

American

NEWS & VIEWS

A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

April 12, 2010

Curbing Nuclear Proliferation Lessens Global Insecurity.....	1
Nuclear Arms Reduction Group Hails New U.S.-Russia Pact.....	1
Energy Ministers Meet to Partner on Climate Change.....	2

Curbing Nuclear Proliferation Lessens Global Insecurity

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — While the chances of a nuclear exchange between superpowers is unlikely today, the threat from the spread of nuclear weapons and the materials to build them and from terrorists who might obtain them has increased, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says.

“Nuclear proliferation is a leading source of insecurity in our world today,” Clinton said during a speech April 9 at the University of Louisville in Kentucky. “A nuclear attack anywhere could destroy the foundation of global order.”

“Nuclear terrorism presents a different challenge, but the consequences would still be devastating,” she added.

The spread of nuclear weapons and the means to build bombs endangers the United States, Russia, its allies and broader global interests, she said. And it can lead to unwarranted arms races in regions of the world already facing increasing uncertainty.

“That’s why nuclear security does matter to us all and why we’re determined to meet this challenge,” Clinton said.

Clinton’s remarks came shortly after she returned from Prague, where President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed a new START Treaty, which would reduce both nations’ arsenals of nuclear warheads to 1,550 each and also would reduce the launchers and vehicles to deliver them. It is the steepest reduction in nuclear weapons by the two former Cold War foes since the 1950s, the first full decade of the nuclear age.

Two days before the treaty signing, the Obama administration introduced its new Nuclear Posture Review, which defines the way the United States will employ its nuclear weapons and under what conditions they could be used. On April 12–13, leaders and delegations from 50 nations and international organizations come to Washington for a global nuclear security summit that was proposed by the president in an effort to further halt the spread of nuclear weapons and to keep the weapons and the components to make them from falling into the hands of terrorists.

“We have an urgent interest in bolstering the world’s nuclear nonproliferation framework and enforcement and verification mechanisms. And the new START Treaty, signed yesterday [April 8] by President Obama and President Medvedev in Prague, helps us advance that

goal,” Clinton said.

The United States and Russia currently hold 90 percent of the nuclear weapons in the world, Clinton acknowledged, but said this new treaty will mean lower verifiable limits on the number of strategic nuclear weapons deployed by both countries.

But the new treaty has another critically important ingredient, Clinton said, and that is expanding a more constructive partnership with Russia. Both nations have been working with Britain, China, France and Germany to convince Iran to forgo a nuclear weapons development program, and the United States and Russia, along with South Korea, Japan and China, have also been trying to convince North Korea to give up its nuclear development program and eliminate nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula.

Because the United States and Russia are willing to abide by the new START Treaty, which is named for the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty that it replaces, and the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, they set an example for other nations to follow, Clinton said.

“This boosts our credibility as we ask other countries to help shore up the nonproliferation regime,” Clinton said.

Nuclear Arms Reduction Group Hails New U.S.-Russia Pact

Treaty could lead other nuclear powers to reduce arsenals, Global Zero says

By Keida Kostreci
Staff Writer

Washington — Leaders of Global Zero, a movement advocating a world free of nuclear weapons, hailed the New START agreement signed April 8 in Prague by President Obama and his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev.

In a same-day press conference in Washington, Richard Burt, who was the chief U.S. negotiator for the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) signed in 1991 and who now is the U.S. chairman of Global Zero, said the time has come to eliminate the nuclear arsenal.

“The world has changed. There was a reason for nuclear weapons in the Cold War. That world is gone,” Burt said.

Global Zero was launched in December 2008 by 100 leaders from around the world, including former heads of state, former foreign ministers, former defense ministers, former national security advisers and former top military commanders.

Burt said Presidents Obama and Medvedev now should focus on further decreasing the nuclear arsenal.

If the United States and Russia commit to eliminate these weapons, Burt said, China might follow, and India might do the same thing if China does. However, acknowledging the danger from countries such as Iran and North Korea, Burt made it clear that the United State should not unilaterally get rid of these weapons. "No one is advocating a unilateral nuclear disarmament," he said.

Queen Noor of Jordan, a founding leader of Global Zero, said at the press conference, "We are encouraged by the leadership and courageous steps Presidents Obama and Medvedev are taking. The progress that we have seen is a good sign, but there is still so much to do." She announced that the movement is organizing a worldwide drive to collect signatures on a Global Zero petition that will be delivered to the leaders of more than 40 countries participating in the Nuclear Security Summit that President Obama is hosting in Washington April 12-13.

Valerie Plame Wilson, a former CIA covert officer who worked to counter nuclear proliferation, said, "There is enough highly enriched uranium and plutonium in the world today to build more than 100,000 bombs."

Much of this material, she added, is poorly guarded and located in unstable regions. "All of us in the Global Zero movement urge the leaders attending next week's Nuclear Security Summit to commit to swift and decisive action to secure all nuclear material worldwide to prevent it from falling into the hands of terrorists," she said.

Global Zero announced a plan for the phased, verified elimination of nuclear weapons. In a message to the Global Zero summit in February in Paris, President Obama reiterated his commitment to nonproliferation goals. At the signing of New START on April 8, the president said that, while this "is an important first step forward, it is just one step on a longer journey."

"As I said last year in Prague, this treaty will set the stage for further cuts. And going forward, we hope to pursue discussions with Russia on reducing both our strategic and tactical weapons, including nondeployed weapons," the president said.

The Global Zero press conference featured a clip from the documentary film *Countdown to Zero*, directed by Lucy Walker, about the danger of the nuclear arsenal. The movie, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January and was reportedly seen by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton during a recent return flight from Mexico, is expected in U.S. theaters in July.

Energy Ministers Meet to Partner on Climate Change

Western Hemisphere leaders discuss energy security, alternative energy

By Cheryl Pellerin

Science Writer

Washington — More than 30 energy ministers and delegation leaders from across the Western Hemisphere will meet April 15-16 to deepen cooperation on energy security, alternative energy resources and confronting the effects of global climate change.

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Steven Chu is hosting the Energy and Climate Ministerial of the Americas. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton will give a keynote address April 15 at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), where attendees will meet with several hundred representatives from civil society, businesses, nongovernmental organizations and others to work together on the partnership's objectives.

The meeting supports the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA), which was formed at the Fifth Summit of the Americas in April 2009.

On April 16, the energy ministers will gather at the Organization of American States (OAS). Over both days, leaders will discuss ongoing and new initiatives under ECPA and identify ways to expand cooperation to promote low-carbon economic growth, improve energy security and reduce energy poverty.

"The overarching goal of ECPA is to foster partnerships, and I underscore the word partnerships, among governments, industry and civil society, to promote clean energy projects and support economic growth," David Sandalow, DOE assistant secretary for policy and international affairs, said at an April 6 briefing.

"Brazil thinks ECPA is an exceptional opportunity for fruitful exchange and debate on sustainable development," said Pompeu Andreucci Neto, minister-counselor for economic affairs at the Embassy of Brazil in Washington. "Brazil believes that a broad exchange of experience among various countries in this area is an innovative avenue for cooperation — a very important one."

CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

In April 2009, at the Fifth Summit of the Americas, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, President Obama invited all countries of the Western Hemisphere to join in an energy and climate partnership. ECPA is a voluntary mechanism through which all Western Hemisphere governments may lead multicountry energy initiatives.

Regional institutions such as the OAS, the IDB and the Latin American Energy Organization, multilateral development banks such as the World Bank, the private sector, civil society and academia were also encouraged to create clean-energy partnerships.

In June 2009, the U.S. and Peruvian governments and the Institute of the Americas hosted the Americas Energy and Climate Symposium in Lima, Peru. There, officials identified opportunities for deeper partnerships under ECPA and governments proposed new initiatives.

Chu and Peruvian Energy Minister Pedro Sánchez announced the creation of an Energy Efficiency Center in Lima. The United States announced a Low Carbon Communities of the Americas initiative and invited proposals to receive U.S. technical assistance on clean energy and energy-efficiency projects. Andre Amado, Brazilian undersecretary for high technology and energy, offered to lead an ECPA initiative to promote sustainable urban planning and development. Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica and Mexico have since offered to lead ECPA initiatives or participate in projects.

WORKING AS PARTNERS

With one of the initiatives under way, the Low Carbon Communities program, DOE will partner with Costa Rica, Peru, Colombia, Dominica and other Caribbean nations to provide technical assistance and funding to develop building standards and adopt modern urban planning strategies, including transit-oriented development, to create low-carbon communities.

Other initiatives include:

- Colombia/Caribbean: Development of transformative energy programs and policies.
- Brazil: Promotion of sustainable urban development and planning.
- Colombia: Strengthening electrical interconnections in the Andean region, Chile and Panama.
- Region-wide: Peru-led clean energy technology centers that include a regional Energy-Efficiency Center, a Mexico-supported regional Wind Research Center, a Chilean regional Renewable Energy Center, a Costa Rican Energy-Efficiency Center with the nongovernmental environmental group the Natural Resources Defense Council, a Brazilian Biomass Center, and an El Salvadoran Geothermal Center established with support from the IDB and DOE.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency is promoting the Clean Energy Exchange Program by inviting nearly 50 Latin American and Caribbean energy officials on six reverse trade missions — trade events in which international officials are brought to the United States to

meet U.S. companies and view their products.

“For the United States, this hemisphere remains critical to energy security,” David Goldwyn, the Department of State’s international energy coordinator, said April 6. “Three of our top suppliers of oil come from this hemisphere, two of our top suppliers of gas — Canada for piped gas, Trinidad and Tobago for [liquid natural gas] imports — come from this hemisphere. Electricity comes to this country from hydropower and from nuclear power from other countries. Two of the major biofuel producers in the world, the United States and Brazil, come from this hemisphere. So for us, for energy security, this hemisphere matters enormously.”

He added: “This hemisphere [also] matters because they are our friends, our allies, our major trading partners and kinsmen to probably more than a third of our population.”

(Preceding items distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://america.gov>)