

Between Sovereignty and Compliance: a Nuclear Strategy for the 21st Century

Marcin Zaborowski*

Universal compliance : a strategy for nuclear security / George Perkovich... [et al.]. - Washington D.C. : Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, c2005. - 220 p.

"It's broke, it needs fixing", this is the view of the existing non-proliferation regime taken by the authors of this book. This multi-authored volume written by leading experts and based on broad international consultation challenges existing modes and institutions for preventing or rolling back nuclear proliferation and calls for better, sustained multilateral efforts to ensure "nuclear security" through "universal compliance". There are two core premises upon which the book proceeds, first, that the US will not be successful at dealing with nuclear proliferation unilaterally, and second, that existing international regimes for non-prolifera-

tion are more or less moribund in the face of the current nuclear challenge.

After delineating the history of international non-proliferation efforts, the first chapter constructs a persuasive argument about why a new strategy is needed, which sets the stage for the remainder of the book. Although this chapter presents nothing particularly new, it provides a well written and informative potted history of the existing proliferation regime and a valuable and convincing analysis of current challenges and their implications. Whilst the NPT regime fared well in the context of the relative predictability and clarity of the Cold War, events thereafter presented a fundamental challenge to the *status quo*, and challenges, the authors claim, call for fresh thinking and "new formulas". Although the current NPT regime was successful in reducing the overall number of nuclear

*Marcin Zaborowski is Research Fellow at the European Union's Institute of Security Studies (EUISS), Paris.

states (pp. 19-20), as the authors note, the optimism surrounding the 1995 renewal of the NPT became jaded only three years later when India and Pakistan announced that they had both successfully exploded nuclear devices. The failings of the NPT in the mid-1990s were then exacerbated by the events of 11 September 2001.

The notion that non-state actors may already have the potential to acquire and use a nuclear device struck a hard blow to the rather rigid NPT regime, which focused upon states. In this context, current US policy in meeting the challenges of proliferation is, in the authors' words, "insufficient". Bush's identification of rogue states, the accent he puts on regime change and "new methods of deterrence" negate international teamwork – considered crucial for meeting "old" and "new" challenges. Bringing the chapter to a close is a concise assessment and ranking of "global nuclear threats" with nuclear terrorism at the top end of the spectrum.

In chapter two, the authors begin to formulate a response to the challenges and deficiencies discussed previously. The authors proffer a bold notion of universal compliance as one which goes beyond treaty signing and "good intentions" and has "actual performance" at its heart. Moreover, universal compliance must include non-state actors, corporations and individuals. This brings with it a range of challenges, especially for the US which, the authors note, will have to work to a greater extent with the UN to ensure legitimacy of any new regime and its enforcement. Six bold obligations, which are discussed in

detail (pp. 36-49), lie at the heart of the strategy of universal compliance: making non-proliferation irreversible, devaluing the political and military currency of nuclear weapons; securing all nuclear materials; stopping illegal transfers; committing to conflict resolution and solving the three-state (India, Israel and Pakistan, the three nuclear weapons states not parties to the NPT) problem.

Weak means of enforcement have historically dogged non-proliferation efforts, especially in stubborn areas, thus a substantial strengthening of enforcement methods is presented as an essential part of universal compliance. New international laws, the strengthening of existing ones and more provisions for voluntary actions are seen as first steps and are detailed in full in chapter three. Inseparable from more robust enforcement measures is a more concerted effort at "blocking supply", which is viewed as a further requirement of universal compliance, a theme developed in chapter four. The authors propose that the US take the lead in this area, alongside a contact group of other nuclear states and any others that possess weapon-usable materials. The idea is that by placing the responsibility for securing nuclear materials on the shoulders of a number of states, a far better regime for controlling materials will emerge.

Chapter five talks about the importance of abating demand, of states concluding that they are actually better off without a nuclear arsenal. One of the most important aspects of this, as the authors note, is to reward those states that act in such a way as to strengthen

non-proliferation. The offer to expand the membership of the UN Security Council could provide both inducements and potential rewards to states showing a commitment to non-proliferation (p. 129). The final chapter brings together into regional contexts many of the arguments discussed previously. The authors argue that the various elements of the strategy of universal compliance should be adapted to help mitigate or even transcend the nuclear dimension of regional conflicts.

Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security is a bold statement,

which offers a viable plan of action to confront the complexities of the current nuclear challenge. At its core is an overwhelming message for current US foreign policy, namely, the need to think and act more multilaterally and to adjust current modes of thinking on deterrence. The book's exhaustive nature should ensure that it will be taken seriously by expert communities and considered a blueprint for new thinking about the nuclear challenge.

This book is essential reading for both policy practitioners and academics working on proliferation issues.