

## ***Preface***

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The years 2009-2010 were marked by important developments related to international efforts to promote arms control and disarmament in the non-conventional realm. Against the background of ongoing challenges to the nuclear nonproliferation regime in particular – due primarily to Iran’s steadfast efforts to advance towards a military nuclear option, North Korea’s nuclear defiance, and concerns over nuclear materials and technology finding their way to terrorists – the Obama administration spearheaded action to strengthen adherence to the regime.

Already during his presidential campaign, Barack Obama declared his desire to significantly reduce the world’s nuclear arsenal, echoing the “global zero” agenda that was injected into the US arms control debate by a respectable group of former statesmen and military personnel as well as prominent academics. In Prague in April 2009, President Obama set forth his far reaching vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, and outlined three principal means the administration would use to advance that goal: the reduction and eventual elimination of existing nuclear arsenals; reinforcement of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); and heightened efforts to secure nuclear materials and nuclear weapons components and prevent their reaching terrorist groups. Obama qualified this aspiration by acknowledging that while the goal was total nuclear disarmament, the United States would continue to maintain its nuclear arsenal at a level required to ensure its own nuclear deterrence as long as there were nuclear arms in the hands of other international actors.

Although the idea of a world free of nuclear weapons is not new, the vision gained new momentum in recent years with the growing fear that nuclear technologies and know-how, fissile materials, and even nuclear weapons might reach terrorist organizations. The call for the declared nuclear states to do more to meet their own disarmament commitments in

accordance with Article VI of the NPT was also driven by a more indirect logic. It was intended to strengthen the hand of these states when they confronted the military nuclear ambitions of non-nuclear states suspected of being in violation of their NPT obligations. In short, the United States hoped that by demonstrating its own adherence to the NPT, it would eliminate the grounds for accusing it of hypocrisy or of applying a double standard when demands were made of Iran and North Korea.

Two previously scheduled events that took place in 2009-2010 provided President Obama with an opportunity to take significant steps in the direction of realizing his vision. The first, in December 2009, was the expiration of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the United States and Russia. The need to renew the treaty coincided with Obama's drive to promote his agenda. The New START agreement, which included a decision to reduce the two parties' nuclear arsenals further, was signed in April 2010 after long months of difficult negotiations. The second prescheduled event, in May 2010, was the NPT Review Conference (RevCon), which takes place once every five years. After the NPT suffered some serious setbacks over the previous decade – including the failure of the 2005 RevCon – the Obama administration hoped this conference would yield results that would help strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation regime. In addition to these events, President Obama launched two other important initiatives in 2010 to advance the realization of his vision: an international summit to promote the securing of nuclear materials, and the publication of the Nuclear Posture Review, a document presenting America's declared nuclear policy.

The essays compiled here analyze the events in 2009-2010 linked to nuclear arms control, focusing on the impact of President Obama's new agenda on the nuclear nonproliferation regime. They analyze the United States' attempts to prevent the proliferation of technologies, materials, and weapons to dangerous elements around the world and examine the extent to which the administration's priorities on nuclear nonproliferation advance the goals – at times distinct, at times convergent – of disarmament and arms control. Issues of deterrence, determination to confront proliferators, tension between the US and Russia over the American missile defense program, and international treaties and agreements for control of other weapons of mass destruction are explored. Special attention is also paid to

the implications of the new agenda for the Middle East, particularly as it relates to Israel and the nuclear realm.

The volume is divided into three sections. Part I analyzes the new arms control and disarmament agenda as presented and led by the United States. In the opening essay, Emily Landau discusses the questionable aspects of the Obama administration's policy on nuclear issues, especially given the tension between the President's disarmament vision and the need to confront accomplished (North Korea) and aspiring proliferators, chief among them Iran. Indeed, rather than confronting the states that are in clear violation of their nonproliferation agreements, the administration has chosen to promote its nonproliferation policies primarily through advancing global disarmament treaties. Landau argues that this misplaced priority may weaken the United States' ability to successfully challenge the defiant states and ultimately invite a heavy, undermining blow to the nuclear nonproliferation regime.

In the essay that follows, Jonathan Schachter discusses some of the contradictions within the administration's disarmament agenda, and particularly their implications for deterrence. Until universal disarmament is attained, sufficient numbers of nuclear weapons are necessary to credibly deter enemy states and provide a nuclear umbrella to United States allies. Furthermore, the self-imposed limitations on nuclear use outlined in the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) weaken the level of American deterrence but do not credibly discourage determined proliferators from pursuing illicit nuclear activities. Thus while the administration's disarmament activity may reduce the world's largest nuclear arsenals, it ultimately could lead to less effective and less stable deterrence, greater nuclear proliferation among friends and foes, and an overall weakening of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Part II of this volume explores the interface between the Obama disarmament agenda and the constraints of international realities. Tamar Malz-Ginzburg looks at the conclusion of the New START treaty by the United States and Russia, the publication of the Nuclear Posture Review, and the Nuclear Security Summit, and questions whether these three measures have made a real contribution to implementation of the Obama vision. Malz-Ginzburg contends that New START is far more an arms control treaty than a disarmament agreement, and the NPR offers little in

curtailing potential use of the US nuclear arsenal. Thus the three events, cast as milestones on the road to disarmament, are in fact of little substance in this regard.

In the next essay, Uzi Rubin examines the relations between the United States and Russia in light of the US missile defense program. He surveys the history of strategic defense, in particular as it challenges a strategic deterrence approach. Unlike during the Cold War, the current issue does not only concern the bilateral nuclear balance, but also involves a potential multilateral balance with regard to rogue states such as North Korea and Iran. However, while the United States explained its intention to establish a missile defense system in Europe in terms of threats emanating from Iran, Russia saw itself as the true target. President Obama's desire to "reset" US-Russia relations largely dictated the formulae of the renegotiated START agreement, and Rubin argues that as long as the gap exists between the Russian and American worldviews about bilateral and multilateral nuclear relations, the question of strategic defense will remain a bone of contention.

Ephraim Asculai examines the second measure towards a world free of nuclear weapons announced by President Obama in his Prague speech: halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The essay discusses nuclear-related international agreements addressed by the international community in 2010: the completed but not yet entered into force Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the proposed Fissile Materials Cutoff Treaty (FMCT), export controls agreements, and the currently non-formalized Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Only the latter two initiatives are enforcement measures, and the verification protocols attendant to the various treaties can do little more than sound a warning that a situation is deteriorating. Thus, Asculai argues that global treaties are far less urgent than the immediate need to stop efforts by Iran and other proliferators to achieve a military capability.

In the final essay of this section, David Friedman broadens the scope of the discussion and surveys efforts to stem other types of weapons of mass destruction. Although some countries have undertaken unilateral actions to control chemical and biological weapons, the primary means are the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions. Friedman examines these two conventions, focusing on the degree to which they exceed the declarative level and effect actual arms control. He also looks at the

chemical-biological threat in the Middle East context, and discusses steps Israel has taken, on both the international and domestic levels, to stem proliferation of chemical and biological weapons.

Part III of this volume examines the ramifications of the Obama arms control agenda in the context of the Middle East, with an emphasis on Israel's nuclear situation. Against the background of the recent upheaval in Egypt, Shimon Stein examines Egypt's longstanding preoccupation with Israel's perceived nuclear capability and the ensuing Egyptian agenda, exacerbated by the materializing Iranian threat. Although to Egypt, Israeli and Iranian capabilities present highly different threats, they have both challenged Egypt's leadership in the Arab-Muslim world. The essay focuses on Egypt's activity at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which constituted a milestone in its ability to push through a final document that singles out Israel and formally places the Israeli nuclear issue on the international agenda. Stein also surveys possible Egyptian options in grappling with the Iranian challenge and indicates that any measures considered will likely be highly intertwined with United States positions.

In the concluding essay of the volume, Yair Evron emphasizes the importance of the nuclear nonproliferation regime, claiming that despite its shortcomings it has successfully established an important norm of nuclear nonproliferation and has enhanced the commitment by nuclear states to disarm. Against the background of the Obama arms control agenda, Evron argues that Israel should help strengthen the nonproliferation regime. He explores possible measures Israel might adopt, even as it maintains its posture of nuclear ambiguity and is not a signatory to the NPT. An Israeli internal debate on nuclear strategic issues and arms control measures will also help Israel prepare for a conference in 2012 called for by the NPT RevCon final document on a weapons of mass destruction free zone. The debate surrounding the proposed conference lies outside of the scope of this volume and will be treated in a separate study.

How much the Obama agenda has or has not enabled the United States to confront Iran is a thread that runs throughout this volume. So too the question of how this agenda impacts on Israel also punctuates the volume as a whole. Indeed, already in the opening essay Emily Landau discusses how the adoption of the US disarmament agenda has introduced a new complication in US relations with Israel. Reconciling the long term US

commitment to uphold Israel's security and ensure its qualitative edge with the disarmament imperative that the administration has embraced has become a more difficult balancing act than in the past, with significant implications for Israel. As for the disarmament vision itself, what has emerged is the absence of a clear direction in United States nonproliferation policy.

Taken together, the essays compiled here probe the effects of international trends in nuclear arms control on the nuclear nonproliferation regime and on Israel's nuclear policy. These trends have in many ways been shaped and guided by the Obama disarmament vision. The essays paint the complex picture of international activity to limit proliferation and to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, and they question the congruence between the steps taken by the Obama administration to strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation regime and his vision of a world free from nuclear arms. Highlighting the tension between theoretical ideals and the reality of aspiring and accomplished proliferators, the authors emphasize that progress towards nuclear disarmament must be grounded in a nuanced awareness of the opportunities and dangers of this vision in the current international reality.

Emily B. Landau, Tamar Malz-Ginzburg  
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