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“Disarmament after the US election”

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Views expressed by Mr. Obama have raised hopes for future US foreign policies that are **favourable to disarmament** and **less militaristic and unilateralist** than those pursued by the Bush administration.

Let me begin with the past policies.

The unilateralism

The Bush administration often seemed to **worry little about the support** or understanding of other states. In many problems calling for cooperation it was ready to go it alone. For instance:

- It decided not to join the rest of the industrialized world in the **Kyoto Protocol** regarding climate change;
- It spent billions of dollars on a **missile shield** intended to minimize the risk **for the US** to be hit by intercontinental missiles; neither the EU nor even NATO was consulted before the US began talks with Poland and the Czech Republic about placing parts of the shield in these states;
- It looked with skepticism on **verification systems run for and by the international community** and preferred its own intelligence ,
- It expressed its extreme distaste for the **International Criminal Court** by **“withdrawing” the US signature** – a unique step that was unnecessary to avoid any binding effect of the signature;

The readiness to use or threaten the use of military power.

- The US National Security Strategy of 2002 made it clear that the US would be ready to take **preemptive military actions** without regard to the restrictions in the UN Charter.

-- The **war in Iraq** was launched although Iraq in 2003 was not a threat to the US or to any other country.

-- **Israel's war in Lebanon** was encouraged by the US as a means of eradicating Hezbollah even though the armed action went far beyond the legitimate retaliation for Hezbollah's incursion into Israel and hostage taking;

-- The frequent assertions in the case of **Iran** that '**all options are on the table**' have amounted to an almost permanent threat to use military force ;

-- Recently a US order was revealed authorizing the use of armed force to **strike Al Qaeda** wherever it was identified and without permission of the state on whose territory the attack would be carried out.

The negative attitude to arms control and disarmament

-- In 2002 the US withdrew from the bilateral **US-Russian ABM treaty** of 1991 to be free to develop a **missile shield** that was seen by Russia and China as a potential future way of allowing the **US to strike** any point on the earth without being deterred by the risk of a counterstrike; the termination of the ABM treaty, led to the unraveling of the START II and of the plans for a START III.

--In 2002 the bilateral US-Russia **Moscow Treaty** was concluded on reductions in the deployment of strategic missiles. Having preferred non-binding declarations the US **reluctantly** agreed with Russia to put the text in **treaty form**. However, the treaty involves no commitment to destroy any warheads and provides no mechanism for verification;

-- In 2002 the US almost single handed stopped year long efforts to add a **verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention**;

-- In 2004 the US presented a draft of a treaty for a **cut off of production of fissile material for weapons**, but the draft lacked the **verification mechanism** that had earlier been considered essential to make the treaty meaningful and on which there had earlier been a broad international agreement;

-- The US has spent billions developing a **space war capability** while declining to include the item in international disarmament talks;

-- At the **NPT** review conference **in 2005** the US saw the non-fulfillment of the treaty by several states and the risk of **terrorists** acquiring nuclear weapons as key problems but **rejected criticism** that the nuclear weapon states parties had failed in their **duty under Article VI** of the treaty to negotiate toward disarmament.

Positions modified by the second Bush administration

I should note that some significant moves to **more conciliatory positions** have taken place in the **second Bush administration**.

-- **DPRK**. In 2002 the **US stopped implementing** the Agreed Framework that had been reached under the Clinton administration, claiming that the DPRK had embarked upon a program of enrichment of uranium. The DPRK denied the claim and **withdrew from the NPT**, resumed reprocessing and – later – exploded a nuclear device.

The **second Bush administration** reverted to a policy of negotiation and the **6-power talks** in Beijing became the main tool to induce North Korea to abandon its nuclear program. Although hotly opposed by some in the Bush administration **carrots** rather than sticks have come to be used and China, Russia, Japan and South Korea have proved to be of great help.

-- **IRAN**. While largely continuing its refusal to take part in the contacts that the UK, France and Germany have had with Iran, the **second Bush** administration, has declared its **support for measures** that the European states have described to Iran as potential rewards for ending its program for the enrichment of uranium.

-- **START I**. This treaty between the US and Russia will expire at the end of 2009 if not prolonged before that date. It contains the basic obligations of the two countries regarding verification and inspection and talks now seem to take place in Geneva. .

Possible change by Obama in US arms control & disarmament policies

Let me now turn to discuss the outlook for international arms control and disarmament with Mr. Obama at the helm of the US. A large part of US public opinion is tired of war and credits Mr. Obama for opposing the war in Iraq before it was launched. It may also feel it is time to trim the US military budget of some 700 billion dollars or as much as the military spending of all other countries together.

Mr. Obama has been remarkably positive about disarmament – affirming that “**America seeks a world with no nuclear weapons.**” At the same time he seeks broad political agreement and he will need to pay attention to mainstream America that **wants the US to retain militarily supremacy**. Not surprisingly Mr. Obama is on record as **not accepting unilateral US disarmament**.

The scope for future disarmament is influenced not only by US public opinion but also by whatever **readiness Russia, China, India** and others may have to go along. Valuable agreements could conceivably be made in the near cold war atmosphere that we currently experience. However, getting Russia and China to join on a significant disarmament agenda will most likely **call for some adjustments** of policies that have been pursued by the Bush administration.

I have in mind, **first**, the policy of seeking to further **expand NATO** to Ukraine, Georgia and possibly central Asian states. Mr. McCain was of the view that NATO should be open

to all democratic states that wanted to join and Senator Lugar has pointed specifically to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. **After the war in Georgia** the reluctance of several members of the alliance to go along with an expansion that stretches it far beyond its original geographic scope and that is perceived by Russia as a policy of encirclement, **may have further stiffened**. If so, and as the admission of new members require a consensus, perhaps a **shelving of the issue** could occur without the need for an overt change in what has been US policy under the Bush administration.

I have in mind, **secondly**, the deployment of parts of the **US missile shield** in Poland and the Czech Republic. Although the Russian Government does **not** fear that such deployment would affect their current **second strike capability** it may feel **concern** that future developments may have such aim. In any case both the Russian government and Russian public opinion clearly **see** these planned installations on their doorsteps as provocative **military body language** by the Western superpower. **Again**, perhaps there could be a solution that does not call for an American political U-turn: Mr. Obama has only voiced support for the deployment of a US missile system “when the **technology** is proved to be **workable**.” This is not yet the case and many doubt that it will ever be the case.

I have in mind, **thirdly**, an adjustment that might reduce potential tensions with China and improve the chance that **China will join new disarmament efforts**. As you know, the Bush administration recently concluded an agreement on **nuclear cooperation with India**. The political **aim** that was not concealed was to tie India more closely to the US and try to fit India into a chain of countries, including Australia and Japan that could be a counterweight to China. The agreement was widely **criticized** from the viewpoint of non-proliferation. The **aim of the NPT** was to gain the **adherence of all states** that did not have nuclear weapons in 1968. That aim was abandoned with the US-India agreement.

A more **specific objection** was that enabling India to import uranium fuel for its nuclear power reactors would **allow India to enrich** its limited indigenous uranium to high levels and make more nuclear weapons. Even if India was, in fact, not doing so, Pakistan and China might suspect this and might, as a precaution, do the same. A nuclear armament race could result.

A way out, as noted in the report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, could lie in the conclusion of the long delayed **verified agreement prohibiting the production of enriched uranium and plutonium for weapons purposes** – the FMCT. A non-verified agreement, such as a draft circulated in Geneva by the Bush administration, would not create the necessary confidence, nor would a moratorium..

It has been assumed that a cut-off agreement would **not cause great difficulties for the five NPT nuclear weapon states**, as they have more weapons grade material than they need. Enrichment and reprocessing plants in the UK and France are already subject to verification through Euratom. **Through a universal cut-off agreement all US, Russian**

and Chinese plants would also be subjected to verification. It might be useful that also the biggest states get accustomed to intrusive verification.

Strengthening the NPT.

The NPT has the double aim of **preventing a further spread** of nuclear weapons beyond the five NWS of 1968 and of bringing about **negotiations** leading to nuclear and general **disarmament**.

On the whole the **first aim of the treaty** has seen **much success**. Practically all states that were without nuclear weapons in 1968 have remained NNW states. US-Russian cooperation successfully averted the risk that **Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine** become NWS. **South Africa** chose to eliminate its own nuclear weapons. **Iraq and Libya** violated the treaty but were made to walk back.

The treaty failed to get the adherence of **India, Pakistan and Israel** and there is scant expectation that any one of these states would renounce nuclear weapons in isolation. **Iran and North Korea** are acute problems. Beyond these states there is concern that **non-state actors** might seek to acquire nuclear weapons and that a big **expansion of nuclear power** could carry risks in the construction of more **fuel cycle facilities** and greater trade in enriched uranium and plutonium.

The **other aim** of the NPT – to bring about negotiations **leading to nuclear disarmament** – has not been successfully pursued. After the end of the Cold War NNWS have not been content just to see a mainly economy driven reduction of excessive stockpiles. They have become **increasingly impatient** and see a risk that a **perpetuation** and **modernization** of nuclear weapons in some states **and doctrines** allowing a freer use of the weapons could one day lead some states to **reconsider** their nuclear weapon free status.

The now famous quartet of **US foreign policy veterans**, George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, William Perry and Sam Nunn has come to share these fears. They do not regret the strong nuclear deterrent they helped to maintain during the Cold War but they find it useless and dangerous after the end of that war. They make the powerful plea that the US should take the **initiative** to an **elimination of nuclear weapons**, reaching out to Russia and other nuclear weapon states and negotiating a large number of agreements aiming at arms control, disarmament and reducing the risk of proliferation.

While some in the US – and elsewhere – shake their heads, the plea has received a remarkably **strong response**. **Mr. Obama** has fully endorsed the proposals and even **Mr McCain** has declared that the US “should lead a global effort at nuclear disarmament.” While, as I have developed, I think renewed détente is needed for success, I do not think an ending of the wars in **Iraq and Afghanistan**, desirable as it is, is a precondition for starting on the path to disarmament

The disarmament agenda

Nothing could send a stronger signal that the disarmament agenda is again on the table than the **entry into force** of the **Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty**. A US ratification would be needed and it would go a long way to trigger other necessary ratification, including that of China. **Mr Obama** is committed to seek US ratification and **Mr McCain**, who once joined in rejecting the treaty in the US Senate, has declared that he was at least open to reconsider the matter. Even **Mr Gates**, who is the Secretary of Defense in the Bush administration that opposes ratification, has declared himself in support of ratification – provided, however, that it be coupled with approval for the design of a new US nuclear weapon – that would require no testing. As ratification in the US requires a two thirds majority in the Senate bipartisan support will be needed.

If the political climate were to improve, it should be possible to replace the **Moscow Treaty of 2002** with an agreement on much deeper cuts in US and Russian nuclear arsenals.

The proposal for a **withdrawal NATO nuclear weapons** from Europe and Russian nuclear weapons deeper into Russia was endorsed by Mr McCain during the election campaign. The continued deployment of these weapons where they are is a hangover from the Cold War. Ending it would contribute to renew détente.

It has long been urged that the NWS should discontinue the practice of keeping nuclear warheads on high or, as it is mostly called, **hair trigger alert**. It would further reduce the risk that any weapon would be released by error or mistake.

Strengthening non-proliferation

Progress on **arms control and disarmament**, the aim of article 6 of the NPT, **will strengthen** the support for the NPT and reduce the risks of future **defections** from it. However, much will also be asked to **reinforce non-proliferation more directly**. Some measures should be **relatively easy**.

The 2010 NPT review conference should be able to push for the acceptance by all of the **Additional Protocol** of the IAEA. Even the most intrusive inspection system will not guarantee that no relevant items exist but extensive inspection rights will do much to increase the Agency's ability to detect violations and read signs of irregularities. I see no reason why the **Nuclear Suppliers Group** should not require acceptance of the Additional Protocol as a requirement for sales of nuclear equipment and material.

It should not be difficult to continue the rather successful efforts spearheaded by the US to **move sensitive fissile material to safe storage** and to establish **better controls** of stores and transports to **minimize** the risk of **trafficking** in nuclear materials.

Much more difficult will be to reach common attitudes to **fuel cycle activities**. The NPT allows states both to **enrich uranium** and to **reprocess** spent fuel and produce

plutonium. Amendments that seek to introduce restrictions in these rights will hardly be accepted. Non-nuclear weapon **will not** renounce their right to build fuel cycle facilities and allow some other states parties to have both such facilities and nuclear weapons. They would like to reduce rather than widen the gap between the nuclear haves and have-nots.

To discourage a proliferation of fuel cycle activities it would probably be wiser to **build on the economic interests** of states. New reprocessing plants will have no economic sense for quite some time and for states with only a few nuclear power reactors there is also no economy in building enrichment facilities. Sweden has ten nuclear power reactors and finds it most **economic to** importing enriched uranium. Finland, Switzerland and many other countries reason the same way. If all states could be confident about the possibility of importing enriched uranium many would most likely abstain from building plants of their own.

Conversely, uncertainty about the **assurance of supply through** the international market could persuade states to start indigenous enrichment even though it would not be economically optimal. To avoid such incentives it would be rational to create **mechanisms for the assurance of supply** for nuclear fuel. Where a state embarks on a program for the indigenous production of enriched uranium despite the existence of supply assurances and against its own economic interest the international community would naturally have reason to be curious and perhaps embark on measures of dissuasion.

I should like to conclude with some comments on the specific cases of **North Korea and Iran**. The public discussion of these cases often focuses on sanctions and threats. Such measures can be effective, but I think a search for effective means should begin by asking **why a particular state might feel a need for nuclear weapon**. After the armed conflict between China and India there was probably little chance to dissuade India from developing nuclear weapons and once India had done so there was little chance of dissuading Pakistan from going the same way. All that the outside world could do was to make the path somewhat more difficult.

What gives me some optimism about the cases of the DPRK and IRAN is that there do not seem to be compelling security reasons for them to go for nuclear weapons. North Korea may have felt and still feel ostracized and in need of nuclear weapons against a perceived military threat. It would then hardly seem rational to strengthen these feelings by increasing isolation and threats. The **path that has been chosen since a few years and that may be wiser**, is offering assurances that **in return for a dismantling** of the nuclear program the country will be given **guarantees against armed attacks and** offered diplomatic relations with the US and Japan.

DPRK does not, of course, fail to use the leverage it has and squeeze out maximum assistance, fuel oil, rice etc. The equation ought to be soluble but there is likely to be a **weakness** in the area of **verification**. There will be no guarantee against the concealment of some limited quantity of plutonium, only a fair assurance about the **absence of facilities** to produce more plutonium.

Iran denies that it has any intention to develop nuclear weapons. However, for Iran to prove the absence of intentions may be as difficult as it is for the IAEA to prove the absence of any prohibited nuclear items. There are some reasons to be suspicious. Why create an expensive indigenous enrichment capacity when there is little indigenous uranium in the ground and few power reactors needing fuel in the foreseeable time?

It does not seem improbable that Iran – like once Pakistan – may have felt a compelling need to develop nuclear weapons. I have in mind **the 1980s**, when Iran was engaged in a horrible **war with a Iraq**. Like Israel, Iran may have rightly suspected that Iraq was working to create a capability to enrich uranium and build nuclear weapons. However, **the Iraqi threat no longer exists**. Recent threats may have been perceived from **US air craft carriers** and possible US activities to engineer **regime change** – as it did in 1953. Iran may also have felt somewhat ostracized, nominated by the Bush Administration as a member of the ‘Axis of Evil’. After the revolution it also experienced difficulty in buying uranium fuel on the international market.

Development of an industrial scale capability in Iran to enrich uranium would dangerously increase tensions in the whole Middle East and **efforts are rightly made to dissuade Iran**. These efforts have sensibly comprised offers of better **trade and investment** relations, support for Iranian membership in the **WTO** and support for the Iranian **nuclear power program**. I am more skeptical, about demanding that Iran **must suspend** enrichment **before** the big powers are willing to sit down to talk with it. Who gives away the most important card before the game begins?

I am also asking myself whether in the circumstances that I have described it would not be worth **trying to persuade Iran** to renounce enrichment by **offering** in return, apart from guarantees of assurance of supply of nuclear fuel for power reactors **first**, guarantees against armed attacks and against activities to bring about regime change;

second, diplomatic relations.

Such offers could only be made by the US, as other states have diplomatic relations with Iran and do not pose any military threat to the country. As such offers are made in the case of the DPRK it is hard to understand why they could not be made vis-à-vis Iran.

There is no certainty that **direct negotiations** and offers of the kind I have mentioned would persuade Iran to renounce enrichment that it rightly says is permitted under the NPT as part of peaceful nuclear power programs. Iran has made proposals for a much broader agenda. Such an agenda might include the question of commitments not to support intervention and terrorist activities, and the idea of a zone – including Iran and Israel -- free of nuclear fuel cycle activities. If negotiations about peace and security in the Middle East were soon to move forward – a big if – even the idea of zone – again comprising both Iran and Israel – free of nuclear fuel cycle activities as well as nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction could be discussed.