I. Introduction: It is a great honor and pleasure to speak at this important conference convened by the PIR Center. I am especially pleased to return to Moscow on the occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the PIR Center. Given my own background as an educator, I also am delighted that a number of participants from the summer school are with us today. As you will hear later in my presentation, I regard education to be a vital but under-utilized tool in promoting both disarmament and nonproliferation.

II. The Vision and the Road to Zero: To paraphrase the great English author Charles Dickens, “these are the best of times and the worst of times” when it comes to nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. It is the best of times in terms of the new political climate for disarmament due in large part to the change in administration in Washington and the political space for serious discussions about disarmament afforded by the “Road to Zero” initiative launched a little over two years ago by George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger, and Sam Nunn. It also is the worst of times in terms of the number of new and continuing nuclear challenges we face, among the most difficult of which are those posed by non-state actors. What I will try to do in the 20 minutes that have been allotted to me is to discuss the prospects for movement on the disarmament front in the near term, with particular reference to NPT. I also will say a little bit about how US-Russian arms reductions can contribute to a successful 2010 NPT Review Conference. Finally, I will suggest how those of us in civil society can assist the disarmament and nonproliferation process.

As many of you know, Sam Nunn, one of the so-called Gang of Four advocates of a world without nuclear weapons, has compared the road to zero to a trek up a steep mountain where we have to stop at various base camps en route to the top. My colleague at Monterey, Dr. Patricia Lewis, has used a different metaphor likening the journey to a train ride in which we have to build a cog railroad track up a steep mountain as we go, picking up passengers along the way and constantly being vigilant so as to avoid derailment due to further proliferation, disagreements about the end destination, the quickest route to that station, and what we may find when we actually
get there, as well as frustration over the slow pace of the train, and wavering leadership among the train’s engineers.

Regardless if one thinks about the road to zero as a long mountain trek or a train ride, one can envisage parallel but separate paths or tracks, some built by bilateral action, others involving multilateral efforts. In some instances, these tracks may be joined, much as the NPT process has been anchored to a large extent on US-Soviet (and more recently, US-Russian) cooperation for nonproliferation.


Next year, on May 3rd, a four-week negotiation of the 2010 NPT Review Conference will begin in New York. This conference will be the first review conference since the disastrous one in 2005, at which delegates devoted most of their energy and time debating an agenda and ended without any substantive agreements. Although a lot has changed since then, it is by no means certain that any meaningful progress on disarmament will be reached at the 2010 Review Conference. Among the major challenges will be:

*the degree to which key states parties perceive major threats to the NPT and their own security;

*the extent to which these perceptions of threat lead countries to demonstrate flexibility in their negotiating postures;

*the readiness of a small number of states to flout the will of the overwhelming majority of states parties and block consensus;

*the presence of any political grouping that can serve as a bridge between NWS and NNWS and help forge common ground on pressing proliferation, peaceful use, and disarmament issues;

*the readiness of states parties to focus on key regional security issues, and especially that of the Middle East;

*the extent to which the P-5, the EU, and the NAM, among other groups, serve as constructive coalitions in search of common ground on pressing proliferation, peaceful use, and disarmament issues, or instead use these political groupings to constrain forward motion and pursue at best a lowest common denominator approach;

*the headway the United States and Russia makes in its bilateral strategic arms reductions negotiations.

I note these issues based upon my participation in the past three NPT Review Conferences. In 2000, for example, many key states perceived the NPT to be in grave danger and adopted flexible postures that enabled the Conference to reach consensus on the 13 Practical Steps. The U.S. Government, at that time, adopted the very shrewd and sensible approach that since it could accept 95% of what the New Agenda Coalition was proposing, it would embrace the NAC proposal and let other NWS say “no” if they were so inclined. As a result, the United States in 2000 almost always
was on the majority side, while China, Russia, and France often were isolated and found themselves in an awkward minority position resisting the disarmament measures endorsed by most assembled delegates. For its part, the NAC was able to moderate the more extreme positions usually taken by some of its NAM members and to find common ground between NWS and NNWS.

In 2000 another key factor contributing to the success of the Rev Con was the P-5 proposal at the very start of the meeting, which removed the most contentious issue from the conference—that of BMD. Thanks to this action by the P-5, the conference was able to proceed smoothly and to adopt a number of significant measures related to disarmament, nonproliferation, peaceful use, and the strengthened review process.

In contrast to 2000, in 2005 a number of countries were not anxious to reach agreement at the Review Conference. This certainly was the case for Iran, but the same also could be said regarding the United States and Egypt, both of which frequently adopted obstructionist positions which made it difficult to agree on an agenda for the meeting, much less substantive matters.

Against this backdrop, the recently concluded 2009 NPT Prep Com offers some hope that states will adopt more flexible positions in 2010. The good news is that an agenda for the Review Conference was agreed upon and states largely acted in a business-like fashion. Most countries particularly appreciated the less polemical and flexible stance taken by the United States, whose delegation was led by Rose Gottemoeller. The United Kingdom and Russian Federation also were seen as generally constructive in their interventions. Unfortunately, the same can not be said about France and China, who appeared more inclined to play the role of nuclear nay-sayers. France, for example, did its best to block adoption of the PrepCom agenda, and its interventions on various issues indicate that is was very uncomfortable with the new U.S. vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. As such, one may anticipate that it will be difficult to get France to support many forward-looking proposals that seek to advance disarmament in a significant fashion at the 2010 Review Conference. China also acted very cautiously at the 2009 PrepCom and appeared to be unprepared and unwilling to discuss substantive issues. None of the nuclear weapons states any longer can rely upon the United States to block most disarmament initiatives, and may find themselves in an awkward position should new disarmament objectives be proposed. For Russia, the most difficult issues may relate to new efforts to reduce further non-strategic nuclear weapons, building on the 2000 NPT Final Document.

There is no doubt that much of the world has great expectations that the United States and Russia will conclude a START replacement treaty before the 2010 Review Conference. If that occurs, and by next week we should have a better sense of its likelihood, the disarmament process will be perceived as having gained significant momentum. However, should the US-Russian negotiations become stalled over issues associated with missile defense or other technical matters, this outcome would be perceived by many as a very serious setback to disarmament and would not auger well for other disarmament measures. In this sense, the bilateral US-Russian arms negotiation process is a bellwether or indicator of the potential for serious disarmament, and can serve either as a confidence-building measure or a signal that rhetoric is unlikely to be matched by action. As such, the outcome of the bilateral negotiations is likely to have an impact well beyond the US-Russian relationship.
By the same token, should the Obama administration be successful in gaining ratification of the CTBT in advance of the Review Conference, that action would be widely regarded as a major boost to disarmament and the strengthening the NPT. Personally, I doubt very much that the administration will be able to secure the necessary votes prior to the May Rev Con. Nevertheless, it is very significant that Senator John McCain made relatively positive noises about the CTBT in an important speech to the Senate on June 3rd. His support and that of Senator Richard Lugar will be crucial to a successful CTBT ratification effort. My advice to the Obama Administration would be to engage Senator Lugar immediately as the bipartisan leader of the ratification process.

One issue that is likely to be very contentious at the next Review Conference is the implementation (or lack thereof) of the 1995 RevCon Resolution on the Middle East. Egypt undoubtedly will make serious consideration of this a condition for progress on all other issues. In this regard, it was very surprising at the 2009 Prep Com that Egypt, having obtained language that it wanted on the Middle East, failed to push for adoption of the Chair’s revised substantive recommendations to the Review Conference due to problems it had with other issues involving disarmament.

Although debate and disagreement over disarmament issues typically have characterized past NPT Review Conferences, my impression is that with the new orientation toward disarmament taken by the Obama administration, the most difficult issues on which to find common ground at the 2010 RevCon may well involve those related to peaceful use. At the current time, there is a huge gulf between the views of the NWS and leading members of NAM on what must be done to prevent the spread of sensitive fuel cycle technologies, the role of fuel assurances, the Additional Protocol, and other nonproliferation initiatives which they regard as infringing on their “inalienable rights” to peaceful use. I believe that unless we better understand the complexity of NAM politics and perspectives and seek to engage additional NAM representatives in the NPT process, it will be nearly impossible to make headway on disarmament, nonproliferation, peaceful use, and counter nuclear terrorism issues.

Finally with respect to 2010, let me say that I would hope that the P-5 can play a much more constructive role next year than was the case in 2005. Although it will not be easy to reach consensus among the P-5, a statement on their behalf on the subjects of legally binding negative security assurances, the diminished role of nuclear weapons in their national security policies, and/or a road map for implementing the 1995 Middle East Resolution would go a long way in gaining support from many NNWS for issues of great concern to the NWS such as implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (and other measures to combat nuclear terrorism), universalization of the Additional Protocol, and adoption of multinational fuel arrangements such as the NTI fuel bank proposal and the Russian proposal for a multinational fuel center at Angarsk.

2. NWFZs: If I had more time, I would speak in more detail about the promise of NWFZs—an approach to disarmament and nonproliferation that has been one of the least noted but most successful in recent years. Today, nearly the entire Southern Hemisphere is nuclear weapons free, and with the entry-into-force of the Central Asian NWFZ on March 21, 2009, NWFZs also now extend into the Northern Hemisphere. Very shortly I also expect the African NWFZ to enter into force as only one more ratification is required. What is lacking is NWS support for NWFZs, and
more specifically their conclusion of protocols to existing zones promising Negative
Security Assurances for parties to the zone.

3. Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education: Finally, let me say a few words
about education as a very significant but usually overlooked approach to promoting
both disarmament and nonproliferation. I had the privilege as a member of the
Secretary General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to draft a paper on the
subject, which subsequently led to a UN Experts Group on Disarmament and
Nonproliferation Education. That Experts Group, to which Dr. Orlov served as an
advisor, made 34 practical recommendations, which were then adopted by consensus
in the General Assembly. Thanks in particular to the efforts of Japan, the issue has
been brought up in the NPT review process where it enjoys widespread and diverse
support. If the good news is that almost all states endorse the general concept of D
and NP Education, the bad news is that relatively little progress has been made to date
in translating that support in principle into meaningful action. Nevertheless, I was
very encouraged at the last PrepCom that two NWS—Russia and the United
Kingdom—participated in a special event on the subject of D and NP Education, and I
am hopeful that many more states will also address the issue at the 2010 NPT Review
Conference.

4. Conclusion: In a talk I gave yesterday, I made reference to a saying attributed to
the American comedian Woody Allen. He allegedly once observed that “Mankind is
at a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness, the other to total
extinction. Let us pray we have the wisdom to choose correctly.” For many years, that
appeared to be the situation we faced with respect to nuclear weapons. Today,
however, for the first time in nearly a decade there are indications that it may be
possible to move forward in reducing nuclear risks, containing and reversing nuclear
weapons spread, and pursuing practical steps along the road to zero. The signs,
however, remain mixed, and we must be cautious not to assume either the best or
worst. What we can say with confidence is that progress will require a great deal of
US-Russian cooperation. I am hopeful that such cooperation will be in evidence later
this week in Moscow.