

EVENT SUMMARY

Improving nuclear security in 2009 and beyond: Transatlantic options for the new Administration

Public event co-sponsored by

the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) and
Women in International Security (WIIS)

Held at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC
November 6, 2008

BASIC and WIIS brought together a panel of experts immediately after the U.S. elections to reflect upon the prospects for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament under a new administration. The speakers focused on opportunities for international cooperation, particularly in the run up to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in 2010.

Panelists:

- **Mary Alice Hayward:** Deputy Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Nonproliferation Policy and Negotiations at the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, U.S. State Department
- **Deepti Choubey:** Deputy Director, Nonproliferation Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- **Malcolm Savidge:** BASIC Council Member, former MP and founder of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Security and Non-Proliferation
- **Moderator: Paul Ingram,** Executive Director, BASIC



Mary Alice Hayward (Photo: BASIC)

The next Administration will continue to face the grave possibility of terrorists obtaining nuclear and other materials related to weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Mary Alice Hayward discussed how the President can help to mitigate this threat by building upon a range of bilateral and multilateral relationships and agreements. She acknowledged that the critical U.S.-Russian relationship has recently encountered setbacks, including disagreements over the conflict between Georgia and Russia. Ms. Hayward affirmed that U.S. and Russian cooperation on protecting and removing sensitive nuclear materials, however, has continued apace

and remains a route for positive action in the future. She pointed to the Bratislava Nuclear Security Initiative, which includes U.S. assistance for the upgrading of security at nuclear facilities in Russia and advised the next U.S. Administration to sustain the momentum and resources for this program.

Ms. Hayward also emphasized the necessity of building a broader strategic coalition of countries to address the problem at all capacity levels. She cited the example of the Global Initiative to Combat

Nuclear Terrorism and exercise scenarios that will bring together international and local experts to prepare for securing lost and detonated WMD. She added that providing U.S. assistance for programs that prevent safe havens for nuclear smuggling will remain an important component of international cooperation on non-proliferation.

Malcolm Savidge turned the focus of the discussion toward the expectations for the next U.S. Administration. He proposed that regardless of whether John McCain or Barack Obama had been elected president, the next administration will face a number of urgent demands for strengthening arms control agreements. Mr. Savidge called on the Obama Administration to press for the U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and to facilitate agreement on a multilateral treaty that would ban the production of fissile materials.



Malcolm Savidge (Photo: BASIC)

Mr. Savidge affirmed the importance of producing a follow-up accord to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which expires at the end of 2009. He recognized that reaching such a deal will be more difficult given the recent setbacks in Russian-U.S. relations, and criticized the Bush Administration's handling of missile defense in Europe as an additional contributing factor to the relationship's decline.

He also highlighted the importance of dialogue with an emphasis on respect, compromise, and pragmatism between partners in advance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in 2010. Mr. Savidge warned that the next administration must avoid attributing "most-favored nation status" to particular member states or promoting agreements that could reinforce the sense of unfairness felt by some countries toward the nuclear weapons states (NWS) of the NPT. He concluded that the United States and other NWS should refrain from promoting themselves as "responsible stewards" of nuclear weapons while continuing to call on other countries to forego these weapons, especially without paying due attention to their own disarmament commitments.

Deepti Choubey took forward this discussion on the NPT Review Conference and recommended that as a matter of priority, the next administration should engage non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS) and the Non-Aligned Movement. She said that such engagement need not be done for its own sake or altruism, but rather for the common sense purpose of improving security.



Deepti Choubey (Photo: BASIC)

Ms. Choubey recently completed a study titled, [Are New Nuclear Bargains Attainable?](#) The project entailed interviewing officials at foreign ministries around the world on the nuclear non-proliferation regime. During her interviews, officials representing non-nuclear weapons states told her that although stockpile reductions in the nuclear weapons states are important to them, they do not see further reductions as being sufficient for the NWS to hold up their end of the NPT bargain. Officials cited the United States in particular as having weakened the bargain as they interpret it. The Bush Administration's push for new nuclear programs, such as the nuclear "bunker buster" and a Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW), has been seen by some countries as signaling the United States' intention to retain nuclear weapons far into the future and reflecting the value that U.S. policymakers still place on these weapons even while they seek to prevent other countries from obtaining them.

NNWS officials also warned Ms. Choubey that even if the United States ratifies the CTBT, such action will not bring additional political capital that the United States can use for promoting non-proliferation. They perceive CTBT ratification to be long overdue and feel that they have already paid for this action. Rather, they are looking for the United States to more aggressively downplay the role of nuclear weapons in its strategic posture and within its alliances, especially within NATO. However, Ms. Choubey also noted that while the NNWS now have deeper expectations of the United States, they should be prepared to spread their attention to other nuclear weapon states, as their cooperation will also be needed before further progress can be made in non-proliferation.

Please note: BASIC and WIIS do not necessarily endorse all of the comments made during the discussion.



Following the panelists' presentations, Paul Ingram (second from left) moderates a question and answer session. (Photo: BASIC)

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