U.S. Arms Control Policy in a Time Warp

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There is much hand-wringing in the arms control trenches these days over the role and future of arms control in U.S. policy. Liberal supporters of arms control lament what they see as a decade of missed opportunities to pursue deep cuts in the world's nuclear arsenals and to strengthen the regimes for controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Those on the right, perceiving grave weaknesses in Cold War–era arms control regimes, prefers to move ahead with "assertive isolationism," happily unencumbered with the comprehensive test ban or soon, they hope, the Anti–Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. After a promising start in arms control at the beginning of the 1990s, both sides see U.S. arms control policy drifting in purpose and slackening in momentum, with arms control officials spread thin over a proliferating agenda. Even as arms control tasks have burgeoned, the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), historically often a voice of restraint on arms matters, was dismantled by a housecleaning, anti-big-government Republican Congress in 1999 and its functions folded into the State Department. Arms control officials have been asked to do more with less, and, as Brad Roberts notes, "some would prefer that they do less with less."[1]

This state of affairs has a number of causes, including the more uncertain security landscape after the end of the Cold War, a Clinton administration more interested in economic than security issues, contentious domestic politics in the United States, and a profound skepticism on the part of ideologically minded Republicans about the value of international agreements generally. The more serious underlying problem is that, even as the security climate has shifted dramatically, there has been no comparable change in U.S. government thinking about the role of nuclear weapons and arms control in security policy. The U.S. government and other nuclear-weapons states remain mired in Cold War paradigms of threat and deterrence. The Cold War reigns, not only in the astronomical military budget but in the categories and concepts

[1] Brad Roberts, "The Road Ahead for Arms Control," *Washington Quarterly* 23 (Spring 2000), pp. 219–32.

we use to think about arms control and security. Most new thinking on weapons today has come from citizens' movements and nonnuclear states, not from the U.S. president or his political advisers, Pentagon nuclear planners, Congressional policymakers, or other nuclear states.

In this essay, I review the current state of arms control and consider some emerging trends. I make three arguments. First, the current posture of the U.S. government is self-defeating. Arms control remains a central tool for enhancing U.S. security, but if arms control efforts are to succeed, the U.S. government must seriously reconsider the role of nuclear deterrence. Continued reliance on a nuclear threat and large nuclear arsenals undermines U.S. efforts to stem weapons proliferation, ultimately the greatest long-term security threat to the United States. Moreover, any global arms control scheme that continues to enshrine nuclear deterrence for some states but not for others is probably unsustainable and unstable over the long haul.

Second, the global arms control process is changing in important ways. It is becoming more transnational and pluralistic, and the major powers no longer entirely control the agenda. Citizens' movements, small and medium-sized states, and international organizations are increasingly asserting themselves in the arms control process and defining the agenda. This creates new sources of change but also new challenges for the United States.

Third, what is ultimately required for successful arms control is a fundamental cognitive and normative shift in how we think about weapons and their role. Specifically, arms control and disarmament will not be effective over the long run until discussions about weapons are removed from the exclusive grip and prerogative of a narrow national security discourse. If the discourse about weapons is recast as one of environmental, medical, and humanitarian issues rather than simply one of national security, it may be easier to ban and regulate weapons. This discursive shift, which is already evident in the campaigns to ban nuclear weapons and to regulate small arms and is driven largely by citizens' movements, challenges the hegemony of states' national security claims by calling for transnational, global accountability for the effects of national security policies.

The Scorecard on Arms Control

The 1990s began as a period of significant accomplishments in nuclear arms control and concluded as one of lost opportunities. At the beginning of the decade, it was widely expected that the end of the Cold War offered a historic opportunity to engage in deep cuts in nuclear arsenals and to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons. President

George Bush and Russian leaders signed START I in July 1991 and START II in January 1993, the most sweeping arms-reduction pacts in history. START II, when implemented, would reduce each side's arsenals to about 3,000 to 3,500 warheads. Bush also negotiated and signed the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993, which prohibits the manufacture, deployment, possession, and use of chemical weapons. It entered into force in 1997 after the United States and Russia finally ratified it.

There have been no truly deep cuts in nuclear weapons, however. President Bill Clinton achieved no further agreements on reductions in strategic nuclear arsenals, even though Russia was now a U.S. "partner for peace," the Russian nuclear missiles were rusting in their silos, and the Russians were being forced to cut back their arsenals for economic reasons. Clinton made any further progress on arms control hostage to ratification of START II by the Russian Duma, which sat on the issue until April 2000—the U.S. Senate ratified it in January 1996—angered by the expansion of NATO eastward, NATO's war in Kosovo in spring 1999, and U.S. efforts to create missile defenses that would violate the 1972 ABM Treaty and perhaps threaten the Russian nuclear deterrent. START II has not yet entered into force because the U.S. Senate must ratify a 1997 protocol, and START III talks have not begun. There was no lack of thoughtful ideas from the arms control community on how to make progress on strategic arms control, but the Clinton administration's attention seemed to be elsewhere.[2] As of July 2000, the United States still had approximately 7,520 strategic nuclear warheads and Russia 6,460.[3]

On nonproliferation also, progress early in the decade was followed by later setbacks. After the Cold War ended, there was a small stampede to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). South Africa, in a remarkable rollback, dismantled its secret nuclear arsenal and acceded to the treaty in July 1991, and China and France, two of the five declared nuclear powers, joined in 1992. All the states of the former Soviet Union (except for Russia) joined the NPT as nonnuclear states, including those—Ukraine, Belarus, and Khazakhstan—that had had Soviet nuclear weapons deployed on their territories. In 1990 Argentina and Brazil formally renounced the manufacture of nuclear weapons, joining the NPT in 1995 and 1998. In August 1994 even Cuba, after holding out for more than 25 years, announced its intention to join the Treaty of Tlatelolco—the nuclear-weapons-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean. In 1994, North Korea's secret effort to build nuclear weapons was bought off in a deal with the United States. The United

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[2] For a review of some of these ideas, see Cathleen Fisher, *Reformation and Resistance: Nongovernmental Organizations and the Future of Nuclear Weapons*, Report No. 29 (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, May 1999).

[3] Philipp C. Bleek, "U.S. and Soviet/Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces," *Arms Control Today* 30 (December 2000).

States, Japan, and South Korea will take the lead in supplying energy in exchange for an end to North Korea's nuclear fuel reprocessing program. The NPT was extended indefinitely in April 1995 and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was finally signed in 1996, after more than thirty years of negotiations. At the time of the April 2000 NPT review conference, only four states were not members: India, Pakistan, Israel, and Cuba.

Major setbacks also occurred. The nonnuclear states threatened to scuttle the 1995 indefinite extension of the NPT, angry over the nuclear states' lack of progress toward meeting their disarmament obligations under the treaty. The UN inspection regime to monitor Iraq's demolition of its weapons of mass destruction, after a successful first few years, fell apart because of divisions in the UN Security Council, and no inspectors have been at work in Iraq since 1998. In May 1998, India stunned the world by testing five nuclear weapons, and Pakistan followed by testing six of its own, ending decades of secrecy and suspicion about their nuclear projects. Many saw this as a failure of U.S. nonproliferation policy and a significant blow to the global nonproliferation regime. Although the international community forcefully condemned the tests and the United States, the European Union, and several other states applied sanctions, they were weak, and the Clinton administration quickly lifted many of the U.S. sanctions under pressure from commercial interests.

Most important of all, the U.S. Senate's failure to ratify the CTBT in September 1999 cast doubt on the fate of this hard-won agreement and raised serious questions about the U.S. commitment to nuclear reductions. In rejecting the treaty, many Republican senators, who voted along strict party lines, claimed that they had "voted their conscience." To the extent that national security issues were considered, the Senate's decision focused primarily on the treaty's impact on the reliability of the nuclear deterrent and hardly at all on the international consequences of rejection.

Shortly after the ratification failed, a senator who had voted against it asserted that the United States should abide by the treaty anyway (thus reaffirming a dominant impression among observers that denying the president the treaty had been a major factor motivating the Senate). He had obviously missed the point: If the United States planned to abide by its provisions anyway, it might as well have the treaty enter into force so that it could help constrain the behavior of others. Opponents of the treaty claimed that it could not be verified. But since the effect of undetected cheating will be the same whether the United States ratifies it or not, it might as well ratify it and have a legal basis for response.

Although the Republican Senate bore the major blame for rejecting the CTBT, many in the arms control community felt that the Clinton administration had not made it a priority or lobbied hard enough for it. Arms control supporters felt let

down by the Democratic administration, feeling that it had squandered a decade of opportunity and failed to make use of their ideas.[4]

To be fair to the Democrats, however, the past few years have been dominated by Republican opposition to arms control treaties and calls for increases in military spending and the rapid deployment of new weapons systems, particularly missile defenses. The 1994 elections catapulted strong ideological opponents of international treaty regimes into powerful positions in Congress. Their distrust of potential foes, together with a lack of confidence in international law and international treaties, underlies their calls for increases in military spending at a time when it is falling dramatically worldwide. Suspicion of international agreements also explains their proposals to abandon prohibitions on missile defenses, and for continued nuclear-weapons research and simulated testing even as a comprehensive nuclear test ban takes hold.[5]

The Changing Motivations for Arms Control

It is widely noted that the motivations for, and emphasis of, U.S. arms control policy have changed significantly since the end of the Cold War. During the Cold War, the primary focus was on avoiding nuclear war with the Soviet Union. Arms control efforts thus aimed to stabilize the U.S.–Soviet nuclear deterrent relationship, rein in an unrestrained nuclear arms race, and implement measures to avoid nuclear war through accident or miscalculation. They also focused on stemming the spread of nuclear weapons to more states.

Today, the threat of nuclear war with Russia has largely vanished. It has been replaced by more a diffuse set of threats from terrorism and from the proliferation of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missile technology, and advanced conventional weaponry, especially in states unfriendly to the United States. Thus the focus of arms control has shifted primarily to controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction—nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons—and the missile technology to deliver them.[6] Reducing the once-bloated nuclear arsenals of Russia and the United States to levels consistent with long-term safety and security remains a central concern for most arms controllers, both within and outside government. A new goal is

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[4] Joseph Cirincione, "Republicans Do It Better," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 56 (September/October 2000), pp. 17–19.

[5] Jonathan Dean and Jeffrey Laurenti, *Options and Opportunities: Arms Control and Disarmament for the 21st Century* (New York: United Nations Association, 1997), p. 6.

[6] John D. Holum, director, U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, "Arms Control: A Central Element of U.S. Foreign Policy," *USIA Electronic Journal* 2, No. 3 (August 1997).

controlling the spread of small arms and light weapons that fuel bloody civil conflicts. In short, the agenda is a bit more complicated.

But the changed security environment, along with the vastly asymmetrical power position of the United States after the Cold War, has reopened for some the question of whether arms control of any kind is in the U.S. interest. Two strains of thought exist in international relations about the role of arms control in contributing to national security. One view, a realpolitik or realist perspective, holds that security is best achieved through unilateral arms buildups, self-help, and the formation of military alliances to enhance the state's power. This view is skeptical of the value of international agreements, especially those to regulate arms, because it sees them as susceptible to cheating and difficult to verify, with dangerous consequences if one is caught as the dupe. The second view, a liberal perspective, holds that security can best be achieved through political agreements and institutions to constrain dangerous and wasteful arms races, reduce tensions, and promote confidence-building.

Although both of these perspectives have long been reflected in the American polity, the liberal perspective has dominated. Since World War I and for most of this century, U.S. leaders have joined with their counterparts around the world to create international political institutions to resolve conflicts, regulate and control arms, and galvanize collective responses to security threats. In both bilateral and multilateral forums, these world leaders developed international agreements, institutions, and mechanisms to constrain unchecked and destabilizing arms races, reduce the possibility of war, and promote confidence-building and peaceful relations. In several cases, the United States, often at the urging of top military leaders, has complied with treaties that it did not ratify, such as SALT II and currently the CTBT, because of the stable expectations they provide about the behavior of others. Since the end of the Cold War, in a reversal of policy, the United States has supported increased verification capabilities for international agencies, such as those verifying compliance with the chemical weapons ban and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which monitors nuclear materials.[7]

But despite general American support for U.S.–Soviet arms control during the Cold War, a significant minority in the defense establishment and Congress harbored deep suspicions of the wisdom of such agreements. In some periods, such as in the 1950s and the early 1980s, the United States obstructed arms control efforts. This skeptical view has once again come to the fore. The Senate's rejection of the test ban treaty in 1999 and the 1997 debate over ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention reflected this ideological opposition to arms control and disarmament. In the chemical weapons treaty debate, some senators expressed a fundamental skepticism about reliance on international agreements to regulate armaments. Persuaded by this critique,

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[7] Dean and Laurenti, *Options and Opportunities*, pp. 3–9, 74.

twenty-six senators ended up voting against the treaty, despite the fact that it had been negotiated by Republican presidents with the broad support of the U.S. pharmaceutical industry (whose installations are subject to inspection under the treaty). Even though the United States had already acted unilaterally to get rid of its chemical weapons stockpiles, opponents of the treaty argued that the United States was safer in a world without strict treaty verification of the chemical weapons ban than it would be with it. In their view, unfettered freedom of action for the U.S. government would best protect Americans' safety.[8] This argument did not carry the day, but it revealed a profoundly skeptical undercurrent regarding U.S. interest in international agreements.

While a healthy scrutiny of arms agreements is important, it should not be allowed to obscure the enduring benefits of arms control. In the more complex security environment of today, cooperation to control arms remains essential. In the realm of security, as in other areas, globalization has made the world increasingly interconnected, undermining states' ability to provide security unilaterally. After the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, U.S. and Soviet leaders realized that security in the nuclear age could not be achieved unilaterally, but instead required mutual cooperation. This is even truer today. While unilateral measures are possible and necessary, ultimately they will be insufficient, in part because of the changing nature of the threats. For example, even if the United States succeeds at deploying a working missile defense, it will not protect against bombs smuggled into harbors on ships or dropped from an airplane—or terrorism in general, for that matter. Further, while some states might try to hide from the threat of proliferation with unilateral arms buildups, such buildups may provoke a similar or countervailing response by others, and may lead to multilateral arms races.

Responding to proliferation threats requires coordinated measures such as controls on exports and supplier groups that will reduce access to arms, and arms limitation agreements and confidence-building measures that will reduce the incentives of others to acquire arms. Restraining others, however, requires that the United States be willing to restrain itself. While this may be a moral claim, it is also pragmatic. International agreements tend to be perceived as more legitimate, and therefore more capable of inducing compliance, when the burden of their requirements is distributed in some kind of principled and reciprocal (if not necessarily symmetrical) fashion, and when all parties are seen as making a good-faith effort.[9]

The ideological opposition to arms control appears to have little resonance with the American public. Public opinion shows widespread support for reducing nuclear dangers and general support for U.S. participation in international agreements. Americans continue to favor an international treaty banning nuclear tests, with

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[8] Ibid., p. 6.

[9] Thomas M. Franck, *The Power of Legitimacy among Nations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

70 percent doing so, up from about 64 percent during the Cold War.[10] Most Americans now seem disposed to accept verification mechanisms under international control, and it is likely that they will continue to do so.

In sum, multilateral arms control is still in the U.S. interest. The real problem is that it also remains mired in Cold War thinking.

The Declining Legitimacy of Deterrence

Despite the vast changes in the world, the major goal of U.S. arms control policy is still to "preserve deterrence," or, more specifically, to preserve deterrence for itself while denying it to most of the rest of the world. Yet the continued reliance on a nuclear threat and large nuclear arsenals by the United States undermines U.S. nonproliferation efforts, and thus ultimately long-term U.S. security. It sends a signal to the rest of the world that nuclear weapons are useful and legitimate. Any global arms control scheme that continues to permit deterrence for some states but not for others is likely to remain fragile and fraught with difficulties.

Although many observers expected that the end of the Cold War would be an opportunity for a dramatic reduction in the role of nuclear weapons in defense policies, instead, for U.S. military planners, the feared proliferation of chemical and biological weapons has become a rationale for keeping large numbers of nuclear weapons and even giving them new roles. The Pentagon has assigned nuclear weapons a prominent role in its "counterproliferation" scenarios. "Measured ambiguity" is the Pentagon's preferred policy.[11] The United States is spending about $20 billion annually on the maintenance of nuclear forces, including several thousand weapons aimed at an estimated 2,200 Russian targets and plans for strikes against China, North Korea, Iraq, and so-called nonstate actors.[12] The target list, rather than being reduced, has grown by 20 percent in the last five years.[13] In light of what it sees as continuing and expanded roles for nuclear weapons, the United States continues to preserve its right to initiate their use and to resist any serious disarmament.

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[10] *Public Attitudes on Nuclear Weapons: An Opportunity for Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, 1998), p. 26.

[11] The Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Department of Defense, "Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations," Joint Pub 3–12 (April 29, 1993). This was reaffirmed in Presidential Decision Directive 60 (PDD 60) by President Clinton in November 1997 ("Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy Guidance"). For further discussion, see Hans Kristensen, "Targets of Opportunity: How Nuclear Planners Found New Targets for Old Weapons," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 53 (September/October 1997), pp. 22–28.

[12] Janne E. Nolan, "Preparing for the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review," *Arms Control Today* (November 2000).

[13] Theresa Hitchens, "Nuclear Weapons: Expensive Relics of 'Dead Conflicts.' Key Issues for the Nuclear Posture Review," Issue Brief 5, No. 2, Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers (January 19, 2001).

Yet disarmament is an idea whose time has come, and deterrence is an idea whose time has come and gone. The notion and practice of stable deterrence was one of the major accomplishments of Cold War–era arms control. U.S.–Soviet bilateral arms control and security cooperation agreements codified shared understandings about nuclear weapons and enshrined deterrence—as opposed to "use"—as the legitimate role for nuclear weapons. Thus "deterrence"—a stable practice of nonuse—became the acceptable role for superpower nuclear weapons, and even the acceptable form of political competition between the superpowers. Indeed, after the SALT agreements in the 1970s, a "norm of deterrence" became so ritualized and institutionalized that all military objectives came to be justified in terms of it. Deterrence became synonymous with whatever military objectives of any sort were pursued. Supporters of doctrines of both mutual assured destruction and nuclear superiority justified their positions by arguing that their approaches would strengthen deterrence. Invoking deterrence legitimized otherwise debatable practices: Who could object to a policy that kept nuclear weapons unused?[14]

The legitimacy of deterrence was challenged even before the end of the Cold War. In a provocative and widely discussed statement in 1983, the U.S. Catholic bishops publicly attacked deterrence on moral grounds, arguing that the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons was immoral and that deterrence was only justifiable if it was a step on the way to disarmament. Their statement seriously challenged the legitimacy of U.S. deterrence policy and set off a widespread public debate on both the moral and strategic aspects of nuclear deterrence.[15]

PREVENTING PROLIFERATION

Today the moral issues remain, but the vast changes in the world raise new questions about the appropriateness of deterrence as an organizing principle. In the post–Cold War world, institutionalizing deterrence should no longer be the central goal of U.S. arms control policy. During the Cold War, deterrence was reserved as a legitimate practice for the five declared nuclear states only. Under the terms of the NPT, everyone else had to forswear nuclear weapons. In exchange for this—part of the bargain at the core of the NPT—the nuclear powers committed themselves to pursuing nuclear disarmament. The nonnuclear states tolerated this inequity of the NPT during the special circumstances of the Cold War. But they have become increasingly

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[14] Richard Betts, in John D. Steinbruner and Leon V. Sigal, eds., *Alliance Security: NATO and the No-First-Use Question* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1983), p. 35.

[15] National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response. A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace*, May 3, 1983 (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1983); David S. Yost, "The Delegitimation of Nuclear Deterrence?" *Armed Forces and Society* 16 (Summer 1990).

impatient as the nuclear powers show few signs of willingness to give up their nuclear arsenals and continue to cling to nuclear deterrence. During the 1950s, U.S. military planners referred to U.S. nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union as a "wasting asset," because any leverage it might provide the United States over Soviet behavior would soon be nullified by Soviet acquisition of its own large nuclear arsenal.[16] Today, the benefits of retaining a nuclear deterrent posture risk being undercut by the proliferation it provokes and the global arms control regimes it undermines. It is in this sense that the U.S. nuclear deterrent threat is a "wasting asset," although "increasing deficit" is probably a more accurate description.

Strategic analysts are increasingly arguing the shortcomings of the concept of deterrence. "Deterrence," Brad Roberts notes, "is a language of enemies."[17] General George Lee Butler, former head of the nation's strategic nuclear arsenal, argued in December 1996 before the National Press Club that deterrence rests upon an "embedded assumption of hostility and associated preference for forces in high states of alert," a posture that could lead to war through accident or miscalculation.[18] Radical critic Jonathan Schell suggests that "the deterrent" should be renamed "the proliferant," as proliferation is today the most likely consequence of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.[19] Given the lack of a convincing enemy in the world and the absence of any great clash of global purposes or ambitions among the great powers, it is not clear exactly what U.S. nuclear weapons deter. Rather, their most likely effect is to contribute to sustaining the interest of others in acquiring such weapons—as the recent tests by India and Pakistan, and their statements over the years, suggest.[20]

Most states of the world are not on the verge of tossing out the NPT or pursuing a nuclear capability, because they view the nonproliferation regime, despite its shortcomings, as serving their security interests. It is with respect to those states wavering on the margins of the regime—the North Koreas and Iraqs—that the example set by the nuclear powers, with its signals about the usefulness, value, and prestige of nuclear weapons, is likely to make the most difference. It could possibly tip the balance in the calculations of nuclear "wannabes," often weak states, about the merits of acquiring such weapons. If such states succeeded in acquiring nuclear weapons, neighboring states might reconsider their nonnuclear status, and the nonproliferation regime could unravel, region by region.

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[16] Marc Trachtenberg, "A 'Wasting Asset': American Strategy and the Shifting Nuclear Balance, 1949–1954," *International Security* 13 (Winter 1988/89).

[17] Roberts, "The Road Ahead for Arms Control."

[18] George Lee Butler, "Abolition of Nuclear Weapons" (speech presented at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., December 4, 1996); available at www.wagingpeace.org/butlerspeech.html.

[19] Jonathan Schell, "The Folly of Arms Control," *Foreign Affairs* 79 (September/October 2000).

[20] See George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

In a similar vein, mainstream analyst John Steinbruner argues that "deterrence has become too large and too inequitably distributed for its own good." The U.S. alliance system is now so asymmetrically predominant that it poses serious issues of inequity, creating security threats for other countries and provoking "asymmetrical deterrent strategies" (by which he means the resort to low-tech terrorist strategies and chemical and biological weapons). The central purpose of arms control, he argues, should now be to reassure, not to deter.[21]

There is no risk today for which even one nuclear detonation would be in the U.S. interest. Because the United States possesses such overwhelming conventional superiority, only an adversary with nuclear weapons could truly threaten U.S. forces on the battlefield. The primary interest of the United States should be to prevent other countries from acquiring nuclear weapons and to delegitimize their use. Had Iraq possessed a nuclear weapon during the Gulf War, U.S. calculations about how to respond in that conflict would likely have been very different. This recognition is undoubtedly part of what led General Butler, along with sixty other former military officers from seventeen countries, in 1996 to call for elimination of all nuclear weapons.[22]

UNDERMINING STRATEGIC STABILITY

Ironically, the one place deterrence still matters in the short run is the very place where U.S. policy threatens to undermine its stability. If the continued deterrent threat to use nuclear weapons is Exhibit A in old Cold War thinking, the push for a national missile defense (NMD) is Exhibit B. Here also, proponents of NMD appear determined to ignore the negative international consequences of deploying it, which may far outweigh its benefits, even assuming it might work (which is doubtful). Deployment of an NMD is opposed by Russia, China, the NATO allies, and an overwhelming majority of nations (as reflected in votes on a draft resolution in the UN General Assembly on the need to preserve the ABM Treaty). It could dangerously destabilize U.S. relations with Russia and China—ultimately a greater threat to the United States than threats posed by emerging missile states.

The 1972 ABM Treaty is widely viewed as a cornerstone of the arms control and disarmament agreements concluded over the last thirty years. By prohibiting defensive systems, it reduces the incentives of each side to acquire more missiles and warheads to overwhelm the other side's defenses. Russian leaders have made it clear that they would view any abrogation of the anti-missile treaty as a threat to Russia's nuclear deterrent, but the United States has insisted that the NMD would pose no such

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[21] John Steinbruner, "Renovating Arms Control Through Reassurance," *Washington Quarterly* 23 (Spring 2000), pp. 197–206.

[22] Butler, "Abolition of Nuclear Weapons."

threat. Several thousand Russian nuclear weapons, along with decoys, could overwhelm the system. But this means that the U.S. government would continue to accept a large Russian nuclear arsenal rather than seek deep cuts in nuclear weapons. Russian President Vladimir Putin has indicated that Russia is prepared to make deep cuts in its nuclear warheads, but not if the United States builds an anti-missile system that violates the ABM treaty. As one Russian official commented about the U.S. penchant for technological solutions such as NMD, the United States "prefers to comply with its commitments to the military-industrial complex."[23]

Advocates of NMD (including, famously, President Ronald Reagan) support it in part because, they say, it would render deterrence obsolete. Thus it might seem that those in favor of replacing deterrence with something else ought to be in favor of missile defenses. However, the actual consequences of deploying a missile defense would probably be to perpetuate a deterrence system—and at higher levels of missiles and warheads—not to do away with it. As noted, U.S. pursuit of missile defenses threatens to undercut existing international agreements to control the spread of nuclear arms, and is likely to ignite a new arms race. By appearing to threaten China's nuclear deterrent as well as Russia's, a U.S. missile defense may contribute to heating up an Asian arms race—just the outcome the United States would like to avoid. The consequences of ruining the system of strategic stability will be felt by the entire world.

These negative consequences of current U.S. arms control policy underscore the need to rethink the institutionalization of threat and deterrence, and move instead toward reassurance and disarmament, what we might call "sustainable disarmament." For example, the United States appears to have given little thought to how, in a nuclear-free world, a collective security system might be made into a more effective deterrent. It looks as if such new thinking will have to come from somewhere else.

How Arms Control Is Changing

Although the United States remains under the sway of old thinking, the global arms control process is changing in important ways. It is becoming more multilateral, but even more significantly, it is becoming more transnational and pluralistic. Both the agenda and the process for arms control today involve not just governments, but international organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and citizens' movements operating across borders. Arms control achievements—for example, the NPT, nuclear-weapons-free zones, and the test ban treaty—have all required multilateral

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[23] "Oleg Chernov: Globalization Makes Russia Even More Sensitive to New Missile Challenges," *PIR Arms Control Letters*, Center for Policy Studies in Russia (November 27, 2000).

negotiations. This will increasingly be the case. Curtailing weapons sales and trans-fers of technology requires agreement among many arms suppliers. Abolishing chem-ical and biological weapons, putting an end to testing, and eliminating nuclear weapons depend on the acquiescence of many states. Effectively banning landmines from war-torn areas requires agreement among all major producers.[24]

But arms control is also becoming more pluralistic. By this I mean that a much greater variety of actors are involved. "Coalitions of the weak"—combinations of citizens' movements, NGOs, and small or "middle-power" states—are using the Internet and the forums provided by international organizations to scrutinize and politicize the weapons practices of states, and put their ideas on the arms control agenda. In the recent successful campaign to ban landmines, more than one thousand NGOs from sixty nations organized under an umbrella group, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, which used the Internet to coordinate a campaign directly engaging national governments and international media. It gained the sup-port of important states such as Canada and many European states, which deter-minedly led the cause despite objections from the United States. The campaign result-ed in 1997 in the surprising achievement of a treaty banning anti-personnel landmines, a staple of militaries everywhere.[25] The convention entered into force in March 1999 and 133 countries have now signed it, though not the United States.

The new arms control pluralism is also reflected in the renewed movement for the abolition of nuclear weapons, led by an unusual but attention-drawing coalition of prominent former military officers and political leaders, peace groups, interna-tional organizations, and like-minded states. For the first time since the 1940s and 1950s, disarmament has become a subject of serious discussion. Lacking the power actually to force the nuclear states to get rid of their nuclear arms, these groups have focused on delegitimizing the weapons along with the concepts, such as deterrence, that the nuclear states use to justify their continued possession of nuclear arsenals.

In late 1995, the Australian government formed the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, with a list of experienced policymakers such as former secretary of defense Robert McNamara and former French prime minister Michel Rocard. The commission's report, issued in August 1996, called on the nuclear powers to commit themselves to the elimination of all nuclear weapons. It rejected both the argument that nuclear weapons deter war and the notion that the nuclear states could keep their arsenals indefinitely without the weapons being used someday. The commission called for a series of immediate measures to cut back nuclear dan-

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[24] Thomas Graham, "Strengthening Arms Control," *Washington Quarterly* 23 (Spring 2000), pp. 183–96.
[25] Richard Price, "Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines," *International Organization* 52, No. 3 (Summer 1998).

gers, including an agreement by the nuclear powers that they would neither to be the first to use nuclear weapons nor use them against nonnuclear states.[26]

Numerous other groups have endorsed the goal of nuclear elimination, including, in addition to the group of retired generals and admirals mentioned earlier, the fairly mainstream Atlantic Council and the Nobel Prize–winning Pugwash organization. In 1997 a report of the National Academy of Sciences urged prohibition of all existing nuclear weapons, with destruction of existing stocks. In 1995 activists formed Abolition 2000—today a global movement of more than 2,000 organizations in 90 countries—to call for negotiations on a convention to ban nuclear weapons.[27]

In an especially interesting example of arms control pluralism, in 1996 antinuclear groups worked through client states to get an advisory opinion on the legality of use of nuclear weapons from the World Court. In line with similar efforts in the past to create prohibitionary international norms, such as against slavery and piracy, these "moral entrepreneurs" were attempting to criminalize the targeted activity—the use of nuclear weapons. Despite the court's uncertainty over whether all uses of nuclear weapons were illegal, its unanimous statement that the nuclear powers have an obligation to pursue nuclear disarmament contributed to the further delegitimization of deterrence and provided a boost to the abolition coalition. Although the court's opinion had no binding effect and could be dismissed as merely rhetorical, the great effort exerted by the nuclear powers to justify their position and their strenuous attempts at every stage to block the advisory opinion from going forward suggested how seriously they took the matter. The court's decision was yet another step in the "agenda politics" of nuclear delegitimization. After the court's decision, resolutions followed in the UN General Assembly calling for negotiations on disarmament, and naturally, the nuclear weapons states other than China opposed these. They also blocked any attempts to start such negotiations in the Geneva negotiating forum.[28]

Although such General Assembly resolutions are typically not taken seriously by the nuclear powers' military establishments, the increasing support for them in the international community reflects a growing impatience among other states and world publics with the nuclear powers' foot-dragging on disarmament. In a significant development, even its friends and allies have begun to split with the United States over nuclear weapons. In June 1998, in the wake of the India and Pakistani nuclear tests, the foreign ministers of eight "middle powers"—Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New

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[26] The Report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons is available at www.psr.org/canberra.htm.

[27] For more extensive discussion, see Fisher, *NGOs and the Future of Nuclear Weapons.*

[28] Alyn Ware, "The World Court and Nuclear Weapons: Who Is Listening?" *UN Chronicle* 36, No. 4 (1999), pp. 49–50.

Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa, and Sweden—signed a joint declaration calling for a new agenda for nuclear disarmament. They called on Israel, India, and Pakistan to adhere to the NPT and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and the declared nuclear powers to adhere to their commitment in the NPT to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. In November 1998 this group (the "new agenda coalition") minus Slovenia submitted a similar resolution to the UN General Assembly. Britain, France, and the United States launched a concerted effort to persuade their nuclear–umbrella allies, NATO and those Eastern European countries seeking admission to the European Union or NATO, to vote against the coalition resolution. Despite these efforts, twelve of sixteen NATO members abstained from the voting, indicating their displeasure with current U.S. and NATO policies.[29]

Following the vote, the political debates in many countries over the UN resolution prompted Germany, Canada, and others to push harder for a reexamination of NATO strategies, in particular NATO's policy of relying on a threat to use nuclear weapons first. Defying outspoken U.S. opposition, the new German Red-Green coalition government, which advocates a nuclear-free world, called for renouncing this normally untouchable tenet of NATO policy. At the NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels in December 1998, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer called for a review of the policy. At the same meeting, Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy stated that the alliance needed to address "the evident tension between what NATO allies say about proliferation and what we do about disarmament."[30] The United States, France, and Britain strongly opposed any reexamination of NATO's first-use policy.

The following year, in November 1999, in a similar middle-powers' resolution in the UN on disarmament, all but two nonnuclear NATO members, including Turkey, abstained. While two of the newly admitted NATO members voted with the United States against the resolution, the third, the Czech Republic, resisted heavy pressure and joined the remaining nonnuclear members in abstaining. The middle powers had begun to assert themselves on nuclear disarmament.[31]

STIGMATIZATION OF WEAPONS

It may be argued that these renewed abolition efforts have little real effect because the dominant powers can easily ignore them. But since the nineteenth century, citizens' movements have pressured governments to change the way they conduct war. Focusing

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[29] Graham, "Strengthening Arms Control."

[30] "Germany Raises No-First-Use Issue at NATO Meeting," *Arms Control Today* (November/December 1998), p. 24.

[31] Graham, "Strengthening Arms Control."

especially on nuclear weapons since 1945 and now moving on to small arms, with remarkable success they have mobilized public opinion behind new prohibitionary norms, delegitimized weapons, and pressured governments to engage in arms control. While only states have the power to reach arms control agreements, citizens' groups have paved the way for such agreements by successfully stigmatizing some weapons, making them normatively unacceptable for use by "civilized" nations.

Although the recent landmines campaign is a prime example of weapons stigmatization, nuclear weapons also present a strong demonstration of how this works. During the Cold War a global grassroots anti-nuclear movement, along with anti-nuclear politics in the UN and other forums, subjected nuclear weapons to an onslaught of criticism. Members of these groups exerted pressure on leaders to justify their nuclear weapons policies and to engage in nuclear arms control. In the 1950s, atmospheric nuclear weapons tests stimulated public concerns over testing and fostered the rise of a grassroots movement against nuclear weapons that came to include prominent intellectuals, scientists, pacifist and church groups, housewives, and students. These popular protests over testing changed the priorities of the Eisenhower administration, encouraging it to adhere to a test moratorium and later to seek a test ban rather than pursue other less feasible arms control options with the Soviet Union. By August 1958, Eisenhower was reacting skeptically to enthusiastic reports about recent weapons tests from his pro-testing advisers: "The new thermonuclear weapons are tremendously powerful; however, they are not . . . as powerful as is world opinion today in obliging the United States to follow certain lines of policy."[32]

Some twenty-five years later, in the early 1980s, the largest anti-nuclear movement ever arose in the United States and Europe to protest the Reagan administration's anti-arms-control policies. It brought down governments in Europe, and the nuclear freeze movement in the United States forced the Reagan administration to return to the arms control negotiating table.[33] When France resumed nuclear testing in 1995, anti-nuclear movements organized a boycott of French wine and other goods, stunning French leaders and the military establishments of the nuclear states by the strong public outcry and forcing France to curtail the testing program.[34]

Although the anti-nuclear movement has not so far achieved its goal of disarmament, its most important contribution has been a normative one: to delegitimize

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[32] Lawrence S. Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954-1970* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 182.

[33] Jeffrey Knopf, *Domestic Society and International Cooperation: The Impact of Protest on U.S. Arms Control Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[34] "Firestorm of Protest Radiates from Pacific," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 11, 1995; "Pacific Critics Use a Megaphone against Chirac: Amplified Denunciations May Finally Get France to Stop Its Nuclear Testing," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 7, 1995.

nuclear weapons as acceptable weapons of war. It has done so through both moral persuasion and social learning. By castigating nuclear weapons as abhorrent weapons unacceptable for use by civilized nations, it has diminished their utility as weapons of war. It has disseminated knowledge about nuclear weapons and their consequences, such as the long-term effects of radiation exposure and fallout from testing, contributing to a steady shift in the perception of nuclear weapons: Once seen primarily as explosive implements, they now appear much more insidious, more akin to chemical or biological weapons. The U.S. government's attempts to suppress knowledge and information about the effects of nuclear weapons in the 1950s and beyond—even to the point of disseminating disinformation—suggest the important of role of nonstate actors as alternative sources of facts and interpretations.[35] Whereas in the 1950s U.S. leaders argued that nuclear weapons should be viewed as conventional, just like any other weapon, no one makes this argument today. This stigmatization of nuclear technology is probably the peace movement's most important contribution to world history.

DELEGITIMIZATION OF SMALL ARMS

This stigmatization politics continues today, not only with respect to nuclear weapons, but increasingly with respect to a range of small arms. Building on the success of the landmines campaign, activists are now turning their attention to other light weapons. In October 1998 in Brussels a coalition of arms control, humanitarian, and development NGOs launched the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) to encourage governments to take greater action to stem the spread and unlawful use of small arms.[36] In addition, in 1995 the international community banned blinding laser weapons, which have never been used in battle. In the wake of the 1999 Kosovo war, humanitarian groups are now also targeting for prohibition cluster bombs, which have been in nations' arsenals for decades.

A common feature of these prohibitionary efforts is that they seek to remove weapons from the exclusive grip of a national security discourse and to recast the discourse of weapons as one of environmental, medical, and humanitarian issues. They link conceptions of "appropriate" weaponry to notions of what it means to be a "civilized" state. In the history of restraints on war, weapons limitations have always been weaker than other normative restraints such as the tradition of noncombatant immunity. This has been explained as a consequence of the fact that keeping civilian

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[35] For an extended discussion of U.S. government secrecy regarding nuclear weapons, and its costs, see Stephen I. Schwartz, ed., *Atomic Audit: The Costs and Consequences of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Since 1940* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1998).

[36] See, in this volume, William Hartung, "The New Business of War," *Ethics & International Affairs* 15, No. 1 (2001), pp. 79–96.

populations *hors de combat* is a deeply held civilizational value, while weapons technologies come and go.[37] But as respect for humanitarian norms becomes an increasingly important requirement for legitimate states, weapons are becoming normatively linked to populations. The discourse of humanitarianism is creating a political space in which moral actors scrutinize—and politicize—weapons technologies themselves.

These trends provide growing evidence of how transnational movements and less powerful states have played an important role in creating global norms that restrain the way states conduct war. Ultimately, these movements challenge the claim of states to be the ultimate arbiters of national security. Governments think in terms of national security paradigms based on the sovereign state. These peace and humanitarian movements argue their position in terms of cosmopolitan, transnational paradigms and values.[38] In politicizing weapons, they seek to hold states accountable for the transnational effects of their national security policies.

ON THE DEFENSIVE

Although the major powers continue to have veto power, they are increasingly put on the defensive in the court of public opinion, and they may even be left behind, as the United States was with regard to the landmines ban. Historically, although many U.S. officials have worked sincerely to restrain the arms race, U.S. actions on arms control have often been driven by international pressures to "show progress" and the desire to fend off international and public demands for more ambitious arms control measures. For example, in a memo drafted by staffers at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency at the end of October 1966, Undersecretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach advised President Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of State Dean Rusk that agreeing to a request from the nonaligned states for "nonuse assurances" would give the United States grounds for resisting proposals for other "disadvantageous limitations" on use of nuclear weapons.[39] In internal negotiations on the 1970 Seabed Treaty, which banned nuclear weapons from the ocean floor, William Foster, director of ACDA, argued in favor of it partly on the grounds that it would "relieve pressure for a comprehensive test ban" and enable us to "fend off more general proposals" that might adversely affect U.S. security interests.[40]

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[37] Martin Van Crevald, *Technology and War: From 2000 B.C. to the Present*, rev. ed. (New York : Free Press, 1991).

[38] Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

[39] Telegram from the Department of State to the U.S. Embassy in Korea, October 31, 1966, *Foreign Relations of the United States* [hereafter *FRUS*] *1964-68*, Vol. 11, pp. 399–400.

[40] Memorandum from the Director of ACDA (Foster) to the Committee of Principals, "Arms Control on the Seabed," April 12, 1968, *FRUS 1964-68*, Vol. 11, p. 579.

More recently, in 2000, Harold Brown, secretary of defense under President Jimmy Carter, wrote that "absent a U.S. arms control policy and corresponding initiatives, the field [will] be left to pressures by other countries and by nongovernmental organizations that often aim their initiatives at dismantling weapons systems of special value to the United States. An example is the treaty to ban land mines; it would delegitimize the defensive mine system on which the United States and South Korea rely for protection against a North Korean invasion. Therefore, an earlier and more proactive U.S. leadership role in arms control, working with our allies and others, is needed to ensure that U.S. interests are preserved."[41] In other words, in the absence of U.S. action, the field will be left to the global peace, arms control, and humanitarian movements.

Maybe this is not such a bad idea.

Conclusion: Toward Sustainable Disarmament

As long as U.S. policy remains caught in the grip of Cold War thinking, the United States will increasingly be on the defensive in the face of pressures from the broad majority of the world, which is growing impatient with the dominant powers' addiction to nuclear weapons. U.S. arms control policy should no longer focus on institutionalizing deterrence, but rather should shift toward "sustainable disarmament." This means pursuing verifiable international agreements to reduce dramatically reliance on nuclear weapons, with elimination as the goal. It means attention to the serious inequities of the current global arms control scheme, and policies that reduce the legitimacy and utility of nuclear weapons for all states, including the current nuclear powers.

Critics argue that disarmament is infeasible, as states will never trust one another enough to disarm. But as the bans on chemical weapons and landmines show, states can indeed engage in disarmament if they choose, as well as establish extensive monitoring systems. It is not easy, and nuclear disarmament is certainly a long-term project, but it is not impossible either. Critics also charge that a disarmed world would be more dangerous, because of the possibility of surreptitious and destabilizing nuclear rearmament in the absence of good political relations.[42] Their fundamental point is that disarmament should not be imposed on a world where political relations are not ready for it.

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[41] Harold Brown, "Is Arms Control Dead?" *Washington Quarterly* 23 (Spring 2000), pp. 173–77.

[42] Charles L. Glaser, "The Flawed Case for Nuclear Disarmament," *Survival* 40 (Spring 1998), pp. 112–28.

This is an important critique, but we could do much more to prepare for that world and, indeed, to bring it about. Disarmament will be built, not imposed. Political relations today, even with all the uncertainties of the post–Cold War world, already permit dramatically lower levels of nuclear weapons. The goal of disarmament will help press states toward decreases in their stockpiles. At the same time, steady progress toward disarmament will help sustain widespread and robust political support for the nonproliferation regime.

In the long run, successful disarmament and arms control will depend on normative change, not simply on strategic bargains or the physical dismantling of weapons. Even if nuclear weapons are never entirely physically abolished, three normative changes could make them "virtually" obsolete: a world of democratic states, the "obsolescence of war," and more robust norms of nonuse. Ideally, the United States will take the lead in fostering these normative changes, for if disarmament is to be achieved and sustained, it will require U.S. leadership. In the coming years, the United States should take advantage of the outstanding opportunity presented to work in tandem with citizens' groups, NATO allies, "middle-power" friends, even Russia and China, and the many other states that support the goal of moving more seriously and in good faith toward a nuclear-free world.