



The Prague Agenda 2014

Interviews

Interviewees

Kubbig Bernd W. is Project Director at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) and Adj. Professor (Privatdozent) at Goethe University, Frankfurt. Since 2006 he has been coordinating the international expert groups 'Multilateral Study Group on the Establishment of a Missile Free Zone in the Middle East' and the Academic Peace Orchestra Middle East. He specializes in U.S. foreign and security policy, especially in regard to the Middle East, missile defense, and space.

Kühn Ulrich works at the Hamburg University's Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy and was an external advisor on nuclear arms control to the Division for Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany in Berlin. He is a co-founder of the IDEAS network for the establishment of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community and currently coordinates the project on Challenges to Deep Nuclear Cuts.

Nielsen Jenny is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Queensland (Australia), researching the 'humanitarian initiative' leading up to the 2015 NPT Review Conference. Previously based in the UK, she was a Research Analyst with the Non-proliferation and Disarmament Programme at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), a Programme Manager for the Defence & Security Programme at Wilton Park (an executive agency of the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office), and a Research Assistant for the Mountbatten Centre for International Studies (MCIS) at the University of Southampton. At MCIS, Jenny was tasked with the co-editing the 2004-2012 editions of the NPT Briefing Book. She holds a PhD from the University of Southampton which focused on U.S. nuclear non-proliferation policy vis-à-vis Iran in the 1970s. Jenny's research focuses on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament policy issues, particularly the multilateral Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) review process.

Pifer Steven is director of the Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Initiative and a senior fellow in the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution, where he focuses on arms control, Russia and Ukraine. A retired Foreign Service officer, his assignments included serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State with responsibilities for Russia and Ukraine, U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, and special assistant to the president and senior director for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia on the National Security Council.

Rauf Tariq is a Director of Arms Control and the Non-Proliferation Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Rauf is an internationally respected authority on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Since 2014 he is Senior Advisor to the Chair of the 2014 Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. From 2002 to 2011 he was Head of the Verification and Security Policy Coordination Office at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He was also the Alternate Head of the IAEA delegation to Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Conferences from 2003 to 2010, and the IAEA Liaison and Point-of-Contact for a number of multilateral control regimes and United Nations Security Council committees. He specializes in nuclear non-proliferation; nuclear disarmament; nuclear security; international and regional security; nuclear-weapon-free zones; international organizations; regional security (esp. in North America, South Asia, and the Middle East); multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle; and foreign and security policy education and training.

Ritchie Nick is a lecturer at the Department of Politics at the University of York. His particular focus is on nuclear disarmament, proliferation and arms control and US and UK national security. He also worked at the Oxford Research Group, an independent Non-Governmental Organisation working with policy-makers and independent experts on the challenges of global security and nuclear disarmament. His recent research has explored the rationales underpinning the UK's decision to embark on a controversial programme to replace the current Trident nuclear weapons system. He is currently conducting an ESRC-funded project on the political challenges of 'devaluing' nuclear weapons.

Weidlich Christian is a Research Associate at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) and he also works on the staff of the Academic Peace Orchestra Middle East as a Co-Editor of the Policy Brief series. He holds an MA in International Studies/Peace and Conflict Studies from Goethe University, Frankfurt, and a BA in Political Science from Münster University. His research interests include arms control in the Middle East as well as military robotics and the automation of warfare.

Wunderlich Carmen is a research associate at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) and a PhD student at Frankfurt University. She studied Political Science, Philosophy and German Language and Literature at Frankfurt University. Her research focuses on norm contestation and so-called 'rogue states' as counterhegemonic norm entrepreneurs. Her further research interests include arms control and disarmament, critical constructivist theory and Swedish foreign and security policy. Her work appeared in *International Politics and The Nonproliferation Review*. Her most recent publications include 'A Rogue Gone Norm Entrepreneurial? Iran within the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime', in Wolfgang Wagner, Wouter Werner and Michal Onderco (eds.), *Deviance in International Relations: 'Rogue States'* and *International Society* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and *Norm Dynamics in Multilateral Arms Control: Norm, Interests, and Justice* (co-edited with Harald Müller, University of Georgia Press, 2013).

Zhang Hui is a Senior Research Associate at the Project on Managing the Atom in the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Hui Zhang is leading a research initiative on China's nuclear policies for the project. His research topics include verification techniques of nuclear arms control, the control of fissile material, nuclear terrorism, China's nuclear policy, nuclear safeguards and non-proliferation, policy of the nuclear fuel cycle and reprocessing. Dr. Zhang is the author of a number of technical reports and book chapters, and dozens of articles in academic journals and the print media, including *Science and Global Security*, *Arms Control Today*, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, *Disarmament Diplomacy*, *Disarmament Forum*, the *Non-Proliferation Review*, *Washington Quarterly*, *Journal of Nuclear Materials Management*, and *China Security*.

Interviewers

Marcela Cimflová is a student of International Relations and European Studies at Metropolitan University Prague. She spent one year in Germany in order to better understand its culture and improve her language skills. Her German experience is one of the reasons why she chose to interview Carmen Wunderlich from the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt and tried to see the issue of nuclear weapons from her point of view.

Emily Curryová is an intern at the Institute of International Relations in Prague and a PhD candidate in International Relations and European Studies at the Metropolitan University Prague. Her interests in the field of International Relations consist of the UK foreign policy, democratisation of Latin America and theories of conflict resolution.

Eliška Hrušovská has a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and European Studies as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Management of Leisure Time and Recreation – Recreology. She was a project intern during the Prague Agenda conference at the Institute of International Relations in Prague. She does volunteering even in her leisure time. She worked as a volunteer for organisations such as the Amnesty International, Forum 2000 Czech Republic or for the United Nations Information Centre Prague. Her academic research concerns global governance and leadership, interpersonal relations, global conflicts and international security, non-governmental organisations, and global civil society. She is currently working on her Master's thesis: *Global civil society of the 21st century: challenges and threats* (2015, MUP).

Tomáš Kolder: My name is Tomáš Kolder. I graduated from the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University in Brno, earning a bachelor's degree in Political Science. I am currently studying for a master's degree in Political Science at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Charles University in Prague. In addition, I am currently studying at the Faculty of Economics at the Technical University in Ostrava. My interests are political parties, political systems of Scandinavian countries, political economy, the regional policy of the EU, international economic relations and political marketing.

Interviewers

Jakub Kuchar is currently studying for his bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Relations at Charles University in Prague. Since October 2014, he has been an active intern at the Institute of International Relations Prague. The discussions between him and Mr. Weidlich during the Prague Agenda have ultimately led to a fruitful interview. Jakub hopes that the on-point answers, fresh views on the topics at hand and overall optimistic message presented by Mr. Weidlich will well enrich the final outputs of the event and please even the most demanding reader.

Pavel Mészáros is currently studying the Bachelor's programme in International Studies and Diplomacy at the University of Economics, Prague. His areas of interest consist of European energy security, US foreign policy and the game theoretic approach to international relations theory, which is also the topic of his Bachelor's thesis - Game Theoretical Analysis of the Soviet Invasion in the Year 1968. Thanks to his internship at the Institute of International Relations he broadened his views on world politics and has gained the possibility to attend two immensely interesting conferences, namely the International Symposium and the Prague Agenda.

Michal Smetana is PhD. candidate, lecturer and research associate at the Institute of Political Studies of Charles University in Prague. He graduated from Charles University with Bachelor's Degree in International Area Studies and Master's Degree in Security Studies. In 2013, he was appointed to the position of the Deputy Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies.

Nicole Stelzerová: "My name is Nicole Stelzerová. I grew up in New Mexico, USA, but have been living in the Czech Republic for seven years. I am currently studying International Relations in Prague at Anglo-American University. I am very interested in world politics and international relations; therefore I decided that an internship at the Institute of International Relations would give me more insight into the field. Also, this internship gave me a great opportunity to attend a couple of big international conferences and the chance to interview Mr. Tariq Rauf."

The Prague Agenda and the Future of Nuclear Arms Control and Disarmament

The Introductory Word by Michal Smetana

The calls for the international control and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons are as old as the nuclear age itself. High-level initiatives such as the Baruch Plan of the 1940's, the three-pillar bargain of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or the presidential proposals at the Reykjavik Summit supported abolitionist visions in the prevalent Cold War strategic discourse marked by the dynamics of superpower arms races and the Dr. Strangelove-like images of a thermonuclear armageddon.

At the height of the Cold War, the issue of nuclear disarmament was perceived as important enough to bring over a million people to the streets of New York, in one of the biggest political demonstrations the United States has ever experienced. After the demise of the bipolar international order, it seemed that the window of opportunity for nuclear abolition opened wider than ever before. However, once the four-decades-long conflict ended, the popular support for disarmament faded out and the world's attention turned to other pressing security problems of the 1990's era.

In the recent years, we can witness the birth of a number of new initiatives that once again aim to spark the global nuclear disarmament movement. The famous Wall Street Journal op-ed's by the "gang of four" – George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn – suggested that the idea of nuclear disarmament does not belong only to the domain of utopian, idealist hippies, but that it can also be supported in all seriousness by pragmatic Cold War veterans with a realist vision of world affairs. In addition, the so-called "humanitarian turn" in nuclear disarmament discourse has been embraced by a growing number of like-minded states and NGO's, framing the need for global ban on nuclear weapons through the human security paradigm. Nevertheless, what really brought the disarmament vision back to the forefront of international politics was the fact that the idea of a nuclear weapon-free world was explicitly placed among the top national priorities by the president of the United States, Barack Obama.

It is important to note that his 2009 speech at Hradcany Square in Prague did not only formulate an abstract, long-term goal of nuclear disarmament, but it also laid down a number of very concrete, short-term steps in the area of nuclear arms control and non-proliferation. And this is exactly the logic behind the annual Prague Agenda conference organized by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Institute of International Relations, the Institute of Political Studies of Charles University, and the Metropolitan University. While the feasibility and desirability of "global zero" is an integral part of the conference discussions every year, the topics of particular panels and roundtables also focus in great detail on the recent progress and challenges related to nuclear arms control, non-proliferation and strategic stability.

The aim is not only to gather renowned experts, scholars and decision-makers to track the progress within the broadly defined president Obama's disarmament agenda, but also to discuss, propose and challenge new ideas that may complement it.

A prominent theme at 2014 Prague Agenda conference was the issue of engagement of nuclear-armed states beyond the United States and Russia in arms control initiatives that have been so far employed exclusively in a bilateral setting between the two major nuclear powers. That means, in particular, a creation of a new multilateral format in which the respective states would agree to accept some more or less formal limitations and reductions of weapons in their arsenals, as well as measures to enhance transparency and trust among participants. Most notably, US Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Rose Gottemoeller used her speech in Prague as an opportunity to announce a brand new multilateral initiative called the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, with the aim to develop solutions to the issues connected with the future multilateral verification regime involving all nuclear-armed states.

Furthermore, last year's conference also discussed prospects for the success of the upcoming NPT Review Conference; nuclear proliferation hard cases North Korea and Iran; the impact of Ukraine crisis on nuclear affairs; and the hypothetical implications of nuclear disarmament in both global and regional contexts.

One of the speakers at the conference noted how important the role of education and particularly the universities is for the success of nuclear disarmament vision. In this context, I was very happy to hear that a number of students from Czech universities met with some of the most renowned international experts on nuclear issues that attended the Prague Agenda and interviewed them.

The result of their work is this special issue of International Politics. The list of notable names include Bernd W. Kubbig, Project Director at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) who specializes in U.S. foreign and security policy, especially in regard to the Middle East, missile defense, and space; Ulrich Kühn from the Hamburg University's Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy who currently coordinates the project on challenges to deep nuclear cuts; Jenny Nielsen, a postdoctoral research fellow at the School of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Queensland, who is researching the 'humanitarian initiative' leading up to the 2015 NPT Review Conference; Steve Pifer, the director of Brookings' Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Initiative and a former United States Ambassador in Kiev, who shared some of his thoughts on arms control in the context of the current crisis over Ukraine; Tariq Rauf, new director of Arms Control and Non-proliferation Programme at SIPRI, who commented on the failure of Western diplomacy in the case of North Korean defiance of nonproliferation norms and on importance of E3+3 dialogue in the context of Iranian nuclear program; Nick Ritchie, lecturer and researcher at the University of York dealing with the UK perspective of nuclear disarmament; Christian Weidlich from Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, who discussed the issues through regional

lenses of Middle East security complex; Carmen Wunderlich from the same institution, who commented on the role of OSCE and other international organizations and and last but not least Hui Zhang who is a Senior Research Associate at the Project on Managing the Atom in the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and he focuses on China's nuclear policies.

In the concluding paragraph of this short essay, I would like to briefly reflect on the oft-made comments that it is fruitless to talk about arms control and disarmament when the relations between the West and Russia are at their all-time low since the fall of the Berlin Wall. One should not forget that during some of the most critical moments of the Cold War, arms control talks between Washington and Moscow enabled an unprecedented strategic dialogue between the two competitors, building mutual trust and deepening their understanding of each others' intentions. Despite all the complex issues we deal with, arms control negotiations should not be seen only as a challenge, but also as an important political opportunity. In today's complicated international situation marked by the Ukraine crisis, high-level discussions over the next steps on the long, rocky road towards global nuclear disarmament may well serve the very same purpose.

Bernd W. Kubbig

Bernd W. Kubbig is Project Director at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) and Adj. Professor (Privatdozent) at Goethe University, Frankfurt. Since 2006 he has been coordinating the international expert groups 'Multilateral Study Group on the Establishment of a Missile Free Zone in the Middle East' and the Academic Peace Orchestra Middle East. He specializes in U.S. foreign and security policy, especially in regard to the Middle East, missile defense, and space.

The Germans' attitude to Russia is currently 50:50. How do you perceive the differences?

In my view, when it comes to foreign policy, the government consisting of the Christian Conservatives under Chancellor Merkel and the Social Democrats represented by Frank Walter Steinmeier is more united than it seems at first glance from outside. Both coalition partners pursue a dual-track approach of dialogue and sanctions. Nevertheless, there is a difference when it comes to the launch of a new round of the coercive measures. Mr. Steinmeier has warned us - and in my view he is completely right - that the current threat from Russia is, as paradoxical as it may sound, a weakened Russian bear, since a weakened Russian bear is more dangerous than a relatively strong one. What this implies is that the sanctions have worked and that their efficiency has triggered fears in some quarters of European and German decision-making circles.

Do you think that German Chancellor Merkel's initiative can practically solve the conflict?

In my view, the largely-united position in Berlin is the best way of reaching a compromise with President Vladimir Putin, as it includes regular telephone calls at the highest level and also possibilities for an exit strategy, which should hopefully enable President Putin to exit Ukraine without losing face.

Do you think that Chancellor Merkel will continue in her sharper rhetoric against Moscow?

The Brisbane speech by Chancellor Merkel was fairly strong in terms of rhetoric, but this speech should be seen in the context of the overall solution-oriented policy of both the chancellor and the foreign minister....

Is there a real danger that the crisis in Ukraine could reinforce the role of nuclear deterrence in European security?

I strongly believe - and in this I have been endorsed by the discussions at the Prague conference in early December - that nuclear weapons do not play a role at all in this case. The fact that, for instance, some 20 nuclear warheads are on German soil has not prevented Mr. Putin from violating international law and pursuing the annexation of Crimea as well as his destabilization policy in the South-Eastern part of Ukraine. Therefore, on the contrary, we need a strong signal that would implement Mr. Obama's speech in Prague on April 5, 2009: let's create a European nuclear-weapon-free zone and demonstrate to the Russians that military measures and especially nuclear ones are not an efficient policy option.

How can the Prague Agenda influence global nuclear disarmament?

It can influence it very much, as I have pointed out in my previous answer.

What new efforts or treaties can be conceived of that would lead to a more predictable, more secure and less militarized Europe?

At this point in time, the priority is damage limitation, which means that the West has to facilitate a Russian policy that stop the destabilization of Ukraine and that is interested in becoming, at least in the mid-term, a reliable partner with respect to the European security architecture. Real security can only be achieved with the Russians, but not without them. We have to convince Mr. Putin that this fundamental principle applies to him and to his country as well. In my view, President Putin does not have a master plan, but he miscalculated because he might have thought that the West would react to the annexation of Crimea as it did in 2008, when it responded to the Russian invasion of Georgia with nothing more than rhetoric.

Will this Conference be useful for your own work? How?

In a private conversation we have told the director of your institute and especially Dr. Schneider how important it is that both the Czech MFA and a leading institute continue their efforts to hold conferences on this very topic on an annual basis. The Prague Agenda is unique and I encourage you to conduct further conferences focusing this topic.

Ulrich Kühn

Ulrich Kühn works at the Hamburg University's Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy and was an external advisor on nuclear arms control to the Division for Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany in Berlin. He is a co-founder of the IDEAS network for the establishment of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community and currently coordinates the project on Challenges to Deep Nuclear Cuts.

What did the conference Prague Agenda 2014 present to you?

It presented an opportunity to exchange views and information with the members of the arms control and non-proliferation community.

Could The Prague Agenda, as an international meeting of experts on global nuclear issues, be a useful way to work towards global nuclear disarmament?

It definitely could because, most importantly, it holds up the spirit of Obama's Prague speech and thus serves as a continuous reminder of the importance of the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

What do regional perspectives of nuclear disarmament represent to you?

I am particularly interested in discussing possible solutions with regard to establishing a nuclear-weapons-free zone in Europe.

What are the biggest global challenges and threats for contemporary society in your opinion?

Terrorism, the lack of democratic institutions, uncontrolled finance capitalism, social inequality, non-proliferation of WMD, hyper-nationalism, and poverty.

How can nuclear arms control and non-proliferation be intensified?

Through more money from private and state funders to support research and track 2 initiatives around the globe, and through more professional outreach (PR) activities.

How can nuclear weapons be reduced in your opinion?

Sorry, this question is too general for me to fully answer it; in short: it can be done through a phased approach involving all nuclear weapons states with legally binding limits on certain actors which have a direct nuclear deterrence relationship, and a sound international verification mechanism (incl. a functioning version of the FMCT and the CTBT).

What is the future of the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty) in light of what has been said at the Prague Agenda conference?

The future of the CTBT hinges very much on a possible second try for a successful ratification of it in the United States. This could be a game changer.

How do you see the situation regarding nuclear-free zone countries?

I am not very optimistic with regard to the NWFZs because the value of negative security guarantees has been strongly negatively affected by the Ukraine crisis (i.e. Budapest Memorandum). However, I would support civil society efforts aimed towards starting a discussion about a possible NWFZ in Europe in order to get rid of NATO's tactical nuclear weapons.

What do you think about the cooperation between nuclear states and countries from nuclear-free zones?

As referred to under Pt. 9, the relationship depends very much on the ability to devise clear and sound negative security guarantees. So far, the NWS have not done enough to support the NWFZs.

Jenny Nielsen

Jenny Nielsen is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the School of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Queensland (Australia), and she is researching the 'humanitarian initiative' leading up to the 2015 NPT Review Conference. Previously based in the UK, she was a Research Analyst with the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Programme at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), a Programme Manager for the Defence & Security Programme at Wilton Park (an executive agency of the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office), and a Research Assistant for the Mountbatten Centre for International Studies (MCIS) at the University of Southampton. At the MCIS, she was tasked with co-editing the 2004-2012 editions of the NPT Briefing Book. Jenny's research focuses on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament policy issues, particularly the multilateral Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) review process.

What did the conference Prague Agenda 2014 represent to you?

The Prague Agenda conference was a very timely gathering of nuclear policy experts. It was especially timely because it occurred ahead of the Vienna Humanitarian Conference, and the strategic issues and concerns about the Russia-Eastern Europe relations were highlighted in it. This issue was disregarded by many civil society groups in Vienna, who fail to appreciate the strategic realities and concerns of many Eastern European states in the current geopolitical climate.

Could The Prague Agenda, as an international meeting of experts on global nuclear issues, be a useful way to work towards global nuclear disarmament?

The Prague Agenda conferences could be very useful fora for nuclear experts and policy-makers, since at these conferences, they could convene outside the US and the UK to discuss nuclear policy issues. The concerns of Eastern Europe make the Prague Agenda especially useful, as different perspectives are represented there. In many US/UK conferences, the Eastern European participation/perspective is not as prevalent, and hence the perspective is often skewed in the discussions.

What do regional perspectives on nuclear disarmament represent to you?

Regional perspective on nuclear disarmament are important coalitions in the multilateral diplomatic fora.

What are the biggest global challenges and threats for contemporary society in your opinion?

The most pressing global challenges and threats for society at this time are climate change, terrorism, and poverty/inequality.

How can nuclear arms control and non-proliferation be intensified?

Nuclear arms control and non-proliferation policy can be strengthened by furthering confidence-building and trust amongst key states through Track 1.5 dialogues.

How can nuclear weapons be reduced in your opinion?

Nuclear weapons reductions—beyond the superfluous and agreed bilateral US-Russia reductions—can take place once the strategic and security concerns of states possessing these weapons are assuaged through other means, including perhaps alternate/new regional alliances, security guarantees and possibly even alternate advanced conventional weapons systems.

What is the future of the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty) in light of what has been said at the Prague Agenda?

I think there should be a renewed focus on promoting the CTBT's entry into force. Its ratification by all the Annex II states, even if North Korea would be the one outlier, would strengthen the confidence between states - both states which are party to the NPT and those which are not party to the NPT. Such a focus on the CTBT could assist in restoring some of the credibility in the non-proliferation regime regarding commitment to Article VI (NPT) implementation, as there is currently a perceived lack of credibility in this respect.

How do you see the situation regarding nuclear-free zone countries?

The Middle East WMD-free zone issue is going to be a very contentious issue at the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The failure of regional states to agree on an agenda for a conference in Helsinki is going to have implications for reaching consensus on a Final Document at the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

What do you think about the cooperation between nuclear states and countries from nuclear-free zones?

States from NWFZs and the NPT NWS cooperate on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear security goals and priorities even if they disagree on pathways and timelines for the nuclear disarmament implementation. This collaborative relationship in relation to such non-proliferation, counter-proliferation and nuclear security priorities could potentially be affected by the lack of commitment to the implementation of nuclear disarmament priorities, which is perceived by non-nuclear weapon states in NWFZs.

Was this Conference useful for your own work? How?

The 2014 Prague Agenda conference was very useful for my research on nuclear disarmament and the NPT review process. The presentations, conversations and networking with the participants, especially those from Eastern Europe and Russia, enriched my appreciation of the many divergent and regional dimensions of the global nuclear policy issues being discussed at the UN.

Steven Pifer

Being a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution as well as the director of Brookings' Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Initiative and a former United States Ambassador to Ukraine, Steven Pifer had a lot to say about the Ukraine/Russia crisis and the current developments regarding non-proliferation regimes and arms control. In a short interview that he gave to us during the Prague Agenda 2014 Conference, Mr. Pifer talked about how he perceives the current state of play regarding arms control and how things could be resolved in the future.

As you were a United States Ambassador to Ukraine during the years 1998-2000, what were your perceptions on the relations between Ukraine and Russia back then? Have they changed throughout the time period?

There already were some bumps in the relationship between Ukraine and Russia back then, but it certainly was not like the current situation, where you see Russian military forces in Ukraine. It is disturbing to me personally because I helped negotiate the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, which the Russians have grossly violated. They have paid no respect to Ukraine's territorial integrity and used force against Ukraine.

Considering the unfolding events in Ukraine and the evident animosity between the West and Russia, could we be talking about another "Cold War"?

I don't think it is a Cold War, in part because there is no ideological aspect to it like we had in terms of capitalism versus communism. In addition, Russia is not the Soviet Union; it is a lesser power. Although the current situation has some characteristics of the Cold War, it is not going to be a Cold War II.

What do you think is the future of the multilateral non-proliferation regimes in light of the crisis in Ukraine/Crimea?

I don't think the Ukraine/Russia crisis is going to affect the non-proliferation regimes. My greater concern is that the non-nuclear weapons states are going to come to a conclusion that the nuclear weapon states are not doing enough in terms of reducing nuclear arms and that they are not doing it fast enough. And then you have, of course, the specific cases of Iran and North Korea.

In one of his statements, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier said that Ukraine should not enter the NATO. Apparently the economic and political modernisation of Ukraine is a too long-term project. What is your view on this?

I don't think we should say that Ukraine can never enter NATO. I do think that there will be a certain point in time, perhaps as part of the solution with Russia, that Ukraine may talk to the Russians and say, "Look, we will put NATO off the table for x number of years". And last week President Poroshenko said that Ukraine would not look at NATO for at least six years, and there would have to be a referendum before any move toward the Alliance. So push the question off into the future, and that might be part of a solution. But I am not sure the Russians are prepared to accept any solution at this point. They actually may want things to go as they are now – a frozen conflict in eastern Ukraine.

After the end of the Cold War it was believed that the role of arms control would diminish. Yet 20 years later it seems that this presumption is far from being true. What are your thoughts on that? Is arms control currently as significant as it was during the Cold War?

Arms control is certainly more significant now than it was a year ago, and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) has more value. I also think that regarding nuclear weapons, arms control is a good vehicle that could help us move towards the goal of a more stable world by a step-by-step process.

Does the Global Zero campaign have a chance to succeed? Are their goals realistic - for example, the reduction of all nuclear arsenals to zero total warheads by 2030?

Being a member of Global Zero I support the objective, but I am sure it is going to be very hard goal to achieve. It must be by a step-by-step process. The idea is that you should design each step so that if you get stuck in one step and cannot go further, you are at least better off than where you initially started.

Mr. Pifer, what does the Prague Agenda conference mean to you? Will the outcomes of the conference be valuable for your own work?

I like the name of the conference, recalling President Obama's Prague speech of 2009 and the objectives of looking at ways to reduce and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. I think that what is important and what has been discussed here are the steps that would move us in the right direction. The conference will be valuable for me, and I expect to learn a lot from it.

Tariq Rauf

Tariq Rauf is the director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. He is an expert on nuclear non-proliferation issues, nuclear disarmament and nuclear security. Previously, Mr. Rauf was the Head of the Verification and Security Policy Coordination Office at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from 2002 to 2011, and there he dealt with numerous cases like those of Iraq, Syria, South Korea and Libya, but also more extreme cases like those of North Korea and Iran. As a respected expert on nuclear security, Mr. Rauf was among the speakers of the Prague Agenda 2014 conference, where we posed to him several questions.

What do you think about the situation in North Korea? Are the steps that the western countries are taking helpful, and will they be successful in the end?

Yes, my view was a little bit different than that of the speaker. The North Korean nuclear file was also one of the files that I worked on, and I think the North Korean situation has been badly mishandled. Because of this bad mishandling, we have one more country that has tested nuclear weapons. Before 2006 they had not tested a weapon, but by that year North Korea had been put into the category of the “axis of evil” by the United States, and they were under Security Council sanctions, so it made it easier for the North Korean government to carry out the test. And from a non-proliferation and a disarmament point of view, this was a very bad development because India and Pakistan had already tested nuclear weapons in 1998, which means that instead of five, we had seven countries testing weapons, and now with North Korea, it is eight. So this is a historic fact that has now been created. And nobody is doing anything at the moment to prevent yet another nuclear test by North Korea.

Western diplomacy, unfortunately, has deteriorated because there is not much leadership here; you do not see big leaders out there anymore. And so it has deteriorated into name-calling, and anytime anyone doesn’t like anyone they impose sanctions on them. And it’s the average person who suffers, not the leadership.

What do you think about the Iranian nuclear program? Do you think that it is as peaceful as they claim?

The IAEA has been verifying it since 2002, since the allegations against it were made, and the IAEA has not yet found any nuclear material in military use there. Their obligation to the NPT is to use nuclear material only for peaceful purposes. So either Iran has a nuclear weapon program that is so well hidden that nothing has leaked out, which would be strange because so much other information has leaked out, or Iran might have been working on a weapon program until the period of 2002-2003, but then stopped working on it. That is very difficult to find out, but at the moment all the declared nuclear material in Iran is under IAEA verification, so I think the E3+3 dialogue is the best way to deal with this issue.

What does the Prague Agenda conference mean to you, and will this conference be useful for your own work? How?

Yes. It is good that the Prague Agenda conferences are being held because it keeps the issue of nuclear weapons on the table. And the Prague Speech by President Obama was historic in the sense that for the first time the head of a nuclear weapon state said very clearly that they wanted to eliminate nuclear weapons, although a timeline was not given, but a clear commitment was made to moving towards security in a world without nuclear weapons. Before that, there had been statements that hinted at it, but no one with the authority of the President of United States said it in so many words. So it keeps the issue alive, and it also means that by us having these conferences the United States is also reminded that this statement was made, and even though things have changed and the world is changing, nonetheless this is the commitment that was made and needs to be worked upon.

Yes, I think there were some sessions where the discussion was very useful. We got a little bit of a preview of the discussion between the Russians and the Americans on not only Ukraine, but also missile defense and strategic arms control. Some of the discussions held before had been between the Americans and the Russians only, and those outside the discussions didn't know that many of their details, so this discussion now brought some of that information to people from other countries, so that they could also be aware of those issues.

Could the Prague Agenda, as an international meeting of experts on global nuclear issues, be a useful way to work towards global nuclear disarmament?

Yeah, I think so, definitely. At the moment it's a small format, and it's primarily attended by academic people, but at some point it would become like the Munich Security Conference, where you have defense ministers and foreign ministers coming, but it also started off like the Prague Agenda and then they elevated the level of it. So the Munich Security Conferences are held every year, and some countries use that conference to make important statements, and it gets a lot of international media coverage, so one of the things the Prague Agenda could try to do in future years is get more media coverage of the discussions.

Nick Ritchie

Nick Ritchie does research and teaches in the areas of international relations and international security at the University of York. His particular focus is on nuclear disarmament, proliferation and arms control and US and UK national security.

How did you like the Prague Agenda 2014 conference?

I thought the Agenda was very good over the two days. It covered most of the salient issues in global nuclear politics. It might have been good to have some other voices - from, perhaps, developing countries - but that would be my only comment.

I saw you making notes. Does that mean that you will utilize them in your lectures or further research?

I will use part of the notes that I have taken for my own research in terms of new information that was delivered by the speakers and questions or things that were said that got me thinking. Some statements confirmed and/or challenged some of my thoughts and assumptions. I am particularly interested in statements from our Russian colleagues, to understand their perspectives. So I will primarily use my notes for my own research purposes and to develop my own thinking.

In your opinion, hypothetically, if the UK got rid of all of its NW, would it cause a chain reaction? I mean, would all the other countries have the same initiative? Or are we waiting for Russia and the US to make the first step?

If the UK unilaterally relinquished its nuclear weapons it would not cause a chain reaction, because in my view, it's not how nuclear politics work. It is not that simple. It would certainly have an effect on France and NATO as well as on NPT nuclear dynamics, although it would depend on how that decision was framed. If it was framed in the UK in terms of financial constraints and a sense that the UK could no longer afford the nuclear weapons it has, but would prefer to keep them if circumstances were different, then that might not change the situation much.

If it was part of a genuine reconsideration of British national and international security perspectives and a judgement that nuclear weapons are no longer required in the sense that it would be perhaps counter-productive to continue to practice nuclear deterrence, then I think that could have some political force, but no one could argue that it would have a direct causal impact on nuclear weapon decisions of other nuclear-armed states, because British nuclear weapons are peripheral to the security logics of India, Pakistan, Israel and, I would dare to say, even Russia.

What about the actual numbers and statistics? Are those unbiased? Because I would expect that every country would classify them and not give them out so simply.

In terms of the numbers that the UK government has given publicly, there has been no independent verification of these numbers but there is also no reason to doubt their veracity, seeing as they are broadly in keeping with independent assessments of the number of Trident missile bodies that the UK has acquired and the amount of fissile material that it produced and the number of nuclear warheads that are thought to have been produced for the Trident programme over the 1980s and 1990s. But you are right: there is no independent verification of these numbers, and that's something that perhaps the British government could think about. There has been a transition from the Cold War to the post-Cold War period in that it is seen as politically important and valuable to be more transparent about nuclear holdings.

So the British government, following the American lead, conducted an exercise to publicly disclose the historical production of weapon-grade plutonium and highly enriched uranium, and published declassified summaries of that historical accounting exercise, and it has stated the total number of warheads it has, the maximum number of warheads it will deploy on one a single nuclear armed submarines, one of which is always permanently at sea, and the number of Trident missile bodies that we've leased from the US. So that information has been placed in the public domain.

How can the political culture be changed in this context?

The political culture in the UK that is still explicitly and tacitly supporting the continuing possession of nuclear weapons is underpinned at the elite level by a particular conception of the sort of state Britain is and how it sees itself acting in the world. I think that would have to evolve and change to the point where acting as a so-called 'force for good', which is a phrase that the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defense use to describe us, in the interest of the international peace, security and justice will no longer be seen to require nuclear weapons.

It would require some visible support from the public, which we've seen over the last seven or eight years, and a shift in favour of getting rid of nuclear weapons rather than keeping them. And we've certainly seen that in the debate on Scotland around the recent referendum on independence. So the public support is by no means overwhelming for the continued retention of nuclear weapons in the UK. But there are broader national role conceptions that would need to change as well as the American factor that looms large in the British nuclear weapons programme, and a fear of destabilizing that relationship should the UK decide that it no longer wanted to be in the nuclear weapons business. So some kind of reassurance from the US, I think, a tacit or explicit approval, would be required to show that they are comfortable with Britain no longer being a nuclear weapon state.

Christian Weidlich

Christian Weidlich currently works as a Research Associate at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, with a specialization in Middle East arms control and warfare automatization.

Will this conference be useful for your own work?

Yes, very much. It is, on the one hand, good to meet with some friends and colleagues, and on the other hand, it is also a good chance to get to know other experts, especially from Central Europe. The organizers of the Prague Agenda have entered the international disarmament discourse, so it is a great opportunity to come to the Czech Republic and get to know the Czech views. I am very glad that the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs has inherited the speech of U.S. President Barack Obama in Prague, and has transformed his vision of a nuclear-weapons-free world into a conference cycle. Although my work, which focusses on the Middle East, was only one aspect of the entire proceedings here, it was still very good to get to know the latest diplomatic developments, so it will definitely be useful for me and my work at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF).

Would you like to attend next year's conference?

Yes, of course. It was a great pleasure coming here and I would definitely enjoy coming back next year. However, I want to generally encourage the organizers set up some kind of informal forum for young disarmament experts. For example, in Brussels, at the last EU Non-Proliferation Consortium conference, there was a next generation meeting prior to the actual conference, and this was a very good way to engage with younger colleagues. There are many of them throughout Europe, and there are especially many female experts entering the non-proliferation stage, and they should enjoy more support and more chances to speak within the disarmament community. This might be something the organizers may want to consider for the next Prague Agenda.

How can the Prague Agenda influence global nuclear disarmament?

Well, it is difficult. It is difficult to influence world politics within a one-and-a-half-day conference. Nevertheless, providing a place to meet on a continuous basis and involving high ranking officials from the nuclear weapon states remain important practices; it is an important issue to remind them of their duty to dismantle their nuclear weapons. Of course, in the short term, the impact of the Prague Agenda may be quite low, but again, it is great that the Czech Republic took up President Obama's speech and his vision of a nuclear-weapons-free world. I think, in the long term, this might well impact the nuclear disarmament discourse; at least this is what I hope for.

What, in your opinion, is the biggest issue, related to the arms control in the Middle East right now?

The first issue is the nuclear negotiations with Iran on the E3+3 basis. Most experts have expected a comprehensive nuclear deal that was to be reached by November 24, 2014. Since this deal could not be agreed upon, we are looking forward to the new deadline of July 1, 2015. However, our expectations have been that such a comprehensive deal would have been easier to “sell” to Congress in December than to the new Republican-controlled Congress, which takes office in January 2015. Now, Obama’s room for maneuvering has been dramatically reduced, especially with regard to convincing the House of Representatives and the Senate to agree to the deal with Iran and lift the sanctions on Iran. So this will be a very difficult situation, but still, it is one of the major focuses of Middle East-related arms control discussions.

The second point of the regional discussions is the so-called Helsinki process on the establishment of a WMD/DVs Free Zone in the Middle East, which started in 2010, when the NPT Review Conference set the mandate for a conference to be held in 2012, which has not yet been convened. The informal consultations between the regional states, the facilitator, and the conveners are still ongoing, and there is some hope that at least a one day meeting prior to the next NPT Review Conference is possible.

However, arms control discussions in the Middle East are always influenced by regional developments. In this respect, it was good to see that despite the Syrian Civil War, with more than a hundred thousand people killed after three years of fighting, the United States and the Russian Federation could push, in a so far unprecedented manner, the Syrian Arab Republic towards joining the CWC - the Chemical Weapons Convention - and destroy its chemical weapons stockpile after the chemical massacre of Ghouta in August of 2013. This was, despite the terrible loss of life in the civil war, the major disarmament achievement in the Middle East of the last decades. The regional arms control agenda in the Middle East is also highly influenced by the developments related to both the emerging civil war in Libya, where ten thousand missiles went missing after the fall of the Gaddafi regime, and the Islamic State gaining control over modern weapons from the Iraqi army and now establishing what they call a caliphate in both Syria and Iraq, challenging the entire regional order. As a result, the Middle East is very much in flux, which makes it very difficult to achieve progress in the arms control and disarmament area.

Do you think conventional warfare will be replaced by unconventional warfare in the near future and that we will soon see a conflict with no conventional aspects at all?

I think, personally, that we will still see, for the next couple of decades, war fighting that includes kinetic action. Nevertheless, we have seen the first cyber attacks, the most prominent one being the Stuxnet attack on an Iranian enrichment facility, which led to the destruction of nearly half the centrifuges there. But I think this is the exception to the rule. ...

For the time being, I cannot see how “traditional” warfare capabilities can be entirely replaced by cyber warfare, although cyber warfare could lead to even more destruction and more casualties. Of course, countries are already increasing their cyber warfare capabilities since there is no international regulation, but I think there will still be a mix of both conventional, kinetic war fighting capabilities and cyber and electronic war fighting capabilities.

In general and with regard to the development of modern warfare technologies, I see the problem that more and more Western states develop military robotic capabilities. This started with the drones in the air, and now robots are taking over on the ground and in the naval arena. So there is already a robotics revolution underway. From the non-proliferation and disarmament point of view, this will be one of the biggest challenges in the next couple of decades. It is not clear if and how this robotic revolution can be controlled. A civil society initiative, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, has emerged, trying to reach a ban on autonomous weapon systems, which are released and then independently select their target and engage without human control.

But we will see more of the unconventional methods being used in the future?

Yes, we surely will. Cyber warfare and military robotics, if not internationally controlled, will bring about an entirely new set of problems to which we do not have any solution yet.

What would a world without nuclear weapons look like, and what will be the difference?

Since weapons of mass destruction, and especially nuclear weapons, serve a certain purpose, it could be assumed that conventional weapons in the future of a nuclear-free world may serve the same military purposes as today’s nuclear weapons. We see this development already in the United States, where very strong conventional weaponry is developed in combination with hypersonic delivery vehicles, which can reach any place in the world within minutes. Consequently, a world without nuclear weapons would not be entirely different. Therefore, it is important that we address not only existing arsenals, but also future weapon systems.

Is a world without nuclear weapons a real possibility?

I very much hope that at least the younger people here at the Prague Agenda will one day live in a world free of nuclear weapons. However, we have to acknowledge that it will not happen overnight, that it may perhaps happen incrementally, gradually, with a lot of steps along the way. Besides furthering U.S.-Russian nuclear reductions, which obviously is becoming more and more complicated because of the worsening political climate nowadays, there is always the possibility that one state may take decisive action on the nuclear disarmament front and give up its capabilities. ...

In my view, the most obvious candidates would be France, Britain, Israel, and North Korea. In the case of Israel, exchanging its nuclear arsenal for peace in the Middle East would be, I think, a good bargain. North Korea may one day be forced to give up its weapons – in exchange for a massive economic relief. The United Kingdom and France may one day also consider the economic impact on their budgets and reconsider their, in my view, unnecessary nuclear programs.

Carmen Wunderlich

Carmen Wunderlich works as a Research Associate at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF). She studied Political Science Philosophy and German Language and Literature Studies at the University of Frankfurt. She also carried out a research stay at the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in 2012.

What is your main point of interest?

My interest consists of norms pertaining to the control of weapons of mass destruction, including nonproliferation and disarmament. PRIF has many different research areas. The one in which I work deals with international security and world order. I focus on countries which are labeled as rogue states, such as Iran, and last but not least, I also have some expertise on Sweden. At first glance it may seem incomprehensible. Why should I focus on Sweden and Iran? I chose Sweden as a country that is usually analysed as a prime example of a disarmament advocate, for in the theoretical part of my PhD thesis I work with the concept of norm entrepreneurship, that is, countries that work for the evolution and strengthening of norms. In my thesis I ask a counterintuitive question: whether rogue states might also act as norm entrepreneurs and, if so, to what extent their norm advocacy differs from that of prototypical norm entrepreneurs. Thus, for my empirical analysis I chose Iran and its interpretation and advocacy of norms in the realm of multilateral arms control. I would like to mention that at the PRIF we have many Country Specialists and also even some experts who focus on special types of weapons. Due to their expertise, some of them have acted as advisers to the German delegations to various treaty conferences, such as the NPT Review Conferences.

Do you think it's hard to keep the peace today, when we have so many international organizations and democratic states?

Good question. Personally, I think it should be easier nowadays because we have more democracy, and more international organizations, and therefore I think it would be easier for the states to cooperate, to sit at one table and act collectively. A few years ago it was much more difficult because there weren't so many channels through which the states could communicate, so we must also emphasize the impact of technical progress. Also the media has had some impact. People tend to be more informed and have the opportunity to act quickly. A good example is the chemical weapons attack in Syria in August 2013, when the pictures of the victims came through the media so quickly that people had a chance to demand, "It's time to do something. Now our government must respond." Therefore, I think it is still not an easy task to keep the peace, but at least today there are multiple ways of doing it.

Do you believe that the existence of international organizations is effective? For example, the existence of the OSCE?

I think the OSCE is currently facing a phase of transition, and it must think about how to respond to the challenges of our time, such as the events in Ukraine. I believe that a lot will happen in the upcoming years but it is speculative, and I'm not an expert on the OSCE. As for the UN, I think it has a very important role. It is the organization charged with maintaining peace and international security for all. But there is much to be done to ensure that the Member States' dissatisfaction is minimized and resolved – for example, their dissatisfaction pertaining to unjust decision-making procedures and unfair burden sharing. It is high time for a reform of the Security Council, as many states, particularly those from Asia and Africa, claim not to be included properly. If the reform will not solve these issues, dissatisfaction and injustice will continue to grow. Considering the previous years, we can say that the UN is not perfect, but it is indispensable. Without the UN the world would be a worse place. The UN is only as good as its members make it to be. It needs much more political will to make the UN a more inclusive, transparent, and efficient institution.

What do you think is the biggest problem in the world today?

I think the biggest problem is basically an ongoing and ever increasing lack of mutual understanding between states. Research has long pointed towards the importance of understanding that different countries have different perceptions as to how they interpret and act towards current problems. I do not know if you noticed, but yesterday at the conference, someone spoke about the role of emotions. Usually, we tend to see states as rational actors only, so states sit at one table and rationally bargain about their interests, about politics, and about security, but in the end it's more about emotion than rationality. For example, take Iran and the USA. For 35 years the two states did not come together; they did not even talk to each other because of a history full of misunderstandings and past grievances. Events in the past have resulted in a vicious circle of mutual hatred and fear, and this drives their policies towards each other. It is not at all rational; it is emotions. Usually, when dealing with others, we should take into account that the other party has its own needs and its own perception of the situation; we should try to find some middle way and be careful not to insist on the position that our interpretation is the only one and the correct one.

What do you think about Iran's nuclear program? Is it really as peaceful as they say?

Well, to keep a complicated issue short, up to 2003 Iran secretly worked on a nuclear weapons option. Thanks to the revelation of some weapons-related activists, this project was interrupted. While Tehran has been able to acquire the technical capabilities and knowledge necessary to build nuclear weapons, there is quite some ambiguity regarding Iran's intentions to actually build a bomb. Personally, I think that Iran aims towards a nuclear weapon capability, that is, the ability to build a bomb in a rather short time frame if need be...

The reasons for Iran's nuclear policy are manifold and security-related, but it is also driven by the strife for prestige and status. Iran also wants to be technically able to partake in nuclear weapons research (for peaceful purposes) on an equal footing with other nuclear energy holders and to demonstrate its status as a technologically modern state.

For example, countries such as Brazil, Germany, Japan, etc. are trustworthy non-nuclear weapon states and are allowed to have enrichment capacities, as nobody believes that they have intentions to clandestinely work on a bomb. So in order to solve the crisis with Iran and ensure that the program is for peaceful purposes only, I think it is necessary that Iran comes clean with its past weapons-related activities and accepts comprehensive transparency measures. Simultaneously, the international community will have to accept a limited enrichment programme in Iran and the fact that Iran is involved in nuclear research like other countries. We have to be able to distinguish this.

At present, the relations between Russia and Ukraine as well as those between Russia and the USA are very tense. Do you think the nuclear-free zone will somehow develop further?

I believe so, yes. I think it does not depend on the strained relations between Russia and the USA, because this nuclear-free zone is in the interests of both of the countries.

Can we expect any change?

I'm afraid we can not expect a change in the tense relations too soon. But as far as a nuclear-weapon-free zone is concerned I hope that by the end of this year or early next year a conference will be held in Helsinki to explore the issue further. Ultimately, everything hinges on whether Israel agrees to participate. If it does, chances are good for a change.

Now there will be a few questions as to the agenda. Was this agenda useful and beneficial for you and your work?

Yes, it was a great benefit to me; I got a lot of new information, even about subjects to which I do not pay so much attention - for example, the relationship between the US and Russia. It's the perfect opportunity to meet old colleagues and get to know new ones, and to do some networking, and I must say that the most important conversations are always held during the coffee break or lunch time. I'd say it was one of the best conferences I attended in the last few years.

What does the Prague Agenda 2014 mean to you?

I perceive the agenda as very important in its content, and personally I hope that someday we will have a world without nuclear weapons. I find it great that so many different countries and actors are involved and that we are discussing the so-called two-track diplomacy...

because when states with nuclear weapons will only act among each other, it will never solve anything, so we still need the influence of smaller states, which are very important - the Czech Republic, Germany, northern states, etc. - and, of course, civil-society actors and experts alike are also important in this respect. It was also great that the organizers gathered together various types of actors - people from ministries, institutes of the EU, the EAS, etc., though it was not easy during the workshop because it was evident that there were a lot of different positions. There are plenty of positions that can not be solved easily, but it is important to talk about them together and to try to find a common language.

How can the Prague Agenda affect global nuclear disarmament?

As I said, it's all about communication, about creating new models of information exchange. I learned a lot of things here because different people know different pieces of information, have different experiences and gain other kinds of information, so when we meet together and have discussions, together we can develop new ideas.

Hui Zhang

Hui Zhang is a Senior Research Associate at the Project on Managing the Atom in the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He is leading a research initiative on China's nuclear policies for the Project on Managing the Atom in the Kennedy School of Government. His research interests include verification techniques of nuclear arms control, the control of fissile material, nuclear terrorism, China's nuclear policy, nuclear safeguards and non-proliferation, nuclear fuel cycle policy and reprocessing.

What were the benefits of the Prague Agenda 2014 for you personally?

It was a great opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas with experts from different regions.

Could the Prague Agenda, as an international meeting of experts on global nuclear issues, be useful for working towards global nuclear disarmament?

Yes, it would be an important forum for global nuclear disarmament.

What do regional perspectives of nuclear disarmament represent to you?

Chinese views.

What are the biggest global challenges and threats for contemporary society in your opinion?

In my opinion, those are the huge nuclear arsenals and the threat of nuclear terrorism.

How can nuclear arms control and non-proliferation be intensified?

This can be done by moving forward in global nuclear disarmament, ratifying the CTBT (the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty), negotiating the FMCT (the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty), restricting missile defence, and resolving the North Korean and Iranian nuclear issues.

How can nuclear weapons be reduced in your opinion?

The USA and Russia need to take the lead to cut their nuclear arsenals to a total of 1000 warheads, and then China and other states can join the process.

What is the future of the CTBT (the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty) in light of what has been said at the Prague Agenda?

It is not optimistic.

How do you see the situation regarding nuclear-free zone countries?

One challenge is to establish a Middle Eastern NWFZ.

Was this conference useful for your own work? If so, how?

Yes, it was very useful for my work. By taking part in the conference, I better understand different perspectives on nuclear disarmament.