

**CARNEGIE INTERNATIONAL NONPROLIFERATION
CONFERENCE**

**DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE
JAMES B. STEINBERG**

**WELCOME:
JESSICA MATHEWS,
PRESIDENT AND CEO,
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT**

**SPEAKER:
JAMES B. STEINBERG,
DEPUTY SECRETARY,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2009

*Transcript by
Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.*

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JESSICA MATHEWS: I'm going to interrupt your lunch out of deference for our speaker's very tight schedule. We heard this morning President Obama outline the approach his administration plans to take on nonproliferation, strategic arms control and disarmament. It's a huge and challenging agenda that he's laid out. If this administration can achieve half of it, we will look back on this as an historic speech.

It's a mark of the seriousness with which he clearly takes these issues that he chose to make it one of his keynote speeches on his first trip overseas, that he has sent the message to all of us that you found at your places when you sat down – and I hope nobody mistook it for the menu – and that when you have a moment you will read it. And that today in the midst of a week full of complications that we have a very senior member of the administration, Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg, to join us in our discussions.

Jim is a very well-known and valued friend to many of us in the room. For those who may not know him, it's hard to think of anyone whose career has better prepared him for his current job. Jim was until very recently dean of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin, and prior to that he was vice president, director of foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution. During the Clinton administration he served as deputy assistant secretary for intelligence and research, as director of the policy planning staff, as chief of staff of the entire State Department, and in the second term as deputy national security advisor.

So Jim has seen policy-making in Washington from every possible perspective, from Congress, from the executive branch, from the think tank world – preparation that will serve him and each of us so well as he helps Secretary Clinton and the administration address these and other challenges.

I want to emphasize that this is still an administration in its infancy. An awful lot of people are home alone. There are many, many positions that are not yet filled. No matter what their individual jobs, everyone has been hoping that the global economic crisis – and believe it or not there is an overflowing in-box of foreign policy challenges that have nothing to do with nuclear energy or nuclear issues. I hope in our discussion with Secretary Steinberg today we will not expect answers at a level of detail that the administration has had no opportunity yet to develop. That said, I think constructive feedback as well as questions is particularly appropriate.

Please do introduce yourself when you ask questions. There are microphones available too somewhere. With that, without taking more of his time, let me reiterate our general thanks to Secretary Steinberg for agreeing to be with us, and welcome him to the podium. Jim.

(Applause.)

SECRETARY JAMES STEINBERG: Thank you, Jessica, for that very kind introduction, and it really is an honor and a privilege to be here with so many good friends and colleagues from so many journeys in the past and so many efforts that we've worked on together. I have to tell you it is exciting to be a partner for all of you as part of the new administration, very deeply committed to the values and principles that so many of you have been working on for such a long time. I really look forward both to your comments today and working together closely as we go forward.

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I'm also grateful to Jessica for her two cautions, one, to be realistic about expectations. We do have an ambitious agenda but the flip side of ambitious means it's hard. And second, her very thoughtful recognition that we are in the early stages of the administration and so there are important elements within the president's broad framework that do remain to be done. So when we get to the Q&A and I tell you it's all TBD, you'll understand why, so I'm appreciative for her setting that up.

It's, as I said, a privilege to be here, and it's an easy task to be here in light of the president's speech on Sunday because he really did set the tone, and it allows me to be able to come here and to say a little bit more in detail about where the president seeks to go and what our objectives are over the coming years, but broadly within the framework that he set out. I think obviously, as you know well, the most important part of that is the ambition in his vision that he set out, that while he acknowledged that that vision of a nuclear-free world would take time and may be difficult to reach, it's still a path that the United States must remain committed to and pursue.

As you heard in his words, he said, "Some argue that the spread of these weapons cannot be stopped, cannot be checked, that we are destined to live in a world where more nations and more people possess the ultimate tools of destruction. Such fatalism is a deadly adversary, for if we believe that the spread of nuclear weapons is inevitable, then in some ways we are admitting to ourselves that the use of nuclear weapons is inevitable." I think that's a challenge to us all.

So I want to take advantage of this important conference to try to elaborate a little bit on what the president had in mind. As you all remember well, the very seminal address that President Kennedy gave some 46 years ago, he realized that this prescription of the spread of nuclear weapons was a lethal prescription.

Kennedy warned, "I ask you to stop and think for a moment what it would mean to have nuclear weapons in so many hands, in the hands of countries large and small, stable and unstable, responsible and irresponsible, scattered throughout the world. There would be no rest for anyone then, no stability, no real security, and no chance of effective disarmament. There would be only the increased chance of an accidental war, and an increased necessity for the great powers to involve themselves in what otherwise would be local conflicts."

Kennedy's contemporaries agreed with that diagnosis, and five years later the world joined together to adopt the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. The NPT embodies a core bargain that the nuclear states would agree to reduce and eventually eliminate their nuclear weapons, while the non-nuclear states would renounce them, in return for the right to pursue nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

This bargain helped avert President Kennedy's nightmare for decades. Over time the United States and the Soviet Union developed practices of communication and restraint that brought a measure of stability to their relationship, though the risks of nuclear accident and other dangers remained. Today the threat of a massive nuclear exchange has largely subsided, but in the 21st century we face dramatically changed nuclear risks that pose new and urgent concerns at a time when the core NPT bargain itself has begun to unravel.

A crucial reason for this increased danger is the growing number of potential nuclear states, some of which have a demonstrated track record of irresponsible actions of proliferation concern.

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Even more ominous is the threat posed by terrorist groups such as al Qaeda, whose suicidal fanaticism, well-substantiated quest for nuclear capability, and a lack of a return address combine to undercut the premises on which traditional deterrent was based. These trends take place in the context of a dramatic expansion of civilian nuclear programs, as more and more countries seek access to reliable carbon-free sources of energy.

Recent developments have made the nonproliferation challenge even more acute: growing commercial availability of sensitive nuclear technology, as demonstrated by the activities of the network led by A.Q. Khan; shortcomings in the verification system, as recently exposed by the failure to identify the construction of a covert nuclear reactor in Syria until it was nearly completed; the ability of North Korea to withdraw from the NPT with relative impunity, even as it pursued a nuclear weapons program; the failure of the U.N. Security Council and the international community at large to bring both North Korea and Iran into compliance, even after their violations had been discovered and formally reported to the IAEA; and the continued existence of large and potentially vulnerable stocks of bomb-making nuclear materials around the world.

In light of these developments, I think it's fair to say the global nonproliferation regime is under great stress. Some say further nonproliferation is available, stopping it is futile. They talk about cascades of countries going nuclear and terrorists getting their hands on their bombs. Some even argue we should not worry about more and more countries joining the nuclear club, that the fear of mutual assured destruction will keep even unstable or irresponsible governments from using their nuclear capabilities. Both of these views are dangerously wrong.

To overcome 21st century nuclear threats, President Obama called on the nations of the world to come together to renew and reinvigorate the basic bargain of the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear nonproliferation regime, and is as vital today as it was when it entered into force in 1970. But we must now build on that essential foundation by supplementing the NPT and updating the overall nonproliferation regime with measures specially designed to tackle the newly emerging challenges.

The fundamental principle of renewed nuclear bargain must be reciprocal responsibility, and the path forward requires all of the stakeholders to do their part. The United States and other nuclear weapons states bear a clear responsibility under the NPT to pursue nuclear disarmament, and we will pursue that responsibility with great resolve.

But non-nuclear weapons states bear no less responsibility to work actively and continuously to prevent further proliferation. And that responsibility does not end with the decision to forego their own nuclear capability and accept safeguards to demonstrate the sincerity of that decision. It must continue through the participation of those states in resolute, collective efforts to impede other countries from crossing the nuclear threshold because their own security and well-being are profoundly affected by the outcome of these efforts.

And all nations bear responsibility to do whatever they can to prevent nuclear materials from falling into the hands of those bent on destruction. We are all the potential victims of nuclear terrorism, whether directly or not, and the detonation of a terrorist nuclear bomb in New York or Moscow, Tokyo or Beijing, Islamabad or Mumbai would not only cause unprecedented suffering and destruction, it would have devastating consequences – economic, security, political and social – in every corner of the world.

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We must stop pointing fingers and acting as separate interest groups, as nuclear weapons states or non-nuclear weapons states, as countries with advanced civil nuclear energy programs, or countries just embarking on such programs, as members of security alliances or members of the nonaligned movement. We must recognize the common threat we face and join together to overcome it, casting aside slogans and seeking pragmatic solutions that work.

Our efforts to renew the nuclear bargain will require us to reinvigorate nuclear arms control and disarmament, and the best starting point for getting disarmament back on track will be for the United States and other nuclear weapons states to recommit themselves to the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons worldwide. As you heard, President Obama stated this unequivocally, "I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the security of the world without nuclear weapons."

He went on to say that we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same. And he pledged that we will reduce the U.S. arsenal as a step toward a nuclear-free world. He recognized that goal will not be reached quickly and it will take patience and persistence. And he made clear that as long as nuclear weapons exist, and even as their numbers and role are reduced, the United States will maintain safe, secure, and effective nuclear forces capable of credibly performing their essential mission of deterring adversaries and reassuring allies and friends.

But he also made clear his determination to start now to pursue practical interim steps that not only move us toward the ultimate goal of a nuclear-free world, but can in their own right promote a more secure and stable international environment, reinforce the global nonproliferation regime, and raise the barriers to the acquisition of nuclear weapons and materials by terrorist groups.

One such step would be for Russia and the United States to reach agreement on a new strategic arms reduction treaty to replace the current START I treaty, which expires in December. Last Thursday in London Presidents Obama and Medvedev jointly directed their negotiating teams to work out a legally binding and effectively verifiable agreement that would reduce delivery vehicles and warheads to levels below those contained in the START treaty and in the 2002 Moscow treaty, and to do so before START expires on December 5th. Achieving this objective would be another milestone in nuclear disarmament and would set the stage for further cuts and eventually a disarmament process that includes all nuclear weapons states.

Another crucial step the United States can take in restoring America's leadership would be to ratify the CTBT, as the president also made clear in Prague. We'll undertake a careful review of technical military and diplomatic issues surrounding the CTBT and work closely with Congress to address any concerns. Once U.S. ratification is achieved, the Obama administration will work hard with others to ensure that the other requirements for CTBT's entry into force are met at the earliest possible day.

A treaty prohibiting the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, has long been considered the next logical and important step in the multilateral nuclear disarmament process. The continued production of bomb-making nuclear materials by some countries to increase their nuclear weapons capabilities clearly works at cross-purposes with the goal of nuclear disarmament. The Obama administration strongly supports the

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early conclusion of an FMCT, one with international verification provisions, and we will cooperate with other countries to remove the impediments that block the commencement of negotiations for over a decade.

Steps such as replacing START, ratifying the CTVT, and commencing FMCT negotiations can help build broad international support for a renewed nuclear compact. But to overcome today's nuclear threats, that compact also must include effective measures that can prevent further proliferation. We must improve the verification system. Adherence to the IAEA's protocol must become a duty, not an option. We should explore means of augmenting the IAEA safeguards authorities, and the agencies should receive the increased resources it needs to carry out its rapidly growing responsibilities.

Undetected violations of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation agreements threaten the security of all states and we must all play our part in strengthening the current verification system. The burden must not rest only on certain categories of states, such as non-nuclear parties to the NPT, but must be borne equitably.

It's not enough to detect violations. Potential violators must know that if they are caught they face an international community that will react to noncompliance with real consequences. The record of enforcing compliance in recent years has been unacceptable. The international community and especially members of the Security Council must summon the political will to arrest a trend that, if allowed to continue, will leave the NPT an empty shell.

We must also act to discourage withdrawal from the NPT without cause. Parties have the legal right to withdraw if, in the treaty's terms, extraordinary events jeopardize their supreme national interests, but they are certainly not entitled to use membership in the NPT as a cover to pursue a nuclear weapons program and then withdraw from the treaty while in material breach of it. There must be consequences for unjustified withdrawal.

These measures seek to reinforce the vitality of the nonproliferation regime as a whole. But it is no less important to address effectively the two most acute country-specific problems facing the world today – the nuclear programs of North Korea and Iran. With both North Korea and Iran, diplomacy must play a central role, but both countries must first understand that the international community views their nuclear programs as profound dangers to international peace and security.

As you know, over the weekend North Korea launched a Taepodong-II rocket, in direct violation of U.N. Security Council resolution 1718, and the clear warnings of the international community that such a launch could be provocative and destabilizing. The Security Council is now meeting to consider what steps to take in response to this new challenge by North Korea. But we should all be clear to the DPRK that as the international community responds, North Korea's obligations to live up to its commitments under the Six-Party Talks remain, and we intend to continue our efforts along with Japan, South Korea, China and Russia to press for the complete and verifiable de-nuclearization of North Korea.

The United States and its international partners must make clear to the leaders of North Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran that the benefits of cooperating with the international community that would come from eliminating their nuclear programs, benefits including normalized relationships with the United States, would be in the best interest of their countries, and that the

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costs they would incur if they persist in their nuclear ambitions would be enormous and would undermine their legitimate aspirations. This will be a focus of the upcoming P-5-plus-1 meeting this Wednesday.

With today's escalating demands for clean sources of energy and growing prospects for what has been called a nuclear renaissance, the peaceful use of nuclear energy assumes greater importance as we seek to forge a renewed international nuclear compact. But any worldwide expansion of nuclear power must not be accompanied by a dramatically increased threat of nuclear proliferation, and that would surely be the result if an ever-growing number of countries decided to acquire their own sensitive fuel cycle facilities, enrichment, or reprocessing plants.

Clearly this is an issue that must be approached inclusively, with all relevant stakeholders, and with an emphasis not on ideology but on pragmatic solutions that are in the best economic, technological, and security interest of all concerned, especially developing countries. Any successful broadly supported approach must assure countries expanding or embarking on nuclear power programs that they will have reliable access to peaceful nuclear technologies and fuel services, and at the same time must serve the international community's collective security interest of avoiding the spread of nuclear weapons production capabilities.

Agreement on additional measures to reduce nuclear weapons capabilities and to stop further proliferation would be a major contribution to forging a renewed nuclear bargain, but that is not enough to prevent nuclear terrorism, a challenge not fully appreciated at the time the NPT was negotiated, but one that has risen to the top of the international security agenda in recent years.

The most effective way to prevent nuclear terrorism is to secure the critical materials terrorists need to build a nuclear weapon. Much progress has been made in recent years to lock down potentially vulnerable nuclear materials, but more needs to be done on an urgent basis. Collaboration between the United States and Russia under the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction programs has greatly improved the security of nuclear installations, weapons, and materials in Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union. The job must now be completed and the focus shifted to ensuring nuclear security on a global basis.

The job requires more than the efforts of the United States alone. We must enlist the support of Russia and other partners, including those who join together in the G-8 global partnership against weapons and materials of mass destruction. Our common goal should be effective protection of all potentially vulnerable nuclear materials worldwide within four years.

In addressing the non-state actor threat, we should build on valuable initiatives taken by the Bush administration. We should seek to accelerate the implementation by U.N. members of their obligation under Security Council Resolution 1540 to put in place effective nonproliferation controls. We should strengthen the proliferation security initiative, especially in the use of financial and other tools to disrupt and eradicate illicit networks. And we should use the global initiative to combat nuclear terrorism, to help participating states build their domestic capacity to reduce the threat posed by terrorists who are seeking nuclear weapons, materials, and technology.

Both PSI and the global initiative have been run so far on a highly informal and decentralized basis and could benefit from having small central mechanisms to help coordinate their activities.

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Finally, international efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism require high level political impetus. In Prague President Obama proposed that a global summit on nuclear security be convened to assess the terrorist nuclear threat and to give directions to ways in which concerned governments can act together to counter it. He offered that the United States would host such a summit within the next year.

As a measure of the president's continuing commitment to this vital nonproliferation agenda, he has asked Vice President Joe Biden to help lead the administration's nonproliferation efforts. The vice president will lead the conduct of a comprehensive review of the complex technical military and diplomatic issues surrounding the comprehensive test ban treaty and develop a strategy to secure its ratification. To protect the American people from the threat of nuclear terrorism, the vice president will lead the effort to meet the president's goal of securing sensitive nuclear materials around the world in four years.

The nuclear threats the international community faces today are grave and growing. As in the case of some other global threats confronting us, most notably climate change, we are all in the same boat, and unless we act decisively now the situation could deteriorate catastrophically and irreversibly.

Nuclear terrorism and further nuclear proliferation are not inevitable. As President Kennedy observed in his famous 1963 American University speech calling for a nuclear test ban, "Our problems are manmade. Therefore, they can be solved by man." But doing so will require that all states recognize that they bear responsibility for preventing further nuclear proliferation. It also requires that we act boldly, wisely, and not least important, together.

And most immediately it requires that we join together in a renewed nuclear compact, one that is based on the goal of eventually eliminating nuclear weapons worldwide, that proceeds toward that goal with balanced, practical, and mutually beneficial steps that protect the security and promote the well-being of all participants at every stage.

Thanks for your attention, and I look forward to your comments.

(Applause.)

I see mikes, one over there and one over there.

Q: Good afternoon, Jim. Steven Schwartz with the Nonproliferation Review at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies. I wanted to ask a question about one sentence in the president's speech, a sentence that you highlighted in your talk just now, that the United States will put an end to Cold War thinking by reducing the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same.

Does this include, will this include efforts to devalue and delegitimize nuclear weapons as being militarily and politically useful, as well as symbols of technological development and national status? And if it does, if you can share with us, what steps the administration might be considering.

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SEC. STEINBERG: Well, Steve, as you know, the administration is both required by law but also by good policy to conduct a nuclear posture review, and that's something that we're now undertaking. I think that the president has clearly given us a direction that should guide that review in terms of reducing the salience of nuclear weapons as a part of our strategy, and how we embody that in the strategy itself is obviously going to be one of the most important questions.

I think that there's a clear overriding message that the president has given us as we carry out the specific task of trying to adapt our doctrine to this new vision that he's offered, but I don't want to anticipate in detail how that would be embodied in the review except, as you pointed out, he's very clear that this is not just about warhead counts, but it is – will involve review of doctrine and the role of nuclear weapons in our strategy.

Q: Thank you, Mr. Steinberg, for your remarks. You and I were classmates at Phillips Andover 40 years ago and I want to say, I find it reassuring that you look so fit and young. So thank you.

SEC. STEINBERG: You're not looking so bad yourself, James.

Q: Thank you. Now my question is, I'm thrilled by your boss's declared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. I hold the cynical opinion that one of the main impediments to that goal will be the entrenched self-interest of the American nuclear weapons complex. My question becomes, as the Obama administration begins to reduce the stockpile, will it also consider shrinking the nuclear weapons complex?

There are some very expensive projects on deck. There's a \$3 billion plutonium facility at Los Alamos, a \$4 billion uranium facility at Y-12. Why can't we start looking at shrinking the weapons complex?

SEC. STEINBERG: Well, without necessarily sharing the attribution of intention – because I've worked with the community for a long time and I have great respect for what they're doing and their firm belief about the importance of maintaining the basic level of knowledge and infrastructure within the system – it is clear that the infrastructure is going to be part of the review, that we have to right-size the capacity of the system to reflect the changes that will be adopted in the nuclear posture review.

So I think the two have to go hand in hand, and as we develop the review we'll have a better sense of what kind of infrastructure is needed to sustain the clearly delimited role that the president has in mind. But those are issues that are legitimately and appropriately up for discussion and should be part of the outcome of this process.

Q: Thank you. Daryl Kimball. I'm executive director of the Arms Control Association. Many of us here I think are, if we could all say it, are thrilled about the president's speech yesterday, a visionary, practical speech, and there is a lot of work to do. Especially supportive of the approach on the test ban treaty, aggressive and immediate. That's very important. There's also going to be immediate and aggressive work that needs to be done on the START follow-on and I have a question about that.

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With the START I treaty expiring on December 5, can you shed any light on how the U.S. and Russia might navigate the potential exploration of treaty when the new treaty might not – it probably will be concluded. That's the goal, but it may not necessarily be ratified. Can you shed any light on how that would be navigated in the next few months?

SEC. STEINBERG: Well, Daryl, as you might imagine, I'm highly sensitive to the prerogatives of the U.S. Senate and it certainly will be our objective to be able to conclude an agreement, assuming it will be in the form of a treaty, to get the Senate's approval of that treaty. Obviously there are a variety of tools and decisions that can be made that would allow for interim moves to reflect that, and I think both sides are conscious of the fact that we don't want to allow the expiration date to become a major disruption of our long-term and stable planning for a path of forward to reduced arsenals on both sides.

But I think it's premature to try to anticipate how we would get that. I think right now we're trying to go pedal to the metal in terms of negotiating first the framework and then an actual treaty. We're beginning to put our team in place. As you know, we're all looking forward to our mutual friend Rose Gottemoeller's engagement on these issues. I am optimistic that we will get far reasonably fast. It's always bad for policy-makers to predict these things, but I think there's a strong will on both sides to take this on.

Although I don't want to under-estimate the difficulties of this negotiation, I think the path forward is perhaps clearer on this than some of the other challenges that we have. So I think we're all committed to try to get this done in a timely way and in ways that will allow us to move down that path that we want to move in close consultation with the Congress.

Q: Larry Weiler. I'm a sort of ancient mariner. Except for the current arrangement in the State Department after the elimination of ACTA (ph), I have been an integral part of every U.S. government structure to deal with armaments since the Truman administration, all seven of them. I cite that at my age not as an application for employment – (laughter) – but seriously, there is a relationship between the structure of the government dealing with the subject of disarmament, and the likelihood of accomplishment. You can't do it on the cheap.

With all good people in the State Department, there does seem to anyone who's been involved in this a missed connection between the current arrangement for dealing with the subject and the very ambitious agenda. I would hope that you would pay some attention to the need to expand the structure. Otherwise you'll end up having to farm out a lot of the assignments to other agencies or task forces.

SEC. STEINBERG: I think it's an entirely fair point, and I anticipate, without pre-judging what the specific outcome would be, that when our new under secretary is in place and our assistant secretary is in place that we are going to take a look at this. I think we have a very clear sense that the infrastructure of policy-making in this area of arms control, disarmament, and nonproliferation has been degraded badly in recent years, and that we lack the capacity and structures to undertake the kind of ambitious agenda that the president has had.

So I hope that we can move quickly as our senior officials are put in place and confirmed by the Senate, to move quickly to rebuild that capacity and to look at whether our current structures are effective enough to deal with the policy agenda that the president has laid out.

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Q: Thank you also for coming and sharing all this with us. It's a very exciting time. My name is Deborah Decker. I'm with the Belfer Center at Harvard. One thing that hasn't come up today and is really I consider of utmost importance is nuclear forensics and attribution technology as we go into the 21st century. We know that the threats may not be state-based, that they're going to be more individual or other-actor based.

That hadn't come out and I didn't know if that was going to be something that Biden would be focusing on in terms of having some cooperative agreement on a multinational way to address forensics. And tagging off what the last gentleman was talking about, I was in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the 1970s myself, and looking at the organizational structure today of who's in charge of attribution, it's so confusing with DNDO and DTRA and the labs and arms control in the State Department.

I guess you partly answered that part of the question about having some type of review of this, but could you further assure us on that?

SEC. STEINBERG: As I say, on the structural issues, other than to agree with the basic proposition that when you've got an aggressive arms control and disarmament objective you have to have the infrastructure and the organization to do it. And clearly that was not in place in recent years and needs to be reinvigorated and replaced.

On forensics I would just say, it's obviously enormously important. And in part of the challenge, particularly in the nexus between states and non-state actors, that this is critical for us to be able to make progress in this area. It's a sensitive topic that's difficult for governments, obviously given the sensitivity of their programs. But I think we see this as an integral part of the overall structure, and attribution is critical to being able to make clear to others that there's not some way to engage with dangerous actors with impunity.

MS. MATHEWS: Thank you. We have time for one last.

Q: Tom Cochran, with the Natural Resources Defense Council. The trajectory that the president has outlined focuses on reducing the number of nuclear warheads. To reduce the risk of the existing arsenals in the United States and Russia, you would have to take the warheads off of alert status. There's little in his speech that focuses on alert weapons.

I wondered if the president would entertain a high priority in removing warheads from alert status, both in the United States and Russia.

SEC. STEINBERG: I think the issue of alerting is clearly on the table. I think we feel very strongly that this complex of issues around the composition and size of the arsenal, the strategy and the like, all ought to be dealt with comprehensively. I think we need to have an integrated approach because when we come time to seek support in the Congress and with the American people about the overall program that we can present an integrated strategy.

So I think the president wanted to frame this for the working level types, like us, to delve into this problem with a clear set of objectives. I think it was his job to set us to work within that framework and our job to come up and deal with these dimensions. But there's no question that the

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issue of how to deal with alert postures and the like are relevant to our overall question about the nuclear doctrine and nuclear strategy, and I think it would be well within the ambit of what we're undertaking in the next few months.

The one thing that I've learned long since is that if we knew the answer to the question before we started the review, there wouldn't be much point in undertaking the review.

MS. MATHEWS: In thanking Secretary Steinberg, I want to just reiterate what I heard in that message, which was that not only is this an agenda that's going to keep all of them sleepless for the next four or eight years, but it's one that, as the president made clear and as Secretary Steinberg just I think underlined, that depends heavily on not just the followership but the leadership of a whole lot of other countries. Since this room is filled with a whole lot of other countries, I think that message is, at least as I heard your message, is one that we all take home.

So our great thanks to you for taking time today be here.

SEC. STEINBERG: Thanks to all of you.

MS. MATHEWS: And good luck.

(Applause.)

(END)