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# A ROADMAP TO REDUCE NUCLEAR RISK



"If we do not address this issue with urgency, we may wake up one day to a 1972 Munich-Olympics scenario, with a masked terrorist waving a gun outside of a nuclear warhead bunker somewhere in Europe."

**Senator Sam Nunn**



NATO leaders gathering for their 25th summit face a number of critical decisions, from shaping NATO's role in the ongoing war in Afghanistan to responding to the Arab Spring. Each of these decisions is important for NATO security; yet one vital issue stands out for the United States, NATO, Russia and all of Europe: the changing nuclear threat and how to respond.

The global nuclear threats that are staring us in the face today—catastrophic terrorism; a rise in the number of nuclear weapon states; and the danger of mistaken, accidental, or unauthorized nuclear launch—can only be successfully prevented by cooperation between Washington, Brussels, and Moscow. NATO leaders already have decided that the nuclear status quo is not where NATO wants to be. Chicago offers an historic opportunity to build a new strategy which finally addresses the largest piece of unfinished business from the Cold War, now two decades behind us.

## THE STAGE IS SET FOR CHANGE

At the 2010 NATO summit in Lisbon, leaders adopted a new Strategic Concept—or 10-year roadmap—which recognizes the importance of arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation. NATO endorsed further reductions in tactical nuclear weapons, the small weapons—a terrorist's dream—still deployed throughout the Euro-Atlantic zone. As General James E. Cartwright, former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said, there is no military mission performed by tactical nuclear weapons that cannot today be performed by allied strategic and conventional forces.

To implement the 2010 Strategic Concept, NATO must define a path forward for reducing nuclear risks in Europe. An NTI report includes a 10-step strategy for nuclear threat reduction from Senator Sam Nunn, former chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. This plan recognizes that the rationale for maintaining thousands of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe for another decade is out of date and dangerous for NATO and for Russia.



“We need to jack up our resolve, use our best brains and creativity, and get moving on this problem now.”

**George P. Shultz, Secretary of State, 1982-1989**

## A SAFER AND MORE CREDIBLE DETERRENT

NATO will remain a nuclear alliance as long as nuclear weapons exist, and extended nuclear deterrence will continue. Senator Nunn’s proposal frames that deterrence in a form that is safer and more credible. His core recommendations:

- **DEEPEN CONSULTATIONS WITH RUSSIA.** NATO should commit to engaging Russia in a process that builds trust, transparency, and confidence for both sides on a range of Euro-Atlantic security issues—including tactical nuclear weapons, conventional forces, and missile defense. Both sides should seek to adopt measures that reduce the threat of a short-warning conventional attack. This could significantly reduce the chances of war—including nuclear war—by accident, miscalculation, or false warning.
- **RETURN U.S. WEAPONS.** NATO should complete consolidation of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons back to the United States within five years—with the final timing and pace determined by broad political and security developments with Russia, including but not limited to, their tactical nuclear deployments near NATO’s border. This is meant to be a flexible formula for reciprocity, not a rigid linkage that would preclude progress.
- **CLARIFY THE FUNDAMENTALS.** NATO should state that it now believes the fundamental purpose of its nuclear weapons is to deter the use of nuclear weapons by others.

These “10 for 2012” steps are outlined in Senator Nunn’s essay, “*The Race Between Cooperation and Catastrophe*,” at [www.nti.org/natoreport](http://www.nti.org/natoreport).

Avoiding this issue for the next few years—or even just until the next NATO summit—is more likely to undermine rather than strengthen NATO unity and security. Moreover, as many NATO representatives agree, the status quo presents unacceptable financial and political costs—and inherent security risks—in an era of tight budgets and competing defense priorities. If NATO adopts a wait-and-see attitude on this issue at Chicago, NATO’s options are likely to shrink, not expand.

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