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| Gautam Ranji: | Good evening. My name is Gautam Ranji. I'm a senior vice president here at the Hearst Corporation. I'll be brief. I really just wanted to take the opportunity to welcome you all here this evening. For those of you who have been at the Hearst Corporation before, welcome back. We have a fantastic program ahead, this evening. I will turn it over to Dr. Hugh Roome from Scholastic to begin the event. |
| Hugh Roome: | Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, I want to just reiterate that this is the David Hamburg lecture from the Carnegie Corporation and David is here. We are so fortunate. David, in the front row, has made a significant contribution to some of the issues that Senator Sam Nunn is going to talk about this evening, but very significantly was chairman of the department of psychiatry at Stanford for many years where he went on to become a trustee and has been involved in enumerable issues related to the thinking and mindset that affects the issues that we'll talk about tonight. |
|  | I also would like to thank Vartan Gregorian for coming and representing, also, the Carnegie Corporation and it's wonderful to have you here and to have this lecture. |
|  | Now, the lecture will be given by Senator Sam Nunn and it's almost impossible to introduce him because he has enumerable accolades so I'm going to be really concise. I think importantly at the moment, Senator Nunn, who was a US Senator from '72 to '97, is currently CEO of the Nuclear Threat Initiative NTI. There he is doing critical work in dealing with nuclear arms as you may know. Related to that, during his tenure in office the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Plan, in my personal opinion, is one of the most significant things that the United States has achieved in the post-Soviet era. This took probably 7600 or more nuclear weapons out of the Soviet Union. The weapons were then dismantled and they, remarkably, and the nuclear material used for power generation. A wonderful scenario. It took great vision. It took great energy. It also took an ability to work across the aisle. I think that is equally one of the hallmarks of Sam Nunn. |
|  | I'll go back to the very beginning. Hailing from Georgia, a family also in politics, an Eagle Scout, attended Georgia Tech, and then finished at Amory but going back to Georgia Tech now where there is the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs. Among his enumerable achievements he was asked by President Clinton to try to convince the Haitian dictator General Raoul Cedras to leave and he, in a delegation with Colin Powell, former President Jimmy Carter, went in and were successful in that all-critical endeavor. He's on the board of places like Coca-Cola, and many others. I will also note just two of his truly enumerable accolades. |
|  | He's the winner of the Ivan Allen Jr Prize for Social Courage. How appropriate. He's a night commander of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. Again, makes great sense in terms of the impact that his work, particularly in nuclear arms, has had in Germany. |
|  | Two weeks ago, Sam Nunn gave a speech at the Carnegie Moscow Center and I'll just quote a couple of things from that. "Our challenges are clear and dangerous," he said, "There is a corrosive lack of trust undermining cooperation between the US and Russian leaders. There is aggressive rhetoric regarding nuclear weapons." And, third, "There is no agreed process or an agenda for next steps on nuclear arms control in risk reduction." With that, no one is more articulate on these issues. Sam Nunn, in one of the many, many videos you can watch on him, did a description of if the 9/11 strike had been a nuclear weapon instead of these airplanes, as horrific as it is, it is unimaginable the consequences. |
|  | To understand the threat that nuclear arms are to our world is truly important and this man is crusading. He is speaking every day to audiences such as ours tonight. No one has a louder or more important voice on these issues. |
|  | With that, Senator Sam Nunn. |
| Sen. Sam Nunn: | Thank you very much, Hugh for that very generous introduction and I thank Noel and the Foreign Policy Association, not only for having this event today but also for continuing your mission of informing and educating and discussing our foreign policy with so many citizens that really can have an impact on a smart and wise foreign policy for America. |
|  | Never has there been a time where we needed more of that kind of discussion because we were accustomed to a world that had good guys and bad guys. The Soviet Union and the West for many, many years, at least in perception, and now we're in a complex world with an awful lot of moving parts so those kinds of discussions sponsored by your association is terrific, Noel and Hugh, and all of those who make it possible. I thank Carnegie. I see my good friend Vartan Gregorian here and I see other Carnegie people who are so important. Deanna, and Gene, and others who work so hard to make the world safer every day so I thank you for your continuing, outstanding leadership. |
|  | Having been in politics for 24 years, actually, 28 counting the State Legislature, I could explain to this audience today in a very brief time the intricacies and reasons behind all the political events this year but I think I'm going to refrain from doing that by simply quoting Will Rogers many years ago who seems to have no end to his relevancy of his remarks. He said, "Politicians are like diapers. They have to be changed often and for the same reason." That is the end of my political report and I'm going to spend the evening talking about serious matters that David Hamburg has played such a role in. |
|  | I'm delighted to be here this evening to honor the legacy and the work and the outstanding leadership which continues of Dr. David Hamburg on conflict prevention among many other things. David and Betty Hamburg, who is not with us today, but David and Betty's lovely granddaughter is here and they are at the top of my list of the country's most thoughtful and caring and accomplished and creative couples. I consider them to be national treasures. For decades they've worked to solve problems to improve the prospects for humanity and to prevent deadly conflict, in the case of David. I've been honored to work closely with David Hamburg for many years and to benefit from his experience, from his wisdom, and from his marvelous spirit. I'm also delighted that David is spending some time and when he has time in our office in Washington, DC of the organization I run which is called The Nuclear Threat Initiative. His insights and his experience is a thrill for our young staff and for, indeed, our older staff at all levels every single day. |
|  | Some people ask, "Well, where did you meet David Hamburg and how has he been so impactful?" Let me flash back to September 1991. I had recently returned from an exciting and fascinating but rather alarming, in many ways, trip to Moscow. Just days after Gorbachev was released from the coup attempted by members of his own government and the Russian military. The reason I had gone to Moscow was because one of the former Soviet friends that I had had rushed from Budapest, Hungary where I was in a conference back to Moscow when Gorbachev was taken prisoner and after he was released he called me and said, "Sam, immediately, you've got to come to Moscow. Things are really changing." I said, "Well, I don't have a visa." His name is Andrew Kokoshin. "I don't have a visa." He said, "I'll have the Russian ambassador there in just a few minutes." I said, "Andrei, you've never done anything in your bureaucracy in less than 10 or 15 days but I'll believe it when I see it." Anyway, the Russian or Soviet ambassador showed up and I had a visa and so I went. |
|  | I was convinced after several days there, watching all the turmoil and the excitement, I was convinced the Soviet Union was coming apart and that the largest arsenal of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and materials in human history could be up for grabs across 11 time zones. That was the alarming part. |
|  | Shortly thereafter, Dick Lugar ... After I came back, Dick Lugar and I joined together to work on what some immediately termed "a wacky, wacky idea." To spend US defense dollars to secure and help destroy Soviet weapons of mass destruction which were located in the far reaches of the Soviet Union. We argued that the United States most work with our Cold War adversary to protect the world from disaster, if and when, the empire broke up. This argument came in September. I was chair of the Armed Services Committee and we had already passed our bill and it went into conference and Les Aspen who was chair on the House side and I put in that provision which later known as the Nunn-Lugar bill and we put it in conference. It came back to the Senate floor and all heck broke loose, so to speak. We had to pull it out and start convincing our colleagues over the next 6-8 weeks that it really was meritorious. |
|  | Some of our Senate colleagues immediately criticized this effort as aid to the Soviet military. The idea was initially in trouble but under David Hamburg's leadership the Carnegie Corporation, and I did not know this at that time, but they had recently funded a crucial report on the imminent danger to the United States and the world of the possible loss of Soviet nuclear, and chemical, and biological weapons. This Carnegie report, and it's author by the name of Ash Carter who happens to be US Secretary of Defense today, that made all the difference. It helped Senator Lugar and I. We had one breakfast after another, one lunch after another, convince our colleagues on an analytical basis. Mine was all intuitive. This was an analytical product that there really was an immediate danger to the United States and indeed to the whole world with the possible loss of control of Soviet nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. |
|  | This Carnegie report made all the difference. In mid-December the Senate approved the Nunn-Lugar Amendment by 86-8. An amendment to the Appropriation Bill. Two weeks later President Bush signed the bill into law. Two weeks after that the Soviet Union collapses. Not for the first time or the last, the role of Carnegie and the role of David Hamburg was indispensable and this role continues today and Carnegie under the very strong leadership of Vartan Gregorian. |
|  | I've encountered and worked with many brilliant leaders in my years in the public arena. Some have great breadth on a range of diverse topics. Some have great range in terms of breadth in areas of specialty. My bottom line, I've never known anyone that could match David' breadth of experience and his depth of knowledge and his huge, huge heart to go with it. What a combination. Thank you, David. I salute you for your sterling work and that work continues. You are a crown jewel. |
|  | Years ago, some young person came up to then-Secretary of State Dean Acheson and asked the Secretary how he would describe foreign policy. Evidently, that had been a particularly bad week for Secretary Acheson. He thought for 10 or 15 seconds, scratched his head, and finally said, "Foreign policy is one damn thing after another." |
|  | Well, there's a lot of truth to that. It's even more true today because we have so many crises going on in the world and so many moving parts. It's important to sort out priorities and it's absolutely crucial the United States sort out priorities because we are actually expected and asked to be everywhere to deal in every crisis. It's virtually ... It is impossible. We have to set priorities. Many things are important, many things are important. Many things we can justify getting involved. That doesn't mean they're wise. A few things are vital. A very few are what I call existential. Einstein said many years ago something to this effect, "I know not with what weapons World War Three will be fought but I am confident that World War Four will be fought with sticks and stones." I think that tells us something about what's vital and what's existential. |
|  | Beginning in 2006, George Schultz, Bill Perry, Henry Kissinger, and I have discussed the dangers related to nuclear weapons and our continuing obligation as a nation to address these risks. Since that time we've authored five essays in The Wall Street Journal detailing our conclusions and their implication. Believe me, with the four of us every essay is a negotiated product. It takes quite a while to put together. Let me reduce all five of these down to three key points. First, we are in a new and dangerous era, nuclear era, with outdated nuclear policies and increasing risk of nuclear use. Second, in this new era of nine armed nations and others aspiring to that ambition, a reliance on nuclear weapons for security is becoming increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective as a deterrent to prevent war. Third, US leadership and new approaches are required to protect our security. We need to take practical steps with other nations to reduce risks now and build the essential foundation to ultimately end nuclear weapons as a threat to the world. |
|  | In our five essays we outlined a series of steps urgently needed today as well as the long-term vision of ultimately getting rid of nuclear weapons in the world. This policy framework was initially adopted by both the Republican John McCain and Democratic candidate for President in 2008. Of course, that was President Obama. In 2009, President Obama in his prorogue speech, as well as the UN Security Council later that year by unanimous vote, including Russia, China, France, the UK, and the US, called for steps to make this world safer for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons. This was encouraging. Of course, that principal is already in the non-proliferation treaty. It's been there for a long time but having it said again in this day and time by these leaders in the UN Security Council was encouraging. |
|  | If we look at what has been accomplished over the past decade the report card is much more mixed. On the plus side, in some areas, progress has been made in reducing nuclear dangers and advancing non-proliferation through the hard work of many governments. The new start agreement provides a new and legally binding framework for reductions and, most importantly, verification of US and Russian strategic nuclear forces and essential component of strategic stability. Also, on the plus side the Nuclear Security Summits led by President Obama have contributed to a significant reduction in the number of countries with weapons usable nuclear material that could be used to build nuclear bombs. The further good news is we've gone from 50 countries to 24 countries in the last 25 years that have weapons-usable nuclear material. Not weapons, but weapons-usable nuclear material. Which is what terrorists would like to have in order to build a crude weapon to blow up a city somewhere in the world. |
|  | The nuclear agreement with Iran is a significant step forward from preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and a cascade of probable nuclear proliferation in the Mid East that would follow. It is certainly not a permanent guarantee. It buys time and time is valuable in this area. It buys time if it is successfully implemented and that will take a lot of diligence by the United States and other countries. |
|  | But despite this encouraging accomplishments, progress on many essential steps is halting or is absent. In particular the United States and Russia nuclear cuts are stalled and other nuclear nations are reluctant to join into arms control, even discussions pointing out that the US and Russia still control 90% of global nuclear inventory which is true. The US and Russia still deploy thousands of nuclear weapons ready to launch on a moment's notice. Something that has been bothering me for many, many years. Increasing the risk of a catastrophic accident or miscalculation based on false warning and in a cyber world false warning would become much more likely. Hundreds of US and thousands of Russian short-range nuclear weapons inviting targets for terrorists remain deployed or stored in Europe. All of them dangerous if not properly guarded and secured. |
|  | The comprehensive treaty banning nuclear tests remains unratified by a number of nations including the United States. Nearly 2000 metric tonnes of highly-enriched uranium and plutonium are spread across facilities in the 24 countries that still have that material and there is no global system for tracking or accounting for and managing and securing these materials. Including materials under military control which is 83% of the total. |
|  | The good news is as we move to the final nuclear security conference which will be coming up in one week, under President Obama's leadership, is that we have moved from 32 countries to 24 countries retaining weapons-usable material over the last 6 years. There's a huge job ahead. The job is just beginning. The terrorist threat is getting worse in a sense of groups that would not only aspire to such nuclear materials but also would use them if they have an opportunity. We have a lot to do and sustaining that progress is vital for our country and the world. Clearly the pace of work on these critical risk reduction steps does not match the urgency of a global threat. The world's efforts remain inadequate to the danger. |
|  | Now, in terms of looking at the broader picture of what's going on in the world and many of you are more expertise in many of these areas than I am, but compounding these dangers we have Russia's annexation of Crimea and support for separatists and that's a violation of it's commitments to respect Ukraine sovereignty and territorial integrity when the Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons in the 1990s which is part of the program that Hugh referred to in his introduction. We had three countries give up their nuclear weapons altogether. Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. A huge, huge deal that went largely unnoticed but was tremendously important for our security and the security of the region. You can figure what kind of a situation it would be there now if all three of those countries still had thousands of nuclear weapons and Ukraine had the largest nuclear inventory of weapons aimed at the United States of any countries except for Russia, and perhaps China. |
|  | Washington believes that Moscow is violating the intermediate range at nuclear forces treaty and Russia has charges against the US for violations themselves. European Union countries are facing new security challenges generated by the Syrian tragedy and open borders, as well as the Eurozone having other struggles including the Greece financial crisis. Though Eurozone is having a real struggle. Islamic state extremists are threatening states and borders in pursuit of a caliphate stretching across the Middle East. They are now claiming a dirty bomb capability. There are doubters as to whether that's true or not but any time that you control territory and you have access to hospitals, hospitals have radiological material. This is not weapon-grade material but it could be the subject of a dirty bomb. It's a serious problem. Tensions between China and other nations in Asia including US friends and allies undermine regional stability in that area, or at least threaten to. |
|  | In the nuclear arenas, states with nuclear arms have front-burner plans to modernize their forces. Particularly, United States and Russia. Former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry recently warned the United States and Russia are on the verge of a new nuclear arms race. Nuclear programs and capabilities continue in unstable countries and volatile regions, particularly, of course, Iran as we continue to be concerned there as well as North Korea. Regional conflicts like we see in the Middle East give rise to new nuclear power ambitions. Cyber-related threats loom large highlighting risk to nuclear facilities commanding control systems and warning system, as well as US infrastructure both public and private. |
|  | All of these events are occurring while thousands of US and Russia nuclear weapons remain on high alert and thousands more in global inventories. This underscores the fundamental point that George, Henry, Bill, and I have been making that reliance on nuclear weapons for our security is becoming increasingly complex and increasingly hazardous. |
|  | Before we get totally depressed in analyzing today's complex global security landscape and it's implications for nuclear threat reduction let's look back on the work of George Kennan and Paul Nitze who in 1947 to 1950 played crucial roles in crafting a US national security strategy that guided American policy throughout the Cold War more or less followed by both political parties when in office. In their work they assumed a day when the Cold War would end. Though few people then or until the Berlin Wall fell conceded that possibility. Their vision, along with a set of concrete steps pursued by both parties in the White House and our allies served as an organizing principle for a series of policy initiatives pursued patiently over many years by both political parties. Just as we did not know when and how the Cold War would end we cannot predict whether and when the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons might be within reach. A clear US nuclear goal consistent with a non-proliferation treaty obligations is required to guide our policy, give us the high ground, and also guide our diplomacy as well as our defense programs. |
|  | We do not know what a nuclear weapons-free world would look like but we do now that it would not be simply today's world subtracting nuclear weapons. There have to be major, major changes. Likewise, there were many changes in the world between 1947 and 1991, but the vision that motivated the policies articulated by Kennan and Nitze was to sustain throughout. Both men lived to see the end of the Cold War. Nitze was one of the first to make the case in 1999 for working again toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. With this inspiring example in mind what are the next steps in nuclear threat reduction? While there is still much to be done I continue to believe that the vision and steps frame we've been working on with global leaders and experts remains our best hope to address the strategic challenges of a multiple whirl while maintaining our own nuclear capabilities in a very sensible way until we reach a different stage in world opinion and willingness to move in this direction. |
|  | Each step is essential if following generations [inaudible 00:27:31] in a world without nuclear weapons but each step is also urgently needed if our present generation is going to be able to get the kind of cooperation required to reduce nuclear risk in today's world. For instance, securing all nuclear weapons material globally. If our next President continues to work within this framework this will also provide needed reinforcement to the needed non-proliferation and disarmament pillars of a non-proliferation treaty which needs bolstering after a failed review conference last year. Most importantly, a point I keep emphasizing wherever I am in the world, world leaders must recognize that we are in a new world era. Nation states no longer have a monopoly on weapons of mass destruction or disruption, including nuclear, radiological, chemical, biological, as well as cyber. The world is in a race between cooperation and catastrophe. |
|  | Some relationships are vital. US and Russia relationship is one of those. As the two countries with more than 90% of the world's nuclear inventories the United States and Russia have a very unique role to play. Trust between our two nations has severely eroded. One of my Russian friends who is a defense expert recently posed a powerful question. Vartan and David, this is Alexei Arbatov, you know very well. He said, and he made this a public statement which I thought was pretty gutsy in Russia's environment today, he said, "Could President Obama and President Putin today make the same statement that was jointly made by President Reagan and Gorbachev that nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought?" |
|  | I was in Moscow a couple of weeks ago and discussed with both Russians there and Americans back home a few of my own suggestions. I'll cite a few of these suggestions today with this audience. My first suggestion: we need to begin to learn how to and about each other. Prominent leaders must realize that reckless rhetoric creates an atmosphere that could lead to dangerous misunderstandings and miscalculations, including throughout the military chain of command. As Henry Kissinger reminded us recently, quoting him, "The fate of US and Russia remains tightly intertwined." End quote. Every day, 24 by 7, our two nations have an existential stake in command and control and warning systems. In both our nations this must occur every day, all the time. Systems that work perfectly and properly with competent human leadership. We don't stop and think about it, even some military leaders I've talked to over the years don't think about it. It's not only our warning systems, it's theirs. Theirs have to work because if they don't work properly they get false warnings, awful, terrible catastrophes can happen. |
|  | Second point: we must revive and strengthen channels of communication with Russia. We can no longer afford to treat dialogue as a bargaining chip. "You upset us and we will punish you by not talking" is not a sound strategy for two countries that control 90% of the world's nuclear weapons and materials. Both in the Georgia conflict and the Ukrainian conflict, the NATO Russian council which was set up for communication purposes, NATO has refused to have meetings when those conflicts started. To me, why have them if you're not going to have discussions at critical, critical moments. Continuous dialogue is essential between our military leaders and our intelligence communities. The NATO Russian councils should either be utilized or eliminated and we need to come up with something else. As a former member of the US Senate, I strongly recommend beginning a dialogue, again, between our parliamentary leaders as we had during the Cold War. David, you had a lot to do with that back in those days. |
|  | As part of this continuous dialogue the United States, NATO, and Russia must expand mechanisms that reduce the chances of military misunderstandings between us. Last year's events in Turkey relating to the unfortunate shoot-down of the Russian jet served as a powerful wake-up call that we need to reduce the chances of accidental encounters between NATO aircraft and Russian aircraft, as well as ships at sea. The United States and Russia should also agree on confidence-building measures to reinforce strategic stability and further reduce the chances of miscalculation including bolstering military to military communication. We should also utilize more robustly the Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers that former Senator John Warren and I instituted decades ago. They're in existence. They're in the State Department. They're also in Russia. They don't do anything like what they should be doing and could be doing. That's another initiative that David Hamburg helped inspire. |
|  | Third point: effective trust on reducing nuclear risk is not likely when the United States and Russia remain postured for nuclear mutually-assured destruction in a very brief few minutes. If leaders fail to see and act on this continued danger, Washington and Moscow will remain trapped in a costly and risky nuclear posture and other nations may follow making probably that Hiroshima and Nagasaki are not the last cities to suffer a nuclear attack. Washington and Moscow must find a way to work together to lower prop launch threats to each side. Reduce first strike capabilities, improve the survivability of forces, and increase warning and decision time for leaders. In spite of recent tensions we should determine if there is a basis for restarting serious discussions with Moscow under this framework. Reducing the number of nuclear weapons is important but it is only one factor in what we call overall strategic nuclear stability. |
|  | Fourth: President Obama will host a final Nuclear Summit Security Summit next week which I mentioned. This is an important opportunity and obligation to build on the progress made at the first three summits to secure weapons-usable nuclear material wherever they are around the globe. Leaders that attend this summit next week must find a way to sustain this effort after President Obama leaves office. The world must develop a global nuclear security system that covers all weapons-usable nuclear materials, including those held for military purposes. We must minimize the risk of nuclear terrorism posed by these materials through actions to reduce and consolidate materials and wherever possible eliminate them all together. |
|  | Fifth: the President and Congress are facing serious questions about the size and the capability of US nuclear deterrent. We are having very little discussion of it nationally. Leaders must identify trade-offs between paying to maintain and modernize exactly our current nuclear deterrent with all three legs and a triad and an estimate 30 year cost of $1 trillion against investing in other essential defense requirements. Ignoring these trade-offs or resorting to budgetary sleight of hand threatens our non-nuclear defense capabilities over time. The question of how much nuclear is enough with the respect to the nuclear triad as well as to what we call tactical or battlefield nuclear weapons must be asked and answered and linked to our overall defense needs including conventional forces. Former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry has called recently for a national discussion and debate on this subject including whether we should phase out our land-based missiles. I believe these important questions raised by Bill Perry must be addressed seriously by the administration and Congress. Certainly, by the next administration and Congress. |
|  | Most immediately and this is something I think can be achieved, can be achieved in the next week or two weeks or three weeks. No treaties needed, no negotiations, or long negotiations, but the United States and Russia I think could simply announce that we understand in spite of our differences that we must work together in the fight to keep ISIS or other violent extremist groups from getting any type of weapon of mass destruction. The threat posed by ISIS directly affects the core national interests of both of our countries. In particularly Russia and the United States, much work to ensure that neither ISIS nor any other violent group ever acquires nuclear, radiological, biological, chemical or other weapons of mass destruction. I particularly emphasize the dirty bomb radiological which I think is a clear and present danger. |
|  | Our two countries have the technical expertise and the unique knowledge to lead this effort. We work together since the early 1990s as has been mentioned. We've been doing such work together as well as in our own countries, now since the Nunn-Lugar program started early '90s. This mission seems to me to fit well under the legal framework of UN Security Council resolution 1540 as well as the global initiative to combat nuclear terrorism. Most importantly a joint working group must be formed and must lead by developing a prioritized list of actions that we can take together to prevent catastrophic terrorism. This is urgent and must be a front-burner issue with others joining in this effort. Large amounts of radiological material are found out in the last two weeks in Russia, according to Russia experts who made a presentation at two-day conference. Large amounts of radiological material, not weapons-usable, radiological dirty bomb type is located all over the Stan countries which is not very far from a lot of extremist groups are operating. |
|  | This is a proposal that I've talked about in Russia, I've talked about it with our leaders in this government, and I am hopeful that something that can be done on that in spite of our huge differences with Russia today. |
|  | Finally, my final point on US-Russia, when we do work together as we recently did with the Iran agreement we must both learn to express our appreciation publicly so that our political leaders, the media, as well as ordinary citizens of both of our countries recognize not just disagreements and confrontations which is the case today but also points of mutual interest and areas of success. I sat in a meeting several years ago back in the George W. Bush administration in the Secretary of State's office with former head of Russian foreign ministry and others ... Other people with almost all of the top American officials and I heard each side talk to each other about all the cooperation that was going on. It was impressive. Of course, they had disagreements too but when we got to the end I said, "Why didn't somebody say this publicly?" I'm worried that the poisonous atmosphere in Russia and the poisonous atmosphere of public opinion here is such that even when leaders want to get together it's going to be increasingly, increasingly difficult. That kind of positive dialogue is enormously important. |
|  | Foreign minister Iko Ivanov ... Former foreign minister who is the present former minister's predecessor and mentor said when I was in Moscow he made this statement, quote, "We must identify where our interests converge such as combating international terrorism, preventing political extremism, managing migration flows, solving the refugee problems, strengthening cyber and food security, tackling environmental issues, and coordinating on climate change." End quote. I added to that statement in a meeting we had together by saying that if we were going to rebuild damaged trust the US, Russia, and Europe must make every effort to end the Ukrainian conflict in accordance with the Minsk agreement which all of us signed up to. |
|  | In our original Wall Street Journal article we stated carefully, quoting from that article, "That our goal was to reverse alliance on nuclear weapons globally, as a vital contribution to preventing that proliferation into dangerous hands and ultimately ending them as a threat to the world." End quote. We made it very clear that unless we work together on the actions, the vision cannot be achieved. We and other nuclear powers must also understand that without the ultimate goal or vision many nations including our friends around the world are not likely to support the actions needed to prevent proliferation and catastrophic terrorism. The two go together: actions and visions. |
|  | This may be the most difficult but important security mission in the history of the world. I consider the goal of eliminating or getting rid of nuclear weapons like the climbing of the top of a very tall mountain. We can't see the top. We can see that we are heading down, not up. We must turn around. Others must join us as we move together to higher ground. In our world of turmoil and terrorism and distrust there are many who believe the mountain is too high and the fog is too thick. Many who are complacent argue that we've avoided nuclear catastrophe for more than a half-century so we might as well just keep doing what we've been doing. I disagree. It is human nature to resist change. The status quo often feels safer than change. The nuclear status quo is a mirage. The nuclear danger is either going to be increasing or being reduced, depending on what we do. We, being, not just the US but, we, US, Russia, China, and many other nations. |
|  | After the first atomic explosion Einstein commented, "This has changed everything except for the thinking of mankind. We explain the decline of other species as 'too slow' to adapt to a changing environment. Mankind must avoid this epitaph." I recharge my batteries frequently by asking myself two questions. If a nuclear disaster occurs what would we wish we had done to prevent it? Second question: why don't we do it now? |
|  | Thank you, David Hamburg. |
| Speaker 5: | Senator Nunn will take questions. You'll have to speak up loudly and we ask that others ... There are mic here and here. We ask you not to make particular statement but a crisp question, please. |
| Noel Lateef: | Senator, thank you for those very important remarks. What policy prescriptions would you offer for dealing with the nuclear threat posed by North Korea? |
| Sen. Sam Nunn: | Well, I am co-chairing a task force right now with Admiral Mike Mullen on that very question. We've had two meetings. We've got another one coming up next week. I think the key, and a lot of people have said this non-original thought is China. China is the country with the relationship with North Korea. They're the ones that have trade with them. It's a very important thing that we keep North Korea from developing not only the nuclear weapons inventory, they already have nuclear weapons, but also the missile capability. Of course, there have been all sorts of UN resolutions passed. I think we've got to be very clear with China our expectations and I think our government is doing that now. That's non-original thought. |
|  | I also think we need to sit down with China and sit down and have very quiet discussions with them about what would happen if North Korea collapses because China fears the collapse of North Korea more than they fear their nuclear weapons. They don't want them to have nuclear weapons but they fear that collapse. They fear millions of refugees, they fear destabilization of their borders, there are a lot of fears that we probably don't even completely understand. They also fear US troops moving to their border and they fear a South Korea-US alliance being on the China border. We've got to discuss those things with them. On the one hand, getting firmer with China in a private, diplomatic way but also listening to them and understanding from them their concerns about it. If you're not willing for North Korea to collapse you can't put the squeeze on that has to be put on. And South Korea, depending on the government there they have some of the same fears. South Koreans realize that if North Korea does collapse because of economic sanctions or destabilization that they've got huge, huge problems. |
|  | The other factor that has to be put into the equation is the fact that even without nuclear weapons North Korea poses an existential threat to the capital city of South Korea. For years they've had thousands of artillery tubes sitting within 30 mile range of the South Korean capital, the head of their whole basic economic miracle, and so they pose that threat if there is a war. Now, any war in my ... I haven't been briefed in a long time on this one but any war in my opinion just roughly speaking would be decisively in South Korea-US favor. It would happen within several weeks. If you lose the South Korean capital and you have millions of refugees from South Korea as well as North, it's something you want to avoid if you possibly can. |
|  | That would be my approach. Some of that may be going on, I'm not privy to what may be going on. I'm hoping it is. I would say that there's a positive step that's recently been taken by the UN Security Council and China had to go along with it and that is they've basically now have a UN Security Council resolution which empowers states to search every ship or plane coming out of North Korea. What I've always worried about with North Korea ... Iran is a different picture. I worry about proliferation with other countries, Iran, as well as their own, but in North Korea they are so desperately poor and the economic system is such a basket case I worry about the sale of weapons-usable nuclear material to terrorist groups because they are desperate for funding. That's where the worry is. This UN resolution which the question is whether we'll be actually implemented by countries, including China. It does help to address that problem of preventing the sale of nuclear materials by North Korea. |
|  | Yes, sir. |
| Speaker 6: | As a former member of the Armed Service Committee do you think it's even possible that we will give up land-based missiles which Bill Perry is talking about which I think could be a very important step forward but is it even feasible or possible? |
| Sen. Sam Nunn: | I'd say today if you voted on it it would be overwhelmingly no. I think but if you see over the next two years a debate occur and people start really wondering about whether we can pay for all this and what does it do to the US Navy budget, what does it do to the US Army budget, we've got to rebuild an army. They've had unprecedented 12 or 14 years of constant battles in Afghanistan and Iraq. What does it do to the US Air Force budget? When you look at the forces we're going to use and you look at the other big question has to come and again I'm not completely up to date on this one but what is the vulnerability of land-based missiles and right now they're very voluble. Of course we've had all sorts of morale problems with missile commanding control and silos. We've had a lot of problems there. |
|  | I think the whole question has to be carefully examined but I think Bill raises the point that the debate hasn't even occurred. We're setting in motion right now under President Obama's administration of modernization of all three legs of the triad: bombers, submarines, and land-based missiles. The total cost is projected to be about a trillion dollars over thirty year period. Now, when you look at the personnel cost or time cost, medical cost, and you take that cost and you add that to the budget and you look at another trillion bucks at just nuclear you've got to ask what is America's forces that are going to be used. |
|  | The all-important question: can we survive a first strike? This is what stability is all about. Could we survive a first strike with just the bombers and the submarines? The vulnerability of submarines is very, very important here. In a year or two after we examine this situation I think it's ... The Armed Services Committee in both the House and Senate are going to have to look at the trade-offs. It's not simply one easy question. A lot of trade-offs here. |
|  | Also, I think the attitude of the Russians is important too. If we start working with the Russians on some of these nuclear questions as I've outlined in my remarks it would be a little bit different view than right now. Right now with the Russians, in my view making irresponsible statements about nuclear weapons it would be a very difficult environment. The questions have to be asked. |
|  | Yes, sir. |
| Speaker 7: | Thanks for your existential work and thanks for being here. Question, can you address as you did for North Korea Pakistan? |
| Sen. Sam Nunn: | Well, Pakistan is an ally but if you look at the polls in Pakistan, America is very distrusted by that population. We're also distrusted by their military. I'm sure over the last two administrations, both Bush administration and Obama administration, have sent military people over there over and over again trying to assure the Pakistanis are properly safeguarding their nuclear weapons as well as their nuclear materials. They are very antsy about the US having access to any of those sites. I would say that we don't have complete assurances. What I worry about Pakistan, to me, it may be one of the most dangerous countries in the world because they have nuclear weapons, they have nuclear materials, and they also have violent extremists groups. What you worry about is also insiders. What about the insiders in Pakistan? I worry a lot about Pakistan. |
|  | I know that we're doing what we can do, though. But India and Pakistan, in my view, are also the area of the world where I'd be most concerned about some type of conflict with nuclear weapons breaking out. You've got two countries that have had historical animosities, you've got religious differences, you've got violent extremism, you've got conflict over Kashmir, you've got a question of this is where cyber comes in. At some point US and Russia need to work together on cyber making sure the commanding control is not in any way threatened. If we ever do that, if we ever got to that point to where we could work together on common threats to our own commanding control and warning systems then certainly it would be in both of our interests to share it with India and Pakistan and try to make sure they don't have an accidental war. |
|  | There was an article in Scientific American magazine about two and a half years ago that caught my eye because it was a hypothetical super-computer run on the basis of a hundred weapons being exploded between India and Pakistan, a war there limited to those two countries, they both have far more weapons than that, and the result would be several hundred million people killed immediately but even more devastating to the world the global cooling that would take place by the blockage of the sun by that many weapons going off would result according to this article a billion and a half, two billion people starving over the next decade. When people say everything is a sovereign right, a sovereign right to have nuclear weapons to have nuclear enrichment, so forth. Not the way I think. I think no country has the right to pose that kind of devastation on the globe. The whole world has a stake in this. |
|  | Yes, sir. |
| Speaker 8: | We were successful for many years in contributing to reductions from the 10,000 plus nuclear weapons with Russia down to the 3000 level. What is your view as to why that has not continued since we all know that level is vastly in excess of any of the other countries and what's needed from a security perspective so what is your view as to the politics and the military issues as to why that process after like three or four rounds has ceased? |
| Sen. Sam Nunn: | There are some legitimate concerns and then there are other concerns that both the US and Russia have with each other that interferes with the counter-political relationship. One of the genuine concerns is that I think at some point US and Russia would both feel that other countries with nuclear weapons have to be part of the discussion, even though they may not be part of the next round of cuts. The other countries, as I mentioned, with the US and Russia still have several thousand weapons each are not ready to have that discussion. At some point China has to get involved in the discussion as well as our allies Britain and France. Also, we've got countries like India and Pakistan that are building up their weapons. At some point this becomes more than just a bilateral type relationship. |
|  | The immediate reason that we've got no discussions going on with the US and Russia is because of the Ukrainian situation. United States, and Russia, and Great Britain assured Ukraine when they gave up their nuclear weapons in the early 1990s that we would all assure them of the backing of their sovereignty. I'm not sure of the exact magic words. It was not a defense commitment but it was certainly an expression of solidarity on the sovereignty of Ukraine. Of course, that's been badly breached by the Russians. All of those things play into it. The political relationship simply have not been strong enough and are not now to sustain that kind of serious arms control negotiation. |
|  | This is one of the reasons I'm trying to advocate building the bridge to at least have a working group working together to keep weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of terrorist groups, including but not limited to ISIL. That's a bridge that would encompass an awful lot of cooperation. We have to have better political relationships before we're going to have those kind of arms control discussions. Really, we're at the stage where if it were me I'd rather focus on increase warning time than I would number of weapons. What you really ... |
|  | When you talk about strategic stability what I mean by that, I'm not sure everybody means the same thing, but I mean by that not having forced postures that would lead either US or Russia that a first strike would be in their national security interests. It is not in our view, in our interest, for the Russians to fear a first strike and therefore be prepared to launch on warning. Launching their forces because they're not confident they can survive a first strike. We need to talk about those things. Those are the kind of things that really you need to get military leaders talking about together. It's not the kind of thing you sit down and write two or three sentences and say presto. Strategic stability, in my view, is more important than exactly the number of weapons. Survivability of weapons is assurance against a first strike of succeeding. It's in our interest for the Russians to have survivable forces. If we ever get to that stage where we have conflicts that neither of us is going to have a first strike against the other then the numbers will begin to come down. Numbers will become less relevant. |
|  | All of those things have to enter into the discussion. I know it sounds like Dr. Strangelove but that's the way the military leaders have to think. What you don't want to do is have a military general in Moscow come up to Putin or any other President and say, "Mr. President I hate to tell you but you've got 3 to 5 minutes to either use your nuclear weapons or we may use them because we think there's a first strike coming in." We think there is. That's what you call launch on warning. Launch before they actually hit. That can actually be a mistake. In a cyber world it can be a terrible mistake. In a world where you have submarines owned by not just US and Russia but by others it could be an unidentified attack. Not US but guess who would pay the price. It would be both of us. Of course, Russia knows if they launch an attack against us we can survive and retaliate. That small consolation that we could destroy them in exchange ... |
|  | We've got to have a meeting of the minds on this. We're riding a nuclear tiger that made sense during the Cold War to some extent because during the Cold War there was an existential philosophical difference about the way we basically saw the world. Today, we should not be in this posture. We ought to move away from that kind of prompt launch posture and it can be done. It just takes hard work and a lot of discussion among military leaders. |
| Speaker 9: | Could you offer your view on the US Senate, your former body you served in, ability to tackle these issues at this time? |
| Sen. Sam Nunn: | There are some serious people, good people in the Senate. I don't want to in any way disparage the institution as a whole. It's still a body as a whole I love very much but they're having a very hard time getting along well enough to even make the committees function properly. This ought to be the subject of a lot of hearings. Some of them closed, top-secret hearings in committees. They have some of those. I don't want you to believe they don't have any. It's awfully hard for them to work together now. |
|  | When I was in the Senate, Bob Dole and Robert Byrd. I mean, nobody is a more adamant Republican than Bob Dole and Robert Byrd was an avid Democrat but those two leaders ... Ted Stevens and I went to them and we said we think an arms control observer group would be great and they not only endorsed that concept they went to Geneva with us and they went to Vienna with us where arms control discussions were going on. We had about 6 or 8 Republicans and 6 or 8 Democrats and the two leaders actually went. The leadership makes all of the difference in the world. We don't have that kind of leadership in the Senate today. We just don't have it. There are some individual members who would be perfectly capable of that kind of cooperation. Saxby Chambliss who was my state and Mark Warner from Virginia, a Democrat and Republican, they worked assiduously on the budget fiscal situation which is also a huge challenge. They had no leadership backing whatsoever. |
|  | I would say that we have a long way to go. I don't in any way ... I take a long-term pessimistic view, though. I think America finds ways to make things work. We are in a period now that's pretty bad in terms of cooperation. One problem, though, and I don't have an answer to this problem given the Supreme Court decisions, the Senate of the United States like the Representatives are so busy raising money that they ... People think of it as being, "You're bought. You give me a hundred bucks, a thousand bucks, and I'm going to do your bidding." Maybe that's the problem. Maybe that's to much pressure to live with. But the big problem is intellectual corruption. Not having the time to spend on important subjects. Not having the time. If you stay in a session you get in there Monday afternoon or Tuesday morning and you leave Thursday afternoon and you're raising money, probably two fundraisers every week while you're there and then you have fundraisers and you go into California, you're going to New York, you're going all over. You don't get to know your colleagues and you don't get time to get into these subjects in depth. |
|  | I don't know when the last time they've had a strategic stability type of real debate or discussion in a committee or on the floor of the Senate. Maybe behind closed doors. I don't know. But these are crucial discussions and this is one of the things, and Vartan I wanted to report to you, I've had a couple of conversations with Republican members of either Armed Services or foreign relations and there seems to be some willingness to restore that US-Russia and [inaudible 01:02:25] parliamentary discussion. I think it's very important but right now the leaders in Russia that we would be dealing with if we had that are part of the sanctions. We couldn't meet with them in foreign countries, and some of ours are under sanctions. US and Russia are playing this tit to tat game that nobody can say is in the interest of either country. That's the game that's being played right now. There are reasons behind it. I don't want to make light of what the Russians have done in the Ukraine because it's very destabilizing in that part of the world. |
|  | I'll make my final comment here. We also need a ... We're not going to get it in track one. Track one being government to government. We need a track two Euro-Atlantic leadership group. Europeans, Russians, and US. These would be former officials, people at high levels that have access that begin to discuss Euro-Atlantic security in the long run. What role does Russia want to play in 5 years, in 10 years, in 15 years, in 20 years? I've said in several talks and interviews in Russia, How is it in Russia's interest to have all your neighbors frightened? How does that make sense? It makes no sense for Russia. How does it make sense for the United States and NATO to expand our borders and deploy military forces right next to the Russian border knowing they already are paranoid, historically, about that kind of thing. We would be too if the situation was reversed. Remember the Cuban missile crisis? We're doing things in reaction to each other that if you back off of and you really don't make sense for either country's security. |
|  | Therefore, these kinds of discussions are important. Whether this will happen or not, or whether I can ever come to you and say to Carnegie, "It's time to go back to sponsoring that kind of dialogue between US and Russian members of their parliament." I don't know but anyway it needs to be done. |
|  | Thank you very much. Thank you for your interest in foreign policy. |