



GLOBAL
SECURITY
INSTITUTE

GOALS OF GLOBAL SECURITY

A presentation by Jonathan Granoff, President

To address

THE THREATS THAT BIND:
STRENGTHENING GLOBAL COOPERATION

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New Ideas and Initiatives

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POINT ONE:

In the lead up to the 2005 NPT Review Conference, Ted Sorenson was asked by the Global Security Institute to design a billboard for Times Square. He suggested:

Thousands of Russian Warheads Threaten the US
Thousands of US Warheads Threaten Russia

Stop All Nuclear Terrorism Now
Fulfill the Promise of the NPT

POINT TWO:

Consider these extracts from “The Coming Instant Planetary Emergency” by Dahr Jamail, *The Nation*, Dec. 17, 2013:

“We as a species have never experienced 400 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere,” Guy McPherson, professor emeritus of evolutionary biology, natural resources, and ecology at the University of Arizona and a climate change expert of twenty-five years, told me. “We’ve never been on a planet with no Arctic ice, and we will hit the average of 400 ppm...within the next couple of years. At that time, we’ll also see the loss of Arctic ice in the summers.... This planet has not experienced an ice-free Arctic for at least the last three million years.

For the uninitiated, in the simplest terms, here’s what an ice-free Arctic would mean when it comes to heating the planet: minus the reflective ice cover on Arctic waters, solar radiation would be absorbed, not reflected, by the Arctic Ocean...“We’ve never been here as a species and the implications are truly dire and profound for our species and the rest of the living planet.

“...the Permian mass extinction that occurred 250 million years ago is related to methane and thought to be the key to what caused the extinction of most species on the planet.” In that extinction episode, it is estimated that 95 percent of all species were wiped out.

We are currently in the midst of what scientists consider the sixth mass extinction in planetary history, with between 150 and 200 species going extinct daily, a pace 1,000 times greater than the “natural” or “background” extinction rate. This event may already be comparable to, or even exceed, both the speed and intensity of the Permian mass extinction. The difference being that ours is human-caused, isn’t going to take 80,000 years, has so far lasted just a few centuries and is now gaining speed in a non-linear fashion.

Consider this timeline:

* Late 2007: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) announces that the planet will see a one degree Celsius temperature increase due to climate change by 2100.

* Late 2008: The Hadley Centre for Meteorological Research predicts a 2C increase by 2100.

* Mid-2009: The UN Environment Programme predicts a 3.5C increase by 2100. Such an increase would remove habitat for human beings on this planet, as nearly all the plankton in the oceans would be destroyed, and associated temperature swings would kill off many land plants. Humans have never lived on a planet at 3.5C above baseline.

* October 2009: The Hadley Centre for Meteorological Research releases an updated prediction, suggesting a 4C temperature increase by 2060.

* November 2009: The Global Carbon Project, which monitors the global carbon cycle, and the Copenhagen Diagnosis, a climate science report, predict 6C and 7C temperature increases, respectively, by 2100.

* December 2010: The UN Environment Programme predicts up to a 5C increase by 2050.

“The Arctic is warming faster than anywhere else on the planet,” climate scientist James Hansen has [said](#). “There are potential irreversible effects of melting the Arctic sea ice. If it begins to allow the Arctic Ocean to warm up, and warm the ocean floor, then we’ll begin to release methane hydrates. And if we let that happen, that is a potential tipping point that we don’t want to happen. If we burn all the fossil fuels then we certainly will cause the methane hydrates, eventually, to come out and cause several degrees more warming, and it’s not clear that civilization could survive that extreme climate change.”

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What these two points have in common is that, along with several other challenges such as protecting the oceans and the rainforests, they are existential for the survival of civilization and require global cooperation and formal legal structures to address them. In other words, the present game is founded on militaries squaring off and holding off based on calculations of strategic stability. We operate as if it were acceptable to presume intrinsic hostility garbed in unbridled competition. This situation daily risks unimaginable violence, restrained primarily by mutual fears. It fails to identify our realistic and critically important, shared interests. We must now change to an empirically based, realistic approach to sustainable security, founded on achieving shared goals that enhance rather than derogate our common humanity.

Simply put, all nations today, including Cold War enemies, have far greater common interests and shared risks than they have opposing interests.

There are global public goals, the cooperative pursuit of which will amplify the capacity of nations to work together and find common ground in addressing issues where current differences preclude critical short-term progress. Some of these goals are issues of critical importance, where the quality of life for billions of people is at stake. These include: ending terrorism, preventing pandemic diseases, obtaining cyber security and stable financial markets, and bringing about peaceful democratization in transitioning countries. There are other issues that challenge the very existence of civilization. Success in these arenas is imperative. Cooperation is an existential necessity. We must, for example, cooperate universally to achieve success in stabilizing the climate, protecting the oceans and rainforests, and insuring that nuclear weapons are never used.

Achieving these goals, possibly even working cooperatively to move toward such achievements, will constitute global public common goods of the highest value. Failure to engage in such a bold, new approach, commensurate with the unique challenges facing all of humanity today, will ensure immeasurable suffering.

For example, predictions relating to a degraded climate by legions of credible scientists range from disastrous to downright apocalyptic. We know that any use of a nuclear weapon will disrupt society in dramatic ways, but few recognize that a mere 100 blasts could push tons of material into the atmosphere causing a drop in climate and massive famine, sufficient to kill billions from starvation and render civilization a meaningless dream of the past. There are over 17,000 of these horrific devices in the world with thousands poised and ready to strike in short order. Moreover, these weapons constitute a wall of threat and fear between peoples and countries where bridges of trust and cooperation are required. In addition to the amount of money it costs to build, maintain, and deploy these weapons, the daily opportunity costs—the benefits that could be reaped if the money for nuclear weaponry were invested elsewhere—are immeasurably high.

The business community has figured out how to work in a coordinated manner, but the security community is still working with the mentality of existential adversity. Nuclear weapons exemplify this incoherence, symbolically and in reality.

The only guarantee that nuclear weapons will not be used is to eliminate them universally. There are immediate tangible steps that must be taken on the road to this goal: lower their political currency as well as their operational military posture of hair-trigger readiness; strengthen institutional verification and monitoring systems to inventory and control all nuclear weapon-grade fissile materials; bring the test ban treaty into force; obtain a treaty ending any further production of weapon-grade fissile materials; reduce arsenals to minimal numbers; change the doctrines that guide policy decisions to eliminate roadblocks to disarmament progress: and, in diplomacy and law, establish the clearest framework for a legal, verifiable, enforceable, non-discriminatory, universal ban on these weapons. Without such steps, obtaining the cooperative environment required to address our critically important and existentially imperative concerns will remain problematic. We cannot at once threaten annihilation as a means of pursuing security and expect our pursuits requiring new levels of cooperation to succeed.

Every successful domestic legal system is based on principles of equity. The Golden Rule, in some iteration, is universal to all ethical systems, yet the international security community entirely neglects this lesson, and most glaringly in nuclear weapons policies. Imagine if the treaty banning biological weapons universally stated that while no country is allowed to use polio or small pox as a weapon, in the interest of strategic global stability, “we” will permit nine countries to stockpile and threaten the use of the plague as a weapon. The world community would declare this an incoherent, unrealistic, and dangerous policy, and this indictment would be correct. That is why we must correct the analogous example in the realm of nuclear weapons. No country should have them and the failure to establish global norms against them makes stopping their spread very difficult and increases the likelihood of their use, by accident, madness, or design.

Despite legal commitments contained in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and the pleas of numerous world leaders—which include nearly all Nobel Peace Laureates including President Obama—the overwhelming majority of nations, the unanimous ruling of the International Court of Justice, coalitions of powerful voices of US statesmen including Henry Kissinger, George Schultz, Sam Nunn, and William Perry, and diplomats, military leaders, and legions of experts around the world, progress commensurate with the threat is lacking. Arguments posed by those who extol the perceived virtues of nuclear weapons—that we need them to respond to unforeseen dangers and must maintain enough of a nuclear capability to counter a first strike by another country—have not amplified our security at all, but resulted in enormous arsenals plaguing the world with no substantive operational plan to get rid of them.

Advocacy for the elimination of nuclear weapons has not succeeded. One reason is that the debate is framed within a traditional “national risk vs. benefit” analysis.

The debate poses the question incorrectly. It presumes that nuclear weapons provide a unique benefit to the security of privileged states, whilst also having controllable risks. On the other hand, most arms control advocates argue the risk is too great and that some having the weapons is a stimulant for proliferation. Even though this analysis is true, this approach to the debate has not succeeded. Counterarguments in the capitals of states with nuclear weapons consistently prevail and those who extol the value of nuclear weapons box the debate in an antiquated structure that effectively thwarts progress.

Thus, in the risk/ benefit framework, it is difficult to overcome the argument that these weapons provide a beneficial deterrent against a potential, as-yet-unrealized, unforeseen, unknown, and unknowable threat. According to nuclear weapon advocates, we have a known, yet manageable risk, and an unknown risk could be far worse. They thereby successfully advance “the solution” of improving the management system and by making concerted efforts to stop proliferation.

The reality is that nuclear weapons are a present, existential threat and do not provide national security. In fact, they constitute a pillar in a systemically inadequate international security order, which does not effectively address a set of pressing global threats. Nuclear weapons are a critical logjam for progress behind a large, complex, and systemic problem: the lack of a sufficiently broad common security framework that integrates nuclear weapon elimination into the process of addressing all shared threats to human survival. So long as nuclear arms control practitioners insist on pursuing arms control and disarmament goals outside of a broader framework defined by cooperation and collective security, we will have a very hard time achieving success. We must place the elimination of nuclear weapons in the context of achieving the entire menu of existential global public goods. This holistic approach to global sustainable security is accurate, realistic, and will help build coalitions with others also interested in a sustainable future.

Our shared vulnerabilities require a redefinition of security. In an interdependent world, our fates are connected. This obvious truth should compel us to more energetically minimize and ultimately resolve our differences based on a reasoned pragmatism. For the sake of our survival, we must succeed in obtaining the clarity of shared goals and galvanizing the creation of policies based on cooperation. We must do this for ourselves today and for future generations as well, for their well being depends on our conduct today.

Ensuring a sustainable, safe future is a moral imperative. We propose redefining security to meet critical and existentially imperative challenges. Success will be obtaining global common public goods of the highest value. These would be achievements worth celebrating. So-called “realists” persist in asserting that such a

law-based, ethics-based understanding of our shared commonality is adverse to the natural manner in which nations must behave, yet they are unable to come up with realistic solutions to the inarguable threats facing our planet and our species. They advocate the pursuit of a dominance model of security, which is unable to generate a sufficiently cooperative international order to respond to real security threats that have no military solution. A new approach should focus common goals and collective efforts in a manner consistent with empirical, honest, and accurate appraisals of our current existential situation and that is worthy of our highest ideals and most passionate efforts.

What is needed—fast—is a sober discussion includes the world’s leaders of government and civil society to define where nations’ interests are harmonious, coherent, and thus can be coordinated, where interests are adverse, and where they are simply different. It would be discerned that we are in a unique moment in history where our common interests and goals far outweigh perceived adversarial postures. We could then begin acting as grown-ups who deal with reality rather than preconceived ideas about it.