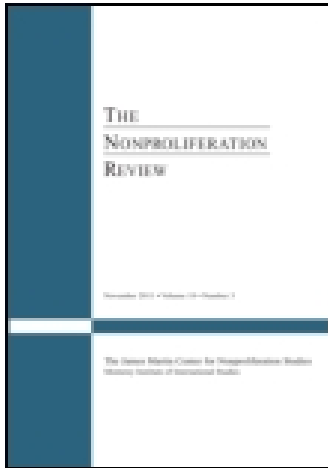


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EDITOR'S NOTE

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EDITOR'S NOTE

As this year marks our twentieth anniversary, it is perhaps worth pausing to reflect for a moment how the world has changed since the *Nonproliferation Review* first appeared in 1993.

Twenty years ago, the Cold War was still a fresh memory, not a distant one. We were very concerned about “loose nukes” and the Nunn-Lugar program to safeguard and dismantle weapons of mass destruction and related materiel in former Soviet states was in its infancy. Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan had each inherited thousands of nuclear weapons when the Soviet Union collapsed. It would be several years before all those weapons were repatriated to Russia and all three newly independent states joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The NPT had not yet been indefinitely extended. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had not yet been negotiated (China and France were still testing their weapons). Pakistan and North Korea had not yet tested nuclear weapons (or, in the case of the latter, withdrawn from the NPT). The Chemical Weapons Convention had been signed but would not take effect until 1997. The Aum Shinrikyo sarin attack on the Tokyo subway had not yet occurred. The UN Special Commission on Iraq was hard at work verifying the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. No one was concerned that Iran was trying to develop nuclear weapons. Most Americans had never heard of al Qaeda.

Perhaps most striking of all, according to my colleagues at the Federation of American Scientists, Robert S. Norris and Hans Kristensen, there were an estimated 50,963 nuclear weapons worldwide. Today, that number has fallen to about 10,400—a nearly 80 percent decline—thanks to dramatic reductions in the US and Russian nuclear arsenals (with a small assist from the United Kingdom and France). That's real progress, even if some critics lament its slow pace, focusing instead on the not-yet-achieved end state rather than the quiet, steady process that is—sometimes more quickly, sometimes more slowly—taking us there.

So, some things are much better. Some things are worse. A few things are about the same. What do the next twenty years hold in store? That's difficult to say, but being an optimist by nature, I expect more progress than setbacks (though I anticipate the latter too). Whatever happens, I can guarantee you'll be reading about it here.

Before running down this issue's contents, I want to thank the director of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, William C. Potter, for his steadfast interest in and support of this journal. I also want to commend previous editors James Clay Moltz, Jeffrey W. Knopf, and Scott Parrish, and former managing editors Sarah J. Diehl, Kimberly A. McCloud, Lisa Donohoe Luscombe, and Catherine Auer. That we are still publishing today is in no small measure due to their vision, dedication, and persistence. That we remain informative, engaging, and influential is due to you, our readers and contributors.

Now, on to what you'll find in this issue.

Jacques E.C. Hymans and Matthew S. Gratts (University of Southern California) start off this issue by tackling a timely topic: when will we know if Iran crosses the nuclear threshold? One (relatively new) school of thought argues that this will come when

Iran obtains enough highly enriched uranium (a "significant quantity") to build a bomb, while another maintains that a nuclear test is the red line that must not be crossed. Utilizing theoretical and empirical analysis, Hymans and Gratias demonstrate that whether or not Iran (or another state) conducts a nuclear test is a more rigorous and intellectually defensible metric than the quantity of highly enriched uranium it possesses.

Anton Khlopkov (Center for Energy and Security Studies) deftly relates the fascinating and largely unknown story of Jeff Eerkens, an American of Dutch descent who, beginning in 1969, was among the first scientists to investigate the possibility of using lasers to enrich uranium. After the Atomic Energy Commission declined to support his research (deciding at the same time there was no need to classify it), Eerkens developed and patented the technology and then sought out parties who might want to use it. A chance meeting with an Iranian businessman in the mid-1970s led to an agreement with the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran to fund additional research and build a laser enrichment laboratory in Tehran. Read Khlopkov's historical but resonant cautionary tale to discover what happened next.

Patrick Homan (Northern Illinois University) undertakes a theoretical analysis, using the case of Venezuela to assess its potential as a future nuclear weapon state. He deploys three models to consider the conditions that could lead Venezuela to pursue nuclear weapons and concludes that, while President Hugo Chávez flouts international norms and maintains close ties with Iran, there is little, if any, security justification for such a course of action. In addition, there are no domestic or scientific constituencies supporting the development of nuclear weapons. Consequently, Homan advises avoiding alarmism while maintaining a cautious stance on developments within Venezuela.

Arturo C. Sotomayor (US Naval Postgraduate School) examines how two other states in Latin America—Brazil and Mexico—developed different approaches to the nuclear nonproliferation regime. In particular, Sotomayor focuses on how US influence and evolving civil-military relations have affected the policy preferences of each of these influential states. He also examines what past developments can tell us about the future support of Brazil and Mexico for the nonproliferation regime.

Andrew Futter (University of Leicester) and **Benjamin Zala** (Oxford Research Group) consider a paradox in President Barack Obama's approach to global nuclear disarmament. A growing reliance on precision conventional weapons and ballistic missile defense can reduce the need for large numbers of US nuclear weapons and make possible greater reductions in their numbers. But a world in which the United States deploys such capabilities is not one in which other states are likely to relinquish their nuclear arsenals. According to Futter and Zala, unless the administration can balance its objectives—and persuade both domestic and foreign audiences to support them—its pursuit of a nuclear weapon-free world may become a solo endeavor.

In the first of two reports in this issue, **C. Christine Fair** (Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University), **Karl Kaltenthaler** (Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, University of Akron), and **William Miller** (Flagler College) analyze Iranian public opinion regarding the NPT and find that, while most Iranians have largely general views on the NPT, a significant minority favor Iran's withdrawal from the treaty. But those supporting such action don't favor Iran's development of nuclear weapons. Rather, they

distrust the International Atomic Energy Agency's motives and fear a US attack on Iranian nuclear facilities.

Next, **Benjamin Bonin** and **Amir Mohagheghi** (both at Sandia National Laboratories), and **Michael Yaffe** (Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University), participants in an ongoing track-two dialogue on the technical parameters of implementing a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East, discuss their insights from three years of interactions with experts from across the region and share their recommendations for advancing the broader official process of establishing such a zone.

In our viewpoints section, **David A. Cooper** (US Naval War College) argues that it is time for the United States to dust off an old idea: expanding the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty—which banned US and Soviet ground-launched ballistic missiles and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers—to prohibit such weapons globally. Although the initial benefits might be modest, if handled properly, such an approach could achieve significant long-term political and security gains.

Brian Finlay and **Johan Bergenäs** (Stimson Center) make a strong case that current strategies to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons are unsustainable and likely to fail if the concerns of the developing world—and in particular the global South—are not considered. They promote a “dual benefit” approach, sharing successful examples from the Caribbean Basin and Latin America, that allows leaders and officials in the developing world to view the problems, and solutions, in terms that make sense to them and, consequently, strengthen engagement globally.

We wrap up this issue with two reviews of important books. **Tanya Ogilvie-White** (Australian Strategic Policy Institute) explores a major new addition to the field that offers a novel conceptual framework on nuclear weapons and international order. **Henry Sokolski** (Nonproliferation Policy Education Center) examines an analysis of the risks of promoting civilian nuclear energy programs without sufficiently tough non-proliferation controls.

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