

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

*A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy*

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April 7, 2010

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## Obama Administration Revamps Nuclear Policy

Washington – The Obama administration issued a new U.S. nuclear strategy April 6 that sharply narrows the use of nuclear weapons, but maintains their traditional role to deter a nuclear strike against the United States.

The Nuclear Posture Review (PDF, 2.7MB) was unveiled at a Pentagon briefing by Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Admiral Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The review of the nation's nuclear policy is the first since 2001 and the third since the end of the Cold War two decades ago. A review of U.S. nuclear policy is conducted at the start of every new administration; it influences federal spending, treaties, weapon deployments and their eventual retirement over the next five to 10 years.

The new policy defines measures to strengthen the global nonproliferation regime, with emphasis on the importance of international treaties such as the 1970 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. And it specifically renews a U.S. commitment to hold accountable those who provide terrorists with nuclear weapons or the materials to make them.

"The NPR provides a road map for implementing President Obama's agenda for reducing nuclear risks to the United States, our allies and partners and the international community," Gates said at the Pentagon briefing. "This review describes how the United States will reduce the role and numbers of nuclear weapons with a long-term goal of a nuclear-free world."

Clinton told reporters the review is a milestone in transforming U.S. nuclear forces and the way in which the nation approaches nuclear issues.

"We are recalibrating our priorities to prevent nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism, and we are reducing the role and number of weapons in our arsenal, while maintaining a safe, secure and effective deterrent to protect our nation, allies and partners," she said.

Release of the strategy in Washington begins nine days of intensive nuclear diplomacy. Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev will meet in Prague April 8 to sign the new START treaty, designed to limit both nations' nuclear arsenals to 1,550 warheads each, reduce deployed strategic delivery vehicles to 700, and limit deployed and nondeployed launchers to 800. Obama will host more than 40 world leaders at a nuclear security summit in Washington April 12-13 aimed at halting the spread of nuclear weapons and related technology.

Following this series of events, representatives from around the world will converge on the United Nations in New York May 3-28 for debate and review of the NPT, in part to determine if it needs to be amended or expanded. The review process is held approximately every five years.

### NPR: FIVE KEY OBJECTIVES

At the Pentagon briefing, Gates told reporters that the Nuclear Posture Review includes significant changes to the U.S. nuclear posture. It focuses on five key objectives.

- The policy emphasizes the prevention of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism.
- It reduces the role of nuclear weapons in American national security by committing the United States to not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear states that participate in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and are in compliance with its requirements. That policy includes instances of chemical and biological attack, but with some reservations.
- While the United States agrees to reduce its nuclear arsenal in a new treaty with Russia, the policy will maintain the traditional role of strategic deterrence and stability of the nuclear arsenal and the means to deliver them by long-range missiles, nuclear submarines and heavy bombers.
- NPR calls for a broadened regional security structure that includes missile defenses and improved conventional forces. The United States will retain the capability to forward-deploy U.S. nuclear weapons on fighter-bombers and heavy bombers.
- The policy requires the United States to sustain a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal as long as nuclear weapons exist. But the United States will not conduct new nuclear testing, and will not develop new nuclear warheads.

### DISSUADING COUNTRIES FROM DEVELOPING WEAPONS

The Obama administration is encouraging global compliance with the NPT. Under the treaty, countries with nuclear weapons agree to move toward disarmament, while countries without nuclear weapons agree not to acquire them, and all have the right to peaceful nuclear energy.

According to the text of the Nuclear Posture Review, "the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear weapons states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations."

Speaking at the Pentagon April 6, Jim Miller, the principal deputy under secretary of defense for policy, said the vast

majority of countries are compliant with the NPT. If any should decide to use chemical or biological weapons (CBW) against the United States, its partners or its allies, they “face the prospect of a devastating conventional military response,” he said, rather than a nuclear attack. Miller said U.S. conventional forces and strike capabilities are developing additional capabilities to create greater deterrence for the use of CBW. However, he said the defense posture could be revised if the United States finds itself unable to cope with a growing threat from those weapons.

Miller said the Obama administration wants its defense posture to dissuade countries from developing nuclear weapons.

“If you are a country considering proliferation ... you put yourself in a different category with respect to our nuclear capabilities,” he said. As the United States continues to develop its conventional and missile-defense capabilities to counter weapons of mass destruction, the hope is that “these states will see less and less of an advantage to going down that path.”

### **Nuclear Security Summit to Meet in Washington**

*Focus will be on keeping nuclear materials out of terrorists' hands*

Washington — President Obama will host a nuclear security summit in Washington April 12 and 13 to enhance international cooperation in preventing nuclear terrorism, a danger he has identified as the most immediate and extreme threat to global security.

He has invited more than 40 nations to participate, nations that represent a diverse set of regions and various levels of nuclear materials, energy and expertise.

The president first proposed the summit in an April 2009 speech in Prague where he outlined his vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and nuclear threats. He reminded people that one terrorist with one nuclear weapon could unleash massive destruction.

“And we know that there is unsecured nuclear material across the globe,” he said.

In Prague, Obama called for a new international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear material around the world, break up black markets, detect and intercept materials in transit, and use financial tools to disrupt illicit trade in nuclear materials and technologies.

During a July 2009 Group of Eight (G8) summit in L'Aquila, Italy, Obama formally announced the nuclear security summit and stated its principal goals:

- Discussion of the nature of the threat and development of steps that can be taken together to secure vulnerable materials, combat nuclear smuggling and deter, detect, and disrupt attempts at nuclear terrorism.
- Agreement on a joint communiqué pledging efforts to attain the highest levels of nuclear security, which is essential for international security as well as the development and expansion of peaceful nuclear energy worldwide.

Obama asked that each attending nation nominate its own “Sherpa” to prepare for the event. He added that the world should not wait for an act of nuclear terrorism before working together to collectively improve the nuclear security culture, share the best practices and raise the standards for nuclear security.

The summit will focus on the security of nuclear materials, leaving other broad topics such as nonproliferation, disarmament and peaceful nuclear energy to different forums, according to the White House.

### **Health Day Focuses on Helping Cities Weather Climate Change**

*Urban health focus for millions vulnerable to rising temperatures, seas*

By Cheryl Pellerin  
Science Writer

Washington — The goal of World Health Day 2010, themed “1,000 Cities, 1,000 Lives,” is to raise awareness about public health in urban areas. The message is critically important to hundreds of millions of city dwellers who already may be experiencing the health-threatening effects of climate change.

April 7 has been commemorated as World Health Day since 1950 to mark the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO). Each year, WHO chooses a key global health issue and organizes international, regional and local events on the day and throughout the year to highlight the issue. For this year’s campaign, events on urbanization and health will be organized worldwide April 7-11.

The vulnerability of human settlements — at a time when half the world’s population lives in cities — is projected to increase due to the rising sea levels, inland floods, frequent and stronger tropical cyclones, periods of increased heat, and disease spread that climate change is beginning to generate.

“The emerging picture of the 21st century city fits many descriptions,” United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon wrote in the forward of the U.N. Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) report, *The State of the World’s Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide*.

“Some are centers of rapid industrial growth and wealth creation, often accompanied by harmful waste and pollution. Others are characterized by stagnation, urban decay and rising social exclusion and intolerance,” he wrote. “Both scenarios point to the urgent need for new, more sustainable approaches to urban development. Both argue for greener, more resilient and inclusive towns and cities that can help combat climate change and resolve age-old urban inequalities.”

#### CITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

By 2015, according to UN-Habitat, 952 million people (77 percent of the population) in the developed world will live in urban areas, along with 2.9 billion (48.7 percent) in developing regions.

In the world’s teeming cities, climate change may damage infrastructure and limit access to basic urban services and health care. Most affected are the urban poor – slum dwellers in developing nations.

To bolster climate change preparedness among cities in developing countries, UN-Habitat’s Cities in Climate Change Initiative initially is working with the pilot cities of Esmeraldas, Ecuador; Kampala, Uganda; Maputo, Mozambique; and Sorsogon City, Philippines, to help develop innovative climate change strategies and tools for local governments.

The initiative will help establish adaptation and mitigation policies and strategies, tools, financing mechanisms and partnerships.

For example, Esmeraldas, a coastal city in the northeastern corner of Ecuador, is seen as vulnerable to climate change mainly because of its location. Flooding and landslides in the rainy season and droughts in the dry season are likely to increase.

Initial assessments there found that adaptation to climate change in and around the city calls for a mix of land-use controls, infrastructure modifications, shifts in energy-use patterns, training and improved governance. Infrastructure modifications include building upstream water storage and flood control systems and levees to protect flood-prone neighborhoods. And institutional tools, such as zoning plans, are needed to improve governance and urban management.

In Kampala, the fast-growing capital of Uganda, new settlements, many of them informal, are set up in areas prone to flooding. Heavy reliance on wood and charcoal for heating and cooking contribute to air pollution and deforestation.

Because low- or neutral-energy housing is needed, the

initiative is helping develop a housing code on energy efficiency. The city’s ecosystem is under threat from wetland destruction, biodiversity loss and soil erosion. Ecosystem conservation and management are important components of climate change adaptation, and the initiative is analyzing the effects of climate change on women and children.

Also under way are demonstration projects that include city greening, alternative energy briquette use, clean wood fuel use, climate-proofing of houses and buildings and energy-efficient urban transport systems.

According to UN-Habitat, more partner cities for the initiative are emerging in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

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