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Thank you for the important role you have played for many years in highlighting the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and other man-made threats to our survival. Your “Doomsday Clock” is one of the most powerful metaphors of the atomic era. Today, that clock is a stark reminder that nuclear dangers did not end with the disappearance of Cold War confrontation between the Soviet Union and the West. Indeed, the threats have changed far more than our nuclear postures. We are now in a race between cooperation and catastrophe, and “we” includes both the U.S. and Russia.

It has been three years since George Shultz, Bill Perry, Henry Kissinger and I published an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* calling for a global effort to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons, to prevent their spread into potentially dangerous hands, and ultimately to end them as a threat to the world. In that piece, we examined the evolution of the nuclear threat, and we concluded that the world was on the precipice of a new and dangerous nuclear era. The approach we advocated was based on two pillars: first, reasserting the vision and goal of a world free of nuclear weapons; and second, outlining specific urgent steps to reduce nuclear dangers.

Our conclusion was this: without the bold vision, the actions will not be perceived as fair or urgent; and without the actions, the vision will not be perceived as realistic or possible.

A year later, we published a second op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* that expanded on the practical steps we think are imperative and reaffirmed our commitment to the vision of a nuclear-weapons free world. Much of the reaction to these two op-eds has been positive around the globe. Statesmen spanning the political spectrum in Britain, Germany, Italy, Norway, Russia, France, Australia, Poland, Japan and other nations have endorsed the vision and steps. Last month, Gareth Evans of Australia and Yoriko Kawaguchi of Japan launched the report of The International Commission on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament – a joint initiative of their two governments. This report provides a number of important recommendations for going forward.

Closer to home, during the 2008 presidential campaign, both then-Senator Barack Obama and Senator John McCain embraced this approach. And last year, President Obama in Prague, and Senator McCain on the Senate floor, reaffirmed the statements of support that they each made during the campaign. So progress has been made.

All of us realize that this will be a step-by step process, and obstacles and setbacks are inevitable as we work to reduce nuclear threats. However, as long as we have nuclear weapons, we must move on two parallel paths – one path which reduces nuclear dangers by maintaining the safety, security and reliability of our weapons, and the other which reduces nuclear dangers through arms control and international cooperation to prevent proliferation. My message to policy makers: these are not mutually exclusive goals. We must succeed in both. Unless we are able to build and maintain this consensus – America’s ability to lead the world in reducing nuclear risks will be in question.

As we gather today, it is clear that the year 2010 will present a number of benchmarks and challenges for nuclear threat reduction. As you well know, your minute and perhaps even your hour hand will be affected by several 2010 events:

- First, the Nuclear Posture Review – or NPR – will emerge sometime around March.
- Second, the Nuclear Security Summit and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference are both this spring.
- Third, the conclusion of the START I follow-on agreement, followed by Senate consideration of that treaty. Many of us hope that CTBT ratification will follow.
- Fourth, a new NATO Strategic Concept, the first revision in a decade, is due later this year.

That’s more activity on the nuclear front than we have seen for years. Each of these benchmarks is both a policy and diplomatic challenge for the Obama administration. We should also note that the nuclear agenda does not exist in isolation from other major foreign policy challenges, including the war in Afghanistan, the nuclear weapons quests of both North Korea and Iran, withdrawing U.S. combat forces from Iraq, terrorism, relations with Russia and China, and our efforts to find our way out of our global economic trough.

In this environment, tomorrow you’ll be resetting the Doomsday Clock. I don’t envy you this task. I will not give you an advice on tomorrow’s announcement. But let me offer a few key questions on the nuclear front that will help determine the Doomsday time over the next five years.

First, will Iran cease its efforts to acquire the capability to produce and deploy a nuclear weapon and engage in a dialogue that holds out prospects for improved relations in the region?

- If they don’t, the spread of nuclear weapons in the Middle East may be inevitable, the prospects for nuclear terrorism will increase, and the risk of nuclear use will rise to new heights.
- If they do, this will be viewed as a strong model for nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament.

Second, will North Korea agree not only to freeze, but also eliminate, their nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missile capabilities?

- If they don't, our Asian allies will grow increasingly nervous, and some of them may consider their own nuclear status.
- If they do, this too would be a big step forward for nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament.

Third, will we succeed in securing nuclear weapons and materials around the globe, and will we complete a verifiable Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty?

- If we don't, the odds of a terrorist getting the material for a nuclear or radiological weapon or even a bomb itself will go up.
- If we do, terrorists are much less likely to gain the most crucial ingredient to their becoming a nuclear power: fissile material for a bomb.

Fourth, will the United States, Europe, and Russia come to mutual understandings regarding Russia's role in Euro-Atlantic security?

- If we don't, U.S. and Russian leadership, trust and cooperation – the essential prerequisite for further reductions in nuclear arms -- as well as the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons and cooperative missile defense – will be absent.
- If we do, this could be a game-changing development that would allow us to move much farther and faster in reducing nuclear dangers including reducing the risk of proliferation and catastrophic terrorism as we move towards the steps and the vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

Fifth, will the U.S. and Russia move decisively away from Cold War nuclear force postures? Almost two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, we continue to live with a risk of a catastrophic nuclear accident or miscalculation that is far higher than it should be.

- If we don't, our leaders may still have just a matter of minutes to make a decision on whether to use nuclear weapons, continuing and perhaps even increasing the risk of an accidental, mistaken or unauthorized nuclear missile launch – a risk recently underscored in David Hoffman's book, "The Dead Hand."
- If we do move away from keeping large numbers of nuclear warheads on high-alert, quick-launch status, we will increase warning and decision time for our leaders, reducing risks and perhaps even setting an example that would be followed by other nuclear weapon states.

Let me close with this thought. One of the repeated criticisms we hear about the vision and steps we have advocated is that a world without nuclear weapons would be more dangerous than a world with them. I agree with the critics that there are a number

of “end state” issues that must be carefully thought through, including verification, enforcement, managing residual nuclear capabilities, and the possibility of reconstituting nuclear forces. Both the good and bad news is that we have time to think through these challenges carefully – and we must.

I must add, however, that the critics who make this point usually ignore and avoid today’s baseline: that is, the nuclear world we live in today is full of peril. That is what the Doomsday Clock is all about. In a world with a growing number of nuclear weapon states and terrorists with no return address, we dare not expect nuclear deterrence to work in perpetuity – supported increasingly by luck or divine providence.

So we must ask ourselves: how can we defend America without taking these essential steps? How can we take these steps without the cooperation of other nations? And how can we get the cooperation of other nations without the vision and hope that the world will someday end these weapons as a threat to mankind? In my view: we cannot.

Yes, it’s a tall climb to the top of the mountain. But to those who urge that we just accept today’s and tomorrow’s risks – I ask – what will we say to the public if a nuclear weapon wipes out a major city? Can you imagine the effect on the global economy and on liberty itself? I believe that even when we meet obstacles and setbacks, leaders in this country and globally must continue to ask two fundamental questions. After a nuclear catastrophe, what would we wish we had done to prevent it? Why aren’t we doing it now?

Our job is to urge our leaders to turn words into deeds, plans into actions, and intentions into meaningful risk reduction. This will ultimately determine whether we -- and generations to come -- live in a world of promise or a world of peril.

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