CD Ambassadors' Transparency Visits

As we look to the Review Conference (RevCon) of the Parties to the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 2010, Article VI issues will likely once again be central, with a predictable focus on US nuclear policy in Obama administration policy statements and especially, the upcoming Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). While the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a few other issues have been enduring features of the Article VI debate, specific issues do change over time.

The US case for Article VI compliance is strong and there will be a welcome reaction to the new administration's declaratory policies, as well as its stated greater commitment to diplomacy, and we can expect a honeymoon on these issues. The expectations surrounding policy are, however, often unrealistic and unrealizable and there will be a continuing need to engage with others on these issues to manage expectations, to defuse the Article VI debate and to limit any damage from that debate to other US NPT issues and interests.

The United States has a continuing need to ensure its views on Article VI progress are effectively communicated. To do so, there is a real need to develop an effective engagement/public diplomacy strategy. As the United States develops its Article VI case in the lead up to and during the 2010 RevCon, a successful public diplomacy will require that the USG get its message of Article VI compliance out to as broad an audience as possible, but focus on educating key opinion leaders on the US record and on US nuclear-

weapon policy. (This can be successful, as has been demonstrated, but needs to be continuously in all possible fora.) More is needed, however. US initiatives, however modest, will be critical, including transparency initiatives.

An effective demonstration of transparency would be to arrange visits to the NNSA "weapons labs." This opportunity would educate key officials and opinion leaders, such as CD Ambassadors and key staff,[1] and demonstrate US's the current focus for the Labs includes a wide diversity of science activities. (Visiting the Nevada Test Site--for discussions of the history of testing from atmospheric to underground to current subcritical testing and non-weapon work at NTS--might also be useful. However, there are different views about whether such a visit would reinforce or undermine the overall message as well as potential sensitivities and security issues.)

Such visits would provide an overview of the current state of weapon program activities, including Stockpile Stewardship (notably a discussion of the program's constraints (no tests, no new capabilities, etc.)) as well as its benefits for non-weapon activities; an overview of capabilities, with attention to the reduced footprint as well as the importance of infrastructure modernization for arms reductions; a briefing and tours of safeguards, nonproliferation and arms control verification activities; and a briefing and tours of alternative energy, climate change and other programs.

Such visits have been undertaken in the past and are of great value. They can:

[1] Other possible visitors might include: NATO officials and staff; P-5 officials; Board of Governors (IAEA) members, NSG members, 1540 Committee members, CTBT BOG members, etc.

- Provide an important window on the weapon program's focus on stewardship of the legacy stockpile, the problems that have to be addressed, the directive that all work assume a no-test environment, etc.; and
- Show the variety of non-weapon work performed at the laboratories, including nonproliferation, arms control verification, alternative energy, etc., illustrating the growing importance of the non-weapon science portfolio for the laboratories.

The reality demonstrates the problems with widely held perceptions about the laboratories.

Against these benefits, there is the possibility that the wrong message will be received/perceived or that the visits will be viewed as propaganda. This has not occurred in the past, but it should be addressed by beginning with close allies and by managing expectations and messages from the invitation through follow-up actions on the visits. Security and costs issues might also be raised. Clearly, security can be readily managed, especially since all visitors will be from allied or friendly states. Operational impacts and associated costs are also limited given the unclassified agendas. There are costs to hosting the visits but they are limited.

Possible tours/discussions that could be organized depending on the focus and length of the visits

Nuclear weapons/ Stockpile Stewardship (LANL and/or LLNL)

CTBT issues (LANL and/or LLNL)

Nuclear forensics (LANL and/or LLNL)

Visit unclassified Powerwall (Advanced Computing) (LANL and/or LLNL)

Visit LANSCE (LANL)

Verification technology Round table– NDA capabilities, IAEA training, surveillance/monitoring (LANL and/or LLNL)

Proliferation resistant nuclear energy (LANL)

National Ignition Facility (LLNL)

Advanced accelerators (LLNL)

Nuclear testing (NTS)

- Historic: atmospheric, underground and weapons effects
- Current: subcritical experiments
- Nonnuclear testing work at NTS