

**Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs  
and the British Pugwash Group**

**ROTBLAT CENTENARY CELEBRATION**

**The Royal Society, Wednesday 10 December 2008**

**Progressing the nuclear disarmament agenda  
Policy, diplomacy and science**

**Dr James Acton**

*Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*

**Presentation 3: Taking the IISS report forward: roles for governments, think tanks and the general public**

Dr Acton outlined the fissure that exists between the disarmament community and the deterrence community. This division is often reflected in the difference and separation between Foreign Ministry and Defence Ministry approaches.

The assumption by the disarmament community that the number of nuclear weapons can be reduced significantly faces significant resistance from US allies under extended deterrence arrangements, eg Japan and South Korea.

Whilst Foreign Ministries are in favour of reductions, militaries often do not want to open what they see as the 'can of worms' involved in addressing the issue and their response is to attempt not to have the debate at all. In some cases, Foreign Ministry staff might be appalled to hear what military communities are saying behind the scenes. Sympathetic governments and think tanks, along with civil society need to address this through engagement with military communities.

On the relationship between disarmament and nuclear energy, within the nuclear industry, non-proliferation is generally addressed by dedicated staff. From the industry's perspective the problem of stopping proliferation to 'bad countries' is simply to put in the reactors and call in the IAEA to deal with it. The nuclear industry should be an ally on non-proliferation because it is not in the industry's interests to be seen to be part of the problem of proliferation, however it is not an ally at the moment. We need to engage the nuclear industry in the drive for disarmament.

The debate today is an elite debate. Greater public engagement and support is needed, but not all publics are going to be supportive as the response to the India and Pakistan nuclear tests demonstrated. We need to engage the public and civil society in a big way, but it has to be done in the right way.

Discussion:

Dhanapala pointed out lessons from the CWC – that members of the chemical industry supported CWC ratification when it went before the US Senate.

We noted the problem of how to engage with the civil nuclear industry. There is a role here for government to bring the industry into dialogue. There is also a role for scientists to engage with scientists in the industry.

Dr Acton agreed that there was a need to devalue nuclear weapons and to take them out of military doctrines and strategies. What was needed was to convince countries that reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons would lead to security benefits in the long run.

*[With thanks to Nicola Butler who produced these informal notes.]*