Negotiating Weapons of Mass Destruction: Introductory Note

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The bombing of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 brought heightened fears concerning the dangers of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) getting into the hands of terrorists or rogue states. Concern about the proliferation of WMD, however, is hardly new; thousands of meetings have been held since 1945 in an effort to negotiate agreements designed to control the spread of nuclear, chemical, biological, and radiological weapons along with their means of delivery.

Although there has been some success in achieving negotiated agreements related to WMD, there remain numerous problems related to the comprehensiveness, verifiability, and enforceability of those agreements as several of the contributors to this issue of *International Negotiation* make clear. It is perhaps out of this sense of frustration over the results of formal negotiated efforts to control weapons of mass destruction that some have raised the possibility of achieving disarmament or arms control without negotiation as discussed by the first author, Randy Rydell, who goes on to explore the requirements for an

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effective negotiated agreement as well as the problems encountered in multilateral negotiation as now constituted.

Ambassador James E. Goodby then provides an analysis of the negotiations for a Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty which was the first significant arms control agreement in the post-World War II period. Based upon his decade-long official experience in the talks leading up to the signing of the 1963 agreement, Goodby sees negotiation as much more than diplomats sitting around a table but as an amalgam of many forces, including random global events, political ambitions, bureaucratic infighting, technical innovations, and public fears and hopes. He concludes that the political will of central decision makers was what ultimately led to a successful result.

Michael Moodie examines the difficulties involved in attempts to negotiate a verification protocol for the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Not only is one confronted with the complexities of negotiating agreements involving more than 150 countries, but also with a rapidly changing technology, slow moving national and international bureaucracies, and commercial interest in the technologies involved which, like nuclear materials and facilities, have both peaceful and warlike potential.

The issue of controlling the means of delivering weapons of mass destruction is addressed by Dinshaw Mistry and Mark Smith in their study of negotiations concerning the creation of the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Production. In both cases, much like that of the earlier Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, limiting the scope of the agreement facilitated a successful, albeit less comprehensive outcome. The result with respect to delivery systems has been that there is still no major multilateral treaty banning missiles.

The next two articles focus upon efforts to deal with the proliferation problem in two of the most unstable regions of the world – the Korean peninsula and the Middle East. In the case of the former, Walter C. Clemens, Jr. contrasts the more hopeful signs of progress in negotiating with North Korea on the issue of weapons of mass destruction during the Clinton administration with that of George W. Bush. Six possible explanations are offered for this variance, including the prospect that progress in the 1990s may simply have been a mirage. Other explanations include cultural differences, distrust of international agreements, perceptions regarding the utility of WMD, internal divisions within each government and what he labels as ulterior motives. The latter includes efforts by governments to use the negotiation process to promote their political and economic agendas in other realms, which Clemens believes to be the best explanation of all.

Gerald M. Steinberg then paints a rather bleak picture of the results to date of arms control negotiations in the Middle East, which he sees as driven pri-