



FEDERAL POLICY BRIEFING
ADVANCING PEACE, SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS
WASHINGTON, DC
MARCH 17-19, 2013

Nuclear Arms Control and Nonproliferation: Which Way Forward?

March 18, 2013, 1:30 - 3:00 pm

Speakers:

- **Daryl Kimball**, Executive Director, Arms Control Association
- **Anthony Wier**, Senior Staff, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Facilitator:

- **Nandini Merz**, Program Director, Colombe Foundation

Daryl Kimball opened his remarks by saying that we are in a unique historical situation, since President Obama embraces a peace and security agenda that advocates have been pushing for over twenty years. He sees several hopeful signs of what's to come. He also views Obama's second term as a time for the administration to evaluate tactical decisions needed to pursue peace and security goals. Kimball then described three major challenges and opportunities he thinks the peace and security community must address.

- Iranian nuclear program
 - There will be more information available after the President's trip to Israel this week.
 - Kimball said this year will be important to achieving a breakthrough. He saw this as being a modest deal that addresses the most urgent proliferation problems, including getting Iran to limit its enrichment activities and halt further accumulation of 20 percent enriched uranium.
 - To get to a deal like this, Kimball said the U.S. would need to give Iran what it wants – sanctions relief. Eliminating sanctions could create lasting solutions for both states, but this window of opportunity is narrow.
- Russia
 - Kimball noted there are positive signs that chief obstacles can be overcome.
 - On Friday, Kimball said the Pentagon had announced the cancellation of the fourth phase of the European missile defense program for budgetary and technical reasons. He said Russia hasn't embraced this but seems that it could influence them.
 - The increasing pressures of the federal budget make it clear that the Pentagon will have to trim back on submarine fleets, bombers, ICMBs, etc., said Kimball. This means it's possible to work with Congress to make a common sense budget savings argument.
- Ratification of Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

- Kimball noted that many congresspeople who voted against the Treaty are thankfully no longer there.
- He said supporters need to find over 12 Republicans so it will be difficult, but if the President is committed it could succeed.
- Kimball expressed that strong bipartisan support exists. We'll need to create champions for the test ban treaty, but it's possible.

Kimball said these three issues are where the NGO community can have the most impact. He ended by reiterating that the President shares the community's long-term goals, so it's important to seize our opportunities.

Anthony Wier opened by noting that around 2001 or 2002, Vice President Biden had suggested the Bush administration should pursue the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty instead of their preferred path of unilateral reductions. This bodes well for our prospects of progress, he said.

The Russian government has talked about creating a new ICBM with warheads, Weir said. The U.S. now needs to determine how to respond to that. Weir cautioned that a difficult road lies ahead in terms of getting enough votes to pass the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. In this partisan day and age, he said, the margins are smaller. The advocacy community needs to be creative about how to attain 12 Republican votes for the Treaty – this is a quarter of the Republican caucus. Wier noted that the challenge is addressing the constituencies of this quarter. The advocacy community has to convince these senators that voting for the Treaty is not political suicide; advocates have to convince these senators on the basis of the concerns of their own constituents.

Wier went on to say that women and young people, among other groups, were constituencies that the Republicans lost in the last election. He wondered if there could be interesting ways to target certain demographic groups around nuclear disarmament. He gave the Catholic community as an example: what if the Catholic establishment took a stand on this?

Questions

One participant noted that the two presenters laid out a sobering landscape on congressional action on disarmament. He asked about next steps.

Wier responded that the President can take significant action on these issues, but not necessarily historic action. A lot of partisan attitudes on disarmament are hollow, he said. Many congress people don't feel the consequences of taking their stance with regard to their constituencies, but they do feel pressure from major players like the Heritage Foundation, for example. Wier highlighted that home state newspapers and other media have a hugely important role to play in making the issue visible among a congress person's constituencies. Kimball added that we have to be careful about how we "brand" the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The recently failed Disability Rights Treaty had bad branding, he said. Kimball continued by saying that this particular debate on nuclear disarmament is particularly driven by interests inside Washington, D.C. An average person doesn't know that the U.S. government has 700 warheads sitting around, he said, and advocacy communities need to bridge that gap. Kimball emphasized that there is a strong team "on paper" to make some significant progress over the next four years, but that the advocacy community will have to work hard to make some Administration officials, especially Kerry and Hagel, understand the opportunity to make progress. The common sense budget argument can really come into play here, he said. When we spend one "dumb dollar" on defense, we

don't have a "smart dollar" to spend on counter-terrorism. A lot of retired generals would agree, Kimball said, because 1700 warheads don't help when a helicopter lands in Pakistan – body armor does.

Finally, another participant stressed the importance of education campaigns to raise public awareness of these issues.