched a year ago outlawing nuclear weapons in the same way as chemical and biological weapons have been outlawed? This is a concept that gets us beyond the idea of elimination and allows us a process of getting down towards zero while not actually finally reaching zero until one does reach zero, if you see what I mean. So a bit like we have done with chemical weapons and biological weapons, we have a treaty where there are states that join them and then there are states that haven’t yet, and so it’s a whole idea of approaching zero from the concept of outlaw. Thank you.

MR. SAGAN: Dr. Li, why don’t we quickly walk in this direction down through the panel to answer Patricia Lewis’ question.

MR. LI: I don’t think I really understand the question.

MR. SAGAN: There is a proposal by the Blix Commission that we should consider outlawing nuclear weapons so that any use of such a weapon would be illegal under international law and possession would also be illegal, although, correct me if I’m wrong, but it was not saying that possession would be illegal immediately, that there was a timeframe involved.

MR. LI: That is – China doesn’t not have any problem to take that idea. I just explained that the philosophy of Chinese – the Chinese nuclear philosophy is that nuclear weapons are not usable weapons; nuclear weapons are psychological weapons. If nuclear weapons – if the international society bans the use of nuclear weapons, that is something China very much welcomes. So I support that; I believe that my Chinese colleagues would support that.

MR. MUELLER: I have difficulties with the idea to start with that. I really like my own idea of taking a political initiative, making a political commitment, which even includes a timeline. I like that better because, I mean, if you put that through the – immediately to the lawyers, I think it goes on forever without a result. If you make a political commitment and then discuss a benchmark and the first steps you are taking,
you might have a better chance. And of course outlawing will then happen sometime
down the road, but not to start with.

MR. POWELL: Like others, I’m not particularly familiar with the particular
proposal. What I would say is I can’t imagine the U.K. would ever feel comfortable with
relying on a purely legal framework delivering the conditions necessary for us to have
confidence in abolition. I wouldn’t exclude outlawing being part of running a zero-
regime once you got there.

MR. TERTRAIS: I would just add one thing – well, first of all, I think in the
longer run under certain circumstances, it might be thinkable to begin thinking about
outlawing first-use. Okay, I’m very prudent on that. But most importantly, I think the
argument made by the WMD Commission can be turned on its head because you can get
a credible case that we got rid of chemical and biological weapons, at least, the P5 got rid
of them and others precisely because they have nuclear weapons. I can guarantee you
that in the case of France that was very deliberate. We can get rid of bios and chems
because we are keeping nuclear weapons. They are not in the same category and we can
deter aggression. We cannot respond, we could not be able, we would not be able to
respond in kind anymore, but hopefully we have nuclear weapons for deterrence. So I
think the argument can turned on its head.

MR. SAGAN: Please, right here in the front.

Q: This for the three nuclear arsenals represented; could you each give me –

MR. SAGAN: Please identify yourself –

Q: Howard Moreland –

MR. SAGAN: Oh yeah, sure. There you are.

Q: Could you each give me an example – I’m assuming that each one of your
arsenals is at least partially targeted on Russia. Could you give me a place in Russia that
you plan to destroy with nuclear weapons, just an example of a nuclear target in Russia
for your arsenal?

MR. SAGAN: Since he didn’t get an answer to his question this morning, he is
going to ask it again and then you know have a chance to answer, please.

MR. LI: For China, we do not have to target any specific city or military target. I
just explained that nuclear weapons are about their inference rather than the military
effect. So for us, nuclear weapons just are used to counter the influence of paper tiger.
It’s not a military use of our weapons.
MR. SAGAN: Doctor Li, are you claiming that, to the best of your knowledge, the Chinese military has not picked out urban-industrial areas in Japan, and/or the United States, and/or Russia that are aim points for weapons?

MR. LI: I believe that Japan is not in the targeting list. I’m not so sure of Russia or United States.

MR. TERTRAIS: Wait a minute, that is for the U.K. and France then, no?

MR. POWELL: Shall I get first – (unintelligible).

MR. SAGAN: It sounds like you are the targets and you have to answer the next question then.

MR. POWELL: I was just toying in my own mind with the difference between “I cannot answer that question” and “I will not answer that question.” Take your pick, but I cannot – I don’t believe for a second you expected me as a representative of the government to answer a question on specific targeting.

MR. TERTRAIS: Well, I could tell you but I would have to kill you all – (laughter). More seriously, I think, it’s the case for Western states that the whole notion of targeting and nuclear plans is very different from what it was 10 or 15 years ago, because there are technical possibilities which allow for the development of targeting plans in a very different way than it was the case in the past.

It has been publicly said by the five that their nuclear weapons are not targeted. That is, they don’t need to have coordinates permanently inserted into the software, which is either in the bomb or in the missile. So by definition, if that statement is true, no nuclear weapon is targeted either on Russia or on any other state. But I think, again, the most important point is that because of the development of software techniques and better intelligence, et cetera, the whole idea of how you construct a possible strike plan is very different from what it was during the Cold War.

MR. SAGAN: Gentleman right here, yes.

Q: James Acton (sp) from King’s College, London. In her speech today, the British foreign secretary said that if it becomes useful for the United Kingdom to take part in multilateral disarmament negotiations with the United States and Russia, then the U.K. will do so.

I’d like to ask the three members of the panel from nuclear weapons states whether they would think it was useful if multilateral negotiations got restarted and Russia and the United States were willing to negotiate reductions, for their country to take part in the next round of reductions, or whether they think it would be necessary to have a purely bilateral agreement between Russia and the U.S. and then at some later stage the other three states entering.
MR. SAGAN: I’m going to start with you Bruno and then go around.

MR. TERTRAIS: Yeah, it’s an interesting question. I don’t think the idea of multilateral negotiations, per se, makes any sense at all. The reason why bilateral negotiations made sense is that American and Soviet weapons targeted each other because of counterforce doctrines and because there was, clearly, a dynamic process through which, you know, the strike plans of one country took into account the forces of the other countries. Now for that reason, I don’t think it would make any sense at all to have multilateral negotiations. By the way, assuming we had P5 negotiations, why would that be P5 negotiations and not, you know, and not N7, N8, or N9. Do you think the P5 would agree to leave out the forces of – China and Russia would agree leave out forces of, you know, the nuclear forces of India and Pakistan for instance? I don’t think they would.

That being said, if you assume that there is a resumption of the bilateral nuclear arms reduction process, not for strategic reasons, but for political reasons, they may – there would come a point, I guess, where the other states – at least my country, I think, would have to take into account the fact that they have reduced to say, hundreds, for instance. If they come down to hundreds, there is a psychological effect that would imply that even though there is no direct relationship between the level of the French arsenal and the level of the others, they would have to take that into account because that would mean there is a political transformation, a complete transformation of the equation. So my guess is that they would take it into account, but starting multilateral negotiations now would be meaningless for the reason that I indicated earlier.

MR. POWELL: I pretty much – well, I agree with much of that. I mean, first of all, let’s try and be clear about what my foreign secretary was saying. I was trying to find the – whether in this speech or whether it was a previous speech, but we have previously been clear that what that phrase means is the point where the numbers, especially of the bigger arsenals, have come down to somewhere in the same general ballpark. So, in other words, Russia and the United States would have to come a hell of a long way down from where they currently are for our less than 1 percent to become a factor in any further process in mutual reductions.

Bruno is, of course, right that if you run a minimum deterrent, it is not directly related to the size – a minimum deterrent without a counterforce strategy, is not in anyway directly related to the size of other people’s arsenals. That’s true; but at some point, as you come down towards some minimal deterrence and you’re trying to push on beyond that towards a regime that leads towards zero, it seems to me inevitable that, you know, the numbers that others have are a factor and need to be – and again, I mean, let’s not get hung up on the word negotiation. Negotiation tends to mean explicitly a treaty with, sort of, fixed accountancy rules and so on. I mean, I think the foreign secretary deliberately chose a broad form of words to say, to try and capture the idea of some mutual process, but that leaves quite a lot of flexibility as to quite how it might be done.
MR. SAGAN: Dr. Li.

MR. LI: I am the first.

MR. SAGAN: We’re set then, sorry.

Q: Thank you. Mark Fitzpatrick from the International Institute for Strategic Studies. I, first of all, have to thank you for the second free advertisement for our institute. I know we’re not the only institute focusing on questions coming out of the op-ed in the Wall Street Journal from January.

My question is for Bruno, intrigued by your reference to France’s defense commitments to Gulf states and the implications of an extended nuclear deterrence possibly. I’m wondering if there is a perception in the Gulf states, with whom France has these commitments, that they are in any way under a nuclear umbrella and if that would be a useful strategy for giving them a reason not to respond to an Iranian nuclear capability with their own development of weapons capability.

MR. TERTRAIS: Okay, France has defense agreements or security agreements with three states of the Gulf region. That is Qatar, Kuwait, and the Emirates. They’re all different. Some of them, you know – perhaps one of them is more stringent or more – much more of a defense commitment than the others, but publicly very little is said.

I think in some case French authorities have referred it specifically to defense commitment in case of aggression, but the contents of the agreements is not public so the French authorities remain very fuzzy because the two parties, actually, France and the states concerned do not actually have an interest in making things public.

That being said, there has never been any public reference to a, quote, “nuclear umbrella,” unquote, but I would be very surprised if these countries have not asked the French authorities in private how they would react to a possible nuclear blackmail or even nuclear aggression by Iran on them. That is the way I would phrase it. I would be very surprised if that issue of “what would happen if Iran went nuclear and posed us problems,” I would be very surprised if that question had not been raised. And I would be very surprised if the French had given a very clear reply or answer to the question – (laughter).

MR. SAGAN: Please, we have a gentleman in the back just in front of camera, yes.

Q: William Walker from Saint Andrews University. I would like to, just two brief comments, one is, and questions behind them too –

MR. SAGAN: That is good –
Q: I don’t think you should underestimate the amount of difference there is between the British and the French positions. And this goes really into domestic politics where in U.K. in domestic politics, the possession of nuclear weapons has always been controversial and with – particularly it split the Labor Party over many, many years. And I would actually see Margaret Beckett’s statement at lunch today as being part of, you know, this constant effort to try and get some kind of position between the possession of nuclear weapons and commitment to disarmament, that sort of ongoing debate within the Labor Party.

Whereas in France it seems to me that possession of nuclear weapons has become so ingrained in the national identity that the questions of disarmament simply aren’t on the agenda. And, in fact, in the NPT context, the U.K. is, in fact, recently very strongly advocated a continuing commitment to Article VI and to the 13 steps and so on whereas France has actually gone in the completely opposite direction, has really resisted any strengthening of language on that. And I suggest to you Bruno that, in fact, the French foreign minister could never have given the speech that Margaret Beckett did in these halls today.

My second thing is really on the U.K. again –

MR. SAGAN: Isn’t that right, Bruno, question mark? (Laughter.)

MR. TERTRAIS: Yes.

MR. SAGAN: Just make sure we have the ground rules straight.

Q: And may I say also, I think, within the European Union, this difference between France and Britain is actually very problematic in terms of the diplomatic stance of the European Union. My second point, I just want to state that I find the Trident replacement decision unstable. I don’t believe it has enough oomph behind it. I agree with Harold the strategic rationale was extremely weak and within the Ministry of Defense there are people who, in fact, although they couldn’t come forward and say so, think this is daft, you know, why are we spending all this money on this when, in fact, we’re off in Iraq and our defense budgets are strained and all the rest of it. So I don’t, from that point of view I don’t regard it as particularly stable.

On the other side, I mean, coming from Scotland I’m bound to say this as you may know, the entire U.K. deterrent deployed in Scotland, there aren’t any British nuclear weapons in England any longer and the present trends continued, I think it is very unlikely that a new Trident system could be deployed in Scotland. Thank you very much.

MR. SAGAN: Isn’t that correct, Mr. Powell? (Laughter.)

MR. POWELL: No.
MR. SAGAN: Please, Bruno and then Hugh.

MR. TERTRAIS: No, I have – no, I think you’re right on the mark, although some of my French government colleagues would say that the Brits are just much better at communication whereas on substance, in fact, the positions of the two countries are fairly similar; but, you know, you can view things differently. But William you’re absolutely right, in fact, it’s not the French style to give a speech like that and you’re absolutely correct to say that the domestic political cultures of the two countries are radically different. Otherwise, you know, I’d love to see a French-Scottish joint nuclear force – (laughter) – sounds fun. You know if, or if Britain seceded -- you know, I’m from Brittany partly -- Brittany is seceded, you know, we could have a Celtic nuclear force. That would sound right.

MR. SAGAN: The Bonny Prince Charlie is the name of the first submarine.

MR. POWELL: Well, this is the point where you probably wish you had an academic up here, not a government official, I mean, you can’t seriously expect me to comment on either labor party politics or the state of the union. (Chuckles.) And if I can’t comment on those two, I’m not sure how I can answer your second point/question.

MR. SAGAN: But what if we were in the commonwealth office, and somebody said, you know this is really daft. What is the real rationale – can you repeat the rationale for having these weapons today? How would you respond to that?

MR. POWELL: The way I did in my opening remarks and the way that the prime minister sold it to Parliament. I mean it is, today, primarily an insurance against future risk. Clearly, as of today, there is no country that we judge that has a combination of intent with capability. There are those we judge have intent and are trying to develop capability. There are those with capability whose intent might change.

MR. TERTRAIS: Can I add something, Scott?

MR. SAGAN: Please.

MR. TERTRAIS: I think Michael Quinlan who has been quoted only once today said something very true about the U.K., which could be true for France. Look, he said once if the U.K. didn’t have nuclear weapons today, you would probably not embark on a nuclear program today. That is very true I think, at least for France. Now that we have done this considerable investment, does the appraised operating cost – is it worthwhile keeping them, or much better to give them up? I mean you have to factor that in, the fact that there’s a lot of sunk cost in nuclear programs.

So, is it wise to keep them? You know, you see how much it costs and again, if France didn’t have nuclear weapons today, it would not build them, but now that we have them, I think they see it as we might as well keep them because – and I think this rationale has been a constant since the beginning of the French program – it is hard for
the French to imagine that you can have an active, independent foreign policy with significant conventional power projection abilities without making sure that at the end of the day, whatever happens, your territory and your utmost interests are covered in ways that currently we can’t imagine being other means than nuclear weapons. Pretty long and convoluted sentence, but I think you got the gist of it, so –

MR. SAGAN: Harald, did you have a comment on this?

MR. MUELLER: I think these two responses by my peers from the European Union show exactly the problem. I mean, I hear that through German ears and say, well there we are – nice to have. But what about Egyptian ears, South African ears, Saudi Arabian ears, or Brazilian ears, or for that matter Iranian or Syrian ears? What message are you giving, and what do you do to the non-proliferation regime by conveying this message day by day? What are you doing? It’s nice for you to argue so towards your public, but there are other people who have stopped to be illiterate.

MR. POWELL: Sorry, can I come back on this now?

MR. SAGAN: Yes.

MR. POWELL: I let it run the first time, but this hypocrisy argument is deeply hackneyed. The answer is we dealt with this in the NPT 40 years ago. Of course, nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence – if you believe in nuclear deterrence – you have to admit that it has potential utility for others. That’s why we struck the bargain that we did in 19 – whatever it was – ’68.

And the bargain was that people drew, collectively, a line. Those who had it could keep it on the basis that they moved towards getting rid of them, and the other side of the bargain was those who didn’t have it but might want it agreed not to get it. The NPT is the answer to this constant refrain on our being hypocritical.

MR. TERTRAIS: Can I add something, too? That’s a classic disagreement that I have with Harald, but this idea that the nuclear postures of the P5 are a key to the proliferation dynamics I don’t think captures – and I have evidence for that too, as you would say. It’s an idea that is not supported by facts, and the facts – let me give you just one argument that I like.

You know, we had very significant arms reductions – unilateral, bilateral, non-proliferation tools reinforce, et cetera, between, say ’87 and ’96. Now perhaps it had some impact on the decisions by Pretoria, Kiev, Brasilia and others at that time. But what I know and what matters from my point of view at least is that it had no impact whatsoever on the proliferation dynamics of India, Pakistan, Israel, Iran, Iraq, the DPRK and Libya. So, even assuming that the argument according to which the disarmament process at that time had an impact on South Africa and the ex-Soviet Union states and on Brazil – Argentina is a different matter, Argentina never had a serious nuclear program.
But what matters is that it didn’t have an impact on all the others who did exactly that. While we were going this way, they went that way.

So I’m not convinced at all that there is credible evidence to say that our nuclear postures are key to – you know, maybe they are a factor among many – understand nuclear proliferation dynamics. And by the way, if we were going, for instance, to a no first use posture, or you know, some allies would actually – that could create a proliferation risk. You know, there is a very important argument – message – in the NPT conferences: a principle of undiminished security for all. Well, a principle of no first use could very well actually worsen the proliferation situation.

I don’t know how, for instance, Japan would react to a no first use commitment by the United States. Maybe Japan would consider that it’s a weakening of the U.S. security guarantee. I mean, if we were to take steps that affect security guarantees, for instance, it could have an adverse impact on the nuclear proliferation. So we just guard caution, all of us, against making too simple argumentations that are rarely substantiated by facts.

MR. SAGAN: Now we are getting into what in diplomatic parlance is a frank discussion, which is good. So I’m going to turn it to let Dr. Li and Harald Mueller comment on this question as well.

MR. LI: Thank you. I have a comment. I never understand the logic why no first use would hurt a positive assurance to other countries nuclear – (inaudible). No first use is no first use. No first use is not to use nuclear weapons first. If you provide nuclear arms – (inaudible) – to any other countries, you – (inaudible) – do that if your ally receive a nuclear attack. I never understand why these two things are linked to each other.

MR. SAGAN: Because in the United States, people confuse two different kinds of extended deterrence: the argument that you use nuclear weapons to stop a conventional attack against your ally, and they use nuclear weapons to respond to a nuclear attack against your ally. People conflate the two, and that’s why that confuses –

MR. LI: Right, right. If you do not use the term extended deterrence – you just say no first use – that’s fine. That’s no – (inaudible) – between the two.

MR. MUELLER: All right. Statistics tell you that of the 35 states that ever seriously considered going nuclear, most started their programs in eras of high-growth armament race, and most terminated them – most of those who terminated them, terminated them in eras of disarmament; that is in the SALT period and then after 1987. That’s the first thing.

Secondly, you just cannot discuss the Indian nuclear program without a relation to the nuclear weapons policies of particularly the United States and China. I mean, look at the record. Read George Perkovich’s book again and you have it. And Pakistan, of course, then was a dependence of India.
And thirdly if you look at North Korea, Libya and Iran, all three countries went nuclear or went on the road to nuclear weapons under particular threat situations in which one or more nuclear weapon states were involved. So, I mean, to say there’s no relation I found strongly against the evidence.

MR. SAGAN: In the very back with the blue shirt. Yes, sir. Is that you, John?

Q: Hi, Scott. It is John. John Wolfsthal of CSIS. Thank you. We heard a couple of times already about the importance of the Wall Street Journal op-ed, and I’d be curious to get some reaction from at least the three – Harald, I think of all the countries represented up front, your country is perhaps most in sync with the ideas that were put forward by the Nunn-Schultz op-ed, et al op-ed. And I’m curious, not just for your personal reactions but to try and understand whether the op-ed has had an impact in your countries. Is it, as it is in the United States, starting to get traction and form at least the basis for a debate, or has it perhaps not penetrated yet, and if it hasn’t, why do you think that is?

MR. TERTRAIS: A classic French stance is to say that the United States are never comfortable with nuclear weapons, and that it’s a very Reagan-like concept, whereas the French see themselves as being very comfortable with the possession of nuclear weapons – that Wall Street Journal op-ed was seen – you know, if there’s a way we can get rid of them, that’s so much the better. It was seen rightly or wrongly as encapsulating the idea that the United States has fundamentally never reconciled itself with the possession of nuclear weapons. That would take us into another debate, but that’s the reaction that it triggered. Impact – no, no –

Q: (Off mike.)

MR. TERTRAIS: No, none that I see.

MR. POWELL: I can’t answer with authority on what impact it had on the British media at the time, because I simply can’t remember. In terms of policy and political discourse in London at least – I mean of course the ideas, or the propositions, in that Wall Street Journal article are much less radical in terms of our debate than they are in terms of the debate here in Washington. However, you know, the fact that you have an article signed up to by names to conjure with, like Kissinger, Schultz, Nunn, does send out a signal that things are shifting in the U.S. polity – that more might be doable with the superpower in this area. So in that sense, it was, I think, felt as, you know, a heads-up, a signal.

MR. SAGAN: Others?

MR. MUELLER: Well, it was generally received well, and the only question I have heard is why have people to go into retirement to see the light? (Laughter.)
Q: Hi, Bob Peters from National Defense University. My question is for Professor Mueller. Sir, you mentioned that the recent government statement that it was working towards complete nuclear disarmament; you mentioned how a number – how most of the people in Germany are for complete nuclear disarmament. My question, then, is why doesn’t Germany then simply recuse itself from the American nuclear umbrella? America has a number of defense relationships with number of states of which the nuclear umbrella is not a part of. It would simply be an issue on Germany’s part to remove itself from the umbrella and still be a member of NATO.

MR. MUELLER: Look, the German way is to try to be smooth with allies, and for that reason, from time to time, our government tries something, and then it gets it over its head like with the no first use attempt in 1999. And in the weighing of the disarmament drive against being a good ally and at ease with the three main Western allies, the latter horn of the dilemma usually wins, and I think that will stay so for a while. And for that reason, Germany will never be the same driver for disarmament than say Norway or Sweden or Ireland, the latter two not being allied. The alliance rationale is always a stronger argument, for better or worse.

MR. SAGAN: Right in the middle here, on that corner.

Q: Thank you, I’m Deborah Decker (ph) with Belfour Center at Harvard and I had two questions. I’m not a lawyer, but I think that lawyers can be brought into this equation to some extent to help, and I was wondering how you thought about Anne-Marie Slaughter’s suggestion – Princeton Woodrow Wilson School – on making, trying to give 1540 more power by making the possession and transfer of nuclear or fissile material among non-state actors crime against humanity, and therefore bringing in the lawyers.

And the other concept of nuclear attribution causing not one – a country to have to confront immediate attack or retaliation that way, but requiring reparations. You know, of course you have to go pretty far along to get attribution to this point where you can pinpoint where the fissile material came from, but it just struck me that we’re talking about deterrence and I was wondering if your countries had considered, to any extent, those two concepts.

MR. TERTRAIS: Well, with due respect to Anne-Marie who is a very respectable person, I think the first notion would be a degradation of the very notion of the crime against humanity – to imply that the possession of transfer is something which has not yet killed anybody would be a degradation of the notion of crime against humanity that I would be very uncomfortable with. I mean, I sympathize with that sort of way to try to find new solutions and so I have no problems with the creativity in that regard, but on that specific proposal, I think it would degrade significantly – and not in a very good way – the notion of what a crime against humanity is, because there is a risk that you enlarge the notion so much that it becomes meaningless.
MR. POWELL: Sorry, if I can respond briefly, I mean, I’m just sitting here trying to work out what exactly a lawyer’s going to do, even if you make it a crime against humanity. You know, what can they actually do about it? Are you really proposing instead – trying to get at the notion that you’re going to create a basis in international law for the use of force to respond to this? I mean that, in a sense, is doing something; I just don’t think people would accept it.

MR. SAGAN: Others.

MR. LI: In principle, China does not have a problem with this idea, but it is a little bit late for China to support this idea. For a long time, China was on the side of non-nuclear weapon states. China supported a war, ideas proposed by non-nuclear weapon states and the humanity organizations against nuclear weapons, but since 1995, China began to listen to other nuclear weapon states to learn from them and to follow them. So if you cannot persuade the other four nuclear weapon states, then China may not be that active in supporting this idea.

MR. MUELLER: I find the idea interesting. It, of course, extends the notion of crime against humanity to what lawyers call conditional intention. That is, once you hand over fissile material to a terrorist group, of course, you willingly take into account that this will be used and create havoc among a lot of people. This is, of course, completely innovative in international law and I think you need a lot of good lawyers to decide whether it makes sense. The only comment I would have is don’t overload 1540. It was difficult enough to get it. There are many people who have misgivings about the UN Security Council acting as a universal legislator, and it should not be done too often this way.

MR. SAGAN: I would just add that the whole technical and political community looking at problems of attribution or forensics also need to think very thoroughly about how to think about complicity versus negligence, because those are two very different concepts legally, and it will be tough enough, under many conditions, to be able to determine with high confidence where materials came from – to determine whether it was through complicity or negligence is going to be a bridge much further.

MR. POWELL: Can I just comment further on that? That’s true of course, but then again you have to draw the distinction between transferring fissile material and transferring a bomb. Now you can’t really transfer a bomb through negligence – it’s deliberate.

MR. SAGAN: You can have a bomb stolen through negligence.

MR. POWELL: Yeah, but pretty difficult.

MR. SAGAN: Well, certainly with the case in the U.K., I would not say that in Pakistan today or in India today we can say with confidence that in a crisis, if they put
their weapons out into the field that their weapon could not be stolen. I would certainly not say that with confidence.

MR. POWELL: I think the bigger risk is that it comes under the command of a rogue element.

MR. SAGAN: Final question in the front here, please.

Q: Thank you very much. I am Li Hua (ph) from Institute of Applied Physics and Computational Mathematics China. My question is simple, but might not be easy to respond. The NPT Review Conference will come in two or in at most three years from now. What might be the contribution or specific measures taken by nuclear weapon states to contribute to this NPT conference? Certainly this is another crucial moment for the non-proliferation regime, but my question is particularly directed to our British and French colleagues. I can maybe more easily expect the response from my Chinese colleague Dr. Li, but particularly directed it to our British and French colleagues. Thank you.

MR. POWELL: Well, I think I get the cop-out answer of, didn’t my foreign secretary just answer that question a couple of hours ago? I mean, she set out what we have already done this year in announcing further cuts and set out a whole range of measures that we will be supporting with a view to the next Review Conference.

MR. TERTRAIS: Okay, after having sounded like the nuclear hawk, I think I need to give you some positive. Let me give you three ideas – three personal ideas. One, a global ban on nuclear-capable – on all nuclear-capable forces of you know, short-range, ground-based tactical nuclear forces. That probably – well that may be feasible, although 500 kilometers is probably too high.

Second idea is -- why don’t the P5 say, in a coordinated way, something along the lines of “the whole purpose of nuclear weapons is deterrence. We don’t intend to use nuclear weapons as we would use conventional weapons.” Since there are doubts about that, especially concerning the United States, why don’t the five say, you know, publicly in a coordinated way, this is all about deterrence and we have no intention to use these weapons as we would use conventional weapons.

Third idea – I think a ban on the presence, or at least a permanent presence of nuclear weapons on foreign soil could be considered if there was – you know, if the Germans, the Turks and others had no problem with it, I would applaud to a ban on the stationing of nuclear weapons on foreign soil, because it might be in the Western interest to avoid situations when – if you have a new global norm to that effect, then you make it more difficult for some countries to consider doing the same thing as NATO is doing today. Again, you know, the Germans and Turks and Italians would have to agree with that, but if they did, I would have no problem with some kind of global ban. But again, whatever we do as nuclear weapon states, I would again caution that the principle of undiminished security for all really applies to all including the P5 of course.
MR. SAGAN: It just remains to thank our panelists for both their comments and for being willing to give frank answers even to unanswerable questions. Thank you. (Applause.)

(END)