

Center for Strategic and International Studies

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TRANSCRIPT

The Negotiator Files: A Conversation with Monte Mallin

FEATURING

Monte Mallin

INTERVIEWED BY

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Amy Nelson:

Terrific. Well, with us today in the studio is Monte Mallin, veteran negotiator of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, or the CTBT. He was also involved in the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, the FMCT. Monte, welcome. Would you start by providing an overview of your role and responsibilities during the CTBT negotiations?

Monte Mallin:

Well, absolutely. First, thanks for having me here as your guest. I've been really looking forward to this. I think it's a great opportunity to talk about something that's been near and dear to my heart forever. We're going all the way back to graduate school, so it's great to have this

opportunity to talk. As far as my role is concerned, I started out my career in 1990 working in the private sector at SAIC.

Clearly, you could see that things were moving forward in the government toward a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty negotiation. Since I wanted to get into government at that time, I kind of positioned myself, I made myself the expert at SAIC on the CTBT and on those negotiations. I really studied it in depth. I gave presentations, I wrote articles, all that stuff. When the announcement came, I was ready. I was poised.

Now, the interesting thing is that the announcement was actually structured toward the FMCT negotiations, but it was all in the same office. At that time, getting into government was a big, something you really wanted to do. I put all my energy into it, and I went over to do FMCT negotiations. That's the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty. Those negotiations stalled, but there's still work being done on them. At the same time, the CTBT negotiations were really picking up. I naturally slotted myself over.

I had great bosses who were accommodating to me, and they said, "Yeah, this is where we need the person power," and so I was able to get started on the CTBT pretty much when I came into government in 1995, at which time, the negotiations were just starting to really get underway.

Amy Nelson:

What was your position? Where were you sitting?

Monte Mallin:

I was in the Multilateral Affairs Office. I was working for Pierce Corden and Michael Guhin. They led the CTBT and the FMCT negotiations respectively. I started out just a young guy, starting out in government, and I was doing whatever I could do. That was also a big learning experience for me in terms of how the government worked, and how you operated with the interagency, and how you communicated with the delegations, and all of those things.

It was a big learning experience for me, but at the same time, it was a great opportunity. I started to work with Dr. Corden on the CTBT side, and that became almost exclusively, not fully, but almost exclusively what I was doing. Certainly, in the last couple of years of the negotiations, that's what I was doing. I was shuttling, I was spending some time working in Washington, supporting the Backstopping team, which is the interagency group that comes together to help move forward on the policy and on the negotiating positions that we would have. I was also spending time in Geneva, supporting the delegation itself.

Amy Nelson:

Pretty great first government job, huh?

Monte Mallin:

It couldn't have been better. It couldn't have been better. Yeah. Yeah, it couldn't have been better.

Amy Nelson:

Yeah. You said you started at SAIC. What was your educational background, and was this something you always knew you wanted to do?

Monte Mallin:

Yes, I did. I always knew I wanted to get into government. Well, when I really started out, I thought, I was thinking about a PhD, but as I was in graduate school, I decided this is a great

opportunity to get into government. I went to the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School for Public and International Affairs. I had a wonderful professor, I'll be happy to give a shout out to, by the name of Robert Gromoll, who was actually a colleague of mine when I went to the State Department.

He was really my guru in graduate school, along with a couple others. The testing thing became more of an interest after graduate school. At the time of graduate school, I was really intrigued by the SDI, which was going on at the time. I was really thinking hard about what does it mean to have a mix of offensive and defensive forces and how would that play together? That's what I wrote my master's degree thesis on.

Amy Nelson:

Oh, fascinating. Terrific. An enduring question, isn't it?

Monte Mallin:

Oh, yeah. Yeah. It's back in the spotlight.

Amy Nelson:

Absolutely. You mentioned the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, and how initially that was the priority, but it faded into the background. What was your role there?

Monte Mallin:

Well, they were both priorities, to be clear. My role there was really just to support the negotiations and to support, it was the same in both cases. The difference was that was CTBT, it was a fast-moving train, and there were always decisions that had to be made. There was always, how do we support the negotiations that are ongoing? What do we need to do? How do we interact with the delegation?

With FMCT, in Geneva, it was just, there was no agreement on a mandate to actually do the FMCT. There was a lot of, "Well, how do we get that mandate started in the first place? That was really the difference. One was a very active negotiation. Other one was focusing on meeting with the P3, and taking out what are our positions, or how do we get this thing going in the conference on disarmament.

Amy Nelson:

Got it. What were the objectives of the CTBT at the outset?

Monte Mallin:

Well, the objectives... That's a great question. Well, the objectives, so I guess the way I would put it is this, that if you look at historical antecedents that led up to the CTBT, there's two narratives that are important. One is the history of testing where, and the history of efforts to have some kind of cessation of testing, which goes all the way back to the 1950s. Then the other narrative is the non-proliferation. How do you control the spread of nuclear weapons?

This was a concern that Kennedy raised, and his predecessor raised it, but it really came to a head after the Chinese test in 1964. At that point, negotiations started through the UN bodies, negotiations started on what would become the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. One of the key elements that the Non-Proliferation Treaty calls for are efforts by the nuclear weapon states to move forward on disarmament, or at least on talks that could lead to disarmament.

At CTBT, a real cessation of testing was always a high priority within the non-proliferation context. They all kind of came together over the years. Then in 1990, there was an NPT review conference, and they were not able to come up with a final document. The big sticking point was the CTBT. That created a chain of events that led to efforts, first to have moratoria, and then to start the negotiations in 1994.

Amy Nelson:

Terrific. Thank you. For our viewers, can you explain the significance of cessation of testing? Why was it so important to non-proliferation?

Monte Mallin:

Well, that really gets to the heart of what the CTBT is supposed to do, because it depends who you ask. I think there's general agreement that it would have a proliferation impact. When you are looking to proliferate or develop or acquire a nuclear weapon, there's a point where you want to test it, either to make sure that you have succeeded, or at least just to announce to the world that you are a nuclear weapons power. That's an important factor too.

There's always that aspect to it, and you want to curtail that option for a country considering a proliferation option. The other side of it, and this is going back to the NPT framework, the non-nuclear weapon states in the NPT felt that the only way to really stop the arms race was to cut off nuclear testing. That was the perspective from many of the countries who were involved, who were non-nuclear weapon states.

Amy Nelson:

Countries who didn't have nuclear weapons yet couldn't get them without going through the testing phase.

Monte Mallin:

Yeah, yeah. Theoretically, you could, but it would be pretty hard to do it, and it would be pretty hard to be able to count on it. From their perspective, it was a disarmament question. It was at what point do you just stop this testing and start to deal with the disarmament commitments or obligations you made in the NPT, and when do you stop developing new systems? They wanted a CTBT that would have some teeth in terms of the disarmament perspective.

Amy Nelson:

Terrific. Thank you. What was the US position at the outset?

Monte Mallin:

Well, the US positions, it started, it was really articulated by President Clinton. Our moratoria, in that period after the 1990 conference, each of the nuclear weapon states gradually announced a moratorium on testing, and they said they wouldn't do this. It wasn't permanent, but it was a moratorium. The US came along and did the same.

In 1992, President Bush agreed to a nine-month moratorium, somewhat grudgingly, but it was a congressional requirement that he had to meet. He did it, but then President Clinton came out and supported it and said, "I'm going to extend the moratoria, but we are going to continue to take efforts to ensure the reliability and effectiveness and performance of our own nuclear weapons stockpile." There was the two threads.

If you ask the US position, it was, "Yeah, we understand the importance of a cessation of nuclear explosions and nuclear testing in terms of the explosive aspects, and the yield, and the constraints that will put on us as well as the proliferators. At the same time, we have to maintain our stockpile," which was Russia, all the others had thousands and thousands of these weapons, even though arms control had been proceeding. Nonetheless, we had thousands and thousands of these weapons.

The perspective was we have to make sure we can count on this stockpile. That was also, from a political perspective, a way to make sure that the lab directors would go along with this. They had to see that there was in fact a stockpile stewardship program that would let them maintain their confidence in the stockpile, which they had to certify every year as part of the CTBT effort. Amy Nelson:

How was that kind of two sides of the coin approach, the Clinton impetus, how was that received by allies and adversaries or internationally?

Monte Mallin:

I think it was just understood. Now, when the negotiations started, it became more of an issue. When the negotiations started, it became more of an issue, but at the time, it was understood, particularly from the allies, that we had to maintain our confidence in our nuclear stockpile, as long as we had it.

Then there's another dimension to this, which is the extended deterrence dimension, which is the allies wanted to make sure that we had confidence in our stockpile, because they counted on it for their own security under the nuclear umbrella, particularly in Europe at that time. That wasn't really considered. That wasn't really, at that time, that wasn't really where the debate was. It became the debate in the context of the negotiations.

At the time, what people focused on was, "Hey, the US is leading this now," because the US has to lead. We have to. The world looks to us to lead. Here was Clinton saying, "We are going to extend our moratorium," and that was considered a good thing and a great impetus to how the negotiations played out.

Amy Nelson:

How did Russia come to the table?

Monte Mallin:

Well, Russia was going through a lot in terms of Yeltsin and then Gorbachev, and they were trying to deal with the collapse of their whole society. At this point, they were more amenable to having conversations, and to playing in the multilateral arena, as well as all the work they were doing in arms control. At one point, NATO even referred to Russia as a partner.

It was a different era. It was a different era. I think they saw this in their advantage as well, and they actually also agreed to the moratorium, and they were doing all the right things at that time.

Amy Nelson:

That bring-

Monte Mallin:

Doesn't mean it wasn't a lot of kicking and screaming along the way, but we got to the right place.

Amy Nelson:

Terrific. That kind of ties into this ambient environment, the environment that was conducive to these negotiations, particularly so at that moment, this hopeful post-war context, and other recent agreements or simultaneous negotiations, including the chemical weapons extension, or Chemical Weapons Convention, the NPT extension. Can you talk a little bit about how this broader political environment shaped the CTBT talks?

Monte Mallin:

It couldn't have happened in a different environment. It couldn't have happened in a Cold War environment. It just simply couldn't have. This was a moment in time. There was a few years where the nuclear weapons states, in particular, the US and Russia together, were cooperating on a number of nuclear-related issues, including having US inspectors and US operators from the labs coming into their most sensitive nuclear sites, which would never happen now, but it was just, there was a need, and everyone agreed to try to meet it.

I'm not saying Russia was the easiest partner in the world. I've sat in many global partnership meetings where you're just gnashing your teeth at the things they were saying, but at the end of the day, they helped to move these things forward. It's hard to see that now. I think one of the lessons I've learned in life, observing this and participating in all this, is that the times have to be conducive to the kind of thing you're trying to achieve.

Put another way, there has to be an alignment between the state's national interests as well as their more broader global interests. Just saying, "We're going to do CTBT," isn't enough. I don't want to get ahead of myself, but in the FMCT, and we can come back to this, but in the FMCT, the national interests just weren't there and never were.

Amy Nelson:

That's an important point. Thank you. You've written extensively about how the role that India and China have played. Can you talk about how they came to the table, how their objectives might've diverged?

Monte Mallin:

Yeah. Well, there's so many interesting things to say about that. Just talking about China, they were basically a positive contributor, but they wanted to leave their options open. They were always the last ones to agree. There were many examples. They wanted to have a cutout for peaceful nuclear explosions. They had an impact on the verification regime, which they changed at the last minute, and they knew they had leverage. They were okay.

Another great example is that there were, in terms of how the negotiations were structured, there were three groups. There was the Western group, the Eastern group, the non-aligned group, but then there was China who called itself a group of one. They wanted to keep their independence. With China, it was always a matter of showing their legitimacy in bona fides to the non-aligned states, that they were really one of them.

They just had this minimum deterrent, because they had to, as opposed to being a nuclear weapons state, which is really what they were. They always tried to balance those two impulses. At the end of the day, they came around. One of the things that was really an impetus to these negotiations coming to a conclusion was the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, where the parties agree to extend the NPT, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, indefinitely.

One of the big requirements for that was a commitment to CTBT. Days, maybe weeks after that conference ended, China exploded a nuclear test. That kind of put a damper on things. It ended up being an impetus. China went its own way, but at the end of the day, they came around. India was

a different story. India, all the way back to the 1950s, the Indian Prime Minister was calling for a cessation of testing.

They positioned themselves squarely in the disarmament camp. This is what they wanted. At the same time, they were pursuing their own nuclear program. They had tested, as you know, in 1974, a so-called peaceful nuclear explosion. They wanted to keep their options open. As we know, a couple years after the CTBT negotiations concluded, they tested and they would declare themselves to be a nuclear weapons power.

They always found a way to create roadblocks in the negotiation, and they were hard to deal with. At the end of the day, this is a very interesting story about how it all came together, and I don't know if you want to get into this now, but at the end of the day, they would not agree to the CTBT. It's a very interesting story of how the CTBT actually moved out of a consensus body to the United Nations where it was overwhelmingly passed. India was the challenge throughout the whole thing.

Amy Nelson:

What were the most significant issues that emerged during the negotiations, and how were they ultimately resolved?

Monte Mallin:

There were several key issues that emerged throughout the negotiations. The way the negotiations proceeded was through a process of a rolling text, which basically any country could contribute to. They would contribute bracketed languages, and this was the CWC precedent. The idea was that they would gradually negotiate each of those brackets, and then you'd end up with a text.

Most of those issues were fairly minor. They got resolved over time, but there were three issues that did not get resolved over time that really required a lot of attention. The first was the basic obligation of the treaty, which was whether or not you would have a zero-yield treaty, or whether you were banning all nuclear explosions. This comes back to the conversation we were having in terms of what the non-nuclear weapon states were looking to achieve, and what the nuclear weapon states were willing to do.

The idea is that a zero, banning all nuclear explosive testing is a great thing. You already had testing prohibited in the atmosphere, and in space, and on land, and underwater, but now you're adding this new one, which was underground. That was the basic obligation of the treaty. Our position and the position of the nuclear weapon states was ultimately that we could go along with no nuclear explosive testing, which put constraints on the non-nuclear weapon states, or to a potential proliferator more specifically, while at the same time, impeding our ability to develop new designs.

That was the argument that we made. Because we wanted to make sure that we maintained the option of ensuring the reliability and effectiveness of our own stockpile over time, we were not willing to simply say, "No more testing in any dimension whatsoever at any yield." We were saying, "No more nuclear explosive testing." That left open the option to develop the Stockpile Stewardship Program, which allowed us to maintain the surety of the stockpile.

That was the first big issue, and that one ultimately was satisfied because the nuclear weapon states clearly were not willing to go any further. The non-nuclear weapon states weren't thrilled about it, but they realized this was as much as they were going to get, and they went along. Not everybody was happy about it, and we can come back and talk about India. They put up, they were not happy that that happened. They felt that the treaty was now discriminatory.

A second set of issues that I want to come back to, had to deal with the entry into force provision, and that one really requires some focus. But the other set of issues had to do with the verification regime. And through the CTBTO, through various chairmen, there were a group of experts, there were many opportunities for scientific contributions, and it was very clear that there were four main ways that you're going to verify this, whether or not a nuclear explosion had taken place. But those four were settled and that moved forward pretty well without a lot of conflict, it was pretty clear.

But the fifth one was the on-site inspection set of issues. That's actually where I was involved pretty heavily. And there were two or three issues that were there. One was, what does it take to call for a challenge inspection in the first place? And we were talking about China. This is another place where they asserted themselves at the last minute by creating a more stringent standard. Then there were issues associated with an on-site inspection. And first of all, who would call for an on-site inspection? That all got resolved. But the issue where I was working was on managed access. And managed access is basically balancing the need of the inspection team to get in there and do their job and find out if a nuclear explosion had taken place and the interests of the inspected state party who had the right to protect anything that was sensitive, that was on their soil.

And so that was a constant issue and it was never really resolved. And so I just saw an opportunity to maybe, why don't we bring the inter-agency together, try to create a working group and really focus on this. And Pierce Corden, who I mentioned, agreed, and he gave me the leash to do it, which was really great. He gave me the leeway to do it. And so we called together the key representatives from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the intelligence community, the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, State Department. We brought together all the countries that had an interest in this.

We started just having general conversations, I could see that wasn't going to get anywhere. So what I proposed and which was agreed was let's just start with what we can't agree, the big issues, and that is as simple as an on-site inspection will be permitted under this treaty. And then as soon as we had some agreements on really those basic questions, I would immediately go back, write a cable. Everybody would agree to it, we'd send it off to Geneva. They would deploy, it would get agreed, and that was the start of building the managed access regime. So then we just kept going like that, and we would just do a few issues wherever we had agreement, put it into a cable, get it out to the team, and they could negotiate it.

And we did that all the way down to the most sensitive issues, which were the last ones to be resolved. And these were issues with what equipment specifically? What size of the inspection area is permitted? How far are you allowed to go? What are shrouding techniques that a state could deploy in order to protect its sensitive secrets? I mean, it really got down to the nitty-gritty, but at the end, we were able to do it. And I still personally consider that maybe my greatest achievement in government, because 95% or more of what we deployed and sent to Geneva was in the treaty verbatim. Some of it changed.

But there's a lot of lessons learned there. There were lessons about the type of people who were involved in these conversations. And we saw at the beginning, there was someone from the Department of Defense who, he was an old-timer and he just hated this whole thing and he wouldn't agree to anything, but he ended up being overruled and ultimately replaced by someone who was more willing to talk.

Then in contrast, the representative from the Joint Chiefs of Staff understood this was a presidential priority. It was going to happen. And she understood, and she came and she fought like hell for every position. And when something was decided and the goalposts were moved a little bit, that was her new playing field. And she would go back and fight. But she was always a good participant because she was protecting her agency's interests, but at the same time, dealing

with the reality that she had to move forward on this. And to me, that was the model for an inter-agency participant.

Amy Nelson:

Oh, interesting.

Monte Mallin:

That was the model, and I still remember her so well because she was just brilliant. And what I learned from that is that, or what I applied there is just, it's so important to listen. People want to be heard, and they want to be respected and just saying, well, this is how we're doing it, that's not going to work. Or it could ultimately, because the NSC would make a decision. That's not the way to do it. What you ended up with was something that everyone around that table believed in. And it was just great to see that people came together and if they were heard and respected, then they were willing to participate in the process. So that's to me, one of the greatest lessons.

I'm sorry, I strayed, but at the end, we ended up with a managed access regime that's still at the heart and still in the treaty itself. So I'm very happy about that.

Amy Nelson:

Terrific. And then are there more details about the overall verification regime that was agreed upon?

Monte Mallin:

There were four basic elements. I mean, seismic of course, hydroacoustic underwater. Infrasound, which is looking for sounds that basically the human ear cannot hear. And then radionuclide sampling, and there's radionuclide stations that are situated all over the world that will pick up radionuclide emissions from a test. And some of them are emissions that only are released with a nuclear test, so those are very important because that's the smoking gun.

Amy Nelson:

This was really innovative, this network of stations and sensors. Can you talk about how it came about?

Monte Mallin:

It came about because of the reliance on expertise, and part of that was the Department of Energy who brought in the experts from the labs. Part of it was just internationally, people who had been working on seismic issues forever. And they were kind of the heart and soul of it, but then it expanded to some of these other areas.

It wasn't particularly controversial to establish those four elements. The controversy really came in the on-site inspection area. But that came about because part of what the chairmen of the CTBT, chairmen, plural, of the CTBT negotiations did was they established friends of the chair, they established working groups and working committees, and this allowed for experts to inform the negotiators who were not experts in this by any means. So they were able to do this kind of work almost on a separate track, but obviously complementary to what was going on in the CTBT negotiations.

Amy Nelson:

Terrific. Thank you. Were there any particularly contentious or memorable moments in the negotiations that stand out to you as shaping the treaty's final form?

Monte Mallin:

Where to start? Yes, there were some. I mean in terms of memorable moments, I still remember the French Ambassador who was fantastic for representing her country's interests. They also, after the Review and Extension Conference announced they were going to conduct a series of eight tests, and those would be the last tests that they would need and they went ahead and did it. And she was just fantastic in representing her country's interest, she really stood out to me. The other thing that stood out to me about her was she just never stopped smoking. From the beginning of every plenary session or every P-3 meeting I was in, she just never stopped smoking.

Amy Nelson:

French through and through.

Monte Mallin:

French through and through, yeah. But we had a great ambassador, Stephen Ledogar, and he really understood all the things that you had to balance. So I learned a lot from him and watching how he did it. When you went to work for him on the delegation in Geneva, you were there to negotiate a CTBT and to support that effort. At the same time, you were there supporting your own agency's perspective. So the good people on the delegation, the savvy folks on the delegation were the ones who understood that, and they found a way to do it. Not all did, but if someone did not have that basic understanding, he didn't keep them around long. He just sent them home. And that was always kind of an eye-opener when that happened.

But in terms of influencing the treaty, China obviously, we talked about that a little bit. I mean, they really had a set of demands, and they pursued them right to the very end, including changes at the last minute on the on-site inspection requirements. And the Indian Ambassador, Ghose, she really was tough. And she represented her country, she made sure that India was able to straddle all of this. Because the one hand, they wanted to be a good participant in the negotiations, they were considered a threshold state, meaning they were right on the verge of having a nuclear weapon. But at the same time, India had a national interest, which was they were preparing to test in just a few years. So she really had to balance all of that, and she was very effective in protecting her country's interest.

As far as Pakistan is concerned, they were thrilled to just hide behind India. And their position was, we will support this treaty and we will join after India joins. If India joins, we will join. And their ambassador was, he was tough. He was tough, and he didn't shy away from making political statements that were big and grandiose. He was a character too. But at the end, he was letting India just carry the ball, so to speak.

Amy Nelson:

Great. Thank you. You mentioned rolling text and friends of the chair, how did these kind of negotiation innovations shape the dynamics or facilitate reaching an agreement?

Monte Mallin:

Yeah. Well, the friends of the chair, I think I talked about a little bit, that they really provided the scientific and technical basis that the negotiators from all the countries relied upon.

Amy Nelson:

And what does that mean, friends of the chair. What kind of position or access or platform did they have?

Monte Mallin:

They would report out at the plenaries, but they would also meet regularly on their own. For example, they would say, we need to have seismic monitoring. What does that mean? How many stations will we need? Where do they need to be placed? What should their capabilities, their minimum capabilities be? They would be the ones who would provide advice to the CTBT negotiators on all of those kind of technical issues.

Amy Nelson:

Great. Thank you.

Monte Mallin:

And you asked about the rolling text.

So the rolling text was at the heart of the negotiations for the first year, or two years. And basically that was a text that all the countries could contribute to that laid out the basic obligations and everything that was required for the CTBT. And any country could add language to it and bracket it, and then the idea would be to negotiate down from those brackets and eliminate the brackets.

But what became clear after the UNGA, the UN General Assembly met in 1996, they called for the completion of the CTBT negotiations by September of 1996 when they would reconvene. And what was clear to the CTBT chairman at the time, Jaap Ramaker from the Netherlands, was that that wasn't going to happen with the rolling text. So the rolling text was a good way to keep the negotiations going and to allow the key issues to coalesce and understand where work needed to be done. But at the end of the day, it was his leadership that resulted in the CTBT itself.

And it couldn't have started that way. What he did was first he introduced a chairman's text, then a little later he just introduced a draft text of what the treaty would look like. That couldn't have happened right away. You had to build up the consensus and the support for the treaty, and that took place in the first year or two. And had they made more progress, then that probably would've been the basis for the treaty. But it was so clear, once the UNGA gave that deadline and they really had to finish this, it was clear to him that wasn't going to happen, so that's why he chose a different route.

Amy Nelson:

And this idea of a rolling text, I am trying to unpack what it is that that concept does for facilitating negotiations. So you talked before about the importance of feeling heard, I imagine this allowed countries to have the experience of a draft text, the sense progress was being made, while also not having to react to language they didn't agree being in the treaty or this kind of shared understanding that things were still open for debate in . . .

Monte Mallin:

Absolutely. I mean, they were open and they were debated all the way to the end. But the rolling text was a key mechanism for gaining that kind of consensus and gaining support for the treaty, because what it would actually entail started to become clear. At the same time, countries as diverse as Iran, I believe, and Sweden and others were contributing draft text and saying, here's what a treaty could look like. And they were different, But there was a lot of active participation

in trying to come up with some way to negotiate this thing. Ultimately at the end, it took Ramaker's leadership to get this done.

Amy Nelson:

Say more about that, please.

Monte Mallin:

Well, as I mentioned, what Jaap Ramaker did was first, he introduced a chairman's text. And the chairman's text was very close to what the treaty actually looked like. And the reactions were mixed in the CD, but people said, we understand, but there was some negotiation over it. But as time moved forward, you got to almost the last session of the CD. And before that session started, at the end of the session, prior to that, Ramaker introduced a chairman's text and he said, "We've gone as far as we can with negotiations. Here is a chairman's text. Please take it back to capitals and see if you can support this text. And I urge you not to make changes unless you feel they're absolutely necessary."

And the reaction was mixed. The Pakistani ambassador had a great comment where he said, "After all this work, now we are to support a treaty that has fallen to us from the skies." And so it wasn't greeted completely on a positive note by countries, but I think they understood they had to get this done. And this was his leadership that created this text, and they went back and they supported it. Then they came back for the final session, and the general feeling was, yes, we will support this text.

India was not happy with how this took place. China made some last-minute changes to how an on-site inspection would be called. And that was really controversial, because that just fed into India's narrative for one thing. And they said, once again, we non-nuclear weapons states are being discriminated against. We were told not to make any changes. Here comes China, they make a change to the verification regime and the on-site inspections regime in particular, and it's accepted. And we all went back in good faith, and we didn't do anything to change this text.

And China made that change and was part of the final text. And this allowed India to really object to the treaty and say, we will never ever be a part of this treaty. At least you had a treaty though. And I think we're going to talk about entry into force, right? And that whole set of issues. But that really led to having a final text, which would not have happened without his leadership.

Amy Nelson:

So you mentioned entry into force, there was something called the 44 -state formula that was contentious. What was that, and how did the process arrive at that?

Monte Mallin:

Well, I mentioned earlier that there were three big contentious issues that were not resolved until the end of the negotiations. And we talked about basic obligations, talked about some of the verification issues. The other one was entry into force, what would be required for entry into force of this treaty? And there were basically two schools of thought. And one of them was you just needed a number, that was the CWC precedent. X number of states have to agree to ratify this treaty, and then it will enter into force.

But the other school of thought was, well, really, there's not all that many countries that are really impacted by this. A lot fewer nuclear weapons states than countries that happen to possess chemicals and chemical weapons and the things that would go into chemical weapons. And so we had to make sure that those, at that point, eight countries, the five nuclear weapons states and the three threshold states, North Korea, India, and Pakistan, were part of the ratification of this treaty.

Otherwise, it wouldn't make sense. And this was really the final issue that had to be resolved all the way to the end.

And India absolutely refused to be singled out in the treaty. And their position was, that's discriminatory, which is the language they used, and we will not accept that. But the general feeling in the CD was that you had to stipulate those eight countries at least somehow or another would be part of the ratification process, or otherwise there's no point to the treaty. So the first--

Amy Nelson:

Does it mean then if all eight were identified, singling out India specifically?

Monte Mallin:

Well, it means a lot, because what happened was they settled on a formula where they said that the 44 countries that were identified by the IAEA as having some kind of nuclear reactor or nuclear research reactor, peaceful nuclear reactors of one nature or another, had to be part of this treaty, if they had that capability and they were members of the negotiations themselves. And at that point, North Korea was an observer, so they were actively participating. So it didn't stipulate those eight countries, but what it did was it said with those 44 countries, that included all eight of those states. So that's where the list of 44 came from. It was a way of capturing those eight states without stipulating those eight states.

And there were a couple problems with it. One was that India had already said, we will not hold up this treaty, but we will not be part of it. But we will not hold it up if it wants to move forward. If the CD decides it wants to move forward, we will not hold it up, but we will not join this treaty. Once that came out, they changed their tune to, we are not going to allow this treaty to move forward. We are not going to be singled out as a country that has to be part of this treaty. That was a change in position on their part. So that was one problem, was that a country who has said they will never, ever, ever join this treaty, she was very adamant about that--was now required to be a member of the treaty before would enter into force. So that was an inherent contradiction right there.

The second problem was that it allowed a country like North Korea to have a complete veto over whether this thing would ever enter into force. So with the number, you were creating an international norm, right? You would say, okay, this is in force, and now you can go to other countries and say, you need to join this, this is the norm. This was the NPT model. And it worked, it was pretty effective. But that was not the model for this treaty. You have these countries called out. Ultimately, you created an international norm against testing, but you really gave a veto to North Korea, as well as India and Pakistan as to whether this treaty would ever enter into force. So that was the problem. That was the rub, yeah.

Monte Mallin:

So that was the problem.

Amy Nelson:

Yeah.

Monte Mallin:

There was the rub. Yeah.

Amy Nelson:

So there was a consensus failure in Geneva as a result, but then the treaty moved over to the UN General Assembly where it was adopted.

Monte Mallin:

Right.

Amy Nelson:

Can you talk about that process?

Monte Mallin:

Yes. It's a great part of the story. Basically, it was just like you said, that the treaty did not have consensus because India would not agree to it, a couple other countries raised objections. Whether or not? At the end, who knows what they would've done? But India clearly would not agree to it. So they were reaching the end of the session and there was a plenary, and at the plenary, there was a lot of talk about, we did great work and people were congratulating Jaap Ramaker on his leadership, and we will continue to pursue this, all the right things were being said.

And then the elderly Belgian ambassador who was minutes away from retiring, As soon as this was all done, he was out, he said, "I want to thank my distinguished colleague for his wonderful leadership, and I have a one-sentence paper here that I would like to have, which is that we support the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty as it's written, and we would like that to be become an official part of the CD record," which means it would be transmitted to the UNGA, "And we would like the text of the CTBT to be attached to that letter, our one-sentence letter."

So before anybody had a chance to object, the CD said, fine, that's how it's done. It went through the secretariat and it came out as an official CD document, which was not the plan. So that's how a treaty that did not have consensus that was negotiated in a consensus body ended up finding its way to the UN, because all the CD documents were then forwarded to the UN. With that one in particular, the Australian ambassador to the United Nations took that document and he immediately turned it into a UN document, and at that point, he called for the UNGA to meet and convene and vote on that document, and the CTBT text that was in that document passed overwhelmingly. I think it was 158 to three, and that's how the CTBT came to be.

Amy Nelson:

Fascinating.

Monte Mallin:

It is fascinating because it defeated the whole purpose. Could have done that three years before that, but it's a fascinating story and that's how a document that did not enjoy consensus became the CTBT.

Amy Nelson:

Fantastic. So it was adopted at the UN General Assembly, and then what happens back home?

Monte Mallin:

Clinton was the first to sign it. He did. All the nuclear weapons states signed it. It had overwhelming support at the signatory level. The trick was ratification, and the US, despite the fact that lab directors would get up to Congress and say that with the stockpile stewardship

program, we can support this, grudgingly but they said we'll support it, despite all of that, the Republican Congress did not want anything to do with this treaty, and they withheld, mainly Jesse Helms but others also made sure that there was no vote for ratification of the treaty.

And it wasn't until 1999 that I think Trent Lott, who was the majority leader at the time I believe, said that... Basically, his position was, "We're so sick of this document and we're so tired of it. You want to vote? Fine, let's get a vote." So all of a sudden, the whole interagency geared up again to prepare for a ratification that we all knew was going to fail. There was no chance, and it did in fact fail on party lines because you have to have two-thirds. So they didn't even come close to that, and that was the end of it.

But I want to just make a point about the ratification process if I could. I was involved in that as well, and that was another example where the government really came together, even knowing that it was a futile effort. And there were people like me and many others who were literally working 16 hours a day, going home, catching a few hours sleep and going right back, and we were preparing one paper after another, after another, after another, working with congressional staff as much as we could. We all knew it was going to fail, but the government really came together and they really worked on that, and everybody put forth their best foot. At the end, it did fail, but we all knew that, but it was great to see the way... I always felt gratified to be part of that particular process.

Amy Nelson:

Terrific. Thank you. And so despite its, let's call it mixed outcome, CTBT and the CTBTO, the organization, the CTBTO still exists, there's an enduring legacy, it's still very much a part of the nonproliferation conversation. Would you say that the greatest contribution of this process was to norm creation, technological advancements for verification? How would you couch the legacy?

Monte Mallin:

Both of those. Obviously, the CTBTO is thriving. That's where all this is coordinated, all the verification is coordinated. It's thriving. I think they're looking to deploy I think 330, 335 seismic stations throughout the world. I think they're 90% of the way there. They do mock on-site inspections. They really are doing great. They have a lot of technical support, but the other contribution is the norm. Unfortunately, if you sign the treaty, you're technically obliged to keep to the terms of the treaty, even if it isn't ratified, which is part of the reason why Russia withdrew from it a while ago, but nonetheless, it's not ratified.

Even with that, the fact of the matter is it's not ratified. The prospects for ratification are not great, but it does create a norm. It supports... There was a good faith effort to support what was called for through the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty negotiations, and it does exist, and there hasn't been any testing except for one country, and the CTBTO, the seismic capabilities there, and the other assets have detected every one of the North Korean tests, so they've been able to get a lot of knowledge through that and understand how the system would work. That's the only country that's tested, so it's had a very positive impact, but the bottom line is that it's not the law. It's not ratified.

Amy Nelson:

Recently, there have been calls from within the United States to resume nuclear testing. What do you make of this in the context of the CTBTO?

Monte Mallin:

I hope it never happens. I mean, I could go on but we don't need to do it. There have been experts who I've talked to who are very involved in creating the stockpile stewardship programs who have told me we have more information than we did with testing. And also, another aspect is that now with the tools that we have, the computer tools, AI, all these other tools, we can go back to the testing data and mine that and get more information from that than we ever could when the tests were taking place. So between that and the fact that we have such a robust system, we don't need to test. Once you start that chain, you're setting off a reaction and others will feel free to do the same, and I just hope we just never do it.

What I'll add to that is that in my mind, being in this business a while, there's two or three things that are just religion. One of them, till recently at least, one of them was strategic defenses or non strategic defenses. I very rarely saw people change their mind about that particular issue.

Amy Nelson:

Interesting.

Monte Mallin:

Another one was testing. You absolutely should not give up testing or we have to give up testing because it's good for the international community, et cetera, et cetera, and people just don't change their mind about that. So if there's folks who are saying we need to start testing again, nothing's going to convince them otherwise. Here's where leadership comes in, and I talked about the international environment being conducive to a CTBT, but it wasn't just the international environment. It was the international environment coupled with leadership, on our part and then on Ramaker's part, we got it done. So we need leadership to say, "We don't need to do this."

Amy Nelson:

Yeah. Great, thank you. At the same time all these negotiations are going on over the CTBT, the FMCT process stalls. Tell me about that and how its dynamics differed from the CTBT negotiations.

Monte Mallin:

Well, it goes back to what I said earlier in our talk in that the CTBT negotiations were dealing with an active treaty, that countries were in good faith, or at least in faith, trying to negotiate, trying to figure out how to work our way through this, whereas the FMCT negotiations never got off the ground. Technically, they did and I'll be happy to tell that story, but the FMCT negotiations never got started in a serious way. That's a better way to put it. And every year, there would be a mandate that would be voted on at the beginning of the CD session, and the idea of doing FMCT negotiations simply never was accepted as part of the mandate, and that just happened year after year after year.

So with FMCT, we were doing internal work, and we would meet with the P3, the UK and France, try to come up with unified positions. We'd meet with others but there were just some intractable issues, but dealing mainly with existing stocks and verification. How would you verify this? But there was also Pakistan who absolutely did not want to have an FMCT, other countries that were not as vocal about it but did not want to have an FMCT, and it just was never going to get started.

And so internally, I remember I worked very closely with a colleague of the state department named Mark Goodman. We were both at this point at ACDA. We started out in the Arms Control Army Agency and then that became ACDA, and we worked very hard together. We were in different bureaus to develop a verification regime. What would it look like if you had one? And

we had some inter-agency meetings, but it became clear very quickly that without a treaty negotiation taking place, there's no impetus for DOE, who had all the sensitive facilities, for DOD to make any concessions about any of this, so it never went anywhere, which is a shame because we had made some nice progress.

So there is a little story. After the tests that India and Pakistan conducted, there was an international uproar, and the way I learned about the test was I was at a meeting in Stockholm with colleagues about how do we get the FMCT negotiations started, and all of sudden - and this is dating myself -- but all of a sudden, someone put on the bulletin board a notice that India had conducted a test, so that put a damper on the conversations a little bit. But anyway, things move forward and there was an effort to start these negotiations, and they actually did agree to start negotiations and there were two actual negotiating sessions of the FMCT that took place. I consider myself lucky, I happened to be there for both of them. Nothing happened, but-

Amy Nelson:

What would have been the function of the treaty? Explain what fissile material cut-off means.

Monte Mallin:

So basically, the fissile material cutoff treaty would cut off the production of fissile materials that would be used in a nuclear weapon, and the big dividing issue was whether or not that would include existing stocks. And the position of the nuclear weapon states was absolutely not. We're starting from scratch. We're not going to produce any new fissile material. We're willing to make that commitment, but it made it very easy for the states like Pakistan and others who wanted to block this from happening to say, "The treaty must include existing stocks or what is the point of the treaty?" And that was really the issue, that and just the national interests really of what India and Pakistan in particular. Here, Pakistan was very upfront and they absolutely were not going to move from that position on existing stocks. So that's what it would've done and it would've been a very impactful treaty one way or another.

Amy Nelson:

Explain how. Explain how placing limitations on the amount of fissile material and nuclear weapons a state can have.

Monte Mallin:

Well, because that would be subject to verification, and there would have to be stringent requirements and you'd have to report out how much of this material you actually have. You'd have to make decisions about how to use it. At some point, where do you face constraints, and those are the kind of things that we just absolutely did not want to deal with, and we didn't want to deal with verification.

Amy Nelson:

Great. Thank you.

Monte Mallin:

And the idea of managed access into these facilities was just not even something that DOE or others would consider, and I don't say that in bad faith. I say that because there were no negotiations taking place. Who knows?

Amy Nelson:

Along those lines, in your view, are multilateral negotiations like the CTBT still viable today in our multipolar tech-driven environment?

Monte Mallin:

Well, you could be a realist about it or you can be like me who's a little bit of an optimist and who always believes that there's hope that something can happen. I don't see anything happening anytime soon. I think that those negotiations were really reflecting a time and place. This was a time when countries wanted to come together, wanted to do some kind of negotiation. You had the pressure from the NPT Review and Extension Conference. I think the way things are now, countries are more focused on their national interests. If they feel they need to reduce fissile material, hopefully not but if they feel they need to test, they're going to do what they feel they need to do, so I'm not too optimistic. Were it to happen, I think we have a lot of great tools, as you were alluding, that we could bring to bear, but I'm not too optimistic, but I think it's worth continuing to try.

Amy Nelson:

If the environment were conducive, what lessons from CTBT or FMCT might apply to new domains like cyber, AI or space?

Monte Mallin:

I think the key lesson is to really understand the national interests of the countries that you're dealing with. Well, there's two lessons. That's one, are countries going to be willing to bring in international constraints on some of these new tools? But the second one is that how in the world do you verify this? How do you verify that AI is being used for only certain purposes? And I think that that's the real challenge.

Amy Nelson:

Great. Thank you. Increasingly, there's a visible argument for informal or unilateral measures in lieu of formal treaties, à la CTBT. What do you see as the advantages and the risks of this alternative approach?

Monte Mallin:

I'm glad you asked that because I just happened to write a little article on my Substack page dealing with that question, but in all seriousness, unilateral measures are one thing, but I think in terms of arms control, I think we probably, at least for a while, we need to get away from this idea of these large scale negotiations, whether it's multilateral or more likely bilateral or strategic or including China, where you're talking about weapons reductions, you're talking about real constraints on capabilities, and maybe focus on just getting the process started again with having these countries talk to each other again.

So here's where confidence building measures can come in, smaller measures, transparency measures. Announcing tests, announcing the movement of forces, creating greater communications between the countries to reduce potential instabilities, and I think in the India-Pakistan context, they've already done some of that and I think you will probably see more, or at least I'm hopeful that you'll see more. There are opportunities to do that. I think that's where the focus needs to be, at least for a while.

Amy Nelson:

Great. Thank you. I want to ask you about lessons learned and your broader reflections. For you personally, what were the most important lessons you took away from your experiences with the CTBT, and to a lesser extent, FMCT?

Monte Mallin:

So talking about lessons learned, there are a few and I think we've covered them, but there are a couple I want to add. The key lesson is the timing has to be right. The second lesson is that you have to take into account the national interests of the countries that are participating or you're just simply not going to succeed. There has to be strong leadership, which the United States provided but in something like the FMCT negotiation, that wasn't even close to being enough. It just wasn't going to happen, and that's where the national interests start to play a role.

Another lesson I would mention is there has to be seamless alignment between the negotiators in Geneva and what's taking place in Washington, or in capitals but here in Washington, and the communication every day about what was possible and what wasn't possible. And when Ledogar, our ambassador, Stephen Ledogar would write a memo and say, "This is simply not going to be accepted," it had big impacts. People said, "Okay, this is the new reality on the ground. We have to deal with that," so you have to have that seamless connection that we talked about.

I want to just emphasize something. I want to talk about a couple of things on a more personal level. What does it mean for the individuals who may be watching this and thinking about, is there a role for arms control? And for me, the answer is absolutely. And I think later on in the process, if you actually have something going, yes, there are ways to negotiate, to listen to each other, to understand that you're doing something for a common objective, but there's more to it than that because two points I'd make. One, you really need to believe in what you're doing. If you're doing this because this is what you're getting paid for, you're not going to be an effective civil servant.

And one of the things, the real lessons I took, I started out at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency for my first few years, and that was just full of people who believed in this mission. Then we got absorbed into the State Department and it was one of many considerations. So we would say, for example, "We need to *démarche* Egypt about this or that," and they'd say, "Well, wait. We have these meetings taking place with Egypt and we can't *démarche* them." It lost its priority. So it's really important to believe and really know your portfolio and be able to make a contribution and listen to what others are saying.

But then I also want to make a point, I want to go back to something that Elaine Bunn said in her conversations with you, which is the importance of going to different agencies and hearing different perspectives, because in the end, you're all trying to do the same thing, right? We're trying to make sure that these things never get used, and so hearing how different agencies approach that is so vital, and I did that throughout my career. I went from one place to the next. I never did go to Department of Defense unfortunately, but getting those different perspectives.

And now, I retired from the Department of Energy and NNSA, and that was really a technical perspective but we had such an important policy contribution to make as well as the technical perspective. And understanding that and understanding why my DOE colleagues at the time of the CTBT negotiations had some of the positions that they had, it just changes how you think about things and you got a more balanced approach. So Elaine, as she often does, got it just right, and I really want to endorse that and say that that would be a big lesson learned.

Amy Nelson:

Are these lost or dying arts, the art of listening to the interagency, understanding interagency viewpoints, listening to your negotiating partners, understanding their national objectives? Is this something that used to be more prominent, that this ability, is it fading away?

Monte Mallin:

I put it in a little broader context which is the idea of the nuclear security policy expert was on the wane for years, or there wasn't that much of it. Now, it seems to be having a resurgence as we're dealing with the issues with Russia and we're dealing with so many of these proliferation related issues, Iran, so many other things, and people are starting to make the connection between the nuclear security policy and all the things that entails and how much the world has changed on the other hand, and trying to relate it. So there's great work being done, but going back to your original question, yes, that has become a little bit of a lost art.

I've been away from it a little bit so I can't speak for the day to day, but there just hasn't been the impetus to negotiate this kind of thing and people have moved on. And I think unfortunately, one of the impacts that came from the end of the Cold War and all those things were happening is that people felt like we got this. The US and Russia are reducing their nuclear weapons radically, we're negotiating all these treaties, and so I think the people took their eye off the ball bit. That's part of the reason why I was so happy to be able to finish my career as the director of policy for NNSA, because one of the things I was able to do was develop a policy community of interest, find the people throughout the agency who really did care about this policy. And to be fair, that wasn't a whole lot because it's an implementation agency, but not...

And to be fair, there wasn't a whole lot because it's an implementation agency. But nonetheless, the point is there were people and really get them talking to each other. And I think if there's any lesson, we have to continue that dialogue however we can.

Amy Nelson:

Terrific. Thank you. In hindsight, are there aspects of the negotiation process or the treaty or even the ratification process that you feel should have been handled differently?

Monte Mallin:

Not necessarily. I mean, it was really ... you can only control so much, you have other countries that have different perspectives. So you can be proactive, but you also have to be responsive at the same time. There's only so much that we could do. But we did exert the right leadership.

In the long run, would we be any different had we agreed to a different entry into force provision, for example? I don't think so. I think we'd be exactly where we are now.

Amy Nelson:

Interesting.

Monte Mallin:

And the other thing that you can't really control is the domestic politics within the United States. When we did the ratification effort, we knew that it wasn't going to succeed because the Republicans ... yeah. Because the Republicans simply were against this treaty. We knew it. There's nothing we could do about that. But I think it was good that we made the effort and we showed the world that this was a priority.

I don't really have a long list of things we could do different because a lot of it is dealing with stuff on the ground, day-to-day basis, while at the same time trying to advance a broader national

security policy. So sure, could have done this or that different. Would India have been persuaded? They talked a great disarmament game, but they were also looking to preserve their option to test in a couple years after the treaty.

Amy Nelson:

Great, thank you. How has working on these negotiations shaped your own perspective on the relationship between arms control and deterrence?

Monte Mallin:

To me, it's all part of the same pot. There's really a couple goals you can have. This is my perspective, some people might disagree with this. But there's really only a couple goals you can have. One is to make sure these things never get used. The second is if they are used, to make sure you've controlled the escalation and that you've learned some lessons from that and you start to put some brakes and you start to rethink things. How do we make sure this doesn't happen again? And we don't cross that nuclear threshold again because that's scary. Besides that, that's I think what they're good for. So rephrase your question again or just read again.

Amy Nelson:

Your own perspective on the relationship between deterrence and arms control.

Monte Mallin:

Got it, okay.

So to me, everything is trying to achieve, whether it's deterrence, arms control, whatever it is, diplomacy. It's all trying to achieve those goals. It's all trying to make sure these things don't get used. You have to have both elements. That's the reality we're in. If we were in a reality where disarmament was viable, that would be a different conversation. But where we are right now, you have to have a deterrence strategy, but it has to be informed by arms control. And arms control needs to be informed by our national deterrence objectives. And we've seen that over the years. We've always seen that.

And we talked about it in the CTBT context. We had to make sure that our arsenal was safe and reliable and it could perform the way we wanted it to do. Why? Because that was how we deterred. And we believed that it was credible if it met those criteria, and then it was a credible deterrent. So we didn't give that up. And we balanced that with our arms control objectives. At the same time, we felt we could give up explosives, explosive testing. So there was that balance right there. I think you always have to look at the balance of all of these things and base your strategy on that.

Amy Nelson:

Great, thank you. Were there specific moments in the negotiation where you felt your contributions had a direct impact on the outcome?

Monte Mallin:

Well, the managed access work. And as I look back on that throughout my thirty-year career, that might still be the number one thing I'm most proud of after all these years.

Amy Nelson:

Fantastic, rightfully so.

Monte Mallin:

But also I think just the lessons I learned really had an impact on my whole career. That you go into things not as a bull in a China shop, but as somebody who respects the view of others, you try to find consensus, you work with others. It's a much better way to get things done. And the people who don't do that, you meet them all the time. People who don't do that at DOE or NNSA or wherever, they usually end up kind of left behind a little bit. Not always unfortunately, but-

Amy Nelson:

Hard to make progress.

Monte Mallin:

It's much better to be talking with each other. And that was a big lesson that I learned.

Amy Nelson:

Arms control negotiations are, of course, highly technical. How did you balance these technical details with the broader objectives of the negotiations?

Monte Mallin:

Well, the objectives drove everything. And from our perspective, if this thing was ever going to be ratified, you had to have a technical verification regime that was unquestionable in terms of its capabilities. And so in that sense, the objectives that we had for the negotiations in our own domestic objectives of getting this thing ratified, had to be supported by a really strong technical verification regime.

And we felt that it was. Not everybody did. And there were critics and congressional staff and in the Senate who felt that it was porous, country could get away with it. There were masking techniques and other things. There's all kinds of things decoupling. There's all these things that a country could do to escape verification and without that, you couldn't not possibly support this treaty. But we felt that it was pretty technically supported. We felt with the stockpile stewardship program in place that we had a strong way to maintain our own nuclear stockpile, all those things I talked about. And we thought the technology and the technical capacities and the national objectives were congruent on this one.

Amy Nelson:

Yeah, great. Thank you.

Monte Mallin:

Yeah, that would've been an interesting set of issues to deal with, had FMCT actually taken place. And I think here's where the national labs, as they did in CTBT, would've made some great contributions in trying to figure out how do you verify this?

And you asked about modern tools earlier. This might be an area where some modern tools, in terms of how you verify, could really play a useful role. Maybe without the level of intrusiveness that you had before. You would still need the IAEA, I think. I think that's a given. But I think there are ways to ... I would hope that had we had the opportunity to explore whether we could support the goals of the FMCT with the technical regime that we would've found ways to do it. But it's all speculation.

Amy Nelson:

Yeah, of course.

Amy Nelson:

Monte, looking back, what are you most proud of in your career?

Monte Mallin:

In my career?

Amy Nelson:

Yeah.

Monte Mallin:

Well, this is one of them. I also had the opportunity in my early days at NNSA to plan a radiological sources conference in Vienna that the secretary attended. And he led ... this was a high priority for Secretary Abraham at the time. And I was really glad I had the opportunity to do that.

I did a three-year detail at NDU back about 2016, 2017, and that was just a wonderful time. Because I'm an academic at heart and I've always had that inclination, and it was a great chance to be able to just immerse myself in that. And I really enjoyed that. And I think I could come up with a few other highlights, but what I'll also mention, and I'll give a shout-out to Cindy Larson, who is at NNSA. And she was my boss for the last few years, and I wanted to retire. I was thinking about retiring, and she said, "What would it take for you to stay?" And I told her and she made it happen. And for the last few years, I had the opportunity to be the Policy Director for the entirety of NNSA.

And when I came to NNSA back in 2001, the Policy Director was John Harvey. And he had a policy shop and I was working at the senior advisor level, so I had a chance to go over there now and then. And you'd go into this room with John Harvey, and he had his guys on detail from the labs and others, and they were on the blackboard writing out deterrence equations and arguing about all this. I just thought, this is where I want to be, at the very beginning. So being able to finish my career in that role. And also using that as a way to bring in that next generation of policy experts, that was a great, great way to end my career and I'm really happy about it.

In terms of one of the things I did when I was ... I came to NNSA as a Senior Advisor, and then I moved into the Nonproliferation and Arms Control Bureau, and I was there for many years. And I was an Office Director and all those things. And one of the things that was under me was the work that we did along with our state department colleagues and others, working with Russian scientists and others, trying to help them deploy their skills in other ways, trying to create business relationships to support what they were doing. The particular program was called the Nuclear Cities Initiative, where we got to go into cities we would never get into now, the closed Russian nuclear cities.

And just talking to these people on a human level and hearing how happy they were that they had funding to do whatever it was, developing new window designs, whatever it was. That was some of the most gratifying work I ever did. And I really, really look back on that. Working in the global partnership was also something I enjoyed. But working with the scientists and seeing the human level. Problem with that is that it completely failed to ... it wasn't supported by metrics. There were others in NNSA who were doing guns, gates, and guards and could show up great pictures. Here's what we did, here's what we came across, you can see this is a big mess. Here's how nice this facility looks now, it had a lot of appeal to Congress. And we understood that. But we could never really explain why our mission was as valuable as we thought it was. So in the end, it petered out. But doing that was really something I look back on very fondly.

Amy Nelson:

What's changed the most in this business of ours since you started?

Monte Mallin:

That's a good question. Again, I'm not there every day. And in the last few years, I really wasn't that involved in arms control per se. But my perception is that this just stopped being a priority, this kind of thing, this kind of communication. It's more about what are we going to do? How do we work with others is important, but it's not driving it to the extent that it did during the nineties, the early 2000s. And I think we need to be thinking through some of the things that we're doing just to understand what some of the implications are going to be a little bit more. It doesn't mean they're wrong, but make sure we understand the implications a little bit more. I don't see that happening. I guess you would say it's more top down.

Amy Nelson:

Terrific, thank you. What advice would you give the next generation of arms control and nonproliferation professionals?

Monte Mallin:

The policy is so important. Be the person who understands it. Be the person who makes a difference. Be the person who explains why these things are important, why the relationship between deterrence and arms control is so important. Be prepared to support national objectives from that perspective. You can make a difference. You can, you really can. And it may be subtle and it may be in ways that you aren't expecting. But you can make a difference. But you have to be able to not only understand the policy, but convey it. And that's so important. So really, really know this stuff. And it's not just about building widgets, it's about why.

Amy Nelson:

And finally, Monte, and perhaps along those lines, are there any particular books or thinkers or experience that have shaped your approach, your thinking, your motivation?

Monte Mallin:

Yeah. Well, it's funny because I mentioned earlier that the offense and defense of mix and how they play off of each other. When I was in graduate school, there was one author by the name of Donald Snow from the University of Alabama, I believe, who was writing about this strategy of uncertainty. And he wrote two books on it, and they never really resonated. But to me that was like, wow, somebody's actually thinking about this depth and that mattered a lot.

Another book that really mattered to me, Strategies of Containment by John Lewis Gaddis. And that was the one ... I'm so glad you asked that question. That was the one that really influenced my thinking, because what he did, what John Lewis Gaddis did in that book was to look at the Cold War and divide it up into six eras or a number of eras. And talk about how containment of Russia and the Soviet Union was carried out by different presidents in different times. And I thought it was brilliant.

And I actually had the opportunity in 1990 to write a book about US conventional forces planning since World War II. And I stated right up front, I'm borrowing this framework from John Lewis Gaddis. And that's what ... I was very clear about it. But that book really influenced me, that was a way to think about it.

Another book, another couple books. This is going to surprise you. You ready?

Amy Nelson:

I'm ready.

Monte Mallin:

Some of the works of Richard Nixon. Because whether it was to rehabilitate himself or whatever, whatever, he was really prolific after he left office. And a lot of it was self-serving, the memoirs were self-serving. But he was a thinker. He really did. He really, really had some thoughts about what détente meant, what the limits of arms control meant. And I thought that somebody was willing to buck their own party a little bit and do some of these things, I thought there was some wisdom you could get from that. And I could go on, but those are just a couple of other things that come to mind.

Amy Nelson:

Wonderful. Monte, thank you so much.

Monte Mallin:

Well, thank you.

Amy Nelson:

It was great speaking with you today.

Monte Mallin:

It was great speaking with you too. I'm really glad to have the opportunity. I think the CTBT is critically important, and maybe someday it'll be in force.