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*IEER Conference: Nuclear Disarmament, the NPT, and the Rule of Law
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Questions and Answers: Article I & II of the NPT

April 25, 2000

Question: The question is about the non-nuclear host countries in NATO. Is there any objection from people in those countries to having American missiles stationed in their countries. It seems to me it's almost a Greenham Common kind of situation. It has analogies to that, because they become targets when they have nuclear weapons on their soil. Is there any citizen protest or action that goes on in these countries?

Otfried Nassauer: Surely there is, even if on small scale. But the fact is that these countries knowingly become targets. NATO openly says that shared risks, roles and responsibilities is what makes up NATO's nuclear strategy. Sharing the risk means becoming a target and sharing the roles and responsibility means sharing in the use of nuclear weapons. I think that it is clearly intentional and part of what NATO calls the trans-Atlantic solidarity.

Question: A question on universality, specifically on Israel. I agree with your suggestion, as I interpret it, of not pushing for adherence or universality, at least of this NPT regime as it stands today. I don't think this argument is going to get anywhere with Israel, at least. I wanted to add a little bit about Israel's position, without pretending to represent Israel by any means. Israel categorically rejects the idea of nuclear disarmament through the NPT. Officially, Israel's position is to be a nuclear weapon free zone through voluntary mutual inspections because Israel sees this as a regional problem. Egypt and the Arab states, on the other hand, see the NPT process as the legitimate regime. So there is a kind of a stand-off there, at least officially, where one side is saying regional peace process first, then nuclear weapons through a nuclear weapon free zone. The other side is saying NPT and international inspections first and then a comprehensive peace arrangement. So they are talking at each other, to the extent that they are even talking, and not getting anywhere. I think looking beyond the current NPT regime offers a little bit more of a start.

Question: Question to Otfried. There are new NATO members that joined last year. Are there any commitments from the NATO side to not extend nuclear assurance policies to these new members?

Otfried Nassauer: Yes. They are politically, but not legally, binding. First, NATO issued several statements in the NATO-Russia Founding Act and elsewhere to not have any plans, intentions or reasons to deploy nuclear weapons in those new member countries or to use or build infrastructure for nuclear weapons in these countries. Martin [Butcher] and I had a Senator raising the question in the Senate whether this meant that there are no plans or intentions, etc. to conduct the other elements of nuclear sharing -like training fighter pilots and concluding programs of cooperation, which are legally binding agreements between the U.S. and the individual NATO member and are a prerequisite for sharing nuclear weapons related information. Both the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State in the U.S. clearly answered that the same three "no"s applied to these other elements of nuclear sharing. So the new members are indeed somewhat second class members to NATO because it would take some time until the politically binding situation as it is right now could be changed. You need some time to develop and sign and ratify a program of cooperation or make it legally binding between the two countries. So there is, let's say, a safety cap. On the other hand, NATO's new members are fully eligible to participate in NATO's Nuclear Planning Group and thus in the Alliance's nuclear consultations.

In order to have all NATO members in one class, it would be better if those NATO members, currently having the technical capability to use nuclear weapons, would give that up deliberately and say "in a post-Cold War world, we don't need that." This would ease things very much. First, all non-nuclear NATO members would be in the same class. There would be no separation between them any longer; they all would be eligible to join discussions in the NPG, but there would be no longer non-nuclear countries that had the technical capability to use nuclear weapons. Second, it would strengthen the NPT and non-proliferation regime in general and, to my understanding, third, it would also help Arjun's proposal - which is making it easier for some foreign ministers to write a letter to the U.S. President saying, "Oh, by the way, on behalf of our country, there's no need for using nuclear weapons first, ever."