

COLLOQUIUM

The Rocky Road to Nuclear Zero

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The call for complete nuclear disarmament is as old as the nuclear era itself. But as the Cold War warmed up and nuclear arsenals grew, these weapons seemed to be here to stay. Neither a string of pious UN resolutions nor treaties like NPT and CTBT seemed to lead to complete disarmament. However, hopes for a world without nuclear weapons enjoyed a revival some 8 years ago, led for the first time by a US President in office with a passionate call for a nuke-free world. Other world leaders welcomed the call, including President Medvedev. Respected think tanks began to take seriously the possibility of Nuclear Zero. The New START Treaty was signed by the US and Russia. A biennial sequence of Nuclear Summits, attended by a record number of world leaders followed.

But despite all this, harsh realities are asserting themselves again and the prospects of total disarmament are receding. We will summarize these developments, including the role of India and Pakistan and offer an assessment of where things stand today.