



## Rising to the Challenge of Effective Multilateralism

**Stephen G. Rademaker, Acting Assistant Secretary, International Security and Nonproliferation**

Remarks at the Conference on Disarmament

Geneva, Switzerland

May 18, 2006

5/18 -- Stephen G. Rademaker [press conference](#)

5/18 -- [White Paper](#) on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty

5/18 -- [Texts of the Draft Mandate](#) for Negotiations and the Draft Treaty

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, it is a pleasure for me to appear again in this chamber before the Conference on Disarmament. When I last spoke to this body three years ago, I chose as my theme "The Commitment of the United States to Effective Multilateralism." I explained how, with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction having become the preeminent threat of the post-Cold War era, the United States is convinced that multilateralism is today more important than ever. Because of the crucial importance of effective multilateralism in confronting today's threats, I underscored the determination of my government to provide the international leadership necessary to ensure that multilateralism does not fail in those cases of vital importance to our security. Finally, I cautioned against confusing leadership designed to ensure that multilateralism succeeds in such cases with so-called "unilateralism."



Regrettably, the challenges to international peace and security today are no less great than when I spoke here three years ago. In a moment I will address some of those challenges, but first I want emphasize an important aspect of multilateralism that is overlooked in many discussions of the subject.

### Sovereign Responsibility

Mr. President, in the view of the United States, effective multilateralism begins at home. In confronting the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction, the fundamental building block of success is national efforts to control the dangers of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, and the delivery systems for such weapons. Multilateral institutions and multilateral instruments cannot by themselves substitute for the exercise by sovereign governments of their responsibility to prevent the proliferation of these weapons. Multilateral institutions and multilateral instruments can establish norms, provide assistance and encouragement to those requesting help complying with the norms, and impose consequences for violations of the norms. But sovereign states also have the responsibility and, in most cases, the capability to stem WMD proliferation. Blind deference to multilateralism should not be considered an acceptable excuse for the failure of governments to do everything within their power at home to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

For these reasons, a hallmark of the Bush Administration's approach to proliferation issues across the board has been to promote exercise of the sovereign responsibility of states to act against WMD proliferation. A clear example of this approach is the work program adopted with U.S. support at the conclusion of the Fifth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention in 2002. Rather than adopting a new multilateral instrument or establishing a new multilateral institution, the States Parties to the BWC agreed in 2002 to focus from 2003 to 2005 on steps that individual governments could take to better exercise their sovereign responsibility to prevent the development or spread of biological weapons. Those steps included such things as criminalizing the development or use of biological weapons by their nationals or on their territory, improving security measures applied to dangerous pathogens, and strengthening codes of conduct for scientists.

This approach also is reflected in our vigorous support for the development and adoption of a Plan of Action to promote national measures to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, adopted in 2004, was an even more direct effort to promote the exercise of sovereign responsibility to prevent proliferation. By requiring all states to criminalize WMD proliferation and to adopt and enforce controls on exports of sensitive WMD-related technologies, Resolution 1540 ended once and for all the debate about the propriety of such controls. Today it is clear that effective export controls are not just good policy, they are legally required of all members of the United Nations.

Consistent with Resolution 1540, Mr. President, a coalition numbering over seventy countries, including the United States, has been working through the Proliferation Security Initiative to interdict proliferation-related shipments that export controls fail to stop. Needless to say, we see the PSI as another example of the exercise of sovereign responsibility, albeit an exercise that sovereign governments carry out in coordination with one another.

These kinds of measures are essential to successfully preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and they can be extremely helpful in preventing governments from developing such weapons in violation of their legal obligations. In the case of governments that are absolutely determined to acquire such weapons, however, these kinds of measures are not always enough. In such cases, effective multilateralism requires not only that existing multilateral mechanisms be utilized, but also that they function as they were designed to confront the proliferation threat.

### The Hard Cases

An obvious case in point, Mr. President, is Iran. On September 24th of last year, the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency adopted a resolution formally determining that Iran was in noncompliance with its safeguards obligations due to its "many failures and breaches." This determination was based on a three-year long investigation by the IAEA of previously undeclared nuclear activities in Iran extending back over a period of 18 years.

As a result of this finding by the IAEA Board, as well as a separate finding by the Board in that same resolution that Iran's nuclear program raises questions that are within the competence of the U.N. Security Council as the organ bearing main responsibility for international peace and security, Iran was formally reported to the Security Council in February of this year. On March 29th, the Security Council, acting by consensus, adopted a presidential statement calling on Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment-related activities, cooperate fully with the IAEA's ongoing investigations, and enter into good faith negotiations on measures to restore international confidence in Iran's nuclear intentions. Iran's response to this statement was to announce two weeks later that it had met with initial success in uranium enrichment and was planning to expand rapidly the scale of its enrichment work. Lest this response be misunderstood, Iran also rejected repeated requests for transparency and cooperation.

The United States expects the Security Council to fulfill its responsibility under the UN Charter to address the threat to international peace and security posed by Iran's illegal nuclear weapons program, and it will be a defeat for effective multilateralism should the Council fail to live up to this responsibility.

Mr. President, I do not need to recount the long history of Iran's clandestine activities which have slowly been brought to light by the IAEA, nor the many areas in which,

even today, Iran is failing to cooperate fully with the IAEA in its investigation of Iran's nuclear program. I do, however, want to make a few observations about the justification that Iran offers for its continued pursuit of the capability to enrich uranium.

Iran claims that it is pursuing uranium enrichment because of the high value that it attaches to its energy independence; Iran says it does not want to be dependent on foreign sources of fuel for nuclear power reactors. There are flaws with this argument.

First, Iran today does not have any operational nuclear power reactors. Russia is building one power reactor at Bushehr, but Iran has no reason to worry about how it will be fueled, as Russia and Iran have negotiated a contract obligating Russia to provide roughly twelve years' worth of fuel for the reactor. Russia has further offered to provide Bushehr's lifetime fuel needs. Russia has strongly advised Iran against seeking to manufacture its own fuel for Bushehr. Russia has pointed out that Iranian production of fuel for Bushehr will not be economically viable. In addition, Russia has warned Iran that if it attempts to introduce its own fuel into the Bushehr reactor this will void Russia's warranties of safe operation for the reactor, meaning that Russia no longer will be responsible if a nuclear accident occurs.

Second, in contrast to Iran's vast oil and gas reserves, Iran does not have sufficient reserves of uranium to support its claimed nuclear power ambitions. According to information provided by Iran to the OECD in 2003, Iran's known uranium reserves would provide less than one year's worth of fuel for the nuclear power program that Iran says it intends to build -- that is, seven 1000 MW reactors by 2020. Even if Iran's unproven and speculative uranium reserves are also taken into account -- reserves which are only a geological possibility, but have not been found, and again drawing on numbers provided by Iran to the OECD -- Iran still would have no more than ten year's worth of fuel for its intended nuclear power program.

Third, even if Iran had sufficient uranium reserves to support such a program, calculations show that the cost to Iran of indigenous fuel manufacture will far exceed the price at which reactor fuel could be purchased on the open market.

Finally, if Iran genuinely were concerned with its energy independence, it would be investing in additional petroleum refinery capacity to address a critical energy vulnerability that exists today -- its dependence on foreign imports for 40% of its gasoline consumption. Instead of investing to eliminate a large and growing energy dependence that exists today, Iran is investing somewhere on the order of \$1 billion to develop a uranium enrichment capability to protect against a relatively small energy dependence that may arise in the future. The Bushehr reactor will not even begin to produce electric power for at least another 18 months, and it will be many more years before Iran completes any additional nuclear power plants.

All of these points underscore the economic illogic of Iran's investment in enrichment: an indigenous nuclear fuel cycle in Iran simply will not make any substantial contribution to Iran's energy independence.

In addition to Iran, of course, there is the case of the D.P.R.K. The D.P.R.K. has withdrawn from the NPT, is pursuing enrichment and reprocessing of fissile material, and has declared that it has manufactured nuclear weapons. At the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks in September 2005, the D.P.R.K. stated its commitment to abandon all its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, and to return at an early date to the NPT and to IAEA safeguards. It is imperative that the D.P.R.K. avoid steps that would be contrary to the purpose of the Joint Statement issued at the end of the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks, including any transfer of nuclear material, testing of a nuclear weapon or of missiles, or the continuing reprocessing of plutonium. The next round of the Six-Party Talks should focus on the steps required for complete, verifiable, and irreversible elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs

#### **The Conference on Disarmament**

Mr. President, the Conference on Disarmament and its predecessor bodies have been the international community's principal multilateral negotiating forum for addressing weapons of mass destruction and other arms control, nonproliferation, and security issues for the past four decades. In that time, the CD has negotiated successfully a number of multilateral treaties, most notably the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, and the Chemical Weapons Convention. In the view of the United States, this Conference retains its potential as one of the world community's primary instruments for promoting a safer and more secure world. Regrettably, we have seen little evidence of that potential in recent years.

When I last spoke before this Conference three years ago, I lamented the fact that the CD had, for six years, failed to agree on how to address the dangers of weapons of mass destruction, or any other dangers, for that matter. Today, I could repeat those words, except that I would have to substitute "nine years" for "six years."

The fundamental problem today is the same as it was when I last spoke here. Over the past decade, this body has permitted itself to become deadlocked by a lack of consensus on a work plan, thus reducing most CD meetings to nearly meaningless exercises in rhetoric.

The source of the deadlock is twofold. First, there has developed here an unconscionable tolerance for hostage-taking. For years, worthy proposals to which no one objects have been taken hostage by proponents of less worthy ideas that do not command consensus. So ingrained is the acceptance of hostage-taking here that, today, most of the complaints are directed not at the hostage-takers, but at those who refuse to "ransom" the hostages by agreeing to proposals that their governments do not support. Second, far too many members remain committed to an outmoded and unrealistic agenda that dates back to the Cold War.

How, then, should this Conference proceed, Mr. President? Surely, it is time for delegations finally to acknowledge that the package approach to a program of work will never succeed. For nearly a decade, well-meaning CD member states, groups of members, and individual representatives acting in their personal capacities have developed a series of these packages, such as CD/1624 (known as the Amorim proposal), CD/1693/Rev.1 (known as the A-5 proposal), and CD/1757, circulated by the former Peruvian presidency near the end of last year's session. All have focused on the same group of issues, and none has been able to elicit consensus support from this body. To date, our Delegation has seen no evidence that continuing to look for a package deal is any more likely to succeed this year.

#### **Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty**

Mr. President, my Government believes that the only possible avenue for progress is for the Conference on Disarmament to concentrate its efforts on the one topic on which we most likely shall be able to take action. That issue, of course, is the one that consistently has garnered overwhelming support in the UN General Assembly, and always has been considered the top priority on the multilateral disarmament and nonproliferation agenda. It is also the one and only proposed agenda item that all members of this conference profess to support. That, Mr. President, is a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, or FMCT.

Today, the United States is tabling the text of a draft FMCT, a draft mandate for FMCT negotiations, and a paper summarizing United States views on an FMCT. Our Delegation requests that these texts be circulated as official documents of the Conference. The treaty text that we are putting forward contains the essential provisions that would comprise a successful, legally binding FMCT. Our draft treaty has a straightforward scope: it bans, after entry into force, the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This is the fundamental objective that an FMCT should achieve.

Mr. President, our draft clearly defines fissile material and related production methods in a manner consistent with established practices and past thinking on that subject. For example, the production of fissile material for non-explosive purposes, such as naval propulsion, would not be prohibited by an FMCT. Existing stocks of fissile material also would be unaffected. Our draft also spells out the mechanisms needed for a treaty. Entry into force, dispute resolution, implementation, signature, accession -- it's all here.

Consistent with our conclusions regarding the verifiability of an FMCT, which Ambassador Sanders announced to the Conference in July 2004, our text includes no provisions designed to provide verification. This does not mean that compliance with the treaty would be unverified, but rather that the primary responsibility for verification would rest with the parties using their own national means and methods -- or, said another way, through the exercise of the sovereign responsibilities of the states parties to monitor compliance.

Mr. President, this draft treaty is a way forward for this body and for the maintenance of international peace and security. Our Delegation looks forward to explaining our proposed text, whether at this time or at the negotiating table. Therefore, Mr. President, we propose that an ad hoc committee, or even this plenary itself, begin immediate debate on our text, with the objective of approving a text for signature by the end of this year's CD session.

I am aware, Mr. President, that the traditionalists here will say that it is inconceivable that progress will be allowed on one proposed agenda item without simultaneous movement on other proposed agenda items. As I noted earlier, the acceptance of hostage-taking is deeply ingrained here. It is not surprising that individual delegations would use procedural devices such as hostage-taking to advance their pet ideas. What is surprising is the tolerance of hostage-taking that has been on display here for nearly a decade.

My Government, as all delegations know, has its own pet idea. Two years ago we called on the CD to negotiate a treaty banning the sale or export of persistent landmines. I am reliably informed that we still have some work to do if we want to achieve a consensus to commence such a negotiation. If we were unprepared to do the hard work of trying to persuade others of the merits of our idea, we could adopt the approach of others here in threatening to block all work until our idea was accommodated. If we were to do that, I would expect us to be widely criticized for standing in the way of progress. What I do not understand, and what I have a hard time explaining to the proponents of our landmines idea back in Washington, is why that kind of behavior would be condemned here if we engaged in it, but is not condemned here when others engage in it. I have an even harder time explaining why it is that many delegations here seem to assign the principal blame for inaction at the CD to those of us who refuse to acquiesce in hostage-taking by others.

Mr. President, our Delegation believes that the CD could continue to discuss other, so-called "traditional" issues as it conducts FMCT negotiations. We also support the discussion of so-called "new" issues, with the aim of identifying any that might be ripe for more serious consideration. The United States is always prepared to consider proposals designed to confront modern security threats with the seriousness that they deserve. Our Delegation sees no need at this time, however, for the negotiation of new multilateral agreements on nuclear disarmament, outer space, or negative security assurances. Not only are such negotiations unnecessary, but we believe that after nine years of inactivity, this body simply is not able at this time to deal in depth with more than one issue.

Mr. President, the United States views 2006 as critical to the continued existence of the CD as a meaningful international negotiating forum. The long-lived deadlock at the CD has raised questions in many countries as to the continued viability of this forum. As a result, since the 1990's, most CD member states have withdrawn their CD-specific delegations as their governments have shifted their priorities and resources to more productive venues.

Despite what many other governments have done, President Bush last week renewed America's commitment to the CD by nominating a new U.S. ambassador to the Conference. Christina Rocca, our former Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, is a highly qualified replacement for Ambassador Jackie Sanders. She has been nominated to come here in the hope that the time is now ripe for progress on an FMCT and other U.S. priorities. I urge all delegations to work with us in order to ensure that she does not serve as the last U.S. ambassador to the CD. Thank you, Mr. President.

Released on May 18, 2006

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.