“LESSONS LEARNED; WHERE NEXT?”

COMMENTS FOR PRINCETON PRESENTATION
13 February 2004

1. Even years of negotiation do not necessarily produce a good product

   • Critiques suggest it was purely a political decision; commentary at the time seemed to assume that anything was better than nothing

   • In fact, something bad is worse than nothing and an argument can be made that the draft protocol tabled by the AHG Chairman was not a good product insofar as it was not going to meet even the limited objective of bolstering confidence in compliance, let alone “verify” compliance (which entails a whole different standard)

   • Some people seem to have the notion that if there is a change in administration, can go back to it. Not sure that even a Gore administration would have approved it; certainly not the Senate.

2. for the time being, the traditional Geneva process is not the way to move forward

   • process of multilaterally negotiating a legally-binding agreement

   • out politically, BUT ALSO growing recognition of limits of this particular mode of doing business

3. This is hard

   • Security, political, scientific, and technological factors interacting to produce a complex environment characterized by a high degree of uncertainty and rapid change

     • Some examples
       o Evolving threat: convergence of traditional state proliferation and growing terrorist interest
       o An expanded risk spectrum; risks from the life sciences
Advancing S & T: a revolution in the life sciences that could influence our very understanding of what constitutes a biological weapon

- Political factors

  - How serious is the threat? We and the Europeans don’t seem to agree
  - What do we do about it? Don’t agree on that either; dispute over the role of arms control
  - What U.S. role? What role for others? Especially after Iraq War
  - Cooperation and assistance
  - Responding to non-compliance

So a world very different from the one in which the BWC was written

Old ways of doing business will not suffice. Must be supplemented by new ones. Focus on two areas

1. Requires thinking differently about the problem

   not about arms control; not even about weapons as we traditionally think about them

   Biological Challenge: about the misuse of science and technology in a complex world whose hallmarks are great uncertainty about the future and the need to manage risks in the present.

   Need for creative, collaborative approaches

   Need for an intellectual infrastructure to support this new thinking

   - threat assessments: complex interaction of several categories of factors – actor, agent, mode, target

     A policy makers worst nightmare; combinations could produce wide variety of outcomes from catastrophic to nothing; How do
you plan against this? How much money do you spend? What should be your priorities?

- Risk assessments: reflect the full risk spectrum mentioned earlier; introduce costs/ benefits of alternative options that allows for tradeoffs

- Scientific assessments: “Net assessments”

- Impact assessments: develop new metrics beyond casualties and economic impact
  
  - Psychological impact

All directed toward understanding what the problem of today is, not yesterday’s

2. New partnerships

Diplomats aren’t equipped to deal with this. Indeed, governments can’t do this alone.

As part of the new ways of doing business, have to build bridges to some communities that have not always been active on the security agenda. Particularly in life sciences, and industry and academic communities in particular.

Grand solution not possible; must do the possible, building where appropriate on what already exists, and developing new conceptual and policy tools where needed.

Why I think the Work Plan concept approved at the 2002 BWC RevCon was, in principle, a good approach. But have some issues with it:

1. minimalist expectations; how committed really?

2. relations to the 2006 exercise?

3. beyond 2006?
A final word on responding to non-compliance: Many were outraged at the last RevCon when Undesecretary Bolton “named names” of those the US believed to be in violation of their commitments. But in my view useful. For too long countries have been unwilling to engage on this issue. Many reasons, some good, but not all. One view holds that some states are willing to duck the question of noncompliance because acknowledging it would require a response, a responsibility that many states would prefer to avoid for whatever reason.

In my view, ensuring compliance and responding to noncompliance is central to the long-term sustainability of arms control and NP agreements; refusing to acknowledge legitimate BWC noncompliance issues and an unwillingness or inability to deal with them meaningfully will do more than anything else to erode the norm against BW.

Few cases are clear; ambiguity permeates the problem of determining compliance, and finding ways to reduce that ambiguity is one of the most important and most difficult tasks we confront. Reinforces the other major barrier to responding effectively – the lack of political will. History suggests that the existence of a BW program, let alone stated concerns about potential problems, is not sufficient to prompt action or even commitments to act.

It may be that it is only BW use that creates a chance that the international community will act. Perhaps BW use represents a red line whose crossing no one can ignore. But even in the case of use, action should not be taken for granted.

A problem searching for an answer in a situation in which previous answers have not been successful. Incumbent on us to promote new thinking and new approaches.