

# Gary Samore

Current Position: Special Assistant to the President and White House Coordinator for Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction, Proliferation, and Terrorism (since January 2009)

Boss: Gen. [James L. Jones](#)



Credit: Council on Foreign

## Relations

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## Why He Matters

In the days after the 2009 presidential election, Samore said Iran and North Korea's nuclear ambitions were some of the biggest challenges facing President Obama. Chaudhuri, Pramitpal, "[Obama to face 5 key foreign policy problems: Gary Samore](#)," *McClatchy News Service*, Nov. 22, 2008 Just a few weeks later, he was tapped to join a team of White House officials, national security experts and State Department leaders entrusted with developing U.S. nuclear non-proliferation strategy, a top priority for the administration.

Samore has been appointed as the White House coordinator for arms control and weapons of mass destruction, proliferation, and terrorism. He leads a team of ten staff members and sits on the National Security Council.

Though the position is new, Samore will be addressing issues that he worked on for years as a State Department official, adviser to President Bill Clinton and an expert at several top foreign policy think-tanks. He has years of experience negotiating non-proliferation treaties and arms-control experts call him a "non ideological pragmatist." Miller, Judith, "[Gary Samore Tapped for Weapons of Mass Destruction 'Czar'](#)," *FOX News*, Jan. 29, 2009

## At a Glance

Current Position: Special Assistant to the President and White House Coordinator for Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction, Proliferation, and Terrorism (since Jan. 2009)

Career History: Director, Council on Foreign Relations (2006 to 2009); Vice President for Global Security and Sustainability, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (2005); Researcher, International Institute of Strategic Studies (2001 to 2005)

Birthday: N/A

Hometown: N/A

Alma Mater: State University of New York at Stony Brook, B.A. (sociology); Harvard University, PhD, 1984

Spouse: N/A

Religion: N/A

Office: N/A

Email N/A

[Web site](#)

## Path to Power

Samore earned his B.A. in sociology from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and his PhD in government from Harvard University in 1984.

After brief stints with the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the RAND Corporation, Samore joined the State Department during the Reagan administration in 1987. He held several positions there, including director of the Office of Regional Non-proliferation Affairs; special assistant to the Ambassador-at-Large for Non-proliferation and Nuclear Energy Policy; and deputy to Ambassador-at-Large for Korean Affairs Robert Gallucci.

Samore's biggest role at State was helping to negotiate the 1994 U.S.-North Korea Framework Treaty. The agreement called on Pyongyang to freeze construction of nuclear reactors in exchange for U.S. aid.

Samore joined the Clinton administration's National Security Council in 1995 as an adviser on non-proliferation. There, Samore coordinated U.S. policy on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. <http://www.unitedagainstnucleariran....ip/gary-samore>

## Non-Profit Work

He left government for the world of non-profits in 2001, when he joined the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London. In that position, he directed the group's non-proliferation program and edited papers on weapons in Iraq, North Korea and Iran. "[Gary Samore Joins Council as Director of Studies,](#)" *Council on Foreign Relations*, Aug. 15, 2006

In 2005, Samore was named vice president for global security and sustainability at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. He joined the Council on Foreign Relations as the director of studies in October 2006. "[Gary Samore Joins Council as Director of Studies,](#)" *Council on Foreign Relations*, Aug. 15, 2006

In January 2009, Samore was tapped by the Obama administration to head a White House office on arms control and nuclear non-proliferation.

## The Issues

In his White House gig, Samore oversees efforts to reduce existing nuclear arsenals, stop proliferation to additional countries and prevent terrorists and other non-state actors from acquiring nuclear weapons. In his first year on the job, his top priorities include convincing Russia to negotiate a new strategic-arms reduction treaty, de-nuclearizing North Korea through six-party talks and stopping Iran from developing its nuclear weapons capacity. "[Press Briefing Bu White House Coordinator for Weapons of Mass Destruction, Security and Arms Control Gary Samore and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Denis McDonough](#)," April 5, 2009

### North Korea

Though Samore helped negotiate the original U.S. non-proliferation agreement with North Korea, he has grown increasingly skeptical that the country will abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Samore supports the George W. Bush administration's approach of providing North Korea with political and economic rewards in exchange for their cooperation on particular issues, which he calls an "incremental quid-pro-quo strategy." Samore, Gary, "[CFR Conference Call with Gary Samore on North Korea](#)," *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 27, 2008 He said Koreans must agree to stop their secret uranium enrichment program, cease helping countries like Syria develop nuclear technologies, dismantle all facilities, and surrender any weapons the country currently possesses. "We shouldn't kid ourselves," Samore said in an interview with Fox News. "This is only the very beginning of the toughest part of the negotiations." Miller, Judith, "[Gary Samore Tapped for Weapons of Mass Destruction 'Czar'](#)," *FOX News*, Jan. 29, 2009

Samore also believes the U.S. must work with other countries, and that the country should continue the six-party talks started in August 2003. "The most effective way for us to deal with North Korea is through international unity and cooperation," he said at an April 2009 press conference. "[Press Briefing Bu White House Coordinator for Weapons of Mass Destruction, Security and Arms Control Gary Samore and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Denis McDonough](#)," April 5, 2009

### Iran

Samore cautions that Iran must be treated delicately – unlike North Korea, it will not be enticed to give up its nuclear weapons with carrots alone. "A sweeter offer that isn't accompanied by a bigger threat will be seen in Iran as vindication of its current confrontational policies," Samore said at a 2007 talk. "[Presentation of Dr Gary Samore: Third Session - Nuclear Proliferation](#)," *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 2-4 2008 Some possible "sticks" include an arms embargo and a ban on investments in Iran's oil and gas industries, Samore wrote. "[Presentation of Dr Gary Samore: Third Session - Nuclear Proliferation](#)," *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 2-4 2008

Though Samore thinks U.S. military action in Iran is far from likely, he is afraid that Iran might overplay its hand, forcing Israel (and therefore America) to intervene. "What I worry about more than anything else is that Iran's over-confidence will lead them to eventually provoke a military response from Israel or the U.S.," he wrote in 2007. "[Presentation of Dr Gary Samore: Third Session - Nuclear Proliferation](#)," *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 2-4 2008

## India

Some Indian officials opposed Samore's appointment because he is a "non-proliferation hawk" who they believe will push India to sign the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Indian officials argue that because their nuclear program is very new, they have had fewer opportunities to test their weapons than the U.S. or Russia.

But Samore said that argument would not be accepted by the Obama administration. "I don't think it is a question of American pressure on India, as it will be international pressure on India, because people would say that if all the other big countries have joined the CTBT, why not India?" Samore told an Indian newspaper in 2009. Aziz, Haniffa, "India concerned as nuclear hawks enter administration," *India Abroad*, April 17, 2009

## The Network

As a leader in nuclear non-proliferation, Samore joins what has been described as a "powerful bench" of nuclear specialists in the [Obama](#) administration. Leaders include [Ellen Tauscher](#), undersecretary-designate for arms control and international security affairs at the State Department, [Bob Einhorn](#), a special adviser to Obama on nuclear non-proliferation issues and [Rose Gottemoeller](#), assistant secretary for compliance and implementation at the State Department. Rozen, Laura, "[Names: Obama taps Gottemoeller on nonproliferation](#)," *The Cable*, March 17, 2009

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