
Conference on Disarmament

By

John R. Bolton
Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security

[The following are excerpts from the speech given before the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, Switzerland, January 24, 2002.]

It is a particular honor for me today to be able to introduce the new U.S. ambassador to the Conference, Eric Javits, who comes to you after a long career specializing in what he characterizes as difficult negotiations. He clearly has the proper background for the Conference on Disarmament and has the full support of the Bush Administration as he strives in this distinguished conference to advance international peace and security.

Permit me to outline to this body, the world's oldest multilateral arms control negotiating forum, the fundamental elements of the Bush Administration's security policy. Our timing is particularly opportune. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks have made all too clear the grave threats to civilized nations that come from terrorists who strike without warning, their state sponsors, and rogue states that seek weapons of mass destruction. The U.S. must defend our homelands, our forces, our friends and allies against these threats. And the U.S. must insist on holding accountable states that violate their nonproliferation commitments.

The fight against terrorism will remain a top international security priority. As President Bush said:

“Our lives, our way of life, and our every hope for the world depend on a single commitment: The authors of mass murder must be defeated, and never allowed to gain or use the weapons of mass destruction.”

The United States and its partners in this fight will meet this threat with every method at our disposal.

Above all, the U.S. is acting to end state sponsorship of terror. The U.S. believes that with very few exceptions, terrorist groups have not acquired and cannot acquire weapons of mass destruction without the support of nation-states. This support might be technical assistance. It might be funding. Perhaps such assistance has taken the form of simply turning a blind eye to terrorist camps within one's borders. But the fact that governments which sponsor terrorist groups also are pursuing chemical, biological, nuclear, and missile programs is alarming, and cannot be ignored. Nations that assist terror are playing a dangerous game. President Bush stated the following to a joint session of the U.S. Congress last fall:

“We will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.”

If the September 11 terrorist attacks taught the United States nothing else, it taught us not to underestimate the intentions and capabilities of rogue states and terrorist groups. The U.S. will not be complacent to the threat of any kind of attack on the United States, especially from weapons of mass destruction, whether chemical, biological, nuclear, or from missiles.

Chemical Weapons

The U.S. is alarmed by the continuing spread of dangerous technology to countries pursuing illegal programs. The U.S. is a strong proponent of the *Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)*, which provides several useful tools to combat chemical warfare programs. The U.S. has made effective use of the consultation provision of Article IX of the convention to address our questions and compliance concerns. To date, the U.S. has conducted several visits at the invitation of other States parties in a cooperative effort to resolve these questions and compliance concerns. In many cases, this has proven to be highly successful.

The U.S. will continue to use such consultation mechanisms to enhance verification and promote full compliance with the provisions of the convention. Although bilateral consultations are not a prerequisite for launching a challenge inspection, the U.S. believes that challenge inspections may in some cases be the most appropriate mechanism for resolving compliance concerns. Some state parties have sought erroneously to characterize the challenge inspection process as tantamount to an abuse of political power. On the contrary, challenge inspections were included as a fundamental component of the Chemical Weapons Convention verification regime that benefits all state parties, both as a deterrent to would-be violators and as a fact-finding tool to address compliance concerns. They are a flexible and indispensable tool that, if viewed realistically and used judiciously, can be instrumental in achieving the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The nations that are violating the Chemical Weapons Convention should not be smug in the assumption that your chemical warfare program will never be uncovered and exposed to the international community.

Biological Weapons

On biological weapons, the U.S. made its position crystal clear at the Fifth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention late last year – the U.S. will not condone violation of the Biological Weapons Convention. We flatly oppose flawed diplomatic arrangements that purport to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention but actually increase the specter of biological warfare by not effectively confronting the serious problem of Biological Weapons Convention noncompliance. It is for this reason that the U.S. rejected the draft protocol to the *Biological Weapons Convention* and the continuance of the Biological Weapons Convention ad hoc group and its mandate, and offered an alternate way ahead.

The Biological Weapons Convention protocol, the U.S. government was urged to go along with this proposal because it was “flawed, but better than nothing.” After an exhaustive evaluation within the U.S. government, the government decided that the protocol was actually counterproductive. New approaches and new ways of thinking are needed to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons.

The U.S. presented a number of new proposals to do just this, including tightened national export controls, fully implementing the Biological Weapons Convention by nationally criminalizing activity that violates it, intensified non-proliferation activities, increased domestic preparedness and controls, enhanced biodefense and counter-bioterrorism capabilities, and innovative measures against disease outbreaks. Many, if not all of these measures can begin to be implemented now. The U.S. looks forward to discussing and refining them with all of you and hope that you will join us in endorsing and beginning to implement them as we prepare for the resumption of the Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference next November.

Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons, the United States recently completed a *Nuclear Posture Review*, the basic conclusions of which have recently been made public. Fundamental to this review is the assumption that the U.S. and Russia are no longer adversaries, and, therefore, that such Cold War notions as mutual assured destruction are no longer appropriate as the defining characteristic of our strategic relationship. Accordingly, President Bush has announced that the U.S. will reduce its strategic nuclear force to a total of between 1,700 and 2,200 operationally deployed strategic warheads over the next ten years. President Putin has made a similarly bold and historic decision with respect to Russian strategic nuclear forces. Given the new relationship between Moscow and Washington, the specter of nuclear war between the United States and the Russian Federation is now a comfortably remote possibility. More likely is the possibility of the use of nuclear or radiological weapons by rogue states or terrorist groups. The U.S. is also currently faced with dangerously-high tensions in South Asia between India and Pakistan, both of which have nuclear explosive devices. The proliferation of nuclear materials and technology is a serious threat to international security. The International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) nuclear inspection system must be reinforced, as we press others to adopt strengthened IAEA safeguards designed to detect clandestine nuclear activities. The United States continues to emphasize the importance of universal adherence to, as well as full compliance with and implementation of, the Non-Proliferation Treaty and comprehensive safeguards. Countries such as North Korea and Iraq must cease their violations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and allow the IAEA to do its work. Further, I caution those who think that they can pursue nuclear weapons without detection: the United States and its allies will prove you wrong.

And let me reiterate U.S. policy on nuclear weapons proliferation: the United States regards the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology as a direct threat to international security, and will treat it accordingly. The same holds true for nations that traffic in deadly chemical and biological weapons technology, and missile systems.

Missiles

Almost every state that actively sponsors terror is known to be seeking weapons of mass destruction and the missiles to deliver them at longer and longer ranges. Their hope is to blackmail the civilized world into abandoning the war on terror. They want the United States and others to forsake their friends and allies and security commitments around the world. September 11, 2001 reinforced our resolve to build a limited missile defense shield to defend our nation, friends, forces and interests against missile attacks from rogue states and terrorist organizations who wish to destroy civilized society. It is an undeniable fact that the United States simply has no defense against a missile attack on our homeland. While we do have defenses against shorter-range missiles, we have none against even a single missile launched against our cities. The U.S. must fill this void in our defenses. As a result, the U.S. announced last month our decision to withdraw from the *Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty*. This was an important decision for the Bush Administration and was made in close consultations with Moscow. Although our Russian friends did not agree with our withdrawal decision, the world is aware of the close and growing relationship between our two nations. Our new strategic relationship is much broader than the *Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty*, as evidenced by the announcement by both the United States and Russia that we will reduce our offensive nuclear arsenals to the lowest levels in decades.

The United States is concerned about the spread of missile technology that may not threaten the United States at this time, but poses serious threats to our friends and allies, as well as to deployed U.S. forces. Too many nations are remiss in not controlling their involvement in the proliferation of missile technology. The U.S. is aware of a long list of missile proliferation activities by enterprises from at least a dozen nations. Most of these transactions are serious, and

could result in U.S. sanctions, as has been done several times over the past year. The United States calls on all countries to control missile-related transfers and ensure that private companies operating within their borders cease illegal missile transactions. President Bush has made clear the imperative of restructuring deterrence and defense capabilities to formulate a comprehensive strategy to enhance our security. This strategy must include strengthening nonproliferation measures (prevention), more robust counterproliferation capabilities (protection), and a new concept of deterrence, relying more on missile defense and less on offensive nuclear forces. In this context, the security and well being of the United States and its allies depend on the ability to operate in space. The United States is committed to the exploration and use of outer space by all nations for peaceful purposes for the benefit of humanity purposes that allow defense and intelligence-related activities in pursuit of national security goals. The U.S. remains firmly committed to the *Outer Space Treaty*, and we believe that the current international regime regulating the use of space meets all our purposes. The U.S. see no need for new agreements.

Future of the Conference on Disarmament

This point leads me to touch briefly on the future of this body, the Conference on Disarmament. If it remains deadlocked in futility, it will continue to lose credibility and the attention of the world. To be productive and contribute to international security, the Conference on Disarmament must change the way it does business. It must focus on new threats, such as efforts by terrorist groups to acquire weapons of mass destruction. It must squarely face the serious problem of violations of weapons of mass destruction nonproliferation regimes and treaties. Finally, in order to perform a useful function, the Conference on Disarmament must put aside irreconcilable differences and work on issues that are ready for negotiation, such as a *Missile Material Cutoff Treaty*. I know of no one more qualified to help lead a new approach here in the Conference on Disarmament than Eric Javits, who has already begun working with delegates to find ways to move this body forward in 2002. I have one personal favor to ask the distinguished delegates in this room. It has become fashionable to characterize my country as unilateralist and against all arms control agreements. Nonetheless, our commitment to multilateral regimes to promote nonproliferation and international security never has been as strong as it is today, through numerous arms control treaties and nonproliferation arrangements, including the *Non-Proflieration Treaty*, CFE, CWC, BWC, LTBT, PNET, and the TTBT, as well as to nonproliferation regimes like the Zangger Committee, the NSG, MTCR, the *Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group*. In fact, trying to characterize our policy as “unilateralist” or “multilateralist” is a futile exercise. Our policy is, quite simply, pro-American, as you would expect. The main emphasis of the Bush Administration's arms control policy is the determination to enforce existing treaties, and to seek treaties and arrangements that meet today's threats to peace and stability, not yesterdays. Fundamental to the Bush Administration's policy is the commitment to honor our arms control agreements, and to insist that other nations live up to them as well. Now is the time for the Conference on Disarmament to build on its achievements to forge additional restraints against the spread of weapons of mass destruction. This is Ambassador Javits' mission here, for which he has my full support and that of the U.S. government.