



News from the Kennedy School

Office of Communications and Public Affairs

Former Soviet President Warns of Current Nuclear Threats at Kennedy School Forum

by Sharon Wilke, Belfer Center Communications

December 4, 2007 – The man who helped save the world in the 20th century – former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev – addressed questions about international security in the 21st century at the Kennedy School Tuesday night.

Delivering the 2007 Albert H. Gordon Lecture at the John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum, Gorbachev remarked that, “As we watch the world today, we see profound civilizational changes. We...are already living in a global world, [but] we have found international politics not yet ready for this global world.” We don’t know yet, he added, “whether dialogue or conflict will prevail in interactions between civilizations.”

Gorbachev and 14 other Russian arms control experts, along with 15 American and 15 international experts, are at the Kennedy School this week taking part in a conference, “Overcoming Nuclear Danger,” organized by the School’s [Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs](#) and the World Political Forum, founded by Gorbachev.

The conference agenda includes discussion of the future of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) treaty, signed by Gorbachev and U.S. President Ronald Reagan in 1987, which effectively ended the nuclear arms race.

While lauding the profound impact made by the INF treaty twenty years ago, Gorbachev admitted that the challenges of forging a similar breakthrough today are even greater.

“In nuclear policy, we are seeing a re-militarization of thinking,” he said. “Today, nuclear states are basing policies on the continuance of nuclear weapons. You can’t get rid of nuclear weapons overnight, but we should be working in that direction. We should persuade policy makers that this is the way to go.”

Gorbachev concluded his lecture by saying that Russia and the U.S. must take the lead in that effort. He called on the participants at the Kennedy School conference to begin the process by developing specific proposals for U.S. and Russia leadership.

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View or listen to the Forum via a variety of formats:



Former Soviet President **Mikhail Gorbachev** delivers address at John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum December 4, 2007

