



Keynote Address: Ine Eriksen Søreide 2021 Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference

Tuesday June 22, 2021

Toby Dalton: Good morning, good afternoon, or good evening, wherever across the globe, you may be joining us. My name is Toby Dalton.

James Acton: And I'm James Acton, the more appropriately attired of your emcees for the first ever

Toby Dalton: And hopefully last ever

James Acton: Virtual Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference.

Toby Dalton: We direct the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. And we would far prefer to be speaking to you all in person during our regular biennial gathering in Washington. Obviously, the pandemic has made that impossible this year, as it has impacted so much else around the globe. We hope that those of you tuning in, your families and colleagues remain safe and healthy, and we wish for better times ahead for all of us. We have done our best to assemble a worthy virtual facsimile of this event known famously, or infamously probably depending on your perspective, as NukeFest, which you can tag on Twitter. Rather than the two jam packed days of programming that we usually organize, we have bowed to the reality that for all of us, the appeal of yet another video seminar or conference has dimmed considerably over the last months.

So, we have opted for a more focused agenda spread over three days and with multiple time zones in mind. Now, paring down an inclusive agenda to just a few key issues, necessarily leaves some major problems untouched. But over the next few days, you'll see several key themes running through the various sessions. These include: The challenges and implications of a new period of strategic competition that is spurring the

associated modernization of nuclear programs, the effects of these developments in key regions and options for pursuing risk reduction and arms control, especially in light of technological and geopolitical change. For the first time, reflecting increasing attention in the United States and in many other countries, we will also feature a discussion on how diversity, equity and inclusion efforts relate to nuclear policy challenges with particular focus on equity and anti-racism. We hope this session contributes to existing conversations and spurs more creative thinking.

We look forward to revisiting this important issue again at the next conference to see what progress has been made. Another part of our commitment to make this conference diverse and inclusive, is our efforts to ensure the equitable representation of women. In 2019, for the first time, a majority of our panelists and speakers were women and the same is true again this year. So, these are the parts of the agenda that are visible to all of you, but they are not the entirety of the conference. In addition, building on programming initiated in 2017, we are continuing the Young Professionals Track, which has proved to be especially tricky to arrange in a virtual format as my colleagues can attest. We had immense interest in this programming for graduate students and professionals in the first five years of their careers. We randomly selected 130 out of over 400 people who expressed interest in this option.

Unlike in the Olympics, that program kicked off before the opening ceremony with several mentoring sessions occurring already this morning. There will be a total of 23 hours of programming, specifically for young professionals. In addition to small mentoring groups, we'll host breakout discussions, several organized by our partners at WCAPS and CSIS PONI, as well as a career panel and a networking event, which we guess will be sort of like speed dating by video. We are indebted to our colleagues, Fiona Cunningham Erin McLaughlin, Megan Dubois, and Katherine Buchanan for their exceptional work over the last month on the young professional's track and the conference as a whole.

James Acton: Now, if you're listening to me, then you've already figured out, at least the basics of our conference platform, or you found our livestream. If you're having difficulty using the platform, you can message with or speak to a real person by clicking on the help desk icon on the left navigation bar, and then clicking on the help desk banner on the subsequent page. You can also email us at info@ceip.org. In order to ask questions to panelists and speakers, you'll need to be logged into the platform. When you've navigated to the main stage, you'll see the chat box on the far right toolbar. You'll need to use this, and not the more general event chat, to ensure that your question can be relayed to the moderator. Even a virtual conference like this is resource-intensive, perhaps surprisingly so.

We would like to acknowledge and thank all of our funders who have made this event possible. The Carnegie Corporation of New York, the John D & Catherine T MacArthur Foundation, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Foreign Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Finland, the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the New-Land Foundation, the Prospect Health Foundation and the Edgerton Foundation. Unfortunately, we do not have an official beer sponsor for this edition of NukeFest.

As Toby mentioned at the top, we very much hope that this will be the last Virtual Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference. In fact, we're already planning an in-person event for October 27th and 28th, 2022. You're going to hear this repeatedly over the next year or so, but we are changing venues to the Hyatt Regency, Washington. So please don't be the person who shows up at the Reagan Building at 7:30 AM on a Thursday morning, 16 months from now and wonders where everybody else is.

Toby Dalton: And for those of you that would like to make the 2022 Carnegie conference a neck tie free zone, please consider this your invitation to leave them at home.

James Acton: Or don't. And on that sartorial note, it's my pleasure to hand over to our moderator Shashank Joshi for our opening keynote address. Shashank is currently the defense editor of The Economist, which means you've almost certainly read his work, but perhaps without realizing he wrote it. He's also a prolific author whose career has spanned not only journalism, but also academia and think-tankery within the Oxford University and the Royal United Services Institute. Shashank, let me hand over to you and invite you to introduce our first speaker.

Shashank Joshi: Good morning, James. Good morning, Toby. Thank you both for that fantastic introduction. It's my great privilege to open the conference with what I hope is a very wide ranging and stimulating discussion with the Foreign Minister of Norway, Ine Eriksen Søreide. I'm very, very pleased you've given us your time and thank you very much for joining us, Foreign Minister.

Ine Eriksen Søreide: Thank you so much for having me. I'm really grateful and honored to be here at this very, I would say, important conference, but also a conference that really stands out in the calendar every year to be something to be reckoned with. And I can tell you that, it was probably the only thing that could let the prime minister give me 40 minutes break from the last cabinet meeting before summer. So she even lended me her office. So, I'm in her office now and she's doing the cabinet meeting downstairs. So, I'm very, very happy to be here.

Shashank Joshi: Great. I'm pleased you found sanctuary in someone else's office. Foreign Minister, you've been a Foreign Minister for years. Before that, you were Minister of Defense. And before that, you were chair of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee of Parliament, so you have very long experience and engagement with all of the issues that we'll be discussing today. I think it's worth beginning with a stock take just to reflect on the mood on nuclear policy issues. It feels pretty glum, whether it's on arms control- we have seen treaty after treaty, backed off to pact collapse- whether it's on strategic stability- we have new, more exotic weapons that seem to challenge traditional ideas of strategic stability- and the proliferation picture around the world doesn't look fantastic either with arsenals growing in many regions and states escaping the shackles of proliferation in many parts of the world. So just to begin with, how do you talk yourself out of pessimism if indeed you succeed in doing so?

Ine Eriksen Søreide: Well, it's a good question given today's framework. And I think that, sometimes we have to lend some time to history to see what can be done in a very demanding and challenging environment. There is no doubt that many of our regimes are under severe pressure and some of them also have been abandoned as we all know. But we have seen repeatedly, I think, that under crisis and hardship, there is also opportunities arising. We saw it after the Cuban Missile, Crisis, we have seen it after the Cold War, how conversations and dialogue has started as a result of the states need to have a dialogue on specific issues to make sure that we do not have a situation where a miscalculation and misunderstanding could lead to a catastrophe. So, I do think that there are some, I would say, a ray of light in the horizon so that we can work on what we have and try to make things stronger.

And I would just like to give two very concrete examples or maybe even three. One of the things that Norway has been working on ever since 2007, is the issue of verification. I think we all know that, for disarmament to be credible, we have to have also good verification measures and methods. So, what started out as more or less of a very practical cooperation between us and the UK, has developed into a bigger issue where we have taken this into the UN context as well. We led the expert group on this. We're now going to lead the next expert group. And it is remarkably enough, I would say, in this context, one of the very, very few areas where we can work without the polarized debate. And to me, that is a very good starting point because the debate is extremely polarized.

It's very, very difficult to get any kind of movement on the bigger issues. So that's why we wanted to start with the pragmatic work that both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear working states could agree on. We've also now taken up the issue of irreversibility, which is also extremely important, and those are two of the four main factors that we need to have in disarmament. We work together with 16 other countries in the

Stockholm Initiative, we've given 22 direct, very concrete recommendations to the NPT Review Conference. We're just waiting for the date of the conference right now and hopefully that can also take place soon.

So, I do think that there are potentials here where we can take small steps in the right direction. It's going to be very difficult. It's going to demand a lot of political leadership. But my experience with this over the past almost 12 years is that, if we try to leave the kind of big power politics aside a little bit and work on concrete measures, we do see that there are huge potential for progress if we use it wisely.

And we also of course, have to keep in mind that much of the structures that we're talking about, the reason they are under pressures, of course, big power rivalry, it's about agreements being old, not divided by and so forth. But overall, it's generally, in most big powers' interests to have a framework and architecture around disarmament. So, well, to be very honest, I think that, I can say I'm a born optimist, but you cannot always be an optimist in these census.

However, I think it is a fair amount of, I would say, optimism, or at least, the reason for looking at this with a pragmatic view and thinking that especially a small country like Norway can do something on the pragmatic side. And I just want to just close by saying that, having heard the results on the discussions from the meeting between President Biden and President Putin last week, I'm also quite reassured that they are actually working on a dialogue that will be vital for the non-proliferation work ahead and also the disarmament work ahead.

Shashank Joshi: Thank you very much. Okay. You talked about verification and you talked about irreversibility and I hope we can come back to those ideas a little bit later when we talk about technology, because I think that's perhaps somewhere where those two ideas intersect. But before we do that, let's actually spend a little bit of time on the big power politics because it's unavoidable. Let's begin with Russia. You know, Norway has perhaps a more nuanced relationship with Russia than many other major powers you could say and you have a sort of a very particular set of certain geographic circumstances and others. How stable or unstable is the NATO-Russia nuclear relationship from your vantage point? It's obviously great that we had a constructive summit and the beginnings of a dialogue on that, but in the big picture, things look relatively challenging. How do you see that?

Ine Eriksen Søreide: Well, I agree with you that it looks a bit challenging and we were the first ones to actually regret the abandonment of the INF Treaty. But at the same time, I think we all know that a treaty that is over time, not being by one of the parties, will lose its relevance and it's not going to work in the long run. And the consultation that also the previous American

administration did with NATO allies was actually very important. And of course, for us as a NATO ally, we are always looking to coordinate our messaging, coordinate our policies with allies. At the same time, we are neighbors with Russia, which means that we have a working relationship, we have a pragmatic relationship on issues. We work, for instance, together on nuclear safety. We've been working together on that for more than 20 years, spending a lot of financial resources and also political commitment to this.

At the same time, of course, we disagree with Russia on major issues and their assertive foreign policy and the human rights situation in Russia is, of course, something that we always not only talk to Russia about, but we also impose measures that are in line with our policies in that regard. So for us, it's possible to do both. But I do think that as I said, in my previous intervention, I mean, we do think, honestly, that all major powers have an interest in having a stable regime around disarmament and non-proliferation. We think that is, at the end of the day, serving everyone, although it may be a bit difficult.

And on NATO's part, I mean, we have suspended the military cooperation with Russia as of 2014. We've done it bilaterally. But at the same time, we remain open to dialogue from NATO side. And one of the things that we have been urging Russia to do, or two things more or less, one is to come back to the NATO-Russia Council for meaningful dialogue and secondly, exercise transparency and openness about their capacities, their capabilities, and all of the things that we, of course, find a challenging part of where Russia is in their military modernization and their introduction of new capabilities and also a new deterrence.

Shashank Joshi: So, you said at the outset of your answer, Foreign Minister, about the importance of treaties remaining relevant or the conditions under which they can remain relevant. For you, what does a success at a New START have to look like to remain relevant? This is obviously a bilateral agreement, but it has profound consequence to you and to Europeans as a whole, so, it's legitimate for you to have a view on this. And in particular, assuming non-strategic weapons stay in Europe, what can the US put on the table to elicit Russian concessions on this question? Do you have any sense of that?

Ine Eriksen Søreide: Well, we were very happy that the New START Agreement was prolonged and I do think that the five-year period will allow enough time for not only developing it, because it's going to look different in the future than it did in the past, but also to include other countries. And I think this is an important part of this because the world looks very different now compared to what it did 50 years ago. It also is vital I think to include new countries who are now very much working on their capabilities, working on their technological advantages and can become a challenging part in

this. And that is why we work on that together with others. I do think also that it's important to realize that none of these structures will have any chance of working in the long run unless they are a part of a bigger framework.

My fear is that, if this change doesn't happen, we will have a situation where there is maybe only one or two frameworks left. And for us, the NPT, of course, is the most important framework, the backbone of all of this. But we have to supplement with bilateral and regional agreements then we have to focus on also adding new countries into this. So, we will, of course, be helpful in any way we can, but I do think that the fact that the New START agreement was prolonged, that it was also prolonged for a five-year period, allows enough time for this to be done in a good way.

Shashank Joshi: Very helpful, but I'm not sure you've said, particularly, what you would like to see in a successor agreement. What's on your wishlist? What is on your list of ambitions beyond prolongation, beyond new countries being brought in? In terms of the agenda itself, is there anything specific you might tantalize us with?

Ine Eriksen Søreide: No, but I do think that, as for now, the most important thing is that we, first of all, keep the framework. And that can sound a bit strange given the fact that this is an agreement that we also need to modernize. But the fact of the matter is that, so much pressure is put on multilateral agreements these days, that just keeping a framework is in itself a very important and very positive signal. In addition to that, we have to make sure that it also includes not only what we have seen, but what we are going to see of different capabilities and we also have to include other countries.

Otherwise, it will be in a way, a loop-sided agreement where it will lose relevance over time if only two countries adhere to it. And, for us, I mean, it is an important agreement, even though it's a bilateral agreement. And I think, most countries feel the same way and that is why the importance of continuing it is strong from our side.

Shashank Joshi: You're clearly referring to China and to China's arsenal and I think we understand that, but do you think the British and the French arsenals ought also to be included in such an arrangement?

Ine Eriksen Søreide: As I said, it would be important to include a new countries and China is, of course, one of them. I brought this up directly with my Chinese counterpart when he was visiting here in Oslo in August last year because it has to do with the relevance. And the fact that we see now that China has also been, I would say, engaging constructively in the P5 NPT talks that has been positive. They've been engaging very constructively when it comes to verification. I think that's a good starting point.

And that also means that, when we have a very good cooperation that we do with nuclear powers like the UK, for instance, on verification, I also think that's a good starting point. So, my point as a small country in this, is to work on different practical strands of effort that can ultimately lead to the bigger frameworks actually being upheld and strengthened. So, I'm coming at this from quite an, I would say, open angle, but instead of starting with the most difficult issues, we start with the most practical issues where states can agree and where we include, in my opinion, what is important, namely to include the nuclear powers, otherwise you will not be able to do disarmament at all.

Shashank Joshi: Well, let's then directly tackle something that follows from your last point, which is the question of the Nuclear Ban Treaty and its ascent, its intellectual momentum behind it, it obviously has a great deal of support in Norway, in your own country, as in other European countries. I think we all in this forum sort of understand the objections that NATO states have and the concerns they have, they've been spelt out in the last week.

But I think it might be more interesting to ask you, how do you think it should impact the work of NATO, the policy, the posture, and the approach of NATO to these questions? Can you go on as if the treaty wasn't there or do you have to take into account the diplomatic force that it represents?

Ine Eriksen Søreide: Well, I think it channels much of what NATO is already doing and working on, mainly to try to work in the direction of a world free of nuclear weapons. At the same time, there are, in my opinion, two major issues with the treaty that makes it not viable for us to sign on and to ratify. And that has a broad parliamentary majority behind it. Of course, there were discussions, but I mean, in parliament, it's a very, very broad majority for not signing. And aside from our native commitments, that's one part of it. But the two main issues in our opinion, and we did a very thorough survey on this, was that, the nuclear powers are not coming along, which means that whatever you look at in the treaty, it will not include those who actually possess nuclear weapons, which means that if you are going to disarm, you have to have them along.

The second part is the verification mechanisms. My great fear is that we can undermine the NPT because the verification mechanisms in the Ban Treaty is actually weaker than what we have today. So, in order to actually achieve what is our common goal, and we can discuss ways of getting there and we can discuss whether or not it's the right way or not, but there is no doubt that if we are going to achieve our common goal, we have to have good and strong verification mechanisms, and we have to have the nuclear powers on board. Otherwise, it is not going to get any results from working this way. And that's our big concern about what is taking place right now.

The goal, the aim, fully share it, the road to getting there is something that we disagree on.

Shashank Joshi: Sure. Before I follow up can I remind everyone, I'll be opening this up to questions in just a couple of minutes, so please do get your questions in. We'll convey as many of them as we can to the foreign minister for at least 20 minutes to the time we have available. But before I do that, let's just, you ended that point on verification and you opened with verification as well. The role of technology in all of this is a kind of double-edged sword. We mostly seem to talk about it these days in terms of risks to strategic stability.

James Acton who introduced us, has written a great deal about cyber risks to nuclear command and control, and others have written a great deal about other kinds of technology and the way that it perhaps challenges our traditional ideas of stability. So, I wonder if you could tell us how much of that worries you. What are your technical experts telling you behind the scenes? Are they saying this is a real issue that you need to devote more attention to? And to what extent does technology enabled you to make breakthroughs on the areas that you mentioned; verification, irreversibility? Are there any examples of that you might share with us?

Ine Eriksen Søreide: Well, I do think that new technology of course opens up a lot of opportunities. And I think all of us in this conference virtually, we think that it's a good idea to make the best use of new technology and that technology in itself doesn't pose a challenge, but it's more or less the use of it or the not so qualified use of it. At the same time, we also do think that it poses some challenges if we're not able to tag along with normative framework and legal framework and also frameworks around the use of new technology. And what we have seen is that, much of the new technology that we are seeing right now can also quite strongly hamper much of the, not only technology, but also the civilian instruments we have. I mean, Norway as many other countries, we depend also quite a lot on different early warning mechanisms on satellite communications and so forth.

And if you have capabilities that are also able to hamper that, it would be a big, big challenge. So, I do think that the idea of strategic stability also, is very often narrowly linked to deterrence as such. I think we have to open up that scope and not only think about the terms, but also think about, what I would say, discouraging countries from attacking each other is also part of the strategic stability, not only the technological aspect of it. What we have seen as good example when it comes to verification is the corporation that we've had, as I mentioned, with the UK from 2007. But we also expanded that corporation to include the US and Sweden. And we have been doing a lot of technical tests together just to make sure that what we present in the expert group that we are sharing, is something that

can actually be done and undertaken by nuclear powers when they want to verify.

And our point with this, is not that we aren't necessarily at the point right now, where we are ready to make use of these verification mechanisms, but when the window of opportunity comes, we are ready with these mechanisms. And that's the whole idea behind us pushing this internationally. That's also the idea behind us pushing the issue of irreversibility, because we know that at the same time, verification is extremely important. Irreversibility is also a major part of actually being able to do disarmament and to verify and have it irreversible.

And I think it's a very interesting debate taking place right now about the JCPOA and whether or not Iran has gone to steps that are irreversible or not. And it's very easy to think of that as mainly a technological issue and question, centrifuges, enrichment and so forth. But it is as much about research and development. It is as much about acquiring knowledge that you cannot reverse. So, it's a really interesting mix of issues and challenges that I think when it comes down to having expert groups on this and putting this into a UN context, it can potentially provide a very, very important framework and a foundation for the disarmament that we all agree on.

Shashank Joshi: Your point about irreversibility, I think is fascinating, both the technical and the human research and development side. Can you tell us a little bit more about the lessons you have pulled out of your cooperation with other countries? Are there things you know now about irreversibility and how to bring it about that you didn't know three years ago when you began this job or perhaps that weren't around when you were Minister of Defense?

Ine Eriksen Søreide: I think there are a lot of changes that have taken place in those years, but we've just started the work on irreversibility. And this is something that we want to take from here and onwards. And we do it now because we finished the first stage of our work on verification and are continuing to do that as well. I'm quite certain that there will be things that we discover when working on this, that diverges quite sharply from where these discussions were five or ten years ago. And I think that one of those issues is the one I mentioned on the acquirement of knowledge, the research and development that can sound quite, in way, innocent at first glance, but that actually constitutes the backbone of any development of nuclear weapons. You have to have the competencies, you have to have tested, you have to have researched on many of these issues to be able to connect the dots so to say.

So, I think that that kind of research knowledge part of it is going to be essential as a part of irreversibility that goes or spent beyond the purely technological issues, whether or not you can assemble or disassemble a

machine or other things that have a very technical nature. And that is also the reason why we wanted to dive into this because we have good experiences, very good experiences with the work on verification, also in including nuclear powers. And we have seen that it is an area where the potential for kind of diffusing the polarized discussions and tensions is very good. And that is also why I think we can yield results in this area. And hopefully, those two mechanisms together, of course, with other mechanisms can prove to be building blocks in what we would like to see, disarmament and also non-proliferation.

Shashank Joshi: Thank you. We have a lot of questions coming in. Please do keep them coming in and keep thinking them up. I want to put one to you that perhaps follows on because sort of it's on a proliferation relevant question. Bryce Fincher asks what challenges exist with regards to the expansion of nuclear energy infrastructure throughout the world, which is likely to expand to combat climate change, but it's pointed out that many of these new reactors being built are being done by Russia and China? Does that make verification more difficult of proliferation-sensitive concerns those states may have leveraged with other states? How does the expansion of nuclear energy affect some of the proliferation concerns you may have and does the fact that it's Russian and Chinese companies heavily involved in this area change the nature of this in your view?

Ine Eriksen Søreide: Well, it's a very interesting, and I would say, a very complex question. But I don't think I will be able to answer fully in just a small amount of time, but I think it's important to remember that when it comes to the NPT, the peaceful use of nuclear energy is also a part of all of this. And this is something that we have been promoting for a very long time. We do think that it's important to focus, of course, most of our efforts into, what we see is the military side of this. But there are equality in the NPT that says the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is a very important part of how we can also work on covering the energy needs.

Things have happened also there over the past years that has been adding the focus to nuclear safety in a way that wasn't there necessarily before. And I think that we are going to see more discussions on this over time when the need for energy is increasing, and to make sure that it's done in safe forms. It is not an easy task, but it's an important task and it's very important to not use this as a foreign policy leverage from certain countries, of course, but to make sure that we can still have peaceful use of nuclear energy as an important part of covering the world's energy needs.

Shashank Joshi: Let's switch to a slightly different place, which is a question of US nuclear posture. We're in an interesting period for this, a relatively new administration with a different approach to nuclear posture with debates that are still on the way. Johannes Ahlefeldt asks, "What would the adoption of a no first use policy mean for the upcoming NPT review or

indeed a sole purpose declaration as the case may be? What can you do to promote such a stance? What role does it play for Norwegian goals in the nuclear realm?"

And I might add to that as an additional factor in all of this. Other European allies have a very different range of perspectives on the prospect of US no first use declarations, many of them very anxious and worried about that prospect. What's that conversation like among European foreign ministers and defense ministers?

Ine Eriksen Søreide: Well, I couldn't speak for all of my colleagues in neighboring countries on how they put this. But I do think there are interesting discussions in the US at the moment. And I see this also from a NATO perspective, where NATO is very clear on the fact that, as long as nuclear power exists, sorry, not nuclear weapons exist, we also have to have that as a part of our deterrence. But NATO is equally clear on the fact that the potential use of this is an extremely remote opportunity, extremely remote, which means that as a defensive alliance, this is not something that would be relevant in these cases.

But at the same time, what the US decides is going to, of course, have an impact on the allies as well. What I would prefer is, of course, to have the same level of consultation with allies that we have seen now over the past six months with the Biden administration on certain issues where they are either shifting policies or putting different measures in place for policy decisions. It would be very interesting, I think, both to have this debate in NATO. It will be very interesting also to follow the development of US policies here. I don't think or expect that we'll see any major changes, but I do expect that we can have a situation where the discussion among allies about this is also, I would say, more open and also of course taken into account that, within NATO, allies also have different security needs and different, I would say, worries and challenges. I mean, that's quite obvious.

We're a big alliance, but still we have some different challenges. And that is also why the emphasis on this will be different in different countries. From our side, when we now have given the go ahead for a new or a revised strategic concept of NATO we have to take into account that we still need a balance between conventional and nuclear deterrence. That has always been the backbone of NATO. It's going to continue to be the backbone of NATO. And those discussions will be very interesting in the months to come because the new strategic concept will be debated on the next summit next year. So, it's a short span of time, but a very important span of time.

Shashank Joshi: Thank you. Let me pick up one more strand from the NATO landscape, which is the role of China. It was a very prominent feature at the recent summit relative to your previous meetings. And I'll just combine two

questions. Heather Williams talks about the communiqué and says, "Can you say a little bit about the threat perceptions of China within NATO and what you'd like to see discussed in the dialogue that the summit proposes?" And we also have a linked question, I think from Hiroaki Nakanishi asking, "How do you, as non-nuclear weapon states, incentivize China to join arms control negotiations?" You mentioned raising it, you mentioned the importance you place on it, but I think it's a more specific question. How do you incentivize the Chinese to engage in this and perhaps make concessions from a position of relative numerical inferiority?

Ine Eriksen Søreide: Hmm. Well, to the first question on threat perception, I think it's important that even a regional defense alliance like NATO for the North Atlantic has a full kind of situational awareness and an outlook of what is potential challenges and threats for our alliance. That doesn't mean that we look at everything we dig into as a threat or even as a challenge. But I think it would be quite strange in the year 2021, not to look into what happens in the world's second largest military power, the world's second largest economy, and how that affects us as an alliance, because if there is anything we know from the past 10 years, is that geographical distance doesn't necessarily mean that things are not interlinked. On the contrary, I would say.

That also means that, when the current strategic concept from 2010, well, a lot of things have happened since 2010 to be frank both in our immediate neighborhood, but also geographically further apart. And what is interesting is that, in that strategic concept, Russia is considered a strategic partner and China is not mentioned at all. So, it doesn't really add up to what is today's strategic environment. That means that when the declaration from the summit talked about having a better overview of the impact of China's rise for NATO, for our security, it is not because we're going to have a global outreach. It's because we need to know what can affect us. And I think that having also a paragraph as she probably saw when asking the question about seeking cooperation, where it is possible and also mutually beneficial, I think that's a good balance. At one area is namely when it comes to including China in coming agreements, including them in the work of non-proliferation and also on disarmament.

And even though there is an inferiority when it comes to sheer numbers, there is of course also a technological development that is quite staggering at many places right now, which means that, it doesn't always come down to numbers. It also comes down to technology and what is being done within the realm of a certain nuclear program, for instance. So, what we have been trying to do in addition to bringing this up with the Chinese, that they also have an interest in this corporation, is to look at what we can do practically together. And that is why I think that, what China has done constructively in this regard is to work with the P5 on the NPT, which has

been good. Dialogue has been quite constructive. So has China's, I would say, contributions to the verification issues, both within the expert group talks but also to have a desire to actually contribute in this regard. We see that as positive, and we see that as a way of engaging for a goal and an aim for the down the road that is inclusion in agreements.

Shashank Joshi: Thank you. I'd like to put to you two questions again, which are related closely to each other. One of them by Mariana Nascimento Plum, and she asks, "Could you please comment on the recent British decision to increase the cap on its nuclear weapon warhead stockpile, and its decision to lower transparency in terms of reporting? How does this affect disarmament and how do you end polarization when nuclear weapon states are making these kinds of decisions?" And I think related to that is a question by Eva Gyane who asks, "How can the modernization of nuclear weapon arsenals by nuclear weapon states be reconciled with their disarmament obligations?" I think we value your opinion on that.

Ine Eriksen Søreide: Well, again, two big and important questions. When it comes to the strategic review from the UK, first and foremost, I think it's a way for the UK to answer up on the changes that have taken place since the previous strategic review. We have discussed very directly with the UK that we think the development in this kind of removing the cap is not necessarily something that we would see more of because it is not necessarily a step that is moving in the right direction and that is also why we bring that directly up with our good friend and ally, the UK.

And on the second question, whether or not modernization is in line with disarmament and non-proliferation, I think there are two ways of seeing that question. One way is, of course, to just say straight out that, no, it is not in line with disarmament and non-proliferation. On the other hand, it can certainly be a way of enhancing security and safety, which of course also is a part of this to avoid accidents from happening, to avoid things going wrong with a nuclear arsenal that is potentially extremely, extremely dangerous.

So, there are different ways of seeing that. But overall, I think that one of the greatest achievements that we've had for the past 50 years, is the reduction of warheads and the number of warheads. And that is a development that has to continue. And that is also the light that we see in the UK strategic review, and that we like to see this decline. It has declined with enormous amounts of warheads all the time. But it can't stop now. It has to continue, but it has to do so in a shape and a form that actually allows for non-proliferation and disarmament to take place.

Shashank Joshi: Thank you, Minister. I think we have just over two minutes left, so I think I can squeeze very quickly one more little question into you if you don't mind, which is about North Korea. Colleen Moore asks, "What should

European powers do to work with the United States and others towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula?" And I would ask you more frankly, is it time to accept that North Korea is an arms control problem and no longer a proliferation problem?

Ine Eriksen Søreide: Well again, both are very good questions. There's no doubt that engaging with North Korea is a very, very difficult strand of effort because the country is so completely closed and those efforts that have been, none of them have been successful. I am, however, and that's a bit of a sidetrack, but I mentioned it nevertheless, because I have seen over the past only weeks, the admittance by the leader himself that there is a humanitarian situation in the country amongst other things, which can be used as a door opener for discussions on other issues as well. And I do hope that the US again, will pick up with the conversations and the discussions that can ultimately lead to an improved and more secure situation.

At the same time, I'm not entirely sure if it is fruitful to put up a division saying that it's either an arms control issue or a non-proliferation issue. I do think, yes, still it's both of them and the idea and the goal, of course, both with the sanctions but also with the policies, is to get North Korea to return to a negotiating table to make sure that they eliminate their nuclear weapons program. And I think that, historically also, all of these discussions has contained elements for both even though you discuss non-proliferation and every diplomatic effort discussing this, has also included issues of freeze, of moratorium of tests and so forth. So, I think it's a bit of both. It's very difficult to kind of separate them and say that it's either the one or the other and we have to work along those strands of efforts to actually achieve results in this as well.

Shashank Joshi: Wonderful. Well, Foreign Minister, I think that's all we have time for, but thank you so much for discussing such wide range of subjects with us. Enormous food for thought to kick us off and for the subsequent days of discussion. And we very much appreciate your views. So, please join me in thanking the Foreign Minister and I will pass it back to you, Toby.

Ine Eriksen Søreide: Thank you.

Toby Dalton: Well, let me join Shashank in offering our sincere thanks to Norwegian Foreign Minister, Ine Eriksen, Søreide for spending time with us today and sharing her perspective on how arms control and nuclear security challenges from Oslo and for NATO. And I think also really useful on some of the initiatives that Norway is pursuing specifically on verification and irreversibility.

And thanks also to you Shashank for a very able guiding of this discussion. So, we'll now have about a 40-minute break before the next session which is a panel on a practical agenda for nuclear risk reduction, which I expect

will follow up some of the ideas that the Foreign Minister put on the table. And that starts at 10:30 AM, so please come back to the stage by then. In the meantime, feel free to connect with other conference participants on Hop in, grab a coffee, or if you're a suitable hour, wherever in the world you are, an adult beverage and we'll see you all soon. Thanks very much.