

Conference on Disarmament: P5 Transparency

22 May 2019, Geneva

Introduction

1. Thank you to the US delegation, particularly Ambassador Robert Wood, for the invitation to speak today. We face a bit of a paradox around the issues of transparency in the P5: all members of the P5 would likely argue that their nuclear doctrines are perfectly clear, and yet misunderstanding persist on multiple fronts and on all sides. The past year saw positive momentum within the P5 process under China's leadership around this issue of transparency of doctrine, but more can be done and NNWS certainly expect more to be done.
2. What I'll cover: I will begin with an overview of the current state of play and progress in transparency, including a bit of a scorecard from an academic perspective; opportunities to improve P5 transparency; and specific opportunities around emerging technology.
3. BLUF: I want to highlight the benefits of transparency in terms of risk reduction- directly, this could avoid miscalculation, create crisis communication channels, lay groundwork for further progress towards arms control and disarmament when security environment improves; indirectly, this builds trust and demonstrates commitment to dialogue and nuclear responsibility.

Background

1. Types of transparency: reporting, clarity of doctrine to include declaratory policy, arms control and CBMs, verification of disarmament, and engagement with NGOs.
2. Progress to date:
 - a. Reporting: UK provides most in-depth reporting and also allows for opportunity to discuss its national report; United States, until recently, published stockpile numbers. Others complete reporting requirements, but with less level of detail.
 - b. Clarity of doctrine: US doctrine goes into greatest level of detail about its declaratory policy, such as stating that it would *consider* nuclear weapons use in response to cyber attacks on nuclear command and control; US has also stated that it will always keep a "human in the loop" in nuclear decision-making and not put nuclear weapons on fully autonomous systems. Additionally, Russia should be commended for its effort to clarify its doctrine and rectify misperceptions.
 - c. Arms control and CBMs: we need to consider the ramifications of the breakdown of arms control on transparency; if New START is not extended, we are facing an unprecedented era without verification of strategic weapons systems, lack of data exchanges, and the lack of forums such as the Bilateral Consultative Commission. Other nuclear possessors regularly engage in forums such as Track 1.5 dialogues, but this is perhaps the criteria for transparency that is most at risk.
 - d. Verification of disarmament: the UK-Norway Initiative set an important precedent, and others are following, such as the Quad Initiative with the US, UK, Sweden, and Norway; IPNDV; and the upcoming Germany-France disarmament exercise this autumn

- e. Engagement with NGOs: I can only speak to this from personal experience; the United States regularly engages with a diverse set of NGOs, particularly ICAN and ban treaty supporters at PrepComs; and the UK regularly invites NGOs and academics to engage with its nuclear policy community. I can only speculate as to how transparent France, China, and Russia are with their NGO communities, but in NPT settings I have found them to be less engaging than US and UK.
3. This hopefully captures efforts at transparency, particularly recently around doctrine within the P5, but more can be done: what are ideas to further increase transparency, particularly within the P5 building on recent positive momentum from the meeting in Beijing, going into UK leadership of the P5 process?

Opportunities for P5 Process

1. Short-term:
 - a. Unilaterally: all countries within the P5 can engage in disarmament verification initiatives to promote transparency and trust with NNWS and to make a practical contribution towards a world without nuclear weapons; additionally, they can take steps to clarify their nuclear doctrines, for example I believe the UK can and should write a new White Paper clarifying its nuclear doctrine. As we learned from the recent House of Lords inquiry, there are different interpretations of UK nuclear doctrine within the UK government.
 - b. As a group: the US and Russia can revive strategic stability dialogues, and if successful these can be expanded to the full P5; in the next P5 meeting all members should commit to continue the P5 process beyond 2020 RevCon; and the UK should provide extensive and detailed reporting back to the full NPT and NNWS about P5 discussions
 - c. P5 statement: commit to testing moratorium, commit to NPT
2. Long-term: the P5 should develop an agenda for risk reduction, such as transparency of doctrine to avoid miscalculation, and into safety and security efforts
3. Participation: P5 should invite non-NPT members, groups such as NPDI, NGOs and civil society. In the recent House of Lords inquiry, Des Browne, a founder of the P5 process, lamented that it had turned into a “cartel” and was just a discussion among the P5 themselves rather than inclusive. 2020 is a unique opportunity for transparency and to avoid this perception of the P5. One initiative is particularly worthy of detailed consideration....

Emerging Technology Dialogues

1. Risks: NC3: cyber and AI could potentially increase risks of miscalculation in nuclear decision-making, and US NPR makes it clear these types of non-nuclear attacks could lead to nuclear escalation. Also, dual-use capabilities, particularly cruise missiles and hypersonic glide vehicles, reduce transparency and increase ambiguity
2. Opportunities:
 - a. Scope the problem; in particular, engage with the private sector, potentially in Track 1.5 dialogues, to understand the risks and opportunities presented by emerging technologies

- b. (3) P5 joint statement not to use cyber weapons to target each other's nuclear command and control systems; limit role of AI in nuclear infrastructure, particularly command and control; explore opportunities to incorporate HGVs into arms control frameworks
 - c. Clarification of national postures and doctrine, particularly declaratory policy in response to emerging technology threats to nuclear systems; follow US lead around responses to cyber attacks on nuclear command and control
3. Forums: in addition to P5 process, numerous other initiatives may be useful forums for P5 to discuss these topics, such as the CEND and CEWG, German Foreign Office work on emerging technology and arms control, and the Swedish stepping stone approach.

Conclusion

1. Challenges: but I also recognize the challenges with transparency; geopolitical tensions and disputes among P5 members, legacy of distrust, enduring misperceptions, and many NNWS will argue that this is not sufficient progress towards disarmament and does not demonstrate "good faith".
2. What is obvious, however, is the value of transparency on the part of the P5, and this can be encouraged and facilitated in forums such as the CD. Progress to date should be commended, along with exploring opportunities for additional transparency.
3. Thank you.