

Nuclear Nonproliferation: Our Shared Responsibility

by *Richard T. Kennedy*

Address before the American Nuclear Society in San Diego on January 25, 1983. Ambassador Kennedy is U.S. Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and special adviser to the Secretary on non-proliferation policy and nuclear energy affairs.

In January 1976 in an appearance before a Senate committee, David Lilienthal, the first chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, gave us his chilling personal view of nuclear proliferation. "If a great number of countries come to have an arsenal of nuclear weapons," Lilienthal said, "then I am glad that I am not a young man and I'm sorry for my grandchildren."

The prospect of nuclear proliferation which worried David Lilienthal 7 years ago is still a cause of grave concern. How to head off this threat in the years ahead is one of the most important questions for the future of world order. This then is an appropriate time, in a conference concerned with the technical aspects of nuclear commerce, to examine this problem together.

Around the world today, nuclear industries face a dearth of domestic orders for new facilities. Thus, there is a natural tendency by supplier nations to reach out for foreign orders to support their domestic industries and to sustain the infrastructure they have developed at great expense over so many years. They want to keep that industry healthy so that it will be available to meet the anticipated future domestic demand. New suppliers also are coming on the scene, anxious to generate business on their own.

More is at stake, however, than the natural and understandable quest for markets. These conditions may place a strain on the system of nonproliferation norms and restraints which the international community has put into place in the last 25 years. In that light, then, we all must share David Lilienthal's concern; more than that, we must do something about it. That's what I want to speak about this evening—our shared responsibility to prevent the spread of nuclear explosives.

Thirty years ago, President Eisenhower took a historic step which, in a

sense, created the worldwide civilian nuclear industry: He inaugurated the Atoms for Peace program in 1953. By this generous act, the United States volunteered to share the nuclear technologies it had developed so that they could benefit all mankind. In the intervening years, American policy has sought to assure that nations could benefit from the peaceful application of nuclear technology under a system which prevented the misuse of that technology. Atoms for peace, not war, has been our objective. The United States worked strenuously to establish the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1957 to pursue those same goals and the same rationale. And we worked to bring into force the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty seeking those very goals—to assure the benefits of nuclear technology and to prevent its misuse. Those twin and complementary goals are still at the base of our national policy.

While there has been a broad continuity with past Administrations on nonproliferation policy goals, the Reagan Administration's policy is neither identical to nor interchangeable with the policy of former times. There have been changes—some subtle, some more obvious.

We, for instance, have no pangs of conscience about nuclear power. We think it is a clean, efficient, and reasonable way to generate electricity. As far as we are concerned, it is not a choice of last resort. We see it instead as a key element in our domestic energy future. And we see nuclear-generated energy as important for the economic development and energy security of many nations around the world. For resource-starved developing countries, as well, nuclear power will not be a choice of last resort. Some of the most prosperous nations on Earth—Japan, for example, or some of the nations of Western Europe—have not been blessed with abundant sources of domestic energy. There too, nuclear power is critical to their well-being and energy security.

We believe strongly that the United States must be—and must be seen to be—a predictable and reliable supplier of nuclear materials and technology. For only in that event can we reasonably expect to exert the influence which our technological experience and competence could rightly be presumed to yield.

We stand by the idea, too, that, where the necessary nonproliferation conditions are met, all nations can and should enjoy the benefits of nuclear energy—to power their industry, to hasten their development, to light their cities, to contribute to the health and well-being of their people, to curing and diagnosing their illnesses. The peaceful atom can do that if we let it.

There have been other departures by this Administration from the policies of our predecessors on questions of how we set out to accomplish our goals. To the extent that we have taken a different course, it is because we are convinced that in the long run these steps will better serve our nonproliferation goals.

Let me be specific. We recognize that plutonium is an inherently dangerous substance. It is a basic element of nuclear weapons. How to control it is a very real and substantial challenge for any nonproliferation regime. Thus, our policy seeks to inhibit the spread of sensitive technology, facilities, and material, which could lead to production of weapons-usable material, particularly where there is a risk of proliferation. We do want to restrict the number of reprocessing plants around the world and to limit other sensitive fuel cycle activities. These are not and should not be items of general commerce.

At the same time, the leaders of Japan and of many European countries believe that plutonium fuel is both economical and necessary to their long-term energy security. One approach to this factual situation would be to conduct a series of metaphysical meditations on the nature of the so-called plutonium economy. We are not doing that. Instead, we are seeking to work with Japan and EURATOM [European Atomic Energy Community] to achieve our shared goals of rigorous standards, controls, and safeguards for the reprocessing and use of plutonium. Working with them, we also shall insure physical security for plutonium shipments. At the root of this more flexible approach is our conviction that such nuclear activities pose no risk of proliferation in Japan and EURATOM.

There are some nations whose views on safeguards and nuclear supply, or on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, differ from our own. Not every nation in the world agrees with our policy and all of its ramifications. We recognize that. But rather than cutting off contact with those nations or treating them with stony silence, we are trying to open a dialogue with them. If we are to have

any influence, if our views are to be understood, if there is to be any hope of having our views prevail, we must talk with one another and try to find ways to resolve the issues which divide us. As a general proposition, we favor dialogue over confrontation, persuasion over intimidation, and common sense over iron dogma.

So, if our policies and their concrete applications on occasion depart from those of former times, it is not because we are insensitive to the dangers of nuclear proliferation. It is not because we are prepared to put commerce ahead of global security. Rather, the changes we are making are based on judgments about how best to win the necessary support of other countries and to create the consensus needed to further a sound nonproliferation regime. Only in that way can we put to rest David Lilienthal's fears.

In other areas, continuity is the hallmark of our policy. There are standards for nuclear commerce and supplier guidelines in place today. These are the rules of the game and, as such, are part of the technical basis for nuclear commerce. In the future, we expect those standards to become even more specific and more complete. No list of sensitive items can be immutable; over time, it must be elaborated as new technologies

develop, new uses for old technologies are devised.

When that list gets tougher, exporters everywhere should honor it. Humanity's interest in a stable world order cannot be jeopardized so that nuclear suppliers can win contracts or enhance their competitive position. The global nonproliferation regime—including the principle that the pursuit of nuclear explosives is inconsistent with nuclear cooperation for legitimate peaceful purposes—cannot be shaded so that someone can realize a short-term economic advantage. On the contrary, nuclear suppliers in their own self-interest must work together to produce a framework of institutions and practices which minimizes the risk of proliferation. More than that, nuclear suppliers around the world should take the lead in strengthening the rules of trade and making sure they are known, understood, and observed.

New nuclear suppliers are entering upon the scene, joining the advanced industrial states as sources of material and expertise. They must be brought to see that adherence to a regime of carefully constructed export restraints and practices will serve their self-interest and promote their well-being.

Indeed, all countries have an interest in insuring a sound and rational

framework of nuclear safeguards and rules. Without such a framework, nuclear commerce will not be possible for long and the benefits of the peaceful atom will be lost.

As I have said on so many occasions before, both here and abroad, everyone should know that this Administration will never sacrifice nonproliferation goals for commercial gain or economic advantage. We have set this high standard for our own conduct, and we believe it should be the universal norm.

A few weeks ago, I addressed a group within the State Department at what we call our "Open Forum." My theme that day was that nonproliferation is a fundamental and pervasive element in American foreign policy and a key national security goal. My statement was: "Nonproliferation is everybody's business . . ." To the nuclear suppliers and representatives of foreign nations in the audience tonight and to the nuclear industry generally, I repeat: "Nonproliferation is your business, too. It is our shared responsibility."

We, of course, recognize that a policy of technical denial can't do the job alone or forever. No one has a monopoly any longer. Nuclear technology and industrial expertise are increasingly widespread.

Why should we even bother then with trying to strengthen nuclear export

President Reagan Meets With Afghan Freedom Fighters

On February 2, 1983, President Reagan met with a group of six Afghan freedom fighters at the White House to express U.S. concern and sympathy for these people because of continuing Soviet occupation of their country. Left to right: Mir Ne' Matollah Syeed Mortaza, Habib-Ur-Rehman Hashemi, villagers from Lowgar; President Reagan; Michael Barry, interpreter; Omar Babrakzai, judge and group spokesman; Mohammad Suafoor Yousofzai, resistance leader; Gol Mohammad, villager from Lowgar; and Farida Ahmadi, a former medical student. ■

(White House photo by Michael Evans)

