



Nonproliferation Education in the Fight against Nuclear Weapons

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I have been familiar with the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) for most of its twenty years. I can speak to at least eighteen years of CNS history—remarkable history and important for all of us, both for those of us who lived in Russia and in countries of the former Soviet Union and elsewhere in the world where there is a very strong CNS and Monterey Institute of International Studies alumni community.

I have two important milestones in mind when thinking of the progress on nonproliferation education efforts, to which CNS and Bill Potter have contributed directly and very importantly. The first milestone is 1992, when, here in Monterey, Bill organized the first US-based meeting on nuclear nonproliferation of a relatively small group of experts from the United States, Russia, and other former Soviet republics. Among those who participated were such bright educators as Roland Timerbaev, Ildar Akhtamzyan, and many others. I came to that meeting as young journalist who knew very little about nonproliferation. Frankly speaking, I felt that there were some interesting issues, but other topics—so-called red mercury and some other murky things—interested me more than the grand agenda for nonproliferation and disarmament. So I, personally, needed a lot of education and training in that area as a journalist. Since then I have come to believe that there is no better place than Monterey to get that training and education and to put things in context, whether you are a journalist, a young researcher, or a young expert. CNS has built not only a discussion on nonproliferation on both sides of the ocean, but also, more importantly, a community of nonproliferation experts, which really has proliferated and proliferated. In fact, I would argue that CNS is the major proliferator in the world because it proliferates knowledge—knowledge about nuclear nonproliferation.

The second milestone, which I believe is no less important, came about in 2001–02—a decade after the first one—when a study on disarmament and nonproliferation education and training was prepared within the United Nations, thanks in no small measure to Bill Potter's energy and determination to build a group of ten governmental experts and promote the values of nonproliferation and disarmament education and training. I was happy to consult the group. Anyone involved with nuclear nonproliferation education and training today should read that study because, first of all, the ideas it contains are still valid. Unfortunately, not that much has changed because not all of the recommendations—not even half of the recommendations—have been implemented.

Who should be the target audiences we are talking about related to nonproliferation education and training? Look how the UN study formulated that: children and youth, school and university students, educators and trainers, researchers, scientists, engineers, physicians, private citizens,

corporate donors, religious people, community and municipal representatives, policy makers, members of trade unions and the business community, and professionals implementing laws and policies, such as law enforcement agents and licensing and customs officers. For me it is very important that it starts with the younger generation. The younger generation is probably the best investment. This is what definitely is understood here in Monterey, and by CNS. Unfortunately, it is not always understood elsewhere.

The second point I would like to mention is linguistic, if you like. Nonproliferation and disarmament issues should be addressed in as many languages as possible—but definitely in all six languages of the United Nations. CNS and many others do it very well in English. What about other languages? Here is recommendation number twenty-two from the UN study: “Regional organizations, academic institutions and NGOs are encouraged to develop and disseminate material online in languages other than English.” And here is recommendation twenty-five, discussing how the Department of Disarmament Affairs (now the Office of Disarmament Affairs) “should develop a disarmament and nonproliferation online education resource site in the six official UN languages,” as well as an “online educational resource site in cooperation with interested research institutes, IT companies, NGOs and/or regional centers for information technology. It should have chat rooms and testing tools and be user-friendly.” The point is that English should not and cannot be the sole or the primary language for instruction on these global issues.

What techniques should we use when we work on promoting and developing disarmament and nonproliferation education and training? First of all, of course, the traditional techniques should not be ignored or deemphasized. These include textbooks and curricular materials (in English as well as in other languages), meetings, training programs, summer schools, and winter schools. But we should incorporate modern techniques too, particularly using the internet, online education, and distance learning. In fact, the UN study speaks in detail about these new modern techniques: “High technology methods should complement and enhance traditional forms of education.” Multimedia, streaming videos, webcasts, bulletin boards, and online educational tools are mentioned in the study and should be used.

And, finally, I would like to come back to my own experiences with nonproliferation and disarmament education and training, as the PIR Center from its beginning has been involved in that. We have now more than 700 alumnae throughout Russia and twenty-one other countries around the world, especially those that were part of the former Soviet Union. We use a mix of techniques. We have our nonproliferation textbook, which I was pleased to co-edit with Nikolai Sokov a few years ago.

We have hosted ten summer schools on global security in which we feature nuclear nonproliferation and other issues related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The school is open to all who speak Russian fluently, including of course those from Russia and the former Soviet republics, but also now more and more to people from Central and Eastern Europe and even other parts of the world who believe Russian is an important—and will be an important—language of international communication in the area of international security.

Like CNS, we also offer internship programs. Ours are in Moscow. Initially these were for Russian researchers, academics, and government officials, but we have now expanded the programs to include individuals from the former Soviet Union, and I was pleased to invite the first intern from outside Russia recently, from Uzbekistan. We also offer distance learning for Russian-speaking young people through the Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education and Training (DISNET) Channel, a venture partly supported by the US Department of Energy. And we have ambitious plans to expand our offerings, to partner with others, to become more like CNS.

But when we discuss nonproliferation education, this is only a tool, something intended to reach a more important goal. What is that goal? My answer is very simple. I believe we do it not for the sake of nonproliferation, not just to find new problems and discuss and address them. We do it to solve, to help solve, the major issue, which is nuclear weapons. The UN study is first and foremost about disarmament. So whatever we choose to do, our ultimate goal, as articulated in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, should be to work on eliminating all nuclear weapons. Stronger export controls and greater security measures are vital, but the objective should be a world free of nuclear weapons. That is the challenge and the opportunity for this and the next generation.