

# **The 6th Prague Agenda Conference 2016**

## **Day I**

### **Panel I: Putting the Prague Agenda in Context: Looking Back, Looking Forward, Looking Beyond**

Report by Federica Genna

#### *Petr Kratochvíl - Opening Remarks*

The opening remarks to the 2016 Prague Agenda were delivered by Petr Kratochvíl, the Director of the Institute of International Relations. Addressing the panelists and the audience, Mr. Kratochvíl expressed his honour at hosting the sixth Prague Agenda conference, whose agenda today faces challenges that are more difficult than ever. Recognizing that the transformations the international community is facing are a far cry from the hopes for progress that the 2009 conference was ushering in, Mr. Kratochvíl expressed the intention to not only reflect on the past of the Agenda, but also look to its future, presenting this year's project as looking more broadly to issues of the emerging geopolitical order and disorder. Pointing out the depth of the expertise of the panelists and their diverse backgrounds, which could be used to promote a free and informed discussion, he concluded by expressing his pride in being responsible for the inauguration of the 2016 Prague Agenda and handed over the floor to Benjamin Tallis, the chair of the panel.

Mr. Tallis, the Co-ordinator of the Centre for European Security of the Institute of International Relations, thanked Mr. Kratochvíl and then expressed his joy at having been able to reunite such an academically diversified panel of experts. Arguing that too often the issue of nuclear disarmament tends to be bracketed off rather than analyzed alongside broader political issues, he made it clear that this year's conference meant to bridge this gap by providing a more critical approach to the discussion. He then went on to introduce the speakers that would take part in

the conference: **Angela Kane**, a Senior Fellow at the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation; **Dieter Fleck**, a former director of International Agreements and Policies at the Federal Ministry of Defense in Germany; **Sadia Tasleem**, a lecturer at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies of Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad; **Matthew Kroenig**, an Associate Professor and the Director of Admissions and Fellowships at the Department of Government and the School of Foreign Service of Georgetown University; **Anya Loukianova**, a Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at RAND; and, lastly, the discussant **Anatoly Reshetnikov**, a Doctoral Student at Central European University, Budapest, and a specialist in great power politics and critical great power politics.

Mr. Tallis then concluded by handing over the floor to Ms. Angela Kane and inviting her to officially start the 2016 Prague Agenda with the first speech of the morning.

*Angela Kane - Senior Fellow at the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation*

Officially opening the 2016 Prague Agenda as the first speaker, Angela Kane, a Senior Fellow at the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation and a former UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, provided an overall analysis of the Agenda from 2009 up until today, looking at its achievements and its shortcomings. Initially focusing on the rhetoric surrounding it, she briefly went through some of the speeches delivered by the Agenda's 'father' Barack Obama over the course of the years, underlining the goals that had been set in 2009 and comparing them with the action that was effectively taken. After considering Obama's initial five aims--reducing the role of nuclear weapons in the national security strategy, negotiating a new strategic arms reduction strategy with Russia, pursuing the U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), seeking a new treaty to end the production of fissile material and strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)--she then highlighted how these objectives changed throughout the years, and ultimately drew her conclusions on the successes and failures of the Obama administration in implementing the Agenda. Among the positive elements, Ms. Kane listed the New START Treaty with Russia, the reduction of the number of deployed nuclear warheads, improvements in the physical security of nuclear material--albeit only on the civilian side--and the creation of the

International Uranium Fuel Bank, which is currently being built in Kazakhstan. Among the negative elements, which, she argued, exceed the positive ones by far, Ms. Kane included the fact that the NPT was not strengthened, the CTBT was not ratified, the deployment in Europe was not scaled down and the armsrace with Russia was not reduced. All this, she continued, is to be added to the U.S decision to spend 1 trillion dollars over the next 30 years in the modernization of the existing nuclear arsenal.

Ms. Kane then went on to describe the increasingly deteriorating international framework of cooperation on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, with the 2015 NPT Review Conference being closed without the adoption of a final document and the P5 not attending a UN-sponsored working group. A similar meeting in Geneva in 2013 that was meant to develop proposals for multilateral disarmament negotiations had also been ‘boycotted’ by the P5, Ms. Kane remarked. This overall behaviour, she argued, shows a worrying trend of rejection by major powers of multilateral frameworks of cooperation, a trend which was also confirmed by the decision of the U.S., Russia and most of NATO to vote against UN Resolution L41 in October 2016. This resolution, she explained, called for ‘taking forward multilateral negotiations’ related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Concluding on this sour note, Ms. Kane expressed her belief that the momentum behind the Prague Agenda has been lost and the international community is now moving in unpredictable territory. As such, she concluded, it is imperative to keep on promoting practical and creative solutions to foster disarmament and non-proliferation and push nuclear states to implement their pledge to reduce nuclear armament.

*Dieter Fleck - Former Director of International Agreements and Policies at the Federal Ministry of Defense in Germany*

Tackling the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation from a legal standpoint, Dieter Fleck, the former Director of International Agreements and Policies at the Federal Ministry of Defense in Germany, presented his thoughts as part of a major research project on the assurance of compliance with nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Highlighting the importance of seeing political commitments and legal obligations as mutually reinforcing elements, he argued that it

is cooperation between states that makes it necessary to fulfill the commitments under the NPT and address rights and obligations under customary international law. In this respect, he advocated a new diplomatic approach that would include international cooperation and a serious review of a defence doctrine that is no longer effective for international security.

Mr. Fleck then proceeded to relate more precisely the legal aspects of nuclear disarmament, outlining the steps that still need to be taken in this respect. First and foremost, he argued, the obligations set out in article 6 of the NPT are legally binding. As such, nuclear weapons states are under the legal obligation to limit their relevant strategies, to ensure that nuclear weapons are only a means of last resort in extreme situations of self defense, and to be transparent about the consequences of nuclear use coherently with the obligations outlined by international humanitarian law. He underlined the importance of complying with these obligations and reacting appropriately in case of breaches, which implies a responsible cooperation between states. The said cooperation, he continued, is also fundamental for coping with the challenge of nuclear terrorism, and should be promoted under the auspices of the UN Security Council without being reduced to the criminal prosecution of terrorists, but being extended to include prevention in terms of environmental and human security and welfare.

Mr. Fleck ended his speech by expressing his belief that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes, and that the interrelation between them needs to not only be related to the NPT signatories, but also to those states which are not part of the treaty and whose cooperation must be won in order to achieve the final goal. In this sense, he ultimately concluded, political commitments are just as important as legal obligations in obtaining progress on nuclear disarmament.

*Sadia Tasleem - Lecturer at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies of Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad*

Sadia Tasleem, a lecturer at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies of Quaid-i-Azam University, delivered a compelling speech on the history and the future of the Prague Agenda in the South Asian context and the prospects for arms control and disarmament in the area, placing a particular focus on Pakistan and India.

Explaining that nuclear policy in South Asia is largely shaped by the regional and sub-regional context, Ms. Tasleem provided a quick review of the policy choices made by India and Pakistan since the setting of the five initial goalposts by Barack Obama in 2009. His landmark speech, she argued, did not stir up much conversation on disarmament or arms control, but rather only emphasized the existing discussion on nuclear safety and security without affecting policy makers. It's important to notice, Ms. Tasleem added, that the importance of nuclear security in the region had been clear to both India and Pakistan for years, independently of the Prague Agenda.

In stark contrast to the goals set by the Agenda, she then went on to say, rather than focusing on non-proliferation, India and Pakistan both increased their stockpiles in the last 8 years, diversifying weapons and increasing their missile ranges. Furthermore, neither country showed any willingness to sign, let alone ratify, the CTBT. This trend of increasing, rather than reducing, the reliance on nuclear weapons is set to continue, Ms. Tasleem remarked, for several reasons. In both countries disarmament is seen as unrealistic and impossible, and the fact that India and Pakistan have not come to a state of war despite serious crises during the years has been attributed by many to the presence of a nuclear deterrent. Similarly, the only attempts at peace here that are collectively remembered are the ones that happened after the first nuclear tests in 1998, which have made many simplistically and conveniently believe that nuclear weapons generate incentives for peace. Ms. Tasleem also remarked that a high premium on the conversation on deterrent stability has only reinforced the perception that nuclear power is inevitable for maintaining peace in South Asia, inadvertently perpetuating the nuclear weapons buildup. India and Pakistan are now building whatever they can to strengthen the deterrent stability, and this consensus on the relevance of deterrence blocks any hope for non-proliferation and disarmament.

In the final part of her speech, Ms. Tasleem presented the possible courses of action that need to be taken to tackle the challenges presented. First and foremost, she argued, it is fundamental to change the framework and language in which security and deterrence are discussed, creating a paradigmatic shift that would help reduce the incentives for armed competition. In this respect, granting India and Pakistan access to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) might also reduce security-related competition and pressure. Secondly, a discourse rooted in the indigenous rationale for arms restraint is necessary to help institutions in these countries reconsider their nuclear choices. A more general conversation framed with the language of global disarmament, she explained, would only detract attention from the local context.

Lastly, she concluded, transparency and the existence of a space for an open, informed and candid discussion on nuclear policies are fundamental.

*Matthew Kroenig - Associate Professor and Director of Admissions and Fellowships at the Department of Government and the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University*

The Associate Professor at the Department of Government and the School of Foreign Service of Georgetown University Matthew Kroenig evaluated in his speech the overall progress and development of the Prague Agenda, focusing on the areas of nuclear security, non-proliferation and arms control. Providing a review of the progress achieved in each of these categories he ultimately concluded that the final record of success is mixed. The area where most of the positive developments were found was that of nuclear security, where he praised the setting up of the four Nuclear Security Summits and underlined the notable success in securing civil nuclear material. While he argued that there was still a lot of work to be done on the military side, still he believed that the actions undertaken had made it harder for terrorists to acquire nuclear weapons compared to when the Prague Agenda was started, which he deemed an undeniable success.

With regard to non-proliferation, Mr. Kroenig expressed his belief that two countries that were major challenges in 2009--North Korea and Iran--are still to be considered as such today. Obama's 'strategic patience' policy towards North Korea, he argued, has not yielded much fruit. On the contrary, the situation has deteriorated, with Pyongyang now having enough nuclear material for up to 20 weapons and for increasing their range and the number of the types of delivery vehicles that would be used with these weapons. Moving on to Iran, while he admitted that he might be expressing a very unpopular view, Mr. Kroenig described the achieving of a deal with Tehran as largely a failure, arguing that it legitimized the enrichment program of a country that had cheated on the NPT, was seen as a major sponsor of terrorism and was deemed antagonistic to the U.S. Furthermore, he argued, the sunset clauses in the deal see some of the most important restrictions expiring after six or eight years, meaning that the problem has not really been solved, but simply postponed. Lastly, the lack of support that the

agreement got in US domestic policy made it a very weak deal that is extremely vulnerable to a change in the administration.

Finally, concerning arms control, here too Mr. Kroenig deemed progress to be scarce. While the creation of the New START Treaty with Russia was undoubtedly a step forward, the agreement was made with the underlying idea that it would pave the way to better relations between the two countries and set an example for other nuclear states, which unfortunately has not happened.

Mr. Kroenig then ended his speech by addressing the possible future actions that need to be taken for us to move further along the line of progress. Firstly, he argued, more effort needs to be put into securing nuclear military material. Secondly, he continued, North Korea needs to become a much higher priority for the U.S. administration, and a renegotiation of the Iran deal should not be necessarily regarded as a step back. Lastly, he concluded, with the increasing aggressiveness of Russian foreign policy and nuclear threats, it is imperative that the balance between deterrence and disarmament for the U.S. shift back to deterrence. While the future of the Prague Agenda is uncertain, especially in light of the change in the U.S. administration, he ultimately concluded that there is still a big margin for progress, and hope should not be lost.

### *Anya Loukianova - Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at RAND*

An expert on U.S-Russian relations in terms of nuclear security, Anya Loukianova, a Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at RAND, delivered a speech centered around the question of whether the U.S-Russian cooperation on nuclear issues is still relevant today for the non-proliferation regime and international security more generally.

Looking at the collaboration between the U.S. and Russia since 2009, she argued that it could be defined as made up of 'two steps forward and one step back'. In terms of arms control, while the signing of the New START Treaty brought forward a positive reduction in the numbers of nuclear weapons and the extension of the verification and transparency of strategic forces, the two countries couldn't find a common ground on missile defense or non-strategic nuclear weapon use. Furthermore, she argued, their basic disagreement on the meaning of strategic

stability could prove to be a greater challenge in the future, considering the current climate of nuclear modernization.

Moving on to nuclear security, Ms. Loukianova remarked that while there had initially been a consensus on the importance of physical nuclear material security, not only were the U.S. and Russia not able to turn their relationship from a donor-recipient one into a true partnership, but their bilateral cooperation deteriorated gradually until it completely fell apart, as can be seen in Russia's suspension of two bilateral agreements and cancellation of a third one. Moreover, the decreased transparency of Russia's nuclear sectors and the country's current overall lack of engagement on nuclear security are also worrying matters, Ms. Loukianova stated.

Lastly, with regard to non-proliferation, while the U.S. and Russia cooperated on the achievement of the Iran nuclear deal, there was no common strategy for addressing the other challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. One of these challenges, Ms. Loukianova argued, is North Korea, where a lack of clear cohesion on sanctions on the part of the P5 is also to be blamed on Russia. Ultimately, however, she remarked, a potential U.S.-China partnership on this matter could be more valuable than a U.S.-Russian one in terms of its effect on the broader non-proliferation framework.

Ms. Loukianova ended her speech by focusing on the issue of constructive leadership in relation to Russia. In the past, she argued, Russia derived its prestige from being viewed globally as a responsible stakeholder in nuclear issues, while working hard to show that it had turned into a responsible nuclear power since its nuclear indiscretions in the 1990s. But its recent actions and threats of nuclear weapons use in Europe undermined this view and diminished its prestige. As long as there is a market for nuclear technology, Ms. Loukianova added, Russia will be interested in selling reactors. However, it's fundamental that Moscow understands that it also needs a working non-proliferation and disarming framework and, most of all, a functional nuclear sector that would not be separated from the West and the U.S.

It is in this light, she concluded, that the question of whether a U.S.-Russian cooperation on nuclear issues is still relevant needs to be read.



Anatoly Reshetnikov - *Doctoral Student at Central European University,  
Budapest*

The panel's discussant Anatoly Reshetnikov used a critical approach to tackle in his speech the issues that were presented throughout the conference. Stating that the said approach does not imply simply a critique of the statements made, but rather the use of a different lens to look at the whole process, he anchored his speech in the points made throughout the conference by the speakers. Specifically, he recalled Ms. Kane's emphasis on how rhetoric changes over time, Ms. Tasleem's belief in the need for a change in the discursive framework, Mr. Fleck's statements on the necessity to increase transparency and, lastly, Ms. Loukianova's mentions of the disagreement of interpretations between Russia and the U.S. over specific terms and their common history. Building on these points, Mr. Reshetnikov talked about rhetoric and perception, and how the productive quality of the human language makes it so that by simply defining something as a threat, the threat itself is created. He argued that while there might not be a need to invent a new kind of speech to discuss security, rhetoric is not innocent, and the provocations and insecurities that were highlighted throughout the panel do not seem to exist outside of it: they are produced by a speech that draws lines between emergency and normality, which can be both malign and benign.

Mr. Reshetnikov then concluded by providing some food for thought for the panelists, as he wondered if there are any political channels that could de-securitize disarmament in language, and whether similar channels for at least trying to converge on multiple interpretations of the past exist, seeing as how it's getting increasingly harder to see a common future ahead.

*Discussion*

The discussion part of the conference opened with the chair of the panel Benjamin Tallis expanding on the words of the discussant Anatoly Reshetnikov and elaborating further questions for the speakers. Building on Mr. Reshetnikov's speech about the importance of perception and the productivity of language, he argued that there is still a margin for action and change in the portrayal of nuclear disarmament and proliferation. The existence of this modal agency, he continued, points to the possibility that the international community might be

moving away from a rule-based international order towards one of great power politics. If this is the case, Mr. Tallis then asked, turning to the panelists, “Would disarmament still be a desirable possibility?” Ending his speech with this question he then left the floor open for each of the panelists to address the points made and give their final observations.

**Ms. Kane**’s first comments focused on the issue of North Korea, which had been previously raised during the conference. Firmly convinced of the inefficiency of the increased sanctions against it, she argued that in this instance, as in many other instances, what is seriously lacking is the presence of multilateral solutions. She went on to raise similar points regarding both the U.S.-Russian relationship and the South Asian context, expressing her belief that in these areas, a purely bilateral discourse is very limiting and a multilateral framework of discussion would be much more beneficial.

**Mr. Fleck** backed Ms. Kane’s position on the inefficiency of sanctions, using the Iran deal as a clear example of negotiations being more effective. He then went on to address Mr. Tallis’s question on whether disarmament is still desirable today, firmly arguing that as the threat coming up from nuclear weapons is far bigger than their deterrence, it still is of incredibly high importance. As the floor was given to the next panelist, **Ms. Tasleem** took a chance to respond to Ms. Kane’s comments on the relevance of multilateralism versus a more regional approach, arguing that multilateral approaches are incredibly beneficial when they work, but when they fail they are bound to become a trap for regional actors. As Mr. Fleck did before her, she then proceeded to address Mr. Tallis’s questions to the panel. To his inquiry on whether the international community is moving away from a rule-based order or not she retorted that rather than asking that question we should perhaps question whether we were ever living in a rule-based world or whether it was just an illusion.

After Ms. Tasleem, **Mr. Kroenig** took the floor to make a few comments on the remarks about perception and the productivity of language that had been raised by the discussant. Taking into account what he had described as threats during his speech, for example, Russia and North Korea, he highlighted the objectivity of said threats, arguing that they existed independently from the perception of the observer. With regard to North Korea, he disagreed with Ms. Kane’s statement that increased sanctions would not be efficient, asserting that both cooperation with China and secondary sanctions similar to the ones that had been used on Iran could be useful in this case. Lastly, going back to the points raised by Mr. Tallis, he argued that the responsibility

for whether the international community will continue to live in a rule-based world is in the hands of those autocratic states that are now challenging the order itself. On whether disarmament is desirable or not, he concluded that as long as the countries living under the protection of the U.S. nuclear umbrella are happy to be in that situation, then there is a role for U.S nuclear weapons in terms of their existing and contributing to the stability of the world order.

Changing the focus from disarmament to nuclear reliance, **Ms. Loukianova** expressed her belief that nuclear problems are at their very core political and historical problems, and need to be treated as such with the help of stronger international institutions. Attention, she argued, should be put on reducing reliance on nuclear weapon, and this can only be done if there is a will to talk about the issue.

Finally, **Mr. Reshetnikov** linked his final comments to the initial speech delivered by Ms. Loukianova, focusing on the belief that Russia derived its prestige from the idea of being a great power. Building on this concept, he directed one final question to the panelists, asking whether there is any way that Russia can be perceived once again as the great responsible nuclear power it once prided itself on being.

The last round of answers to this question saw **Ms. Loukianova** begin by stating that Russia has done many things in the recent past that made it lose its credibility, but it now has a chance to show a newfound restraint and go back to being perceived as a responsible stakeholder. Whether it wants to take up the opportunity or not, she concluded, remains to be seen. Continuing on this line of thought, **Ms. Tasleem** commented on the issue of the prestige that comes along with nuclear weapons, comparing the Russian case to the Indian one, and arguing that it all being a matter of perception, what is considered to be bringing prestige by some is seen by others as damaging in terms of reputation. The lack of consensus in the international community on what brings reputation benefits and what brings costs, she stated, is another thing that needs to be taken into serious consideration.

While **Mr. Fleck** only briefly voiced the idea that Russia should be a necessary participant in the Prague Agenda, **Ms. Kane** took her time in delivering her final remarks on the subject. Recalling her experience as a UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, she argued that during the 2012 negotiations for the establishment of a weapons of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East, while Moscow wanted to go ahead with it, it was the U.S., the UK and

the UN itself that were hindering the process by showing disrespect towards their Russian negotiating counterpart. On this note, she concluded by highlighting once again the importance of dialogue and engaging the negotiating partner respectfully in order to reach a common solution.

### *Q&A Session*

The final part of the panel was dedicated to questions and remarks from the audience. Two comments specifically were taken up by the panelists.

The first was made by **Laura Rockwood**, the executive director of the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. In her remarks, she opposed Mr. Kroenig's depiction of the Iran deal as a failure, arguing that it was fundamental in that it averted a military crisis. Furthermore, she continued, as all lasting agreements do, it needed to have balanced winnings on both sides, which meant that some concessions had to be made to Tehran. Talks about renegotiating the deal, she concluded, only add fuel to the fire of the Iranian right wing military, and will ultimately contribute to the defeat of the moderate candidate Rouhani during the spring elections.

On his part, while agreeing with Ms. Rockwood on her political analysis of the situation, **Mr. Kroenig** once again firmly expressed his belief that the Iranian deal cannot be considered successful, purely because it did not achieve its aim. If the goal of the agreement was to prevent Tehran from building nuclear weapons, then the sunset clauses lasting only up to six or eight years did nothing to solve the problem, but simply postponed it.

The second comment that seemed to engage all the panelists came from **Heather Wokusch**, a representative of the Academic Council of the UN System and a cross-cultural expert. Bringing civil society into the discussion for the first time, she asked the panel whether, based on the events that took place in 2016 and the critical year that 2017 is shaping up to be, the focus should remain expert-based or whether the public should be engaged in a more unified manner.

As the first to provide a reply, **Ms. Kane** expressed her agreement on the importance of civil society, highlighting the need to include the media in the discourse and promote a campaign of information and sensitization of civil society. **Mr. Fleck** and **Ms. Tasleem**, who followed up

after her, fully concurred with her statements, with Ms. Tasleem remarking that particularly in Pakistan the public debate is saturated with ‘closer threats’ like terrorism, sectarianism or poverty, and issues like disarmament and non-proliferation tend to stay in the back.

The closing remarks of the panel were delivered by Mr. Tallis, who highlighted the importance of publicly debating the issues that were presented during the conference as a way of both reflecting and stimulating politics. In a world that is manifestly increasingly sick of experts, he continued, it’s important to think of ways the nuclear issues can be talked about, all the while being wary of what seems to be the current trend of blaming the woes of society on democratization.

Concluding on this note, he thanked the panelists and the audience and officially closed the first panel of the 2016 Prague Agenda.

## **Panel II: Weapons of Mass Destruction, Norms, and International Order**

Report by Maria Mayboeck

**Richard Price**, *Professor Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia, Vancouver*

Using primarily the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict, Richard Price placed the trajectory of the chemical weapons taboo in its longer historical context and in comparison to other international norms. Price considers Syria’s first uses of chemical weapons as “testing the waters,” similar to Iraq’s use of them in the 1980s. The goal in both cases was, according to Price, to test the robustness of international norms, such as the chemical weapons taboo. As a result of President Obama’s failure to follow through with his initial threats of a forceful response to any clear violation of an international norm, Price fears that other potential future violators could understand this as a signal.

In Price’s words, this leads to the dilemma that “the tighter in the West a norm or institution gets, so too must its enforcement if it is to keep up.” While describing the institutionalization of international norms as potentially “paralyzing” and “agonizing”, he also pointed to the benefit of having one body able to engage in independent verification of these claims. Relying

on one or the other state for such a verification, such as in the case of Iraq in the early 2000, has proven to be deeply problematic.

An additional complicating factor when assessing the status of the taboo is that nobody claimed responsibility for and nobody justified the use of chemical weapons in the case of Syria. Compared to other violations of norms, in this case there was no open contestation of the essential validity of this taboo.

In terms of norm robustness, Price primarily pointed to two factors. First, he argued that the chemical weapons taboo is robust compared to others, such as the torture taboo, the sexual violence taboo, or the child soldiers taboo. According to Price, this is due to chemical weapons' relative inaccessibility. Due to their nature and the way chemical weapons are institutionalized, the decision to use them is raised to the highest political level, allowing little autonomy in their use. And second, Price considers third party responses to be an important indicator of norm robustness, such as Russia's intervention, which led to Syria joining the chemical weapons convention.

Price concluded that despite violations and despite autocratic governments that are more concerned with their own sovereignty than enforcing international norms being on the rise, there is a number of good reasons for why these instances should not weaken this longstanding international norm.

**Harald Müller**, *Member of the Executive Board, Head of Research Department, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt*

Harald Müller opened with a terminological overview of 'system' and 'order.' Although norms are subject to different cultural interpretations, according to Müller, there must be a core understanding shared by a sufficient number of actors to maintain the order, which is supported by the norms. Concerning weapons of mass destruction (WMD), Müller made the following argument: "WMDs are in natural and inherent contradiction to all possible imaginations of international order and it is the responsibility of nuclear weapon states to disarm." Müller then outlined three main points in support of this argument. First, Müller argued that deterrence implies a willingness to use the weapons. In his words, "The possession of nuclear weapons implies the conditioned intention of absolute destruction. This is not compatible with the nature of order as one of balance, coexistence, cooperation and restraint." Second, possessors of WMDs usually claim to be the guardians of the international order. By claiming to need these weapons to carry out that job, argued Müller, they contradict the order they are supposed to uphold. Müller drew a simple conclusion from the danger nuclear weapons represent in this

claim: the abolition of nuclear weapons as the most powerful type of WMDs is to “eliminate the normative contradiction for which they are the physical indicator.” Third, he stated that the NPT is a “transient and temporary device” in the present order. Disarmament is a necessary step to establish a new order on the basis of the current order. Indeed, he argued, the NPT was intended to be a temporary device, as the ICT decided in 1996 that abolition is the duty of nuclear weapons states. Müller accused the nuclear weapons states of making the conditions unsuitable for general disarmament and engaging in competition rather than self-restraint and cooperation. Disarmament, he said, is “not just a hobby or a sport; it is their damn obligation.” Müller closed by defending international norms and pointed out that although the world may become less violent in general, the statistical fact on which studies rely does not indicate a steady and linear study. Instead, it goes in waves, and improvements are interrupted by bloody episodes. In Müller’s words, “In the nuclear age, such waves will prove fatal. We better stick to norms than, notably, WMDs.”

**William Walker**, *Emeritus Professor, University of St. Andrews*

Walker praised Obama’s speech from 2009 and his intentions, though he also lamented the lack of developments that sprung from them. Walker stated that despite both periods of progress and setbacks, the “NPT remains the primary vessel of norms and rules and is an essential source of guidance and legitimacy in problem solving. In addition, the institution embodies regularity in interstate relations, respect for diplomacy, respect for international law, respect for expertise, [and] meticulous and honest attention to details as exemplified by the IAA.”

However, Walker pointed to a consequence of technological change which may affect the credibility, liability and safety of nuclear deterrence. The threat of cyber security and warfare is, according to Walker, moving to center stage in the struggle for technological advantage between states. Walker predicted that the danger arising from external interference with the practice of nuclear terrorism could become acute. In his words, “If these observations and questions are correct, then the management of the cyber domain must become a fundamental preoccupation of nuclear arms control and, more widely, in the domain of nuclear ordering.” He closed by calling on the need to refocus our attention on what some of these new technological challenges are without losing sight of the additional difficulties surrounding us.

**Jeffrey Fields**, *Director, Dornsife Washington, DC Program; Professor, School of International Relations, University of Southern California*

**Jason Enia**, *Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and Director of the Center for the Study of Disasters & Emergency Management at Sam Houston State University*

Jeffrey Fields and Jason Enia presented their ongoing research on the health of the non-proliferation treaty. Their motivation in this research stems from two core issues: 1) Is the regime healthy? 2) How do we know?

Fields put forth two arguments concerning the question of whether the regime is healthy. First, while admitting that the stakes are very high for the NPT, he said that transgressions are natural and happen due to the self-interested nature of the participating states. Compared to the WTO, for example, he argued, transgressions in the NPT are easily considered crises, while in other regimes they are not considered as such. Second, Fields argued that we tend not to think about unwritten norms and rules. In his words, “If the NPT collapsed, an informal component and other states would get together to keep proliferation in check in absence of that treaty.”

Enia stated that with their research they try to deal with the underlying questions that can easily be applied to other regime types: “1) Is this regime impacting the problem that led to its formation, and 2) in a counterfactual sense, what would the state of the problem look like in a counterfactual world in which this regime did not exist?” Their research breaks down the regime components into the following three types: 1) normative (recognizing that there are different types of norms), 2) institutional and organizational (issue scope: the breadth of the issue covered by regime), and 3) behavioral (participatory scope: participants, regime outsiders, etc.).

They both emphasized that with their research they do not want to lose sight of the positive aspects this regime has to offer and evade rhetoric that considers the regime to be in crisis so as to avoid a self-fulfilling prophecy.



## **Day II**

### **Conference welcome: Lubomír Zaorálek, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic**

Report by Regina Zajícová and Nicholas Saffari

Lubomír Zaorálek welcomed everyone and thanked the organizers for preparing the 6th Prague Agenda. The Prague Agenda exists because of President Barack Obama and his nuclear agenda. Zaorálek talked about the aim of the Prague Agenda, which is a world without nuclear weapons, and which was first declared by Obama in 2009. Zaorálek said that we need to continue in Obama's efforts and keep Prague on the map of places where the nuclear issues are discussed. Lubomír Zaorálek also talked about what we can expect from the continuity of the states. The Prague Agenda, in his view, can give us a possibility of a world without nuclear weapons and try to save the world from them. He also said we need to understand how nuclear topics influence politics and international security.

### **A Letter from Barack Obama, President of the United States, in Support of the Prague Agenda Presented by Jessica Cox**

Report by Regina Zajícová and Nicholas Saffari

Barack Obama's letter outlined the outgoing U.S. President's vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and the progress that has been made towards this objective. Under the Obama administration nuclear disarmament has been brought to the forefront of the international debate through the U.S.'s hosting of four nuclear security summits since 2009. In addition to the renewed discussion, a series of important milestones has been reached, including the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran. By curtailing Iran's ability to produce sufficient quantities of enriched uranium in return for sanction relief the JCPOA goes a long way to reducing the likelihood of Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon in the near future. The JCPOA and the 2010 New START agreement, which was signed in Prague, are noteworthy and hard-fought

achievements considering the strategic issues at stake for states which rely on nuclear weapons for their national defence. Not only has the United States worked on initiatives such as the START with Russia, which will reduce the number of nuclear weapons the United States has to its lowest level since 1950, but it has also helped to develop a series of international agreements encouraging nuclear security and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In doing so the United States has been able to ensure that enough nuclear material to make more than one hundred and fifty bombs has been made secure. Finally, the United States has successfully ensured through diplomatic means that sixteen countries and Taiwan have removed all nuclear materials from their soil. It is hoped that through the continuation of robust diplomatic means such as the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the visionary goals of complete nuclear disarmament will gradually become the reality over the coming decades.

## **Panel I: The Prague Agenda since 2009 – What has been achieved?**

Report by Regina Zajícová and Nicholas Saffari

The establishment of the Prague Agenda during 2009 occurred at a time of significant volatility for the U.S. national security. **Jessica Cox**, the Director for Arms Control on the National Security Council of the U.S. Department of State, provided a survey of its development, the context surrounding the agenda, and the potential challenges it might face in the future. In contrast to the current situation nuclear disarmament issues were considered to be of peripheral interest under the Bush administration. Although preliminary work on the New START agreement with Russia was carried out at that time, greater attention was allocated towards dealing with international terrorism and the instability in Afghanistan and Iraq. Obama reversed this situation, due in part to his personal interest in nuclear disarmament and his previous experience in this domain as a senator. Not only did Obama's Prague Agenda speech delivered on April 5, 2009 set out a clear vision, but it also provided a comprehensive action plan to tackle nuclear proliferation. This plan was based on adopting a holistic approach and built on the pillars of limiting the current reliance on nuclear weapons in national security, maintaining a robust non-proliferation regime, working towards the prevention of nuclear terrorism and, finally, promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The shift away from a narrow focus on nuclear weapons to a broader engagement with nuclear energy and security illustrates the revolutionary nature of the Prague Agenda, according to Cox.

In addition to providing an outline of the Prague Agenda Cox also highlighted the progress that has been made under each pillar. The most significant progress has been made towards reducing the number of nuclear weapons that is necessary for U.S. national security. This has been primarily achieved through the signing of the New START treaty with Russia in 2010, which will firstly cut the number of nuclear missile launch systems in half and secondly establish a strong verification regime to ensure compliance with its provisions. Not only will this lead to one of the lowest levels of active strategic nuclear weapons systems for both states, but it will also grant both countries a degree of strategic stability due to their greater knowledge of their counterpart's capabilities. The JCPOA with Iran, signed in 2015, was a second promising step in the direction of nuclear disarmament, and despite the domestic criticism it faces in the United States it is a noteworthy achievement of the Obama administration.

Several further successes were also referred to in the context of the second, third and fourth pillars, including the review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2015, providing for greater transparency and the implementation of a stronger sanctions regime for North Korea to demonstrate the consequences that violators of the NPT face. A number of improvements towards greater international nuclear security have also been made, leading to the removal of weapons-grade nuclear material from 16 countries and Taiwan. Nuclear terrorism remains an important concern, and its position as an issue of importance has been strengthened through the hosting of four nuclear security summits from 2010 onward. Finally, the United States has also cooperated with the IAEA and other states to encourage the peaceful use of nuclear energy and reduce the possibility of states using nuclear material for weapons programmes.

However, in spite of the success the Obama administration has achieved within the framework of the Prague Agenda a number of challenges remain to be solved. In particular North Korea's violation of the NPT is still a cause for concern, and greater pressure through sanctions is needed to dissuade it from developing nuclear weapons and encourage it to engage with the United States and its regional partners. The nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan also constitutes a growing problem as it has the potential to spiral into an uncontrollable nuclear crisis. While the United States is unlikely to directly intervene in it, it has encouraged both parties to diffuse the current tension through a peaceful discourse about nuclear doctrine. Finally, Russia is still considered a significant threat to nuclear disarmament as it has not only been unwilling to negotiate, but also embarked on the modernisation of its nuclear weapons arsenal. It is clear that until these issues are dealt with, the Prague Agenda, in spite of its numerous successes, will remain an unfulfilled vision in the medium term.

The European Union is a key actor involved in the Prague Agenda and has assisted the United States in implementing a series of policies designed to support the vision of a complete nuclear disarmament. **Jacek Bylica**, the Special Envoy for Non-proliferation and Disarmament at the European External Action Service, discussed eight important areas where progress has been made in strengthening nuclear security from an EU perspective. By increasing the profile of nuclear security issues Obama has assisted in encouraging European governments to place nuclear security at a higher level of priority. Greater awareness has also assisted in the strengthening of the legal basis of nuclear security. Bylica referred particularly to the 2016 Amendment to the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, which made it mandatory for states to safeguard all civilian designated nuclear material, both in transport and in storage, in addition to nuclear facilities designated for non-military activities. The EU encouraged states to sign the Amendment by ensuring that its 28 member states were amongst the first to sign. Further efforts on this front, including delivering démarches and promising capacity building to hesitant states, eased the way for the eventual entry into force of the Amendment on 8 May 2016. Bylica also referred to the successful removal of nuclear material from vulnerable states and the role of EU member-states in assisting states in transferring nuclear material to its original countries and limiting their use of highly enriched uranium. The fourth achievement is the increased allocation of resources to nuclear security by member-states and the EU as a whole, with the latter contributing €40 million to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund. A CBRN Action Plan has also been developed by the EU, which has led to the establishment of Centres of Excellence designed to develop the capacity of partner states to deal with nuclear disasters and their expertise in dealing with them. The final achievements include the establishment of a stronger nuclear security culture, a renewed discussion about CBRN exercises and the management of potential crises, a stronger cooperation between the relevant partners in the field of nuclear security, and, finally, the development of public communication tools to deal with potential crises to increase social and economic resilience and prevent unnecessary fear. Bylica finished by underlining the importance of the multilateral collaboration with the United Nations and the IAEA for the future development of nuclear security and stated that further encouragement is needed to deal with the myriad of challenges facing the Prague Agenda in general and nuclear security in particular.

The final speaker of the first panel, **Benjamin Hautecouverture**, a senior researcher at the Foundation for Strategic Research, provided the audience with an overview of the contrast between the 2009 Prague Agenda Speech of Obama and the reality of nuclear disarmament. He

highlighted the core themes of the speech, including Obama's reference to the moral responsibility of the United States for leading the way in nuclear disarmament and the necessity for international cooperation to tackle the obstacles the Agenda would inevitably face. Moreover, Haute Couverture made special reference to Obama's unprecedented statement that nuclear-armed states must begin the process of complete disarmament and no new states should acquire nuclear weapons. Obama's vision, based largely on political and moral logic, thus marked a departure from the Bush administration's emphasis on strategic principles when dealing with nuclear issues. Haute Couverture continued by retracing some of the content covered by Jessica Cox in regard to the changes Obama's plan of action entailed, including a nuclear posture review which reduced the role of nuclear weapons in the United States national security strategy and a rapprochement with Iran designed to inhibit its obtaining of nuclear weapons. Although the vision of a nuclear weapon free world painted by Obama was undoubtedly an optimistic one, Haute Couverture stressed that Obama stated that such an objective was not likely to be achieved in his lifetime, and until other nuclear-armed states continue down the path of disarmament the United States would maintain a nuclear deterrence. This therefore illustrates that Obama's speech was not based on an unrealistic foundation and, to a certain extent, is even contradictory, as the United States is currently engaged in the modernisation of its nuclear deterrent. In 2015 alone the Department of Defence requested \$23 billion for the renewal of the country's nuclear forces, and Haute Couverture highlighted that in the period from 2015 to 2024 the United States alone will spend \$348 billion on nuclear weapons projects. Haute Couverture finished by stating that the Prague Agenda was not as transformative as the previous speakers had considered it to be. It did not mark a revolution, but instead it was a minor revision of existing policy. The principal accomplishments of the Prague Agenda, in his view, were the hosting of the four nuclear security summits, the JCPOA, and the New START agreement with Russia. However, there has been little to no progress with the North Korea issue, and the United States has still yet to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty. The most revolutionary aspect of the Prague Agenda was its surrounding rhetoric. Its policy prescriptions have largely followed in the vein of the previous administration's concepts. The lack of significant progress and the lack of a feasible strategic solution to the problem of the nuclear deterrence umbrella granted to South Korea, Japan and NATO member-states are the core problems which currently impede the successful progress of the Prague Agenda as a whole.

## **Panel II: Current Status and Perspectives of the Initiatives Supporting the International Control Regimes**

Report by Anna Roininen

The panel discussion concerning the current status and perspectives of the initiatives supporting the international control regimes presented views on what is needed to uphold the global non-proliferation regime. Mallory Stewart, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Emerging Security Challenges and Defence Policy at the US Department of State, was the first to speak. She listed three key challenges that the international control regime is facing: the rise of non-state actors, evolving technologies and the spread of information, as well as the risk of these technologies turning from useful technologies to malicious ones. Stewart emphasised the need for transparency, attribution and accountability in diminishing the negative impacts of these factors.

William Alberque, the Head of the Arms Control and Coordination Section at NATO, spoke next, stating that arms control across the Euro-Atlantic area is under threat as a result of developments on the Russian front. Also, the global NPT regime is weakened by developments such as the failure to make tangible progress toward establishing a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, North Korea's continued violations, the India-Pakistan nuclear rivalry and Russia's violation of the Budapest Memorandum. Answering the question of what can be done to uphold the non-proliferation regime, Alberque stressed the importance of the continued Allied resolve, as this is what underpins the opportunity for dialogue with Russia. Additionally, he maintained that it is important to seek to break the "action-reaction cycle" with Russia and not to compromise the rule-based system. In his view, everything ultimately depends on political will; parties seeking conflict will find it, and similarly, parties seeking a way out will find just that.

Similarly to Alberque, Laura Rockwood, the Executive Director at the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, emphasised the importance of dialogue. According to her, there is an absence of significant development in nuclear disarmament; while many of the goals articulated by President Obama in his 2009 Prague speech have been achieved, a great deal more has happened since 2009 that has weakened the current state of nuclear security. Such developments have involved the lack of a Middle East conference, the breakdown of the Russian-US relations and problems with the issue of safeguards. Rockwood then posed the question of whether it will take another catastrophe akin to 9/11 for the international community to further progress in nuclear disarmament.