The 2000 Review Conference for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) will take place in April and May against the backdrop of stagnation, reversals and indifference in the field of nuclear arms control. Over 180 non-nuclear weapon states that are parties to the Treaty reasonably expected progress in nuclear non-proliferation and arms control when they agreed to the indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995. These expectations have not been fulfilled by the nuclear weapon states.

In the interest of helping to preserve the non-proliferation regime and to promote the disarmament agenda of the New Agenda Coalition, The Carter Center in Atlanta and the Middle Powers Initiative (MPI), an international non-governmental coalition, convened a consultation which brought together governmental representatives and non-governmental experts to explore the issues and search for solutions. Blending the “honest broker” and bridge-building talents of The Carter Center with the nuclear disarmament expertise of MPI, the two groups co-sponsored the Atlanta Consultation at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, January 26-27, 2000.

The Atlanta Consultation brought together representatives of diverse constituencies concerned about the dangers posed to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The goal was for these constituencies to identify the problems facing the nuclear non-proliferation regime from different perspectives and seek common ground for actions, policies and programs that will preserve and strengthen the regime and further the goal of nuclear arms control and the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear dangers.

No consensus was expected or sought at the Consultation; it was a meeting of dialogue. Nevertheless, there were certain themes that resonated throughout the meeting:

- The Non-Proliferation Treaty is the cornerstone of the international regime for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The April-May 2000 Review Conference will be crucial in determining the continuing viability of the Treaty.
- While acknowledging and welcoming the progress made by the United States and Russia in cutting their arsenals, all participants (other than US government officials) believed that much more needs to be accomplished, and accomplished quickly.
- Substantive progress could include deeper cuts in strategic forces, elimination of tactical nuclear weapons, de-alerting nuclear arsenals, no-first-use commitments, and a rethinking (at the minimum) of deterrence.
- There is a need for greater efforts to raise the issues among policy makers, especially in the US. There is a need to reinvigorate the bipartisan US approach to arms control while countering the growing influence of the Congressional minority opposed to any form of arms control.
- International efforts to strengthen political forces for disarmament could include parliamentarian exchanges.
- The media and public are unaware of the debate over nuclear weapons and have limited understanding of risks of proliferation and of not pursuing disarmament. Thus, the risks of current policies and the links between disarmament and non-proliferation must be made in the public domain.
The Atlanta Consultation was co-sponsored by the Carter Center and the Middle Powers Initiative. On January 26-27, 2000, at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, approximately forty concerned individuals overcame the adversity of a blizzard that pounded the Northeastern United States. Attendance itself thus became evidence of sincere serious commitments to work on preserving the non-proliferation regime and reducing dangers posed by nuclear weapons. For two intense days, representatives of the United States, members of the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden) and Canada and Germany, and NGO arms control and non-proliferation experts engaged in honest, open, fruitful dialogues. President Jimmy Carter and Ambassador Harry Barnes represented The Carter Center. The MPI delegation was headed by Senator Douglas Roche. (See inside back cover for a complete list of participants.)

The dialogues sought to identify problems facing the nuclear non-proliferation regime from different perspectives and to promote common ground for actions, policies and programs that will preserve and strengthen the regime and further the goal of nuclear arms control and arms reductions leading to the eventual elimination of nuclear dangers.

The rejection by the US Senate of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was commonly recognized as a major setback for arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Over 180 nations reasonably expected progress in these three areas of international security as part of the bargain involved in the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1995. This treaty, which will be reviewed in April 2000 at the United Nations, and its associated regime may be in jeopardy.

The success of the Atlanta Consultation can be measured by improved communication and understanding. All participants came with the desire to strengthen the NPT regime. Some felt passionately that the only realistic route to such a goal is stronger leadership by the United States. No one thought the goal will be reached rapidly or easily, but all agreed that diminishing the political status of nuclear weapons and moving toward their ultimate elimination will make the world far more secure.

Rapidly changing circumstances present numerous new hazards and opportunities. More consultations, such as the Atlanta Consultation, must occur until the ongoing threat of nuclear annihilation is ended. Opportunities for progress will appear again but without greater clarity and cooperation; they will not be seized and unexpected problems will continue to arise. Who could have imagined a mere decade ago that the United States and Russia would vote together at the United Nations against the nuclear disarmament efforts of countries friendly to the United States and Russia and whose own security is largely dependent on the United States? Who could have imagined that the commitment of the United States to non-proliferation would come under serious scrutiny?

The organizers of the Atlanta Consultation wish to thank all who participated. We recognize that the task of ridding the world of the dangers posed by nuclear weapons will require personal, moral, political and intellectual commitments at a profound level. Out of the six billion people on the planet, those of us working on nuclear arms control and disarmament should feel the full weight of this responsibility and the blessing to be privileged to serve humanity by meeting this challenge. I only hope we have the wisdom and fortitude to complete our task in time.

Jonathan Granoff
Chair, The Atlanta Consultation
It seems that troops of every great movement, men and women everywhere, share an epiphany when they know the force of the universe is on their side and therefore they are the most fortunate men and women in the world of their time. We are the most fortunate of all earthlings today. Our cause is just and to achieve our goal is the most important task of our time... This struggle is ours to win. As we approach this conference, it becomes clear that it does not matter what our opposition does, it only matters what we do... the choice is really ours. In this struggle, we will refuse to be limited by race, racism, nationhood or nationalism or religion or East and West or the other historical enemies of our common progress. The greatness of our task does not allow us such limitations.

In one sense, we should be thankful for the evils we oppose because ultimately they unite us. We lose only if we choose, we win by following the deepest desires of our own inner being....

Let us bind ourselves and all others together by humanity’s common need to survive. We come recognizing that moral and spiritual power undergirds all reality. Help us as we move toward a new social vision for ourselves and our world. Guide us to actions from which average persons will demand of their rulers that our vision become daily reality. Empower our decisions so that new possibilities will come serendipitously up out of our struggle not only to survive but to arrive. Guide us as we act out our stewardship therefore giving greater meaning to life itself.

Help us to help each other to see that poverty will never become a nuclear trigger. Help us to help each other to appreciate all peoples so racism will never become a nuclear trigger. Help us to help each other so nationalism will never become a nuclear trigger. Help us to help each other actively share our spiritual wonders so our religions will never demand other than unity in this universe of values.... Almighty Force, help us remind each other that in the final analysis, we are moral and spiritual beings looking to satisfy deeper human needs. Amen.

Rev. C.T. Vivian
Chair, Center for Democratic Renewal
The 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference will provide a litmus test of the capacity of the international community to repair the non-proliferation regime. Failing to do so would have serious consequences for the international system: increasing instability and the potential for nuclear proliferation, terrorism and even war.

One of the first orders of business will be to review the progress of the nuclear weapon states in fulfilling the Principles and Objectives adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. These Principles and Objectives called for:

- Completion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by 1996;
- Commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT); and
- Determined pursuit of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally with the ultimate goal of eliminating them.

The only one of these points that arguably can be said to have been fulfilled is the completion of a CTBT in 1996. But this treaty has not entered into force, and was dealt a serious blow by the US Senate when it voted down ratification in 1999. There has been virtually no progress on achieving a FMCT. The arguments of the nuclear weapon states with regard to the “determined pursuit” objective will be contrasted with their failure to make progress in the START negotiations, their opposition to carrying out negotiations on nuclear disarmament in any international negotiating body, and continued reliance on their nuclear arsenals by them and their non-nuclear allies.

The following issues are facing the parties to the NPT.

**Nuclear Disarmament**

The commitment to nuclear disarmament of the nuclear weapon states should be the major issue at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The Chairman’s Revised Working Paper, issued May 20 at the 1999 preparatory committee meeting calls for the nuclear weapon states to reaffirm “their unequivocal commitment to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons, and to that end, agreement to pursue vigorously systematic and progressive efforts to further reduce nuclear weapons globally.” While not consensus language, it is clearly the position of the vast majority of states.

The records of the nuclear weapon states will be carefully examined. The US position, for example, is that the major reductions which have already occurred — such as US elimination of over 80 percent of its tactical nuclear warheads and 47 percent of its deployed strategic warheads and the ongoing bilateral negotiations under the START process — demonstrate an end of the nuclear arms race and sufficient progress to fulfill Article VI obligations. In addition, the UK will point to its announcement in 1998 that it has cut its nuclear arsenal by one-third to less than 200 warheads, and relaxed the notice to fire for its deployed Trident submarine from hours to days.

These welcome reductions in nuclear forces have not been matched by Russia, France or China. Moreover, efforts to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons have regressed since 1995. The US indicated in its 1997 Presidential Decision Directive 60 that nuclear weapons remain the “cornerstone” of its security policy. NATO, at its Washington Summit in April 1999, reaffirmed that nuclear weapons “will continue to fulfill an essential role” in its Strategic Concept, although at the urging of Canada, Germany and Norway the Alliance agreed in principle last December to an internal review of its nuclear policy.

In January 2000, Russia issued a revised national security policy which seemed to lower the nuclear threshold, by warning that a nuclear attack by Russia might be forthcoming to repel unspecified armed aggression if all other means of resolving a crisis had failed, and confirming that — like NATO — it
reserves the option to use nuclear weapons first. Only China maintains a policy of No First Use. The Russian Duma has yet to ratify START II — which was concluded seven years ago — and no progress has been made by the US and Russia on START III. Meanwhile, India and Pakistan have become overt nuclear weapon states and continue to refuse to sign the NPT.

In addition, the US is racing to deploy a National Missile Defense (NMD) system, which threatens the integrity of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and progress in bilateral strategic arms reductions. The US is also pressing Russia to agree to modifications in the ABM Treaty. This damage to the bilateral arms reductions process will undermine further the non-proliferation regime and could diminish international confidence in arms control treaties in general. Both Russia and China have indicated that NMD deployment will trigger a new offensive nuclear arms race. Indeed, China has already begun the process of modernizing its nuclear arsenal.

**Universality**

India, Pakistan and Israel have yet to become parties to the NPT. India and Pakistan, which both tested nuclear weapons in 1998, have repeatedly said that they would be non-nuclear weapon states if they saw clear progress on the part of the declared nuclear weapon states to fulfill their obligations to achieve nuclear disarmament. Israel, widely understood to have some 200 nuclear weapons, has maintained an ambiguous position and has received no pressure from the other nuclear weapon states to give up its nuclear arsenal. Without major changes in nuclear disarmament policies by the nuclear weapon states, no progress can be expected on this issue.

**Security Assurances**

Negative security assurances — the renunciation of the threat or use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states — by the nuclear weapon states continue to be weak and unsatisfactory to the non-nuclear weapon states. The 1999 PrepCom Chairman’s Revised Working Paper calls for the urgent conclusion of “a legally-binding negative assurances regime which will ensure the security of non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.” Negative security assurances were explicitly given by the nuclear weapon states as part of the bargain to gain indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. However, NATO’s and Russia’s first use doctrine contradicts those pledges. Additionally, current Western nuclear weapon states’ policies ambiguously assert the right to use nuclear weapons in response to biological or chemical weapon attack against their vital interests anywhere in the world, further diluting the 1995 assurances and creating new or reviving old rationales for keeping nuclear weapons indefinitely despite Article VI commitments.

**Safeguards**

The NPT relies upon the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to provide safeguards against diversion of nuclear materials for weapons uses. These safeguards will have to be considerably strengthened and made binding on all states, including the nuclear weapon states, if they are to be effective in preventing diversion of nuclear materials to weapons programs.

**The Middle East**

The Middle East is recognized as a particularly volatile region, in which all states with the exception of Israel are parties to the NPT. The 1999 PrepCom Chairman’s Revised Working Paper calls upon Israel “to accede to the Treaty and to place all its nuclear facilities under the full-scope IAEA safeguards without further delay and without conditions.”
President Jimmy Carter gave an extensive presentation which criticized current US policy, called for significant progress toward nuclear disarmament, and offered his services to publicize the current nuclear danger and what should be done about it.

He was particularly concerned about the current state of affairs and the prospects for the NPT Conference. “Someone from the United States government might have something good to say about our policies. I don’t see it. I don’t see any commitment on the part of our leaders to take action on any of these very troubling issues.”

He felt that after Ronald Reagan’s START efforts in the 1980s, the issue “has just disappeared from American consciousness.”

“If you look at the political debates going on between the Republicans and Democrats, not one word is mentioned of non-proliferation or nuclear agreements or some of the policies our own country has adopted or failed to adopt. My own belief is that if this group [at the Atlanta Consultation] doesn’t speak very forcefully we are going to go into the sessions at the United Nations in something of a vacuum. You are the voice that will let the American people hear some of the concerns that I’m sure most of you share.”

He said it would be “wasting our time” if nations went into the Review Conference to “finesse this issue” and “to make some slight modification in language to induce the ill-informed and unsuspecting non-nuclear powers [to believe] that the nuclear powers are complying.”

“We had a fragile continuation of the NPT extension five years ago. It was endorsed reluctantly by the non-nuclear powers. Many of them are adequately blessed with both financial and scientific capabilities of developing nuclear weapons as India and Pakistan have proven. But they agreed to restrain themselves with certain provisions that the major nuclear powers agreed to honor. The fact is the major nuclear powers have not honored the agreements that they made.”

Taking care to point out that he didn’t want to do anything that could be viewed as anti-Clinton, the former president came out strongly on the side of an activist agenda. “We must be absolutely forceful and vocal in expressing our legitimate concerns as the only voice I believe will be used in the next few months to the American public and the global public. I’ll be glad to help in any way I can, I don’t want to interfere in your work but I will be a strong ally.”

Specifically, President Carter said that he would draft a statement, either individually or in conjunction with Presidents Ford and Bush if he could get their agreement, to be released at a significant date either at the NPT or preferably beforehand. He also said he would write an op-ed piece on the issue (which was published in the Washington Post on February 23) and that he would consider coming to the NPT Review Conference for a public appearance.

He also pointed out that the deadlock between the White House and Congress and between the United States and Russia need not constrain positive activities. As an object lesson, President Carter pointed out that the president can act unilaterally to advance nuclear disarmament. He cited two examples from his presidency: the cancellation of the neutron bomb program and implementation of SALT II.

In the first case, President Carter said he cancelled the neutron bomb deployment shortly after becoming president, even though it was about to be stationed in Western Europe.

As far as preparing for the review conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is concerned, I don’t see anything good in the prospect. I hope that this group will not maintain a position of neutrality because there are no voices I can hear speaking out in my country on one of the most crucial issues that I had to face when I was president and all of my predecessors faced. I think President Reagan did well with his START effort, but since then it has just disappeared from American consciousness. If you look at the political debates going on between the Republicans and Democrats, not one word is mentioned of non-proliferation or nuclear agreements or some of the policies our own country has adopted or failed to adopt. My own belief is that if this group doesn’t speak very forcefully we are going to go into the sessions at the United Nations in something of a vacuum. You are the voice that will let the American people hear some of the concerns that I’m sure most of you share....

Jimmy Carter
The unique feature of the neutron bomb was that the radiation released would kill people but leave the buildings and vehicles relatively intact. “I saw it as an anti-personnel weapon and not as an anti-tank weapon,” he said, “I immediately issued an order that it be terminated.”

In the case of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), Mr. Carter completed negotiations in 1979 begun by President Ford. Once in force, SALT II restrictions were to have a five-year lifespan. “Because of opposition, I could see I would have a very difficult time getting it approved by two-thirds of the US Senate, so I just ordered that all the terms of the SALT II treaty be implemented,” Mr. Carter said, “Obviously this applied throughout my term, but even in the first three to four years of President Reagan’s term. Every factor in the SALT II I negotiated was implemented. It lasted seven years — two years beyond its original concept — until President Reagan began his START talks.”

“The point I’m making is that the President himself, without authority from Congress, can affect the stated policy of the United States as far as the use of nuclear weapons is concerned,” he concluded.

The whole issue is in much worse shape than it was ten or twenty years ago for many reasons. We had a fragile continuation of the NPT extension five years ago. It was endorsed reluctantly by the non-nuclear powers. Many of them are adequately blessed with both financial and scientific capabilities of developing nuclear weapons as India and Pakistan have proven. But they agreed to restrain themselves with certain provisions that the major nuclear powers agreed to honor. The fact is the major nuclear powers have not honored the agreements that they made. I have difficulty imagining that we could go back to the United Nations this year and just have a review of the treaty when the earlier agreements have been blatantly violated.

There are concerns about the CTBT vote and about the threat to the ABM Treaty, the declaration that we would use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states, the fact that Russia is in a much more fragile state concerning the use of nuclear weapons, and the new threats from India and Pakistan. I don’t think many average Americans know about this because it is not brought to their consciousness by the national news media. This group is the only one I know that collectively can bring this issue forward. I think it has a fairly good chance of making the NPT debate in April successful. Otherwise, if the NPT is abandoned it reduces the effectiveness of the International Atomic Energy Agency to supervise countries, which I think is a genuine restraint on proliferation... Some of the so-called rogue states have recently reaffirmed their commitment to the NPT and permitted inspectors to supervise sites.

Jimmy Carter
Senator Douglas Roche of Canada, the Chairman of The Middle Powers Initiative (MPI), told the Consultation, “The non-proliferation regime is in crisis... The recognition of this should galvanize intelligent and committed people — in both government and civil society — to action.” It is this belief in the dangers and possibilities that led MPI to co-sponsor the Atlanta Consultation.

MPI is a carefully focused campaign established by a network of international citizen organizations in 1998 to urgently address the crisis in post Cold War nuclear disarmament. It has worked in a strategic partnership with middle power governments, including those of the New Agenda Coalition, to bring reasonable voices to the policy debate with the nuclear weapon states: to draw them out of their cold war mindset, to urge the unequivocal commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons to which they are obliged by Article VI of the NPT, and to promote an understanding of the new paradigm of multilateral cooperation and common security which is essential for survival in the 21st century.

The MPI strategy is implemented through high-level diplomatic and political contact with governments in their capitals and at the UN; small off-the-record meetings of government representatives, parliamentarians and NGOs; and public education about the nuclear crisis and historic opportunity for action through publications and forums, all with the purpose of creating political will for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

The Atlanta Consultation was a natural part of that strategy. “If the NPT is to survive,” Sen. Roche said, “the US must find ways to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs. The old pattern of threat and counter-threat, which has led to the unacceptable risk of maintaining nuclear weapons indefinitely, must be broken. No state, however powerful, can find security in unilateralism. We must work together for our common security.”

Alan Cranston, the former US Senator from California, looked towards the next decade at the proliferation and possible use of mass destruction weapons and said, “This is a practical, hard-headed security issue for nations and for people. It is also a profound moral issue — the survival not just of nations, but of the human race, is at stake.” He warned, “The nuclear powers are not providing the leadership they must on this issue....[They] must keep that bargain or the NPT will collapse and ultimately we will have ten, twenty, or more nuclear-armed nations in a more dangerous world.”

He also advocated greater effort to “restore the traditional non-partisan approach” to arms control issues and convening a meeting with key Republican and Democratic senators.

Jonathan Granoff, of the Lawyers Alliance for World Security (LAWS) and Chair of the Atlanta Consultation, noted that, “Our efforts to preserve The NPT regime and promote arms control and disarmament must be understood as pro-security. Undercutting commitments and continuing the reliance on nuclear weapons is pro-threat. Pro-threat policies are destabilizing; pro-security policies enhance cooperation, lower dangers and fulfill legal commitments, thus strengthening the rule of law.”

In the interest of reducing nuclear threats and saving the non-proliferation regime, MPI is encouraging the US government to:

- Affirm that there are legally binding obligations to engage in good faith negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons and assert forcefully that it is US policy to pursue this process in bilateral and multilateral fora;
- Take clear steps to diminish the political value of nuclear weapons by reducing national and NATO reliance on them by, for example, taking them off hair-trigger alert, pledging never to use them first, and negotiating a legally binding agreement which assures non-nuclear weapon states that nuclear weapons will not be used against them;
- Recognize publicly that nuclear deterrence is ineffective in addressing nuclear dangers posed by rogue actors, accidental or unauthorized launches, computer error, terrorist attack, criminal syndicates, and from other unpredictable and irrational scenarios;
- Acknowledge that the NPT regime cannot endure indefinitely if a few states insist that nuclear weapons provide them unique security benefits while denying these alleged benefits to others; and
- Change the morally unacceptable posture of threatening millions of innocent lives with total annihilation as a valid means for any state to pursue its national security.
Human energy, creativity are all abundant [in the United States]. Now that greatness is being called upon as we consider the role of the United States in the overarching issue of our time — the future of nuclear weapons.... The NPT is not an end in itself, we know that, but the review will set the stage for the opening years of the 21st century... The non-proliferation regime is in crisis. The world is staring into an abyss of nuclear weapons proliferation. The danger of the use of nuclear weapons is growing. Recognition of this should galvanize intelligent and committed people in government and civil society to action.

Indeed, such action is under way as seen by steps taken in the legal, military, political, religious and NGO communities. This action, to be effective, needs the vigorous participation of the US government. As a Canadian citizen, it is not my role to interfere in how the US manages its affairs. But because the nuclear weapons issue sweeps across borders in the most dramatic way, what the US does or does not do in this issue affects the life of every person on the planet.

Of course, the other nuclear powers bear their share of the responsibility to stop proliferation: Russia, China, the UK and France — and now India, Pakistan and Israel — all in varying degrees of attachment to nuclear weapons. But their position in justifying the retention of nuclear weapons would be untenable if Washington made an unequivocal commitment to engage without delay in an accelerated process of negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament....

If the NPT is to survive, the US must find ways to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs. The old pattern of threat and counter-threat, which has led to the unacceptable risk of maintaining nuclear weapons indefinitely, must be broken. No state, however, powerful, can find security in unilateralism. We must work together for our common security.

Some say the risk of cheating by would-be proliferators down the line is an impediment to nuclear disarmament. But I believe the risk of trying to maintain the status quo, without a nuclear confrontation or accident, is far higher.

Some say that Russia is reverting to dependence on nuclear weapons and that that is an impediment to nuclear disarmament. But I believe that NATO’s continued insistence that nuclear weapons are “essential” is the main driving force behind the current breakdown of the non-proliferation regime.

Some say that it would be irresponsible to dismantle Western nuclear capability before new and reliable systems for preserving stability are in place. But I believe that would-be nuclear States must be convinced that the nuclear powers are serious about negotiations and that going nuclear would vastly exacerbate any regional disparities they may be involved in. Here the international community must give stronger backing to the kind of conflict-mediation procedures for which The Carter Center is renowned. Because of its strength, the United States can provide the leadership needed to encourage all states to foster dialogue, openness and other trust-and-confidence-building measures with their neighbors. A credible American commitment to a nuclear weapon-free world would encourage other States to strengthen collective and cooperative means of addressing their security concerns.

Douglas Roche
The Middle Powers Initiative

For many of the NGOs attending the consultation, the nuclear disarmament proposals advocated by the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), a coalition of middle power states, represents an innovative path to the elimination of nuclear weapons. It was the clear intention of MPI to promote discussions of the NAC proposals.

All seven of the NAC nations — Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden — were represented either in person or by written statement. In a written statement, Sipho Pityana, the Director General of the Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, said:

“While it is important for the international community to welcome, support and encourage the bilateral nuclear arms reductions which are taking place between the United States and the Russian Federation... it is also important not to confuse nuclear arms reductions with nuclear disarmament. A commitment to nuclear arms reductions, which has to do with a strategic balance of power and with the removal of the Cold War’s excessive nuclear destructive capacity does not necessarily translate into a commitment to nuclear disarmament and to a vision of a world free of nuclear weapons.”

Pityana, quoting the NAC position, argued that the first step in such a commitment should be “an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the speedy and total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.” He added, “Such an undertaking would not only be of momentous symbolic importance but would also provide the basis for greater confidence in the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regimes.”

NAC was launched in the spring of 1998, when this group of nations, expressing their frustration with the lack of progress by the nuclear weapon states, issued a Joint Declaration in June, stating: “We can no longer remain complacent at the reluctance of the nuclear weapon states and the three nuclear-weapons capable states to take that fundamental and requisite step, namely a clear commitment to the speedy, final and total elimination of their nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons capability and we urge them to take that step now.”

NAC crafted a detailed resolution for the consideration of the UN General Assembly in October-November 1998. The agenda was refined and a new resolution was submitted in 1999. Both resolutions were overwhelmingly approved, with the eight nuclear-armed states and a few others in a shrinking minority in opposition. In 1999, all non-nuclear weapon states in NATO broke ranks with their nuclear colleagues and abstained on the resolution, sending a clear signal that they feel more needs to be done.

The NAC resolutions call on the nuclear weapon states to, among other items:

- “make an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the speedy and total elimination of their nuclear arsenals and to engage without delay in an accelerated process of negotiations, thus achieving nuclear disarmament, to which they are committed under Article VI” of the NPT;
- “reduce tactical nuclear weapons;”
- “examine the possibilities for and to proceed to the de-alerting and removal of nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles;” and
- “demonstrate transparency with regard to their nuclear arsenals and fissile materials inventories.”

Between the 1998 and 1999 UN sessions, the third preparatory committee for the NPT was held in May 1999. Once again, NAC language received broad endorsement: a NAC statement was endorsed by more than 30 states and NAC priorities were incorporated into the text written by the chair of the preparatory committee.

Regarding the 2000 NPT Conference, the NAC statement said, “It will no longer suffice in 2000 to rehearse the indefinite goal of the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. It is imperative to secure a clear and unequivocal commitment to the speedy pursuit of the total elimination of these weapons.”
It is clear that a wide spectrum of governmental and non-governmental actors believe the NAC blueprint is the best way to pursue nuclear disarmament in a practical and effective manner.

At the Atlanta Consultation, delegates from NAC countries maintained that the Agenda provided a new standard which was “set out as reasonably as possible.” One diplomat said, “It really is time for global disinvestment of those weapons.”

“We are coming to the end of the old paradigm and the new will not be as tolerant of the traditional approach. The New Agenda was perhaps the last best attempt to bring all the elements of the earlier consensus together.” The current pace of negotiations “will no longer stand... The nuclear weapons states will have to engage a broader constituency.” A NAC participant warned that the non-nuclear weapon states “will come to the Conference with the ability to crash the Conference.” Since many are convinced the nuclear powers’ commitment to Article VI “no longer exists,” then the only useful statement from the five would be an “unequivocal commitment to speedy and total elimination of nuclear weapons.”

“Our concern is not that there will be early defections from the Treaty or that IAEA safeguards are under imminent threat; it is rather that the NPT shows signs of irrelevance as the foundation of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.” Another called the NPT “one of the greatest security blankets” the US has since, by limiting proliferation, it limits the nations the US has to worry about. “That security blanket is in danger of shredding.”

A serious warning was expressed when looking ahead to the next review conference in 2005 when “options still available today will no longer be available.” By then, the US will no longer be able to set the agenda — regional tensions, proliferation of other mass destruction weapons and of ballistic missiles will be among “the new challenges [that] will emerge.”

Remarks at reception, January 26

It is such an honor to be here with President Carter, so many distinguished Ambassadors and experts, especially my dear friend Jane Fonda, a trustee of The Carter Center. Jane and I share a profound experience. Twenty-one years ago, when we made “The China Syndrome” together and alerted the world to the risks posed by nuclear energy plants, much of the press maligned us. They said the film was unrealistic and alarmist. We knew we were right to make the picture. We had researched numerous small accidents and analyzed the kinds of problems that could happen. We had the help of former GE engineers. I am sad to say that less than three weeks after the movie was released the disaster at Three Mile Island occurred and several years later history repeated itself and Chernobyl happened. Pride and the refusal to recognize the likelihood of technical or human error made these disasters inevitable.

Today we face an even graver risk. Before nuclear weapons go off from accident or design, let us listen to the sober warnings of men like General Butler, Senator Cranston and Ambassador Butler and begin by working diligently towards getting nuclear weapons off of alert in our efforts to find a way to negotiate their elimination. I ask this not as an expert on the subject, but as a citizen concerned that public focus and pressure on this most serious of issues is not adequate.

Michael Douglas
The United States government clearly took the Consultation and the goals of the meeting seriously, as demonstrated by the number of officials sent to Atlanta and by the quality of their interventions.

The featured speaker representing the US government was John Holum, the Senior Advisor for Arms Control and International Security at the State Department and the highest ranking official dealing specifically with arms control issues, (see excerpts from his remarks on the following page). The delegation also included Norman Wulf, who will lead the US delegation to the NPT Review Conference, and experts from the departments of State and Energy, the National Security Council and the CIA. Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson sent a statement to the Consultation saying that at the Review Conference “progress toward Treaty goals may be scrutinized, but two facts will be indisputable: the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty remains essential to nuclear nonproliferation and global security; and the United States remains steadfast to its Article VI obligation to work toward nuclear disarmament.” He and officials at the Consultation emphasized steps the US is taking to meet those obligations, including the continued moratorium on nuclear testing, the destruction of “more than 13,000 nuclear weapons since 1988,” progress on reaching START II levels, US/Russian negotiations to reinforce the halt in the production of fissile materials, reduction of NATO “sub-strategic nuclear forces,” and efforts to prevent a “brain drain” from Russia’s downsized nuclear complex.

Richardson also said, “At the Energy Department, we are downsizing the nuclear weapons infrastructure and have trimmed nearly one-third of our Cold War nuclear workforce.” The Energy Department is in charge of researching, producing and maintaining nuclear warheads.

However, he warned, “Despite these significant strides [the Review Conference] will be a time to stress that nuclear disarmament cannot happen overnight, nor in a vacuum. It would be a disservice to the NPT to use the Review Conference to seek to establish unrealistic goals in this area.”

Another official said, “I have to reject the notion that nothing has been done. That is not reality.”

This was the theme of the US officials throughout — progress on disarmament is being made and any attempt to speed up the pace set by the US and Russia would be counter-productive. The US officials also maintained that the planned ballistic missile defense is no threat to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty or international arms control in general, and that current nuclear doctrine — which allows for nuclear first strikes and strikes against non-nuclear states — will not be changed. All other participants took strong exception to these positions.

One official argued that progress has been made in “untraditional arms control” — in other words, initiatives beyond talks about cuts in numbers — such as threat reduction proposals and control of fissile materials. He also said, “Arms control goes forward with the United States paying both sides of the bill,” a reference to the US financing of some Russian projects, in particular the safeguarding of Russia’s nuclear weapons and fissile materials.

There were several concerns shared by the US officials and the rest of the participants about unfavorable trends in the public debate in the US on nuclear arms control. In particular the worry was expressed that those in the Senate absolutely opposed to arms control are “unrepresentative, but a growing” minority. Linked to this is the perception that the traditional bipartisan approach to arms control is diminishing — as demonstrated by the Republican attacks on the Democratic President’s attempt to get the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty ratified — thus making any significant progress on arms control even more difficult.
Excerpts from Address, “On the Need for Effective Stability As We Move Forward”

The challenge that we face now is how to use the arms control process to reinforce political stability despite the many changes in the Post-Cold War security environment.

Attention has turned to more amorphous, less predictable threats, such as “rogue states,” “loose nukes” and “bioterrorism.” Military planning that includes “hedging” strategies means expecting the unexpected and even anticipating irrational behavior.

While this may be prudent, it is also can cause problems. The more we try to keep our options open, the more unpredictable and threatening our behavior can seem to others. That is why it is important to keep working on CTBT ratification, strategic arms reductions, and other concrete ways to demonstrate that we are not trying to go it alone, but remain committed to global arms control and non-proliferation efforts.

A state’s behavior can seem erratic or incomprehensible when its own decision-makers can’t agree on security principles. To be a credible, effective leader in non-proliferation efforts, the US needs to make good on promises to rectify and implement treaties that it negotiates. Whether the issue is CTBT ratification, ABM Treaty, export controls, or the Korean Peninsula, the wider variation in worldviews between Administration and Congressional leaders, the harder it is to have steadfast policies.

In talking with our Russian counterparts, Deputy Secretary Talbott and I have been seeking to preserve political stability as the US contemplates shifts in our security strategy to cope with new threats and changing domestic ideas about appropriate response. We want to make the US decision-making on NMD more transparent, demonstrate that we remain committed to strategic arms control, and reassure Russia that we favor cooperative steps to address its security concerns.

Through this consultative process, we are trying to maintain stable expectations, and lower the likelihood of either side walking away.

A Renewed Agenda?

These frustrations are one of the reasons I am skeptical of what a number of states have urged as a “new agenda” in arms control, including a range of measures, old and new, taking us toward a world free from nuclear weapons.

I consider the US to be part of the international consensus on nuclear disarmament. But just as there is no consensus about what stability means, there is no consensus on how best to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, nuclear dangers.

It is because of these disagreements that, to my way of thinking, the way forward is not through a new agenda, but renewed commitment to the existing agenda.

Progress to date confirms that disarmament is best achieved through practical, discreet steps, each building on its predecessors and each calibrated to the realities of the international security environment. Disarmament does not occur in isolation or upon demand, but from a number of tangible factors: the commitment of states to the process; a stable security environment; effective verification regimes; and enforcement mechanisms.

Our problem is not too few items on the agenda; it is too little headway on those already there. In our haste to reach our shared destination, we cannot bypass key milestones. Attempts to leap ahead before the political groundwork has been laid will only result in further frustrations, unmet expectations, and recriminations.

Rather than new or more intense immediate demands, what we need is a longer-term strategy to lay the political groundwork for deeper reductions and eventual nuclear disarmament.

Many people in this room have worked to convince other countries that cooperative security strategies are better than conflictual ones. Many of you have also worked in conflict-prone regions to create a political environment allowing leaders to take risks for peace. In Northern Ireland, the Middle East, South Asia, and elsewhere, there is a constant struggle between enemy images and conflictual security strategies on the one hand, and more inclusive, cooperative strategies on the other.

Perhaps there are ways to use those tools with the United States as well — to counteract indifference to foreign policy problems, and keep concern about proliferation from leading to “fortress America” security strategies.

Given where we are today, the best course will not be promulgated or handed down from on high, but rather, can only flow from the free exchange of ideas in the policy community, the Congress, universities and town halls, editorial pages and television studios . . . and sessions like this one. We need a respectful dialogue among Americans from all walks of life about how we can best use our power to ensure lasting peace and deep stability in world politics.

I doubt that we can develop an overarching consensus inside the Beltway on one “right” way to view the world. I hope, though, that we can restore broad bipartisan agreement that hardheaded arms control and non-proliferation measures should be major components of our overall security strategy.

John D. Holum
The bulk of the Consultation was given over to small group discussions — breakout sessions — on the themes of the meeting. The sessions allowed a greater opportunity in informal settings to focus on specific problems besetting the non-proliferation regime and on ways to address those problems — in both the short and long term.

Keeping with the promise of confidentiality and the understanding that no one expected the participants to speak with one voice, it is still possible to identify some dominant themes that ran throughout the Consultation, with the clear understanding that nothing stated in the Consultation can be considered a consensus view.

**US partisan politics:** Partisan politics — specifically the desire of some Senate Republicans to embarrass President Clinton — was seen as one of the reasons for the defeat of the CTBT. Therefore, there was discussion of developing a bipartisan US Congressional forum for nuclear disarmament issues. There was a general feeling that the bipartisan approach is disappearing and thus needs to be reinvigorated. However, it may be difficult to do this during 2000, which is an election year in the US — a time when Republicans and Democrats are more competitive; there was even a fear of a backfire if such an initiative was taken now — it might further polarize the debate. Keeping in mind that there is a joint Congressional effort just established for discussions on the CTBT, it may be possible to expand this to other non-proliferation and disarmament issues.

One idea was to try to get nuclear disarmament issues raised in the presidential debates.

**Public awareness:** The US public and media are “asleep,” in the view of one participant. It was noted that US public and media have some concept of the risks of proliferation but there is little awareness or coverage of the risks of not pursuing disarmament. Thus, the risks of current policies and the links between disarmament and non-proliferation must be made in the public domain.

On the NPT specifically, suggestions came up for organizing more public events enlisting the entertainment and music industries and high-profile political leaders to draw the attention of the public. Approaching media representatives — editorial writers, columnists, the networks — to suggest raising the questions surrounding the NPT was also brought up.

One participant noted a paradox on what motivates people: they want to eliminate nuclear weapons, but it is a low priority. There should be some study as to why this is the case.

**Parliamentarian links:** There were several proposals for greater cooperation among parliamentarians including a parliamentary appeal on nuclear disarmament and a series of exchanges of parliamentarians (MPs). It was felt that MPs visiting the US could inform US congressional members of the global effects of US nuclear policies and increase pressure for movement. While there was the warning that US Congress members are sensitive to “outside interference,” another participant noted that US nuclear policy affects everyone. He argued, “No annihilation without representation.”

**NATO and Europe:** The importance of the NATO review of nuclear policy was stressed. The NATO Summit in April 1999 promised to reexamine NATO’s policy of first use and the belief that the alliance will need nuclear weapons “for the foreseeable future.” One belief was that greater public pressure on NATO policy makers would increase the vulnerability of hard-liners since most of the non-nuclear NATO states are more open to change.

The UK was often mentioned as the nuclear weapon state with the greatest possibility of moving forward, of rethinking its reliance on nuclear weapons. The importance of parliament and parliamentary exchanges was especially emphasized, as the UK parliament has considerable influence on government policy and practice. “Imagine a United Kingdom on the Security Council without nuclear weapons,” one participant suggested.
Immediate goals: There were strong opinions that the most immediate goals — not so much to advance disarmament, but rather to arrest the disintegration — are to maintain the moratoria on nuclear testing and cancel the Ballistic Missile Defense project. This US proposal for a missile defense system was roundly criticized both as bad science and strategy and as a potential cause for further breakdown in the arms control regime.

Four proactive proposals that participants felt the US and the other nuclear powers could take were de-alerting their arsenals, adhering to negative security assurances, renouncing first use doctrines and reviewing the doctrine of deterrence. The current US and Russia doctrines on the use of nuclear weapons provide “rationales for other countries to also adopt nuclear doctrines that promote proliferation,” one participant argued.

“Words vs. action”: There is obvious tension between the US position and the NAC proposals. Although the 1999 NAC UN resolution was not “demonized” by the US, as was the 1998 text, Washington is opposed to many of the proposals NAC considers vital — such as de-alerting and examining “nuclear weapons policies and positions.” One US official characterized the situation as “words versus action,” in other words, US/Russia cuts as opposed to new proposals. “Isn’t irreversible action better?” another official asked.

A Nuclear Weapons Convention: Some of the NGOs are advocating a nuclear weapons convention as the path to the long-term goal of the abolition of these arms. The discussion at the Consultation focused on the prognosis for beginning negotiations on it. While many noted that there was much to do before negotiations on a convention could begin, there was discussion of the usefulness now of the model convention a) in public and parliamentary campaigns to address many of the questions that are raised regarding the feasibility of nuclear disarmament, and b) in diplomatic arenas to assist in isolating or promoting specific incremental steps leading toward nuclear disarmament.

The NPT process: When the NPT was indefinitely extended in 1995, a continuing review process was established whereby parties to the Treaty would meet in preparatory sessions three times between the review conferences. The idea was that this continuous process would hold the nuclear weapon states permanently accountable for their 1995 commitments. However, this did not prove to be the case since the preparatory sessions were always stalemated. Participants at the Consultation were largely of the opinion that the minimum agreement at the end of the 2000 conference should be a commitment by the five nuclear states to engage in bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament.

One proposal is that if there is no progress by the end of this review conference, consideration could be given to convening an NPT amendment conference to include a draft amendment on implementation of Article VI.

Nuclear Energy: Article IV of the NPT — which calls for cooperation for the development of nuclear energy — has always been a problem for disarmament advocates. While most disarmament activists believe that nuclear power is a pollution and proliferation danger, the tendency at NPT conferences is to keep the focus on disarmament and ignore Article IV. Some participants believed this is the proper course. “Focus on the bomb,” was a common sentiment. But others pointed out that Article IV “is part of the basic deal” in getting non-nuclear weapon states to accept the NPT, so it had to be addressed.

But viewing the issue in terms of public mobilization, it was argued that the disarmament movement could make common cause with the environmental movement. The latter movement is strong, the argument went, because people can relate to environmental problems, while weapons issues are “distant from people’s realities.” If people see a connection between the environment and the bomb, it can strengthen the personal aspects of the issue.
Given the urgency of the issue and the short time before the NPT Review Conference, it was deemed necessary that some tangible progress be made within a short period of time.

■ President Carter wrote an article called “A Nuclear Crisis” (Washington Post, February 23, 2000) on the present dangers in the non-proliferation regime. In it, he said, “It is imperative that the [NPT] be reconfirmed and subsequently honored by leaders who are inspired to act wisely and courageously by an informed public.” While the United States’ policies have helped create the crisis, Mr. Carter wrote, “Our influence [can] help resolve the nuclear dilemma that faces the world.”

■ Carter Center and MPI officials held a series of follow-up meetings in February with key US government policy makers who attended the Atlanta Consultation, as well as government officials who were not at the Consultation. A key theme raised was the need for the US to send a strong signal to the NPT Review Conference that it reaffirms its legally binding duties under Article VI of the NPT in such a fashion as to ensure that confidence in US non-proliferation and disarmament commitments is not undermined by recent set-backs, as the US Senate’s failure to ratify the CTBT. At a separate meeting with members of Congress, MPI stressed the importance of leadership from parliamentarians in disarmament and the need for greater coordination of strategies between NGOs and parliamentarians.

■ Sen. Alan Cranston is preparing a statement for 100 top US leaders to sign, and which will, in turn, be circulated for signature by a wider group of leaders and then submitted to a broad spectrum of organizations in US civil society.

■ The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation sponsored an appeal called “End the Nuclear Weapons Threat to Humanity!” Some 40 dignitaries, including Jimmy Carter and 14 Nobel Peace laureates, signed the call asking the nations of the world to begin negotiating a nuclear weapons convention, to de-alert their nuclear arsenals and to reallocate resources from military to human needs.

■ Michael Douglas spoke to the all-party Parliamentary Group in the United Kingdom’s House of Commons on March 20, warning that arms control treaties risked “coming apart” and calling on Prime Minister Tony Blair to speak at the NPT Review Conference in defense of nuclear arms control. “This would send a message to other world leaders of the importance of saving that treaty,” Mr. Douglas said.
A Nuclear Crisis
By Jimmy Carter

Every five years, the nuclear nonproliferation treaty (NPT) comes up for reassessment by the countries that have signed it. This is the treaty that provides for international restraints (and inspections) on nuclear programs. It covers not only the nuclear nations but 180 other countries as well, including Iran, Iraq, North Korea and Libya. An end to the NPT could terminate many of these inspections and open a Pandora’s box of nuclear proliferation in states that already present serious terrorist threats to others.

Now it is time for the 30-year-old NPT to be reviewed (in April, by an international assembly at the United Nations), and, sad to say, the current state of affairs with regard to nuclear proliferation is not good. In fact, I think it can be said that the world is facing a nuclear crisis. Unfortunately, U.S. policy has had a good deal to do with creating it.

At the last reassessment session, in 1995, a large group of non-nuclear nations with the financial resources and technology to develop weapons--including Egypt, Brazil and Argentina--agreed to extend the NPT, but with the proviso that the five nuclear powers take certain specific steps to defuse the nuclear issue: adoption of a comprehensive test ban treaty by 1996; conclusion of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, and “determined pursuit” of efforts to reduce nuclear arsenals, with the ultimate goal of eliminating them.

It is almost universally conceded that none of these commitments has been honored. India and Pakistan have used this failure to justify their joining Israel as nations with recognized nuclear capability that are refusing to comply with NPT restraints. And there has been a disturbing pattern of other provocative developments:

* For the first time I can remember, no series of summit meetings is underway or in preparation to seek further cuts in nuclear arsenals. The START II treaty concluded seven years ago by presidents George Bush and Boris Yeltsin has not been seriously considered for ratification by the Russian parliament.

* Instead of moving away from reliance on nuclear arsenals since the end of the Cold War, both the United States and NATO have sent disturbing signals to other nations by declaring that these weapons are still the cornerstone of Western security policy, and both have re-emphasized that they will not comply with a “no first use” policy. Russia has reacted to this U.S. and NATO policy by rejecting its previous “no first use” commitment; strapped for funds and unable to maintain its conventional forces of submarines, tanks, artillery, and troops, it is now much more likely to rely on its nuclear arsenal.

* The United States, NATO and others still maintain arsenals of tactical nuclear weapons, including up to 200 nuclear weapons in Western Europe.

* Despite the efforts of Gens. Lee Butler and Andrew Goodpaster, Adm. Stansfield Turner and other military experts, American and Russian nuclear missiles are still maintained in a “hair-trigger alert” status, susceptible to being launched in a spur-of-the-moment crisis or even by accident.

* After years of intense negotiation, recent rejection by the U.S. Senate of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was a serious blow to global nuclear control efforts and to confidence in American leadership.

* There is a notable lack of enforcement of the excessively weak international agreements against transfer of fissile materials.

* The prospective adoption by the United States of a limited “Star Wars” missile defense system has already led Russia, China and other nations to declare that this would abrogate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which has prevailed since 1972. This could destroy the fabric of existing international agreements among the major powers.

* There is no public effort or comment in the United States or Europe calling for Israel to comply with the NPT or submit to any other restraints. At the same time, we fail to acknowledge what a powerful incentive this is to Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt to join the nuclear community.
The U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) has been recently abolished, removing an often weak but at least identifiable entity to explore arms issues.

I believe that the general public would be extremely concerned if these facts were widely known, but so far such issues have not been on the agenda in presidential debates. A number of responsible non-nuclear nations, including Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden have expressed their disillusionment with the lack of progress toward disarmament. The non-proliferation system may not survive unless the major powers give convincing evidence of compliance with previous commitments.

In April, it is imperative that the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty be reconfirmed and subsequently honored by leaders who are inspired to act wisely and courageously by an informed public. This treaty has been a key deterrent to the proliferation of weapons, and its unraveling would exert powerful pressures even on peace-loving nations to develop a nuclear capability.

All nuclear states must renew efforts to achieve worldwide reduction and ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. In the meantime, it requires no further negotiations for leaders of nuclear nations to honor existing nuclear security agreements, including the test ban and anti-ballistic missile treaties, and to remove nuclear weapons from their present hair-trigger alert status.

Just as American policy is to blame for many of the problems, so can our influence help resolve the nuclear dilemma that faces the world.

Former President Carter is Chairman of The Carter Center in Atlanta.
© Copyright The Carter Center 2000. Used with permission.
There are areas ripe for public debate: Are nuclear weapons more hazardous than the problems they seek to address? Are there strategic, militarily required, moral, legal, politically viable instances in which the use of a thermonuclear device on a population makes sense? Is it correct for states to seek their own survival by placing at risk the survival of humanity?

There are areas where dialogue should be intensified: How can we find common ground to work together to reduce the threat of a nuclear weapon ever being used? How can we work together to stop the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons? How can we work together to create conditions conducive to negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons?

In these past two days we have seen that with dialogue bridges can be built and new programs can be created. This kind of gathering has value and we want the process to continue even in smaller venues. We must prevail in this process over those whose despairing view of the human condition minimizes law and proclaims proliferation inevitable. We must prevail over those for whom counter-proliferation is their best response. We can thus make the debate less and less relevant as we build momentum in working together to progressively reduce the political significance of and military reliance on nuclear weapons, thus paving the way for their eventual elimination.

I want to end reminding us of where we began. Reverend C.T. Vivian had a moral vision that racism was unacceptable. Working closely with Reverend Martin Luther King, he put his life on the line for civil rights. He stayed the course and change happened in this country in our lifetime. We had someone here who very quietly but very definitely at some point in his life made a decision to change history. He did it and he told us why he did it. It came from deep in his heart. We should end this conference with that kind of larger vision.

There are two icons that our grandparents didn’t have. An icon is a picture of something greater than the picture or symbol itself. It’s like a window revealing greater meaning. One icon is the mushroom cloud. It simply didn’t exist as a meaningful image for our grandparents. The destructive horrific vision that cloud awakens in our hearts is one icon of human creativity of our time.

The other icon is the picture of the planet Earth from outer space. Our grandparents didn’t have that vision because human ingenuity had not allowed us to step outside the stratosphere and take that photograph. Who has not been moved by that majestic photograph of this mysterious blue marble? It lets us see a living miracle without borders in which all of the saints and all of the sinners, all of the nations and all of the dramas of history, all of the small dramas of our lives and all of the vanities and all of the greatness of humanity have taken their places and played out their dreams and moved on. I believe it is sacred. Surely no state could create this. Without the photograph, without the icon, none of us could envision that vision. That icon is a gift to remind us as surely as the mushroom cloud is a gift to warn us.

We are the first generation which must choose whether life will continue. This living sphere may be the only such place in the entire infinite universe where this gift of life, this gift to love, exists. We surely do not have the right to place it at risk through our collective ingenuity and in the service of something we have created. We can, we should and we must do better. For the sake of our children and that wondrous living mystery called Earth, let us do better. Thank you.

Jonathan Granoff