

Reagan and Nuclear Disarmament

*How the Nuclear Freeze movement forced the Reagan administration
to make progress on arms control.*

Lawrence S. Wittner



According to conventional wisdom, the nuclear disarmament breakthroughs of the Reagan era—the INF Treaty (which eliminated intermediate range nuclear missiles from Europe) and the START I Treaty (which reduced United States and Soviet strategic nuclear arsenals)—resulted from the Reagan administration’s nuclear buildup of the 1980s. “We didn’t listen to the nuclear freeze crowd,” George Bush claimed in 1992, “We said ‘peace through strength,’ and it worked.”¹ Some historians, such as John Lewis Gaddis, have adopted a similarly triumphalist tone. But former Soviet leaders, such as Anatoly Chernyaev, Anatoly Dobrynin, and Mikhail Gorbachev, have denied that they were overawed by American military might. So what does explain these nuclear disar-

mament measures? The evidence—including what I learned from recent interviews with Reagan era officials—indicates that President Bush and the other triumphalists are wrong. US government officials did listen to critics of the nuclear arms race, and the result was a major reshaping of the nuclear world.² Including Ronald Reagan himself—had joined the administration. CPD member Richard Perle, the new assistant secretary of defense, told the press: “That we and the Russians could compose our differences, reduce them to treaty constraints ... and then rely on compliance to produce a safer world—I

don’t agree with any of that.” Indeed, as Reagan recalled, “there were some people in the Pentagon who thought in terms of fighting and winning a nuclear war.”³ Reagan’s personal qualms about nuclear weapons were offset by his virulent anti-communism and the hawkish military posture it entailed.

Even the new director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), Eugene Rostow, criticized the arms control process. The founder and chair of the CPD, Rostow characterized the nation’s experience with the SALT I and II treaties as “painful and unsatisfactory,” and defined the need to “reassess the role of arms limitation agreements” as his “first task.”⁴

The Reagan administration commitment to a nuclear buildup and loose talk of nuclear war triggered widespread public anxiety and an outburst of popular protest. In the United States, the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign drew broad public support and won backing from the Democratic Party. Antinuclear agitation was particularly heated in Western Europe. Focused primarily on US deployment of cruise and Pershing missiles in Western Europe (planned for late 1983)

¹ This article is based on printed sources and interviews with numerous Reagan administration officials and others involved in nuclear politics. For space reasons, citations for these interviews and some printed sources have been omitted. A fully referenced version is available at no charge. Write Wittner Footnotes, c/o Boston Review, E53-407, MIT, Cambridge, MA 02139.

² The comments of Aleksandr Bessmertnykh at a conference in Princeton, N.J., in 1993, are sometimes cited to illustrate that the Soviet Union turned to nuclear disarmament thanks to American military pressure. But a full reading of those comments suggests a more nuanced interpretation. See William C. Wohlforth, ed., *Witnesses to the End of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 33-35, 74.

³ Ronald Reagan, *An American Life: The Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), pp. 257-58, 265, 267-68, 550.

⁴ *New York Times*, June 23, 28, 1981.

and Soviet deployment of SS-20 missiles in Eastern Europe (which had already begun), massive disarmament demonstrations erupted. In nearly every West European country, antinuclear groups mushroomed into mass movements, and were supported by social-democratic political parties.

Naturally, the Reaganites were deeply disturbed. According to Thomas Graham, then a high-level ACDA official, the administration regarded the Freeze campaign as “a real threat.” Robert McFarlane, the President’s National Security Advisor, recalled:

We took it as a serious movement that could undermine Congressional support for the [nuclear] modernization program, and ... a serious partisan political threat that could affect the election in '84.... [A] measure of how seriously we took it is how much effort we put into dealing with it, ... a huge effort. Specifically, we organized an interdepartmental group that I chaired in the White House that included representatives from all the relevant agencies—from the CIA, from Defense, from the Joint Chiefs, from the State Department, from the USIA.... I said: “I want you people ... to get out from behind your desks and go to Atlanta, San Francisco, Denver, the fourteen major media markets of this country, and make a quota of appearances.... Everybody in this room and all of your deputies have to make at least four appearances within the next thirty days. And every place you go, you have to do four categories of appearance. When you go to Chicago, you have to hit four audiences: a college setting; a drivetime radio setting; a civic group (an alliance, chamber of commerce kind of thing); and another talk show.” ... It started in the spring of '82 and it carried on through ... about late spring of '83.

The administration was even more apprehensive about the antinuclear tide in Western Europe, and responded with a vigorous campaign of “public diploma-

cy.” The USIA devoted considerable energy to explaining the reason for installing cruise and Pershing missiles and proclaiming America’s peaceful intentions. And top US officials, including Reagan and Bush, fanned out across Western Europe to promote the administration’s nuclear policies.

Administration rhetoric also changed dramatically. In April 1982, Reagan declared publicly that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” He added: “To those who protest against nuclear war, I can only say: ‘I’m with you.’”⁵ In a June address to the German Bundestag, he touched on similar themes. The USIA director reported happily to the Secretary of State, George Shultz, that the “most compelling among the discovered attributes of a new Reagan image was his expression of understanding of the nuclear fears of the peace movement.”⁶

While administration officials thought that their rhetoric would pacify antinuclear sentiment, conservative activists were less sanguine. The official campaign has been “moving the discussions away from our agenda to those of the administration’s opponents,” complained Terry Dolan, chair of the National Conservative Political Action Committee. “The administration hasn’t

⁵ Although Reagan’s first use of this statement appears to have occurred on April 17, 1982, he delivered much the same message at his March 31 press conference. Asked whether a nuclear war would be winnable, he responded: “I don’t believe there could be any winners.” If there were a nuclear war, “everybody would be a loser.” Ronald Reagan, Radio Address of Apr. 17, 1982, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan: Vol. I, January 1 to July 2, 1982* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1983), pp. 487-88.

⁶ “Foreign Media Reaction to Presidential Trip,” “Current Wisdom [1982]” folder, David Gergen Files, Reagan Library, Simi Valley, Calif.; “President’s European Trip” (June 14, 1982), enclosure in Charles Wick to Shultz, July 6, 1982, Case file 448124, FG 298, Subject File, White House Office of Records Management Records, Ronald Reagan Library (hereafter cited as WHORM Records).

co-opted the ‘peace’ movement. The ‘peace’ movement has co-opted the administration.”⁷

Dolan’s jeremiad was overdrawn. Reagan and other top officials fought hard to defeat the Nuclear Freeze, arguing that its adoption would deliver a devastating blow to national security. Sometimes, the President went further. In November 1982, he charged that “Soviet agents” had instigated the Freeze movement. The administration also ferociously lobbied Congress to defeat Freeze resolutions in the House and Senate.

Still, the Reaganites *did* adapt their nuclear arms control policy to the antinuclear mood. During 1981, the Reagan administration formulated the “zero option”: the negotiated withdrawal of all intermediate range missiles from Europe. Some administration officials have argued that this proposal—announced by Reagan on November 18, 1981—was cynically crafted to ensure United States missile deployment, for the Soviet Union was certain to reject a plan to remove its 1,100 missiles in return for a promise not to deploy US missiles that had not yet been built. Graham claimed that the Reagan administration proposed the zero option to “make sure that those negotiations did not succeed, and the deployments would go ahead.” Meanwhile, the zero option would soothe the public opinion.

Though other administration officials denied that the zero option was designed to be rejected, all of them—including Reagan, Perle, McFarlane, Caspar Weinberger, Alexander Haig, and Edwin Meese—emphasized its connection to antinuclear sentiment. “My proposal of the ... zero option sprang out of the realities of nuclear politics in Western Europe,” Reagan recalled, citing the demonstrations and antinuclear opinion. Perle, the author of the zero option, remembered that he had difficulty selling it to Weinberger, for the defense secretary wanted the US missiles deployed and, therefore, “was afraid the Soviets would accept it.” But Weinberger eventually compromised, conceding, as Reagan noted, that the zero option

⁷ Dolan to Michael K. Deaver, July 7, 1982, Case file 095592, ND 016, Subject File, WHORM Records.

would “put the Soviets on the defensive in the European propaganda war.”⁸

Resistance to nuclear weapons also affected US policy toward strategic nuclear arms. By building a new missile, the MX, the administration intended to dramatically expand and modernize the land-based component of its long-range nuclear striking force. But Congress repeatedly rejected the MX missile plan, and the administration ultimately secured funding for only fifty of the two hundred MX missiles it proposed. Recalling the administration’s frustration at the failure to substantially upgrade the US intercontinental ballistic missile force, Shultz lamented: “Given the political climate in the United States, we could not keep pace in modernization, production, and deployment of these deadly weapons.”⁹ The resulting US weakness in strategic missiles heightened the appeal of an arms control agreement to US officials.¹⁰ Also, the Reaganites found that the price of Senate support for funding even the reduced numbers of the MX was a strong commitment to nuclear disarmament. Consequently, the

administration opened strategic arms talks in May 1982, dubbed the goal a Strategic Arms *Reduction* Treaty, and adopted increasingly “flexible” negotiating positions. As McFarlane put it, “you had to have appropriations, and to get them you needed political support, and that meant that you had to have an arms control policy worthy of the name.”

The Reagan administration also faced considerable pressure from allied leaders, battered by the storm of protest in their own countries. Weinberger recalled that “as more and more of the demonstrations were held ... more and more defense ministers urged that more be done” to secure a missile agreement. According to ACDA director Kenneth Adelman, West European governments “were nervous about their public, scared to death.” They proposed all kinds of schemes, including scrapping the zero option and delaying deployment. The West German government warned George Shultz that there must be “a real negotiation” over the missiles, “not just a show.”¹¹ The Dutch government, convinced that it could not secure parliamentary approval of deployment, delayed action until 1985.

Starting in mid-1982, the combined pressures from the public, the antinuclear movement, and US allies had significant effects upon the administration’s position at the INF talks. As Shultz recalled: “In order for the European publics to be convinced to go along with the deployment, they had to feel that there was an honest-to-God negotiation going on, a real and honest one. So, we conducted ourselves that way. We constantly wanted to be in the posture of being reasonable people—tough ... but ready to strike a bargain if one could be reached that was reasonable.” Recognizing the growing desperation of Europe’s NATO leaders, Paul Nitze, the chief US negotiator, went on an informal “walk in the woods” with his Soviet counterpart and suggested abandoning the US deployment of Pershing missiles in exchange for a reduction in the number of Soviet SS-20s. Although this formula eventually collapsed, at the end of December Shultz warned the President

that “our allies could not withstand the heat of political pressure against the installation of our INF missiles unless we, at the same time, were advancing reasonable and stabilizing arms control positions.” By March 1983, Shultz had convinced Reagan to shelve the zero option and propose equivalent missile deployment. When this compromise, too, failed to produce any results—and anti-missile demonstrations convulsed Western Europe—Shultz and the President grew rattled. Convinced, in Shultz’s words, that “we could not leave matters as they stood,” the President decided to give a major speech in which he would talk about building a nuclear-free world. Although administration officials discouraged so radical an approach, Reagan ignored them. On January 16, 1984, he delivered a conciliatory address, declaring that the United States and the Soviet Union had “common interests and the foremost among them is to avoid war and reduce the level of arms.” Indeed, “I support a zero option for all nuclear arms.”¹² Although it is tempting to view this speech as part of the administration’s propaganda campaign, a number of officials—including its writer, Jack Matlock Jr.—have contended that it was meant to be taken seriously by Soviet leaders.¹³

⁸ On the night of Reagan’s “zero option” announcement, Richard Burt, assistant secretary of state, told Mary Kaldor, a leader of the European Nuclear Disarmament campaign, with a chuckle, that “we got the idea from your banners. You know, the ones that say ‘No Cruise, No Pershing, No SS-20.’”

⁹ According to Meese, the administration believed that Congressional reductions in the administration’s MX missile plan kept the United States “in a position of some vulnerability or some deficiency in terms of having a robust nuclear defensive capability.”

¹⁰ Shultz told the Princeton conference: “The United States had a terrible problem with deploying land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. Basically, we couldn’t do it. This was an area of very strong Soviet comparative advantage over us.... So, to me, that always argued very strongly for a hard push on the START negotiations.” Carlucci, also at the event, agreed. “Our difficulty in deploying the MX,” he said, “tended to drive the arms control process.” See Wohlforth, ed., *Witnesses*, pp. 54-56.

¹¹ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993), pp. 137, 149-150.

¹² Schultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 376, 464-67; Reagan, *An American Life*, pp. 590-91; *The U.S.-Soviet Relationship* (No. 537; Washington: US Department of State, 1984). The speech’s emotional conclusion was written by Reagan. See his hand-written draft in SP 833, Subject File, WHORM Records.

¹³ Matlock, the National Security Council’s Soviet specialist, recalled that it was designed to signal the administration’s willingness to end the Cold War and, consequently, it was drafted “with an eye for things that would be acceptable to the Soviet Union.” Although U.S. officials did not view arms control as “the central issue” in United States-Soviet relations, that “was where all the public attention in our country was and in many parts of the administration as well.” Some months earlier, when Matlock was appointed to the NSC staff, he was told: “We want you back because the president’s decided it’s time to negotiate with the Soviets.”

During most of 1984, the presidential election campaign kept the administration on the defensive. Richard Wirthlin, who drafted the Reagan re-election plan, recalled that he and other campaign strategists believed that public fear of nuclear war remained “a huge vulnerability” for the President. And “peace through strength” did not provide “the credibility we were hoping for.” Indeed, during June, July, and early August, they considered the Democratic candidate, Walter Mondale—who championed the Nuclear Freeze—“within striking distance.” Reagan adapted his rhetoric and activities accordingly.¹⁴

Even after Reagan’s re-election, the administration could not breathe easily. “Congress,” the secretary of state warned Reagan, “will not support key weapons systems without meaningful negotiations. Similarly, allied support will be problematic if arms control efforts unravel.”¹⁵ In response, the President reined in administration hardliners.

For some time, Reagan had wanted a summit at which he could meet Soviet leaders and promote a disarmament agreement. Thus, as McFarlane recalled, when Reagan had his chance to talk with the new Soviet Party Secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev, in Geneva in November 1985, “he couldn’t wait.... He was eager.” At the meeting, both men recognized that they could work with one another. In a joint statement, they made new proposals for INF and START treaties and repeated the

¹⁴ Schultz recalled that the President’s speech to the UN General Assembly on September 24, 1984, “was universally regarded as constructive, even conciliatory. There was not a word of criticism of the Soviet Union from the cold warrior.” Four days later, stung by Mondale’s charge that Reagan had not held a summit meeting with any Soviet leader, he brought Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko to the White House, where he was greeted with great fanfare and a throng of photographers from around the world. Taking Gromyko aside, Reagan told him: “My dream is for a world where there are no nuclear weapons.” Schultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 482-84.

¹⁵ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 496-99.

now-familiar mantra: “A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”

In 1986, both leaders pushed their recalcitrant colleagues toward a nuclear disarmament agreement. That January, Gorbachev proposed a program to eliminate all nuclear weapons around the world. To the dismay of US national security officials, Reagan welcomed Gorbachev’s proposal. On January 17, Shultz told the state department’s arms control group to get working “on what a world without nuclear weapons would mean to us” and how to obtain it. “I know that many of you and others around here oppose the objective of eliminating nuclear weapons,” he said, “but the president of the United States doesn’t agree with you, and he has said so on several very public occasions.” Furthermore, “it’s a political hot button.”¹⁶

During the balance of the year, Gorbachev and Reagan swapped disarmament ideas and made plans for another United States-Soviet summit, at Reykjavik. Donald Reagan, the White House Chief of Staff, recalled that some of the President’s advisors were opposed to the meeting. But “the President had been speaking out vigorously on disarmament,” he noted, “and to temporize ... could have incalculable consequences in terms of world opinion.”¹⁷ Although the Reykjavik summit failed to produce a disarmament agreement, each side recognized its appeal. Encouraging Gorbachev, the President told him: “Our people would cheer if we got rid of the missiles.” Gorbachev, in turn, dangled before Reagan the prospect that, with some compromises on his beloved Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), he might become “the peacemaker President.”¹⁸

The break in the disarmament impasse occurred in late February 1987,

¹⁶ Mikhail S. Gorbachev, *Nuclear Disarmament by the Year 2000: A Soviet Program* (New York: Richardson & Steirman, 1986); Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 699-705, 719-20; Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 230.

¹⁷ Donald T. Reagan, *For the Record: From Wall Street to Washington* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), pp. 338-4

when Gorbachev—in response to the advice of antinuclear activists—offered to separate negotiations on an INF treaty from the highly contentious issue of SDI. Notes taken at a Politburo meeting of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in late February 1987 reveal that Gorbachev told his colleagues that “we should make a statement about untying the package on the medium-range missiles. This will be our response to the state of public opinion around the world.”¹⁹ Gorbachev’s action ended any possibility that the Reagan administration could retreat from its disarmament commitments. As Shultz recalled: “If the United States reversed its stand now on our willingness to eliminate INF missiles, after maintaining this position throughout the volatile predeployment period, such a reversal would be political dynamite!”²⁰ Conversely, the Reagan administration realized that a nuclear disarmament agreement would give it a substantial political boost. So Gorbachev’s offer could not be refused, and the INF treaty was signed, with great fanfare, in December 1987.

The nuclear disarmament movement was delighted and claimed credit for the INF treaty, but many conservatives regarded it with fear and distaste. The governments of Britain and West Germany were particularly hostile. “I had always disliked the original INF ‘zero option,’” Margaret Thatcher recalled, but “I had gone along with it in the hope that the Soviets would never accept.” Ultimately, objections from these governments were overcome only by pressure from Washington.

In the United States, the outrage among disarmament opponents was more intense. In a full-page ad placed

¹⁹ Anatoly Chernyaev’s notes from the Politburo sessions of Feb. 23 and 26, 1987, in Vladislav Zubok et al, eds., *Understanding the End of the Cold War: A Compendium of Declassified Documents and Chronology of Events* (Washington: National Security Archive, 1998).

²⁰ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 984-85, 1013.

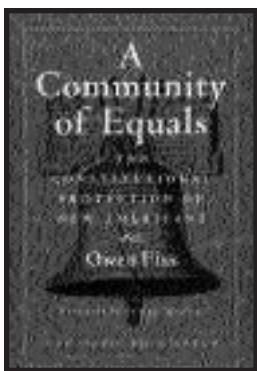
in various publications, the Conservative Caucus denounced the treaty as "appeasement." Robert Dole, the Senate Republican leader, declared, "I don't trust Gorbachev," and accused the President of "stuffing this treaty down the throats of our allies." During treaty hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Jesse Helms assailed the administration for "misstatements and ... misrepresentation." Shultz reported to the President that "the real opposition was all from the GOP side."²¹ Reagan, however, was unmoved by conserva-

tive charges that he had betrayed his principles. His only regret was that his other disarmament venture, the START I Treaty, was not ready for his signature before he left office.

The behavior of the Reagan administration does not sustain the thesis that these nuclear disarmament measures resulted from military strength. Although Reagan was more

²¹ "Appeasement is as Unwise in 1988 as in 1938," Case file 563762, ND 018, Subject File, WHORM Records.

amenable to disarmament than many persons realized, he and other US officials made nuclear disarmament a top priority in response to pressure from antinuclear groups and public opinion. This pressure was both direct and, at times, indirect, as when Congress, anxious NATO allies, and Gorbachev—all influenced by the antinuclear movement—threw their weight behind a nuclear disarmament agreement. If strength lay behind these developments, it was the strength of public resistance to the nuclear arms race. ■



A Community of Equals:

The Constitutional Protection of New Americans

In this book's forum-style political debate, professor of constitutional law Owen Fiss takes issue with the United States' social and political treatment of immigrant aliens, arguing that it is high time for American society to live up to the promise of the Equal Protection Clause and avoid discrimination against non-citizens. Eleven other scholars and professors respond to Fiss' argument, bringing to the table the most important issues surrounding the debate about immigration and citizenship in the United States today. *Beacon Press, \$12. Call 1-800-225-3362 to order.*

Gorbachev's Nuclear Learning

How the Soviet leader became a nuclear abolitionist.

Vladislav M. Zubok

In a 1995 political profile of Mikhail Gorbachev, the late Dmitry Volkogonov said: "One of the historical, giant achievements of *perestroika* was, naturally, the removal in effect of the threat of world nuclear war. This achievement has not yet been fully appreciated."¹ Four years later, former Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union Eduard Shevardnadze told me in an interview: "I recall [when, in the 1980s] the leading scholars and scientists believed that if humanity does not resolve its problems, there could be nuclear disaster. We understood that nuclear disarmament was mandatory, and that we could put an end to the danger only through political methods."

For Gorbachev and the new cohort of Soviet leaders that came to power with him in 1985, the threat of nuclear disaster was indeed an important stimulus for disarmament. Moreover, the worldwide antinuclear movement influenced the Gorbachev leadership, as it influenced the Reagan administration (see Lawrence Wittner's contribution to the forum). But the motives for nuclear disarmament were by no means confined to such external factors. Equally, if not more, important in explaining the extraordinary developments at the end of the Cold War was the reformist agenda, "new thinking," and personality of Mikhail Gorbachev.

Nuclear Neophyte
Josef Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, and Leonid Brezhnev were each obsessed with strategic nuclear armaments. They

¹ Dmitry Volkogonov, *Sam vozhdai: galereia liderov SSSR* [Seven Rulers: A Gallery of the Leaders of the USSR] (Moscow: Novostki, 1995), vol. 2.

were generous patrons of the military-industrial complex, and understood the nuts-and-bolts of the Soviet military power. In contrast, Gorbachev came into contact with nuclear issues late in his life, after he became a full Politburo member and only five years before he became the General Secretary of the CPSU in March 1985. As a party secretary from an agricultural region, Gorbachev had no occasion to deal with those issues. After Yuri Andropov became the General Secretary in November 1982, he added Gorbachev to the inner circle of the Politburo, which discussed the matters of special state importance. Still, the nuts-and-bolts of nuclear issues remained the exclusive purview of the General Secretary and of Minister of Defense Dmitry Ustinov, a powerful master of the Soviet military-industrial complex. But Ustinov died in December 1984. Four months later Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU and inherited all the responsibilities of the supreme commander and the possessor of "nuclear button."

In an interview with Russian scientist Yuri Smirnov in August 1994 Gorbachev said that when he received "the button," he did not experience any drama: "Perhaps there was emotional side to it. . . . But it was rectified by my knowledge of the might that had been accumulated. One-thousandth of this might was enough to destroy all living things on earth. And I knew the report on 'nuclear winter.'" But he did eventually experience something like a moral revulsion when he realized his personal responsibility for the accumulation and possible use of nuclear weapons. "I recall my new colleagues—reformers in the Politburo, whom I commissioned as the General Secretary [to deal with nuclear issues] and who began to receive those documents—coming and sharing their

impressions with me," he said. "They seemed to have known everything—figures that were bandied about, the conclusions of the scientists. But when you personally have to sign this kind of documents, this is quite a different matter. And some of them came to me in a state of shock."

Perhaps as a result of this inner moral repugnance, Gorbachev felt no motivation to learn more than he "needed" about the Soviet nuclear arsenal, the strategic arms race, and issues of strategic stability. One minister recalls a meeting with Gorbachev in 1987 to discuss the Soviet response to Ronald Reagan's "Strategic Defense Initiative" (SDI). He maintains that Gorbachev was not interested in nuts and bolts of missile technology. At some point, Gorbachev asked if Reagan had a point in asking if strategic missiles could really be turned back after launch. In another, even more spectacular episode, Gorbachev participated in a simulation of a Soviet response to a nuclear attack. He explained: "From the central control panel came the signal: missiles are flying towards our country, make a decision. Minute after minute passes, information pours in. I have to give the command for a strike of retaliation. . . . I said: 'I will not press the button even for training purposes.'"²

Different methods can be used to minimize "discomfort" about nuclear weapons and remove doubts about their usability. In the United States, the "nuclear culture" developed by a group of

² Interview of Mikhail Gorbachev by Yuri Smirnov, August 23, 1994. Cited in V. B. Adamsky and Yuri N. Smirnov, *Science and Society: History of the Soviet Atomic Project, 1940s-1950s* (Moscow: Kurchatov Institute Publishing Center, 1997), p. 333.

“nuclear priests”—the wizards of Armageddon—played a large role. They managed to create an aura of rationality around nuclear weapons and achieved a compromise with morality by arguing that nuclear weapons were the best guardian of peace. Some elements of this “nuclear ideology” were shared by the Soviet leadership and the military elite. But it was not deeply rooted in the Soviet political and military establishment, most of whose members had never fully grasped the intricacies of nuclear deterrence. The real backbone of Soviet leaders’ attitude to nuclear issues was their experience of the early phases of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. This experience fed their determination never again to be caught unprepared or with an inferior military arsenal. They saw the Soviet nuclear program as the heroic achievement of Soviet science, industries, and people, and held the firm conviction that nuclear parity with the United States should be maintained at any cost. Moreover, any notion of “immoral equivalence” between Soviet and American nuclear arsenals was angrily repudiated and cognitively suppressed. Beginning in the early 1980s, the pre-Gorbachev leadership repeatedly proclaimed that victory in nuclear war was impossible. But it continued to build Soviet strategic nuclear forces with an implicit aim of matching and, if possible, surpassing the United States arsenal.

To be sure, the leadership also realized the dangers and costs of the cycle of nuclear build-up. This realization motivated Brezhnev to conduct arms control talks with Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter in the 1970s. After Brezhnev’s death there remained a powerful group of proponents of arms control and reductions in Soviet political leadership and bureaucracies; this group included Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, his first deputy Georgy M. Kornienko, head of the General Staff Sergei F. Akhromeyev, and a group of professional arms control negotiators (*peregovorshchiki*). The dominant force behind this group was the General Staff and those diplomats (Gromyko, Akhromeyev, Kornienko) who shared concerns of the military establishment.

In general, by the time Gorbachev came to power, there was no opposition

in the Politburo to arms talks; on the contrary, the Politburo wanted to resume arms talks with the United States. In particular, Politburo members were concerned with two issues: the SDI and the United States deployment of Pershing missiles in Western Europe. These concerns led to two competing positions on the future of Soviet-American talks. One line was to focus on strategic missiles and medium-range missiles in Europe as the most probable areas of agreement. Others focused on the SDI and the danger that an “arms race in space” presented to the whole regime of strategic parity. The proponents of the second position were the General Staff and its allies in the foreign ministry, including Gromyko.

Gorbachev, at first, did not take a stand on these issues. But the new General Secretary had a different political agenda and this shaped his attitudes to the problem of nuclear weapons and security. He and his entourage wanted to reform the Soviet Union, to lead the country out of the dangerous deadlock of “stagnation.” In the opinion of the reformers around Gorbachev, the heavy emphasis by the Brezhnev leadership on achieving strategic parity with the United States had prevented projects of domestic restructuring and blocked all attempts to promote non-military branches of the economy and raise standards of living. Gorbachev wanted to return to these projects and bring them to fruition. And advancing those domestic concerns meant stopping the arms race.

Among his supporters in this regard were Shevardnadze, Aleksandr Yakovlev (who became a Central Committee secretary for ideological matters and a Politburo member in February 1986), and Anatoly Chernyaev (who became a personal foreign policy assistant of the General Secretary, also in February 1986). Later they took a strong stand in favor of liberalization and reconciliation with the West. But even the members of Gorbachev’s Politburo who would later represent a more conservative line on domestic reforms and ideology—Gromyko, Yegor Ligachev, Nikolai Ryzhkov, Vladimir Dolgikh, Vitaly Vorotnikov—wholeheartedly supported the steps towards nuclear disarmament. Akhromeyev, Kornienko, and other arms control professionals also, in their

own way, supported the idea of disarmament—after all, they thought, the United States, not the Soviet Union, needed nuclear weapons to ensure its security goals around the world. Chernyaev recalls a common belief that “one can remove a war threat by focusing only on the issue of disarmament.”³

The shift from military preparedness to domestic reforms and disarmament, from orthodoxy to new thinking, first appeared in the foreign policy segment of Gorbachev’s speech at the Party Congress in February 1986, which contained the key principle of interdependence in the nuclear age. But it was more fully revealed in a “secret” speech to the senior personnel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in late May 1986. There he said: “Peace is the value above anything. In the nuclear-cum-space era a world war is the absolute evil. It cannot be won, as well as the arms race. . . . The threat of nuclear war cannot be ignored when one discusses the prospects of world class struggle.”⁴ Significantly, Gorbachev no longer considered nuclear-strategic parity as the crucial *and sufficient* guarantee of peace. And he understood that a constant struggle for parity was incompatible with serious reform.

This shift, however, took time. International tension, the hostile rhetoric and military buildup by the Reagan administration, and a scarcity of contacts between West and East in 1985-86 did not provide a favorable environment for a shift from the “hard-line” to a more conciliatory, non-militarist mentality. Until the end of 1985 Gorbachev was preoccupied with simply reviving United States-Soviet arms talks. At the Soviet-American summit in Geneva in November 1985 the mutual mistrust between Gorbachev and Reagan mandated a minimalist agenda. Reagan’s advisor on negotiation strategy with the Soviets was surprised when Gorbachev signed with Reagan a statement that “a nuclear war could not be won and must never be

³ Anatoly Chernyaev, “Fenomen Gorbacheva v kontekste liderstva” [Phenomenon of Gorbachev as Leader], *Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn* 7 (1993): p. 57.

⁴ Mikhail S. Gorbachev, *Gody trudnykh reshenii* (Moscow: Alfa-print,

fought.” He interpreted it as “a major reversal of Soviet policy.” The irony was that the principled agreement about it had become an undisputed consensus in the Politburo since the détente of the 1970s. Soviet guidelines for the Geneva summit also mentioned it as “the maximum what one could get” from the Reagan leadership.

Only after Geneva did the General Secretary feel free to begin formulating a new vision of security that corresponded with his reformist preferences. Nuclear disarmament became its cornerstone.

First Steps

After Geneva, a strong political momentum emerged for new initiatives, since Gorbachev was to deliver a policy address to the 26th Party Congress in February 1986. On New Year’s Eve, he met in Moscow with all Soviet arms negotiators. He asked for fresh ideas and approaches, and they, frustrated with years of fruitless talks with the West, eagerly shared them with him. Then he demanded that they should repeat them in front of the entire Politburo. At the same time Kornienko and Akhromeyev plotted, apart from the rest of the arms control community, to present Gorbachev with an attractive “comprehensive” plan of complete nuclear disarmament by 2000. In the end, they carried the day and persuaded Gorbachev (who then left for vacation in Pitsunda on the Black Sea) to approve of their idea. Returning from vacation, he announced the plan to the world and inserted it into the foreign policy section of his political report to the 27th Congress of the CPSU. The Soviet leader began to speak about the need for “new thinking” and, as seen in retrospect, made the total abolition of nuclear weapons a pillar of this thinking.

Despite these large ambitions, Gorbachev and his immediate entourage lacked any alternative broad picture of Soviet security. In particular, he could not ignore the the SDI challenge. In November 1985, at the Geneva summit, Gorbachev still could not tell what was on Reagan’s mind when he spoke of the the SDI: Was it a fantasy, a means of pressing the USSR into diplomatic concessions? Or was it “an awkward attempt to lull us into complacency, while

bringing to fruition the crazy idea” of a first strike?⁵ A witness recalls Gorbachev was “almost embarrassed” by the failure of his irresistible charm on Reagan, and was bothered by a huge chasm between United States and Soviet positions, perceptions, and logic. He said in a narrow circle: “What is this President doing? He would be a good dacha neighbor, but as a political partner he leaves a dismal impression.”⁶

The perception of the SDI as a threat to Soviet security continued to haunt Gorbachev throughout 1986. The recommendations of the commission of scientists under Evgeny P. Velikhov to study feasibility of “a Soviet SDI” are still unavailable, but there is no evidence to conclude, as some hard-line US experts have, that Reagan’s “vision” left the Soviets desperate and in panic, since they could not emulate it. Rather, according to Kornienko and Chernyaev, there are indirect indications that the Velikhov commission waffled. Some Soviet arms designers considered the SDI to be a bluff, but at the same time asked for money to develop new military technologies. Beginning in 1983, Andropov and Ustinov had authorized research on “asymmetrical response” to the SDI. At first, Soviet designers and scientists produced two hundred “options,” then reduced them to thirty. Those possibilities, they calculated, would cost to the Soviet economy only 10 percent of the projected cost of American program.

No wonder that Gorbachev, lacking professional understanding of the issue, could not bring himself to dismiss SDI as a long-term threat. At the same time, unlike the previous leadership, he also regarded SDI as an additional rationale for the nuclear disarmament. In March 1986, Gorbachev suggested at the Politburo: “Maybe we should just stop being afraid of the SDI! Of course, we cannot be indifferent to this dangerous program. But [the people of the US mili-

⁵ Gorbachev, *Zhizn i reformy*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Novosti, 1995), p. 15.

⁶ In private and to the Politburo he called Reagan “a troglodyte,” “caveman,” the person steeped in most primitive anti-communism. *Zhizn i reformy*, vol. 2, p. 15.

tary-industrial complex] are betting precisely on the fact that the USSR is afraid of the SDI—in the moral, economic, political, and military sense. That is why they are putting pressure on us—to exhaust us. And we decided to say: yes, we are against the SDI, because we are in favor of abolishing nuclear weapons. But for us this is a problem not of fear, but of responsibility, because the consequences would be unpredictable.”⁷

While the SDI kept Gorbachev on the fence between nuclear orthodoxy and his abolitionist instincts, the Chernobyl nuclear reactor explosion in April 1986 forced his hand. The accident, its global discussion, and disastrous fallout across huge Soviet areas shattered the Soviet militarized mentality to the core. The scale of post-catastrophe mobilization of troops and economic resources and the resettlement of population reminded many of the high-placed government and military officials of the Great Patriotic War. Yet, as Robert English correctly points out, “Chernobyl’s message was the opposite” of the message of the war. While the latter had been used by the Soviet regime for decades to tout military buildup and preparedness, the lessons of Chernobyl called for abrogation of secrecy and xenophobia, for fundamental rethinking of security in the nuclear age. In political terms, Gorbachev used Chernobyl to undercut the very basis of the nuclear orthodoxy: the heroic and romantic image of Soviet nuclear power.

The catastrophe for the first time induced the Soviet leadership to look at the task of nuclear disarmament as a moral imperative independent of political calculations. In Shevardnadze’s later words, the tragedy “tore the blindfold from our eyes” and “convinced us that morality and politics could not diverge.” For the first time, the Soviet leadership allowed the media to pursue serious public debates about nuclear dangers. The result was a surge of antinuclear sentiments in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev also immediately sensed that Chernobyl would increase antinuclear momentum

⁷ Anatoly Chernyaev’s notes from the Politburo, March 24, 1986, The Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow, Opus 2, File 1.

in the West. He tested his new argument on Richard Nixon when the former president visited Moscow: "Even if one country would constantly be arming itself, and the other would do nothing, then this first country still would gain nothing. For the weak side may simply detonate all its nuclear devices, even on its own territory, and it would mean suicide for it and a slow killing for the adversary."⁸ This was a type of argument that Gorbachev would soon codify in his "new thinking."

Reykjavik

Immediately after Chernobyl, Gorbachev decided to achieve a breakthrough in strategic arms control. At first, this determination led to the successful completion of the Stockholm talks on verification and trust. The Soviets accepted, for the first time in arms control history, on-site inspections for conventional weapons; this later proved to be essential for the implementation of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty.

The Pershings in Western Europe, with their extremely short flight-time, remained the most destabilizing and threatening weapon for the Kremlin. In the summer of 1986, a group of leading Soviet military experts presented a report on the danger of US intermediate nuclear forces in Europe. The idea was to talk to the United States about full liquidation of both the Pershings and the SS-20s, and the proponents asked for political support against the Soviet military establishment that objected to it. Gorbachev said he would support it. In the opinion of one observer, "this was the threshold, from where the practical work on reduction of nuclear armaments began."⁹

Once again, Gorbachev needed a more comprehensive program than the

limited negotiations on the INF. In August, he came up with an idea of an emergency arms control summit with Reagan at Reykjavik, Iceland. The preparations for Reykjavik were marked by several new steps toward a new Soviet disarmament policy—one that would abandon the goal of strict parity between the Soviet Union and *all* of its strategic opponents. In preparation for the summit, Gorbachev announced, without consulting the military, that he would exclude British and French nuclear forces from the equation at the talks with Americans. Moreover, picking several points out of the January 1986 plan for disarmament, he authorized 50 percent cuts on Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles, including the "heaviest" ones, which had caused considerable concern in the United States since the 1970s. If implemented, this package would have produced disproportionately larger cuts on the Soviet side, in what was the most treasured part of Soviet strategic arsenal.

In preparations for Reykjavik, Gorbachev persuaded the civilian and military leadership to present not just a proposal on INF elimination, but "the package" that would include strategic weapons and the SDI. He justified this approach as a bold step to "to prevent the next round of the arms race." And he argued that the USSR could not afford a traditional tit-for-tat response to Reagan's challenge: "[We] will be pulled into an arms race that is beyond our capabilities, and we will lose it, because we are at the limit of our capabilities. Moreover, we can expect that Japan and [West Germany] could very soon join the American potential.... If the new round begins, the pressure on our economy will be unbelievable."¹⁰ British scholar Archie Brown noticed that, at this moment, the SDI was not so much a security concern for Gorbachev as "a further argument for the kind of policy innovation which would break the deadlock and end the vicious spiral of arms race."

The preparations for Reykjavik may be considered a turning point in Gorbachev's shift to new thinking not only on the issue of nuclear disarmament, but also in his overall political agenda, including issues of security and domestic reform. For the first time that September, he blamed the lack of economic progress and the continuing social stagnation on "the headquarters" of local Soviet and party organizations. In a fateful move for his political career and the future of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev decided to liberalize the Soviet political system, to open the gates for "glasnost," and, above all, to create a new base of support for his perestroika in Soviet society—an alternative to the Communist Party. Simultaneously, he began to regard nuclear disarmament not only as a desirable long-term goal, but also as a tool to achieve a spectacular "breakthrough" in Soviet-American relations and to end the Cold War with the West.

The summit began with a conversation between the two leaders without ministers and advisers. Even before the formal talks began, Gorbachev assured Reagan that he would support the "ultimate liquidation of nuclear weapons" on the principle of "equal security." He also said he would go "as far on the matter of verification as would be necessary" to remove American doubts.¹¹ For the first time, the remarkable antinuclear synergy between Gorbachev and Reagan revealed itself. In the next two days Reagan and Gorbachev quickly agreed on more points of disarmament than all their predecessors combined. According to American experts, Gorbachev made more concessions than they had received from the Soviet Union in 25 years. For his part, Reagan, without bothering to consult with his secretary of state, the Pentagon, or allies, suggested a complete elimination of nuclear weapons by 1996. Gorbachev agreed, but demanded only one concession: renunciation of any plans to test components of missile defense in space. Reagan refused and the summit collapsed.

⁸ Anatoly Chernyaev, *Shest let s Gorbachevym* [Six years with Gorbachev] (Moscow: Progress-Kultura, 1993), p. 104.

⁹ Remark at the International Oral History Conference, "The Crash of the Bipolar World: Soviet Factor, 1988-91," Moscow, June 21-22, 1999. Transcript prepared by Oleg Skvortsov and Ilya Gaiduk (courtesy of Oleg Skvortsov), p. 67.

¹⁰ Politburo Sessions October 4 and 8, 1986, notes of Anatoly Chernyaev, the Archive of Gorbachev Foundation, Fund 2, Opis 1.

¹¹ Gorbachev-Reagan Talks at Reykjavik, a morning talk on October 11, 1986, *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnie ot-nosheniia*, no. 4, 1993, p. 81-83.

This episode revealed with utmost clarity that Gorbachev's "learning" had strict limits. Clearly, had he proposed just talks on INF to Reagan, the summit would have ended positively. His "package" approach guaranteed the deadlock. In an unconscious mirror-image projection of his own situation, he complained in Moscow that the US President had no capacity "to break free from the dependence on the military-industrial complex." At a Politburo he complained that Reagan "is unable to handle his gang" and "appears to be a liar."¹²

But the drama of Reykjavik constituted what, in retrospect, Gorbachev defined as a "breakthrough." Those days of October 1986 produced on him a psychological effect that was "comparable to Chernobyl": it shook the foundations "of the post-war world." "After Reykjavik," said Gorbachev to his Politburo colleagues, "we rose to the new level of understanding of the disarmament issues. Those options that were advanced in the past are now buried. We have a new platform ... a qualitatively new situation. The discussion on nuclear disarmament has advanced to the new, higher level, from which we must expand further the struggle for liquidation and full ban on nuclear weapons, to continue actively our peace offensive."

The Sources of New Thinking

At that crucial time, two groups, in addition to the reform-minded entourage, assisted Gorbachev in his breakthrough to radical disarmament approaches. One was the nuclear "freeze" movement among scientists in the West, which found echo among Soviet intellectuals. The themes of this movement resonated in Moscow long before Gorbachev came to power. In 1982-83 some high-placed political analysts in Moscow began to write about "new thinking" in "the nuclear age," implicitly attacking both "realist" and "class-based" rationales for nuclear arms race. The key idea of global interdependence and of the indivisibility of security in the nuclear age also began

to circulate at that time, and Georgi Shakhnazarov, senior official of the Central Committee's international department, dared to defend it in print. The Soviet leadership established "The Committee for Peace, Against Nuclear Threat," headed by Roald Sagdeyev, to expand controlled contacts with Western "nuclear freeze" activists. Along all these channels, the ideas of Western nuclear abolitionists reached the Soviet leadership. Gorbachev in 1985 appealed publicly to The Union of Concerned Scientists with proposals to stop the arms race. And, after Geneva, Gorbachev included academics Evgeny Velikhov, Sagdeyev, and Georgi Arbatov in his inner group of his advisers.

In the propaganda campaign for extending the moratorium on nuclear testing, Gorbachev and his advisers used channels of "public diplomacy" in order to garner support of the Western "freeze" audience. While there was probably a manipulative side to those contacts, Gorbachev and his scientist advisers were also imbued with a genuine concern to find kindred souls. American historian Matthew Evangelista concludes that "the transitional disarmament movement deserves credit not only for the initial idea of the Soviet moratorium but especially for its continuation [from July 1985 until February 1987] in the fact of the US refusal to join." After Reykjavik, Gorbachev approved preparations for the Moscow International Forum for a Nuclear Weapon-Free World. And when this forum opened in February 1987, he appealed to "the giant social movement" against nuclear weapons for support for both Soviet reforms and disarmament. This was the first time that Gorbachev implied that both tasks had the common foundation in the new thinking, the principles of interdependence and mutual trust.

The second group that helped shape Gorbachev's antinuclear convictions consisted of foreign, mostly Western, statesmen, including British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, French President Francois Mitterand, US Secretary of State George Schultz, and, of course, Ronald Reagan. These meetings helped Gorbachev to discard his Cold War fears of the West—and of the American political system—and to realize, gradually and with setbacks, that one could do business with Reagan and that the US President, unlike

his entourage, might actually be a nuclear abolitionist.

At a meeting between Gorbachev and Mitterand in July 1986, Gorbachev attacked Reagan and "the forces and groupings that brought him to power" for promoting the SDI and failing to understand new security needs of humanity. In response, Mitterand admitted that "the military-industrial complex might be applying strong pressure on the US administration." At the same time, he added, "one should keep in mind that [although] Reagan is conditioned by his own milieu, he is not without common sense and intuition." He appealed to Gorbachev not to assess the political setup in the United States "as something set in stone. The situation may change." He also catered to Gorbachev's genuine security concerns, posing as a middleman between the Soviet Union and Americans. The exchange between Mitterand and Gorbachev proceeded as follows:

Mitterand: I told [Reagan]: Are you interested that the Soviet Union had a chance to transfer more resources to the goals of economic development at the cost of reduction of military expenditures in its budget? Or, on the contrary, the United States seeks to exhaust the Soviet Union through arms race, to uproot the USSR, to force the Soviet leadership to invest more and more means to the non-productive expenditures, to armaments? I told Reagan frankly ... that the first choice would mean war, and the second—peace.

Gorbachev: This is very important information.... Our views on this are quite close."

Mitterand: Really, non-productive expenditures know no limit but war. People will not tolerate for long the transfer of the already limited resources to the production of something that cannot be used for feeding, clothing, education, lodging. In essence, the majority of American politicians stand for negotia-

¹² Anatoly Chernyaev's notes of Gorbachev's thinking about Reykjavik (including on the plane on his way back), October 12, 1986, Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow.

tions. The risk of war is too obvious for them.

Gorbachev: I note this consideration as yet another important moment in our conversation.¹³

And in his conversation with Nixon, who had a good standing among Soviet leaders as the architect of “détente” in the 1970s, Gorbachev was told that:

You are right that there are people in the [Reagan] administration that do not want agreements with the Soviet Union. It seems to them that if they can isolate the Soviet Union diplomatically, apply economic pressure on it, achieve military superiority, then the Soviet order would collapse. Of course, this is not going to happen. During many years Reagan, as you know, was considered a part of the grouping that shared these views. However, today he is not one of them. I learned from conversations with him that the meeting with you had a slow, but undeniable impact on the evolution of his thoughts.¹⁴

Margaret Thatcher also became an important sparring partner of Gorbachev; she defended nuclear orthodoxy and he attacked it with full force. Thatcher fully grasped the double-sided idea of reform and disarmament promoted by Gorbachev, but categorically rejected the idea of a nuclear-free world as a dangerous romantic utopia. In retrospect, as one observer of the meetings has said, Thatcher was right, for the process of disarmament followed closer to her vision. But, as Chernyaev points out, “had Gorbachev been not so pushy, so implacable in his desire to prove to all that

nuclear weapons are an absolute evil and one cannot not build world politics on it, then the process would never have begun at all, and we even today would not have had that really historic turn in the arms race that, after all, had taken place.”¹⁵

There were no serious domestic counter-forces. The Politburo fully supported Gorbachev’s disarmament course and activism. The discussion of the results of the Reykjavik summit at the Politburo in October 1986 reveals that Gorbachev skillfully used the broad political consensus among his colleagues on the need to remove the threat of nuclear war and to transfer resources from arms race to reconstruction of Soviet economy. He stressed the huge propagandistic victory and the impact of his post-summit press-conference on world public opinion, particularly on antinuclear peace movements. At the same time he prudently assured the military that “one must not let pacifist sentiments penetrate the armed forces and the military industries. It is important to do everything to ensure the inevitability of our retaliatory strike. In this regard, we should not touch our allocations for defense. We also should pay special attention to the issues regarding our possible response to the SDI.”¹⁶

Advocates of separate talks on the elimination of the INF hailed Gorbachev’s performance and admitted that his “package approach” was the correct one. Gromyko and KGB chairman Viktor Chebrykov also praised a great political propagandist victory. With such support from the so-called “hard-liners” and in the aura of international and domestic fame of a “peace-maker and disarmarmer,” Gorbachev had a huge political capital, in addition to the power of the post, to be able to lead the reluctant and torn Reagan administration further down the road of practical disarmament measures.

The INF Talks

During the Cold War, an asymmetrical approach to disarmament was blocked not so much by domestic politics as by old security concepts. As the leader with absolute political power, Gorbachev could squash the opposition, but could not ignore security fears, particularly as he authorized glasnost and public debates on security issues. From the very beginning, progress on disarmament required “new thinking”—that is, the rejection of basic pillars of official communist ideology. One was the dictum of German military thinker Carl von Clausewitz about war (and preparation for it) as the continuation of policy by other means. Another was the thesis that “class struggle” (that is, Soviet security interests seen in conflict with the interests of the capitalist world) was above the “common human interests.” Both the agreement on the INF with the United States and the new military doctrine required radical ideological change.

As early as 1986, Gorbachev began to advance cautiously the notion of “new thinking” and deny the legitimacy of use of military force in the nuclear age. But the majority of the military and bureaucracy was still imbued with Cold War thinking. A veteran head of the Central Committee’s international department, Boris Ponomarev, fulminated privately: “What is this ‘new thinking’? Let the Americans change their thinking.... What are you trying to do to our foreign policy? Are you against [military] strength, which is the only language that imperialism understands?”¹⁷

During 1986, Gorbachev cautiously began to overcome the opposition among the Soviet military to the disarmament ideas that went beyond the principle of strict parity. Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Kornienko, a most principled adherent to this mentality, was gradually eased out of the loop by Gorbachev and Shevardnadze. Finally, he had to leave the foreign

¹³ *Zapis besedi M. S. Gorbacheva s prezidentom F. Mitteranom* [Record of conversation of Gorbachev with Mitterand], July 7, 1986. Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow.

¹⁴ *Zapis besedi M. S. Gorbacheva s bivshim prezidentom Ssha R. Niksonom*, July 17, 1986. Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow.

¹⁵ Chernyaev, *Shest let s Gorbachevym*, pp. 137-38.

¹⁶ Record of the session of the CC CPSU Politburo, October 14, 1986, the Volkonov Papers in the Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

¹⁷ Chernyaev, *Shest let s Gorbachevym*, p. 152. See also William E. Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 96-97.

ministry for a peripheral position at the international department of the Central Committee. Marshal Akhromeyev and other military leaders attempted to resist on-site inspections and the proposal to eliminate SS-20s, but, under the pressure from the political leadership (who used both military and party discipline to remonstrate the military), this resistance quickly collapsed. After Reykjavik, Akhromeyev, increasingly upset with the turn of events, tried to resign; Gorbachev appealed to his patriotic feelings and sense of duty and offered him the job of personal arms control adviser. Subsequently, Akhromeyev played a crucial role in convincing the suspicious military establishment to support new disarmament initiatives.

His first assignment was to introduce to the military a new doctrine that would justify deep unilateral cuts in Soviet conventional and nuclear forces stationed in Europe. Soon after the summit, Akhromeyev presented a draft to the Academy of the General Staff, where it produced a state of profound shock and muffled "cries of treason." The defense council approved the new doctrine.

At the same time, as part of the campaign to expand support of Soviet disarmament policy among Western scientific community and antinuclear liberals, Gorbachev argued for reopening and reassessing state policies on political prisoners and "human rights" in general. Reopening the issue of imprisoned "dissidents" had larger, perhaps crucial, implications for domestic reforms. After Reykjavik, the KGB, following Gorbachev's instructions, allowed Andrei Sakharov, a well-known opponent of the SDI, to return from exile in the city of Gor'ky (Nizhny Novgorod).

As Gorbachev's foreign policy assistant commented, since the end of 1986 "the process of disarmament" that was initially meant to "provide external conditions" for *perestroika* began to turn into its driving engine, at least in the ideological spheres. By all indications, Gorbachev was fully aware of this interconnection: the progress of *glasnost* went in lockstep with his initiatives on disarmament. Instead of waiting, Gorbachev decided to accept the American "double zero" proposal of 1982, which

would have implied asymmetrically large cuts of Soviet medium-range missiles.

Gorbachev defines as "one of the turning points" his April 1987 talks in Moscow with US Secretary of State George Schultz. The talks revealed two very different philosophical and practical positions. Gorbachev already operated from the high idealistic precepts of new thinking and castigated the principle of "nuclear parity." Schultz based his tactics on the orthodox vision of nuclear balance, interpreting it, of course, from a US angle. Political realities played a role as well: Schultz, a cautious advocate of arms reductions, had to look over his shoulder at his many enemies and critics at home. When Gorbachev called the nuclear parity "a casuistry," Schultz objected:

Schultz: It should be preserved, for I, perhaps with the help of Ambassador [Paul] Nitze would have to defend the forthcoming agreement before the Senate during its ratification."

Gorbachev: Perhaps we should send our people to help you?

Schultz: Only if they will say that the agreement is not advantageous to the USSR. [Laughter.] Perhaps this will help.¹⁸

Gorbachev knew all too well that he, unlike Reagan or Schultz, did not face at that time any domestic opposition to disarmament. Because of his immense power he could safely take a disarmament initiative, totally ignoring or circumventing the opinion of crucial bureaucratic constituencies, particularly the military. In a demonstration of this arbitrary power, during the meeting with Secretary of State George Schultz, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze agreed to liquidate not only all SS-20s stationed in Europe and Asia, but also the newly deployed tactical SS-23s (known as Oka). Formally, this missile tested at 450 kilo-

¹⁸ Gorbachev, *Zhizn i reformy*, vol. 2, pp. 35-47.

meters range, and was out of the confines of the INF discussion. The Americans pocketed this concession without blinking. (George Shultz does not even mention the episode in his memoirs.) But the top military brass, always the stalwarts of nuclear parity, were shocked. They claimed that Shevardnadze intentionally deceived Gorbachev by telling him that the military would not object to the elimination of Oka.

For the first time, a rift opened up between the foreign minister and the military establishment. The old core of the military protested against "inappropriate concessions" to the Americans. But Gorbachev combined stick and carrot to get rid of this obstacle. On one hand, he let Akhromeyev work with the military with facts and figures in-hand, trying to persuade them. On the other, he moved to purge the military establishment. Valentin Varennikov, initially the most resolute critic of Shevardnadze's "concessions," was sent to head Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Then an ideal pretext came on May 28, 1987, when German amateur pilot Mathias Rust flew his single-engine Sessna from Finland to Moscow, made several circles over the Kremlin in the immediate vicinity to Gorbachev's office, and then landed on the Red Square. Shevardnadze and the KGB's Chebrykov suggested that Rust should not be arrested for his crime and the whole incident should be portrayed as "a peace mission."

Gorbachev, however, preferred to give the military establishment a humiliating whipping at the Politburo. Like the leaders of the Soviet nuclear complex after Chernobyl, the top Soviet military were blamed for laxness, grave shortcomings, and professional inadequacy. Minister of Defense Sergei Sokolov resigned on the spot, and more than 150 Soviet officers were tried in court and removed from their posts. In this political execution Gorbachev was assisted by Akhromeyev and Shevardnadze, with eager approval of most Politburo members, including Ligachev, Gromyko, and Ryzhkov. Ligachev threw in the face of the military that "the Army undercut its authority." Gorbachev picked a new defense min-

ister, Dmitry Yazov, who was a congenial general with no expertise or will to take a stand on arms control. The quiet purge of the military ranks continued after that, and by the end of 1988 the entire top echelon of the ministry, the General Staff, the Warsaw Pact commander, and all the military district commanders had been changed. As one American expert commented, "even during Stalin's bloody purge of the Red Army in 1937-38, the percentage of change in top level posts was not as high."¹⁹ The Soviet military establishment was politically and morally crushed.

In arms control discussions the struggle "for Gorbachev's soul" between reformist advisers and spokesmen for the military-industrial complex continued and remained intense. But Gorbachev's sympathies were strongly in favor of asymmetrical disarmament and radical revisionism of the arms control nuclear orthodoxy. By May 1987 the General Secretary admitted Soviet conventional superiority in Europe (27,000 tanks and almost 3.5 million soldiers) and began to hint vaguely at a possibility of unilateral reductions of Soviet troops in Central Europe. But, as before, Gorbachev was less interested in specific disarmament talks than in presenting the world with philosophical and moral guidelines of new thinking.

After the intensive work on the Black Sea in the summer of 1987, Gorbachev published *Perestroika and New Thinking: For the Soviet Union and the Entire World*, a catechism in which he openly contrasted "all human interests" with "class interests" and proclaimed that "it is no longer proper to define the peaceful coexistence of states with different social orders as a specific form of class struggle." Gorbachev concluded that preparations for nuclear war made no political sense and that security in the nuclear age was "indivisible," that it transcended ideological, social, and geopolitical differences. But he went much further by concluding that "generally the policy of force is doomed" and a most effective world politics should be "moral."

Not uncommon for a reformer who searched for a new ideological message, Gorbachev went much too far. While abandoning nuclear orthodoxy in the name of the philosophy of global interdependence, he prematurely and imprudently rejected traditional "realism" and the concept of national interest as well (the basis of security policies of all great powers, including the United States). Under the existing world conditions, particularly given the conservative instincts of another superpower, the United States, "new thinking" was nothing but a messianic utopia.

By the end of 1987, however, this seemed to be the only approach that could break through the deadlock of Cold War mistrust. Privately, Gorbachev touted the merits of romanticism and idealism as the only way to break with the past and turn a new page in history.

Looking Back

The more time separates us from the period of 1985-88, the more extraordinary Gorbachev's "nuclear learning" appears. In fact, it appears all the more remarkable and fascinating in the light of what has happened since 1988.

The available evidence, from archives and oral histories, reveals two phases in Gorbachev's approach to disarmament. At the first, early stage, he and his entourage viewed it as a means to get out of the impasse in the relationship with the West, particularly with the United States, which in itself they saw as a precondition for domestic reforms. At the second stage, after Chernobyl, Gorbachev and his reform-minded assistants began to view disarmament as an inextricable part in the process of reforming not only the Soviet Union but the entire global order. Throughout, we see Gorbachev's surprising and consistent nuclear abolitionism. In both phases, Gorbachev's emphasis on nuclear disarmament was enduring and went far beyond the usual concerns of "normal" statesmanship.

Some personal features of Gorbachev must explain this phenomenon. His lack of experience with, and minimal personal investment in, the nuclear arms race made him an ideal partner of Ronald Reagan, who shared the same characteristics. Moreover, both Gorbachev and Reagan became leaders at a

moment when bipolarity and Cold War rivalry created a wide-spread sense of a global deadlock, and when the stockpiles of nuclear weapons in both superpowers were growing exponentially. From this angle, both antinuclear movements in the West and the personal antinuclear stances of leaders look like part of the same historic phenomenon.

As Jonathan Schell emphasizes in his contribution to this forum, the anti-nuclear momentum has rapidly waned with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Today, nuclear proliferation, not disarmament, is the dominant trend, and in Russia a new political and bureaucratic consensus is emerging that resembles Thatcher's nuclear "philosophy" rather than Gorbachev's revolutionary approach. The new Russian nuclear doctrine, with its emphasis on the first use of nuclear weapons in response to even to a conventional attack, is a telling symbol of new times. Meanwhile, Gorbachev and his loyal advisers say that they had been ahead of their time, and that even the democratic West was "not ready" for new thinking.

Yet there is a third, and most likely, explanation for Gorbachev's urge to disarm: it was an essential part of his messianic utopianism, which, in turn, was the vital ideological and psychological foundation of his reformist drive. It is clear, in retrospect, that this ideological euphoria in Moscow made it possible to wind down the Cold War atmosphere of mistrust and to transform the process of arms control into disarmament. The evidence suggests that the ideological factor was not the only one that made the Soviets disarm. There were serious budgetary pressures by the end of 1988, the result of both structural crisis of the Stalinist economic model, and the gross errors of Gorbachev's administration in trying to mend it. Still, the reformist agenda and the pressing need for "ideological revolution" it created were by far much more decisive factors. The dynamics of the overall reformist agenda and particularly the idealistic new thinking contributed to Gorbachev's conversion into a nuclear abolitionist.

Gorbachev displayed a good deal of political inconsistency and zigzags, but on one point of his new thinking he absolute-

¹⁹ Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military*, p. 110.

ly stuck to his guns: nuclear disarmament, asymmetrical reductions of Soviet armed force, and the general renunciation of use of force both outside and inside the Soviet Union. To no small degree, this principled attitude led to a rapid reduction of

the nuclear threat and an unprecedented decrease in the nuclear arsenals of the two major nuclear powers. At the same time it accounted for a rapid and peaceful disappearance of the Soviet Union from the political map. ■

nations emerged under its provisions. The first class consists of the five nuclear powers—the United States, Russia, China, France, and England. Members of this group were permitted to keep their nuclear arsenals as long as they made good faith efforts to “end the arms race” and reach “nuclear disarmament.” The second class, which now numbers 182, comprises nations that have agreed to forego nuclear arms, and to submit to international inspections of their nuclear facilities, in return for which they are given access to certain nuclear power technology.

When the NPT was signed, in 1968, it was widely considered to be of secondary importance—a sort of side-plot to the main story, which was the negotiation to bring the world-smashing arsenals of Washington and Moscow under control. With the end of the Cold War, however, the NPT emerged as the main story, and the Washington-Moscow negotiations became the side-plot. At the same time, however, the interdependence of the two tracks of negotiation became clearer than ever before.

The test ban negotiations—the grandfather of arms control measures, having commenced in the Eisenhower administration—are a crucial adjunct to the NPT. Their foundation is the Atmospheric Test Ban of 1963, and their current expression is the comprehensive test-ban just voted down by the Senate.

When the Cold War ended, the prospects for a steady strengthening of all three of these main strands of nuclear arms control and their various adjuncts looked fairer than they had at any time since Bernard Baruch presented the Acheson-Lillienthal plan for the abolition of nuclear weapons at the United Nations in 1946. The global conflict between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies had been the political engine propelling the nuclear arms race for four decades. The mere relaxation of the struggle in the Gorbachev era had given new impetus to START. In the INF Treaty, all intermediate-range missiles were banned from the European theater; in the START I agreement, strategic warheads were to be reduced to about 7,000 on each side. And when START II was signed in 1993, requiring reductions of strategic warheads to 3,000-

The Second Age of Nuclear Danger

Did the end of the Cold War mean the end of arms control?

Jonathan Schell

In my remarks, I wish to discuss the surprising and discouraging course of nuclear arms control since the end of Ronald Reagan's presidency in 1989.

The Cold War was a source of nuclear danger—the only nuclear danger the United States had known. It was also an instrument of education regarding the basic realities of the nuclear age. One great milestone in this education was Reagan's statement that “nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought.” This was the product of a long development in which finally even the most extreme hawks came to understand this basic truth.

When the Cold War ended, nuclear danger *seemed* to end—because the precise sort of nuclear danger that the Cold War posed had ended. But with it, unfortunately, the education ended, too. The passing of the Cold War in a sense deprived us of the vocabulary and the concepts—political, military, and moral—that had served as the framework for thought on the issue. No new language developed. Nuclear danger, for a while, was utterly neglected.

It's true that in 1991 it was reasonable to imagine the favorable trends would continue. Instead, they have not only stopped but have been reversed across the board. A new era of

nuclear danger—a second nuclear age—has been emerging.

The fabric of nuclear arms control is woven of three main strands, each represented by a decades-long process of negotiation. The first is the Moscow-Washington negotiations to reduce the twin peaks of offensive nuclear weapons built up during the Cold War. These negotiations began in 1969 as the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) and continued as the Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START). They also included the negotiations on intermediate range nuclear forces, which produced the INF treaty. The second strand—closely entwined with the first—is the attempt to rein in defensive antinuclear systems. Its centerpiece is the 1972 ABM Treaty, under which Washington and Moscow agreed to field no more than one limited-range antinuclear missile system. The defensive ceiling was negotiated in tandem with the offensive restrictions and is necessary to them. Without it, an offensive balance might be upset by defensive countermeasures.

The third strand is the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), perhaps the most impressive and successful arms control treaty ever negotiated and the foundation of any hope for nuclear sanity in the post-Cold War world. Two classes of

3,500, its ratification seemed only a matter of time.

The numbers of countries that had signed the NPT was rising. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 appeared to promise a radical acceleration in this global reduction of the intensity and magnitude of nuclear danger—the more so as no new global political struggle arose to take the Cold War's place. A *positive synergy* among the different negotiations seemed likely. Success in START and in a comprehensive test ban would secure and strengthen the NPT bargain. As the danger of proliferation retreated, the nuclear powers, in turn, would have less reason or justification to retain their nuclear arsenals.

Ten years later, as the new century begins, a frighteningly different picture is emerging. The arms control regime is breaking down. START, stalemated since the 1993 agreements were signed, now is in danger of breaking down altogether. The ABM Treaty likewise is in jeopardy, owing to the United States' resolve to build national missile defenses. The United States asked Russia to agree to an amendment of the treaty to permit the United States a national missile defense system, but the Russians refused, on the ground that the deployment of defenses would destabilize the offensive nuclear arms balance under negotiations at the same time under START. The United States has answered that if Russia refuses, the United States may go ahead anyway.

Finally, in the wake of the START breakdown and the jeopardy of the ABM treaty, the NPT has also been placed under pressure that threatens its breakdown. The next review conference is scheduled for this spring, and promises to be stormy. In the wake of the Sen-

ate rejection, the test-ban treaty is dead for the time being.

In short, the post-Cold War period has turned out to be less hospitable to nuclear arms control than the Cold War. Why has the *end* of the great global conflict in whose name almost all nuclear weapons were built been followed by the near-collapse across the board of the world's efforts to control these weapons? Why has peace been worse for nuclear disarmament than cold war?

■

*The passing of the
Cold War deprived
us of the vocabulary
and the concepts—
political, military,
and moral—that
had served as the
framework for
thought on the issue.*

■

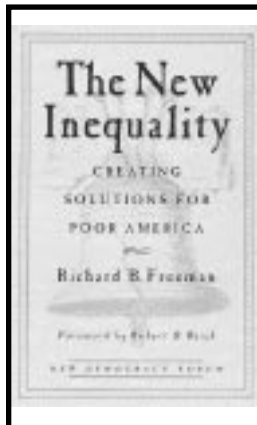
When the Senate rejected the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, many observers suggested that sheer political *partisanship*, still raging in the wake of last year's battle over impeachment, was the cause. Unfortunately, the reasons for the rejection—and for the jeopardy of nuclear arms control generally—are far deeper. I wish to sketch some principal elements of the new danger.

One new element is renewed pressure for nuclear proliferation. It is the fruit of a gradual rather than a sudden development—the sheer increase in the availability of nuclear know-how and technology.

This was inevitable. It is the nature of scientific knowledge and technology to spread. That spread can be retarded but not stopped. And nuclear technology is by now old technology. The State Department lists 44 “capable” nations. But the deeper truth is that whether they possess nuclear power or not, increasing numbers of nations are perfectly capable, simply because they have arrived at a certain state of technical sophistication (and whether they have nuclear power or not), to obtain nuclear weapons within a definite period of time once they make decision.

There are three classes of nation in the world. The first simply cannot build a nuclear weapon. The second already possesses them. The third can build them but has decided, for any number of reasons, not to. The first class is destined to shrink. The second class is destined to grow—unless it joins the third. What's needed are more nations that have the capability of building nuclear weapons yet have renounced them.

The second new element is antinuclear defenses. Their potential availability, though as yet unknown, is also new. Defense technology is not like nuclear technology. It is far more difficult. The United States has poured a hundred billion dollars into it. No other government on earth is capable of such an effort. It is not clear yet whether the investment will provide a dividend. At present other countries are confident that they can overwhelm any defenses that can now be mounted with offensive



The New Inequality:

Creating Solutions for Poor America

In this book form of the *Boston Review's* New Democracy Forum, leading labor economist Richard Freeman presents a compelling and passionately argued proposal for a way for the American economy to better promote fairness, to level the playing field at the “starting gate of life.” While aware of the difficulties of his proposed changes, Freeman refuses to succumb to inertia or cynicism in the fight against inequality, calling it “probably the most important economic argument of our lifetimes.” At the very least, his arguments, along with those of his seven equally well-informed respondents, provide a powerful antidote to ignorance about the fundamental issue of economic inequality.

Beacon Press, \$12. Call 1-800-225-3362 to order.

counter-measures. But they have a healthy respect for the miracles of science. Defenses, should they ever succeed, would offer the United States not a permanent but a lasting strategic advantage. Therefore, defenses are deeply destabilizing—especially of the supposed keystone of the approaching age, nuclear deterrence. The imbalance that the deployment of defenses—if they prove successful—will bring to strategic equations all over the world can scarcely be overestimated.

The current administration hopes to negotiate a revision of the ABM Treaty that would permit the United States to build limited missile defenses, capable of countering small-scale nuclear missile attacks by small “rogue” nations while leaving Russia’s retaliatory capacity intact. But Russia, fearing that the limited system will be the basis for an expanded one, will not agree, and for the time being START might just as well be called the STOP talks. “An attempt to withdraw from the 1972 ABM treaty would destroy the entire system of treaties dealing with the restriction and reduction of weapons of mass destruction,” the First Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff, Valerey Manilov, has said. “All these agreements can be implemented only as a single whole.”¹

The third element, which is both the most important and the least noticed, has been the resolve of the Cold War antagonists—but especially the United States—to hold onto the arsenals they built for Cold War purposes even in the absence of the Cold War.

This was hardly noticed, being a sort of non-decision, but it is crucial to everything else. A nuclear arsenal whose purpose is vague is something different from one dedicated to a clear cause. Its moral and political position is different, and its influence upon the world is different. Nuclear weapons in the Cold War could be seen as an extreme remedy for a particular extreme danger. Once the Soviet Union collapsed, however, and the United States revealed (with very little fanfare or public comment) that it meant to hold on

to a large nuclear arsenal anyway, the foundation of the argument shifted.

At that point, it became implicitly clear that in the view of the United States, any country—even one unthreatened by a serious enemy—deserved and needed nuclear arsenals. Nuclear weapons shifted from an extreme response to a grave emergency to a normal part of the apparatus of force. This shift in rationale—this normalization of nuclear weapons—is accompanied by a shift in their role and influence in the world. In the debate on the test ban, the American nuclear force was regularly called “our deterrent,” as befits weaponry crafted to the ends of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. As long as the Soviet Union existed, the target of deterrence was perfectly obvious. But does anyone seriously maintain today that Russia has a will to attack the United States with nuclear weapons (or any other weapons, for that matter) and is deterred from doing so by American strategic forces? The idea is beyond absurd. Official American policy is that the United States holds on to large strategic forces as a “hedge” against political deterioration in Russia. But there can be equally little doubt that these same arsenals—in themselves and in the chain of effects they generate through other arsenals—are significant goads to proliferation. Of course, every nuclear arsenal is both a deterrent and a goad to proliferation. Today the adverse effect on proliferation is the chief effect. The truth of this becomes especially evident when we consider terrorism. Proliferation makes diversion into the hands of terrorists likely. But terrorists, having no nation to lose, cannot be “deterred.” In their case, the proliferant effect of nuclear arsenals is all, their deterrent effect zero. On the contrary, the only policy that can seriously hope to sharply reduce (though not to entirely eliminate) the danger of nuclear terrorism is abolition, because abolition alone ordains and imposes comprehensive inspections and controls of ever-increasing severity on the production and circulation of nuclear-weapon materials and technology.

Now some people argue, on the other hand, that nations do not develop nuclear weapons merely to follow American or English or Russian example. They do it for urgent *local* reasons. Yet the barest glance at the Indian polit-

ical scene is enough to demonstrate that the example of the current nuclear powers has been potent on the sub-continent.

By all accounts, the Indian tests were conducted as much for domestic political reasons as for external strategic ones. What counts politically at home is the idea that India is a “great power,” according to the accepted definition of the term, which these days includes possession of what Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has called the “big bomb.” When the leader of the ruling Bharatiya Janata party said that the nuclear test showed that Indians were not “eunuchs,” he was scarcely giving voice to a strategic vision.

The deeper problem, however, is not that a wicked United States has corrupted a virtuous India or Pakistan with its bad example; it is that the insistence of the nuclear powers, even in the absence of the Cold War, on clinging to their nuclear arsenals is the first step in a series of powerful causes and effects that reaches directly to the sub-continent. The lesson of history in the nuclear age is that nuclear weapons beget nuclear weapons. Even the United States, which built the first nuclear bomb, did so in *response* to a fear that Hitler would get the bomb first. The famous letter that Albert Einstein and Leo Szilard wrote to President Roosevelt recommending the American program to develop atomic weapons cites this fear. The Soviet Union then raced to build the bomb because it feared the nuclear might of the United States. (David Holloway has shown in his book *Stalin and the Bomb* that Stalin did not order a crash nuclear program until the destruction of Hiroshima, although he had been informed of the American success in testing the first bomb at Alamogordo three weeks earlier.) China built the bomb because it feared the nuclear might of the Soviet Union and the United States (perhaps the former more than the latter). India tested the bomb mainly, its defense minister has stated, because it feared the nuclear might of China. And Pakistan, of course, tested its bomb because India had done so. And the next proliferator will likely do so because it fears one nuclear-armed nation or another—or perhaps several.

¹ *Washington Post*, October 1, 1999.

This series of threats and counter-threats forms an adamant chain that links the left-over arsenals of the Cold War to the new arsenals now springing up in the soil of South Asia and that will link future proliferators to the existing arsenals. It's often said that nations develop nuclear weapons for "regional" reasons. That may be true enough, but

only if we add that the region we must consider is the entire world.

In short, in the new post-cold-war period, we are witnessing, in the absence of an effective movement to proceed toward the elimination of nuclear weapons, the emergence of an extremely volatile and dangerous second age of nuclear danger. In this world, nuclear proliferation to new nations,

the "nuclearism" of the present nuclear powers, and the serious prospect of major introduction of antinuclear defenses for the first time in the nuclear age form a vicious circle of pressures that is wreaking havoc with arms control. By comparison, the presidency of Ronald Reagan looks like a golden age of nuclear disarmament. Who would have thought it? ■

Old Treaties, New World

To reduce the nuclear danger, we must modernize arms control.

Sergey Rogov

When the US Senate rejected the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, it was a surprise only for those who had not been following arms control developments in recent years. By century's end, the entire arms control regime we inherited from the Cold War came under severe pressure. One by one, practically all its components began to crack.

For six years the Russian Duma refused to ratify the START II Treaty. It will not ratify the new version of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, which Russia violated even before the adaptation document was formally signed. And during the Kosovo war NATO refused to let Russian inspectors verify the forces concentrated against Yugoslavia. Chemical and biological agreements are not being implemented. The Open Sky Treaty has been left hanging. India and Pakistan last year openly challenged the regime established by the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Clinton administration plans to announce in June an American missile-defense plan, which would be in flagrant violation of the ABM Treaty. This announcement, coming on the eve of the Presidential elections in Russia, will probably lead to the immediate withdrawal of Moscow from the START I treaty. Right at the beginning of the 21st century the entire arms control regime might collapse.

The current crisis of arms control is explained in part by the widespread per-

ception that arms control lost its importance with the end of the Cold War. The dominant view has been that international stability is endangered by the new threats: drugs, terrorism, ethnic conflicts, and "rogue states" (like North Korea, Iran, or Iraq) that want access to weapons of mass destruction. But this assessment is misguided. The new threats, however important, have not replaced traditional challenges to international security. The collapse of the rigid discipline of the bipolar system, which maintained strategic stability during the Cold War, has not made it easier to maintain the balance of power. The old security mechanism is crumbling, but no new system to ensure peace and stability has yet been created.

The old power balance was based on the principle of Soviet-United States parity. Through an elaborate negotiating process, the two superpowers agreed on equal numbers in the main classes of nuclear and conventional weapons. The three other official nuclear powers were allowed to have 2 percent of the world total, and the rest of the world was prohibited from having access to nuclear weapons or sophisticated conventional arms. Different rules of the game for different players at each level of the international hierarchy ensured the Cold War stability.

This old framework is now being challenged at all levels. India and Pakistan have refused to accept the rules for "the rest of the world," and others may try to follow their example. And China

is contemplating how to support its new economic capabilities with a corresponding military instruments. The asymmetry in American-Russian relations makes Washington much less willing to accept military parity with a weakened Moscow.

The Cold War arms control regime unraveled for two main reasons. First, the collapse of the bipolar structure of international relations undermined the principle of parity. Binary calculations do not work in the new system, which has a much more complicated configuration. China, France, Great Britain, and a few others are silent partners of the United States and Russia in the ABM Treaty modification negotiations. But no successful multilateral arms control deals were negotiated before the Cold War. The Washington Naval Treaty was no great success: it resulted in Pearl Harbor. And the multilateral arrangements that were negotiated in the bilateral system—the Nonproliferation, Chemical Weapons, and Biological Weapons Treaties—were about the complete prohibition of a certain class of weapons, and turned out to be difficult to implement and verify.

A second problem is the so-called revolution in military affairs, which is now official Pentagon doctrine. The application of new information technologies to combat will, it is said, establish total battlefield awareness. Thus it will be possible to find, track, and destroy

with conventional long range munitions any target anywhere in the world.

Naturally, things will not happen quite that way. But precision guidance effectiveness instead of the number of weapon platforms is already becoming the decisive combat factor. JSTARs and JDAMs, laser guidance and GPS were much more important during the war in Kosovo than the number of tanks and aircraft.

It turned out that the CFE Treaty didn't prevent a war in Europe, not only because it limits only some types of military equipment, but also because new long range weapons make territorial limitations for their deployment much less meaningful. These technological changes make "bean counting" (numbers of missiles, warheads, tanks, aircraft, etc.) much less important, because this traditional method of arms control does not include any limitations on the eyes and the brains of the military systems. In contemporary Pentagon slang, the key word now is C⁴SRI: command, control, communications, computers, surveillance, reconnaissance, and intelligence. The only arms control agreement that partially covered information collecting and processing capabilities is the ABM treaty, which limits the deployment and

the size of ground based radars. And it is now under attack from the United States. Any new American missile defense scheme will deploy space-based sensors, whose capabilities are impossible to limit. Thus there will be no way to verify the hardware and the software of the future battle management system. That makes the restrictions on the number of ballistic missile defense (BMD) interceptors much less important, because if ten years from now the United States has a mature BMD battle management system it will be possible to quickly add many hundreds of additional interceptors to create "thick" territorial defenses.

This battle management system is not going to be limited to only BMD aspects. The Pentagon's revolution in military affairs is supposed to integrate all components of combat power into a system that provides the United States—according to Secretary of Defense William Cohen's 1999 *Annual Report to the President and the Congress*—with the capability to "maintain military superiority over current and potential rivals," including Russia and China. The Pentagon wants "full spectrum dominance," because "such a capability is the sine qua non of a superpower." Naturally, the United

States is not enthusiastic about giving up unilateral advantages in the new military technologies, which nobody else is able to match. Of course, the goal of absolute invulnerability, or, as Cohen put it, "freedom to attack and freedom from attack," is incompatible with arms control at all.

The great danger looming over the horizon, then, is the failure to fundamentally modernize the arms control regime to regulate the power relations between the key players in the international arena. The main threat to arms control is represented not by minor nations, which have been labeled as "rogue states," but by the United States, which is, according to the Pentagon "the world's only superpower today and is expected to remain so through at least 2015." Russia, China, India, and other major powers will respond to this challenge by greater reliance on nuclear weapons.

Because of changes in the balance of power and in technology, the old rules of the game have collapsed. If we fail to recognize this danger, we will not be able in the next century to preserve the relevant components of the old arms control regime and build a new mechanism for multilateral security. ■

Eliminating the Danger

What can we do to prevent a nuclear catastrophe?

Randall Forsberg

Nuclear arms control has recently suffered serious setbacks. The suspended START negotiations between the United States and Russia, the Senate's rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), United States plans to withdraw from the ABM treaty, nuclear weapon tests by India and Pakistan, and a planned new submarine program in China—all these threaten to undermine important strides made in the 1980s and early 1990s. What explains the successes of that period? What counts for the

current dire trend? And what might be done to reverse it?

1. *Popular protest movements* Examining arms control during the Reagan administration, Lawrence Wittner argues that the political pressure exerted by the vast United States and European grassroots antinuclear movement forced Reaganites to move from an anti-arms-control to a pro-arms-control position.

2. *Values and decisions of individual political leaders* Portraying Mikhail Gorbachev as a "utopian visionary," Vladislav Zubok argues that Gorbachev's unilateral

concessions were the key to the arms control successes of the 1980s.

3. *Mobilizing effects of military threats to US territory.* Jonathan Schell notes that the end of the Cold War deprived us of "the vocabulary and concepts—political, military, and moral"—we used to perceive the danger of nuclear war. When the Cold War ended and the frightening image of mutual United States-Russian "nuclear deterrence" faded, we failed to develop a new image of the on-going and still very real danger of a nuclear holocaust.

4. *Interactive national patterns of arming and disarming.* Sergey Rogov argues

that quantitative reductions only work in a bipolar environment of the sort that existed during the Cold War and disappeared with the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

In this essay, I propose to integrate these factors in a coherent overview. Then, drawing on the lessons learned and noting several recent nuclear weapon developments, I will suggest some constructive steps for renewed efforts to reduce and eventually eliminate the danger of nuclear war.

Why the Successes?

In accounting for social change, political analysts often debate the relative importance of popular social change movements, on the one hand, and extraordinary political leaders, on the other. When long-awaited reform occurs, is it the broad climate and readiness for change that is decisive, or may a particularly effective individual leader be all-important, either acting alone or in concert with broader pressure for change?

Wittner makes a strong case that the decisive factor in the nuclear arms control successes of the 1980s was the popular protest movement. As one of the founders and leaders of the US Nuclear Weapon Freeze Campaign—and a participant in hundreds of panels, debates, and media interviews about the nuclear arms race and the freeze proposal between 1980 and 1988, often arguing with senior Reagan officials or supporters—I was well aware of the hostility of the Reagan administration toward the antinuclear protesters. But before reading Wittner's account, I had no idea that Reagan and his cabinet gave so much attention to protest movements in the United States and Europe, or of the lengths to which Reagan and company

went to recapture public, congressional, and European government support on security issues.

Wittner shows that Reagan officials were worried because, in their view, the United States and European public protest movements dominated the political and security concerns of the governments and opposition parties in Europe, dominated US public opinion in the run up to the 1984 and 1986 elections, and were influencing members of Congress

■

Political leadership and popular protest movements are both crucial to arms reduction.

■

on issues of military spending and arms procurement. In an effort to offset these successes of the protest movements, Reagan officials publicly embraced arms control in the form of their proposals for the INF Treaty (abolishing intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe) and the talks on Strategic Arms Reductions (START I and START II).

Wittner also makes an even stronger claim, which, in my view, considerably overstates his case: he says that the INF Treaty was concluded largely because the United States and European popular movements brought enough pressure to bear to change their governments' decision to deploy weapons. Yet he notes that


“the turning point came in late February 1987, when *Gorbachev* offered to separate” the INF Treaty from other nuclear weapon issues (my emphasis). Moreover, as Wittner also notes, the Reagan administration (and, probably, the European governments of the time) believed that the INF “zero option” they proposed in November 1981 was a position the Soviets would never accept. The Reaganites were hoisted by their own petard when the Soviets finally accepted the zero option, as well as several subsequent additional conditions the West piled on during the course of the talks on in a futile effort to make them fail.

Another sign of the protest movement's moderate impact on Reagan is Reagan's response to his own growing awareness of the danger of nuclear war: this was to trust to SDI to protect us—not to reduce or abolish nuclear weapons in an effort to reduce the danger.

These facts support Zubok's view—that extraordinary concessions by Gorbachev led to the nuclear arms control successes of the 1980s, particularly the INF Treaty. Key to the final INF agreement was a willingness by Gorbachev not only to accept asymmetrical reductions but also to set aside Soviet concerns about SDI.

Still, I think Zubok's interpretation goes too far in the other direction, for two reasons. First, Gorbachev's views on nuclear weapons and nuclear arms control were a product not only of the Chernobyl disaster, but also of the advice and information given to him by physicists and political scientists who had long and extensive interaction with Western arms control advocates and actively supported nuclear arms reductions. Zubok mentions these fac-

Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?



In this paperback version of the *Boston Review's* New Democracy Forum, Susan Moller Okin addresses the difficult issue of women's rights and multiculturalism, suggesting that in our eager rush to be sophisticated cultural relativists we should perhaps stop for a moment to consider whether there may in fact be cultures truly degrading to women; she points out the potential conflict between cultural respect and respect for the rights of individual women. Her respondents take issue with much of what she says, and their writings together form a provocative introduction to the matter of multiculturalism and women.

Beacon Press, \$12. Call 1-800-225-3362 to order.

tors, but gives them too little weight. Second, on close inspection, Zubok's criticism of Gorbachev as a messianic visionary actually applies only to Gorbachev's *non-nuclear* military policies. An extraordinary decision little known in the West—Gorbachev's general renunciation of the use of force both inside and outside the Soviet Union, announced at the United Nations in December 1988—led to consequences that Gorbachev himself never expected: complete Soviet military withdrawal from Eastern Europe, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, and, ultimately (in Zubok's words), "the rapid and peaceful disappearance of the Soviet Union from the political map." By comparison, Gorbachev's policies on nuclear weapons were moderate and very much in consonance with the arms control thinking of the time. The reductions he accepted in the INF and START treaties had the effect of widening the steps in the ladder of escalation from a possible conventional war in Europe to a global nuclear holocaust, thereby reducing the risk that a nuclear war might occur. At the same time, the reductions left thousands, probably tens of thousands, of nuclear weapons in place on both sides. They were part of a larger policy of decreasing reliance on nuclear deterrence and working toward nuclear disarmament in modest, incremental steps.

Evidence that *both* political leadership and popular protest movements were critical to the nuclear arms reduction successes of the 1980s can be found in the fate of several nuclear arms control initiatives undertaken earlier and later. The late 1970s give us an example of a willing and able political leader lacking the support of a visible popular protest movement and a broad climate for change: Jimmy Carter completed negotiations on the SALT II Treaty, stopped development of the original B-1 bomber, and reversed the Pentagon's decision to deploy the "neutron bomb" in Europe. Lacking the support of a visible popular antinuclear movement, however, he was unable to persuade the majority-Democrat Senate to ratify SALT II. And his decisions not to proceed with two nuclear weapon programs cost him political capital in

Washington and probably contributed to his loss to Reagan in the 1980 presidential election.

The early 1990s offer an example of political leaders prepared to undertake radical change, but this time in the highly supportive environment created by the United States and European protest movements. In 1991, in reciprocal unilateral actions, Bush and Gorbachev withdrew the many thousands of nuclear weapons previously dispersed among their conventional military forces, including nuclear landmines, nuclear anti-ship and anti-submarine torpedoes and depth charges, short-range nuclear missiles, and nuclear shells for howitzers with a range of twenty to thirty miles. For nuclear weapons, this was a watershed event, comparable in magnitude to Gorbachev's withdrawal of forces from Eastern Europe. Far more than the INF Treaty, it "widened the firegap" between conventional war and nuclear war, and made the risk of escalation of any East-West confrontation to nuclear war much less likely. Moreover, it represented the direct reversal of a forty-year "nuclear warfighting" policy of steadily narrowing the steps in the ladder of escalation. Yet because of the antinuclear climate, it passed as a unilateral initiative without debate or challenge, indeed virtually without notice.

From this one initiative, we can conclude that even if the United States and European protest movements did not persuade Reagan to embrace nuclear arms control in actions as well as words and the INF success was, indeed, due to exceptional unilateral concessions by Gorbachev, these movements *did* persuade (or at least permit) Bush to engage in genuine, unilateral but reciprocal reductions (the most far-reaching form of nuclear arms control) and to support actively the conclusion of two strategic arms reduction treaties. True, the START II Treaty involved cuts that fell much more heavily on Russia than on the United States. But this treaty was signed by Yeltsin, not Gorbachev, in the expectation (also held by Gorbachev and US treaty supporters) that it would be a mere stepping stone to a START III treaty, with

even deeper cuts, which would restore a balance.

What Went Wrong?

In the 1990s, the entire nuclear arms control process laboriously built up since 1960 collapsed. START II has not been ratified or implemented. Talks on START III have not begun. The main countries that the NPT was intended to prevent from acquiring nuclear arms—Israel, North Korea, some Arab countries, India, and Pakistan—have begun or completed programs to build and test nuclear weapons. The US Senate voted down the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which had been negotiated for forty years. And the US government is now prepared to abandon the ABM Treaty in order to deploy a new national missile defense system.

What went wrong? Was it a lack of popular movements *and* a lack of political leadership, or something more?

Popular opposition to nuclear weapon programs and support for nuclear arms reductions has shrunk to a very small fraction of its former size. Clinton and Yeltsin were weak leaders in general, and neither took any special initiative or showed any deep concern on nuclear arms issues. At the same time, Clinton was blocked from even modest progress on nuclear arms control by the majority-Republican Senate and the vigorous opposition of Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of the key Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Helms' financial and "advise and consent" stranglehold on foreign policy has obliged Clinton to select a small number of priorities, and nuclear arms control has not been one of them.

Are these points sufficient to account for the collapse of arms control, or are there other important factors? I agree with Schell that the end of the Cold War left people without a framework for perceiving the enduring danger of nuclear war, but would add that the danger is less in some ways and less in some regions while greater in others. The withdrawal of the shorter-range "tactical" nuclear weapons from United States (and Russian) foreign military bases and the reduction in the numbers of deployed United States and Russian strategic intercontinental nuclear warheads have, in fact, reduced the risks of an inadvertent or

uncontrolled escalation of a political crisis into an all-out nuclear holocaust. The urban centers of the United States, Russia, and Europe can still be wiped out in thirty minutes, but the likelihood of such an attack is not as great as it once was. The spread of nuclear capabilities in the Middle East and South Asia increases the risk of nuclear catastrophe in those areas—but not in the regions that saw the vast protest movements of the 1980s.

Moreover, for the most part, the nations concerned have restrained nuclear testing, production, and deployment in the same way that they would have if the nuclear arms control agreements were formally ratified and fully in effect. The United States and Russia have kept their strategic nuclear forces close to the START II limits. The signatories to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) have all stopped testing nuclear weapons and show no sign of resuming. No country that has signed and ratified the Nonproliferation Treaty has withdrawn in order to acquire nuclear weapons. North Korea threatened to withdraw, but has “suspended” its withdrawal. And the new nuclear states (Israel, India, and Pakistan) had all refused to sign unless and until much greater progress was made toward nuclear disarmament on the part of the United States and Russia.

Still, the world has been coasting on past successes. There are signs of much more dangerous new developments if we do not get arms control back on track. But Rogov suggests that it is going to be particularly difficult to revive arms control because all arms control restraints to date have built on two models, neither of which is helpful for the near future: two party equal cuts (or equal ceilings), and multi-party bans. Previous *nuclear* arms control agreements included a slight adaptation: they involved either two-party US-Russian limits or the multi-party bans, such as in the Nonproliferation Treaty and the CTBT; but the latter recognized Britain, France, and China as nuclear-weapon states whose much smaller arsenals were not subject to specific agreed limits for the moment.

Now, Rogov says, we face a world in which Russia cannot be considered equal to the United States, China is going to become more powerful, and the policies of additional countries (at a minimum, In-

dia, Pakistan, and Israel) must be taken into account. In such a world, Rogov argues, neither equal numbers nor a complete ban will be helpful as a goal or a model for near-future arms control agreements.

Rogov’s point is well taken, but I am more optimistic on this score than he is. Even during the Cold War, the two-party nuclear reduction framework was expected to lead, ultimately, to a situation in which the arsenals of the United States and Russia would be no greater than those of Britain, France, and China. While equal and declining ceilings among the five were always assumed to be the goal, the idea that the United States would accept equality with China, or even with Britain and France, was as implausible politically then as it is today. But that did not stop progress toward this goal, nor preclude confidence that we would cross the bridge of multi-party reductions when we came to it.

This brings us to the remaining factors in the arms control equation. One of these—the United States’s definition of its role, its rights, and its obligations as the world’s sole superpower—is playing an increasingly important role and deserves to be front-and-center in our consideration of the prospects for arms control in the next decade or two. A final, related factor is neglected by the other authors. That is the potential future role of other wealthy industrial nations, particularly the nations that make up the European Union, in arms control.

The US government’s response to the end of the Cold War, though not surprising, is, nonetheless, deeply disappointing. Throughout the Cold War, peace and arms control advocates strongly suspected that references to the Soviet or communist threat as the justification for US military spending and arms procurement were merely excuses for what was, in reality, a traditional “power politics” approach to international affairs. Now that the Soviet and communist threats are completely eliminated, this suspicion has been confirmed. Being the militarily most powerful country in the world has become an end in itself, whose only function is to provide decision-making authority or influence—to the extent

that military power is relevant—in various crises and political developments around the world. In other words, the goal of US military policy, including its nuclear-weapon policy, is to have more freedom of action, and more political clout, than any other country in the world.

Rogov puts his finger on this quality when he cites the 1999 Annual Report of the US Secretary of Defense William Cohen, which states that one of the main goals of US innovation in military capabilities is to provide “freedom of action—freedom from attack and freedom to attack.” A key component in this endeavor is the development of new ballistic missile defenses, both shorter-range “theater” defense systems to use with American troops deployed overseas, and longer-range “national” defense systems to protect against possible attacks by countries with small nuclear arsenals.

This most recent incarnation of missile defense, following the ultimately banned ABM developments of the 1960s and the costly, fruitless SDI studies of the 1980s, is, more than any other single factor, likely to put a permanent end to nuclear arms control. At the same time, this program is likely to stimulate an unprecedented global proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These dangerous possibilities took a step closer to reality in December, when China announced that, in response to the American decision to proceed with its missile defense program, China will build six nuclear-powered submarines, each carrying sixteen missiles with six nuclear warheads on each missile—that is, a total of 576 nuclear warheads. While small by United States and Russian standards, this prospective nuclear buildup in China represents another watershed event, and is an almost certain trigger to comparable nuclear buildups in India, Pakistan, and possibly other countries. Until now, China has been the only country in the world with a genuine “minimum deterrent” nuclear arsenal. Having first acquired nuclear weapons in 1964, China remained content for 35 years with an arsenal that comprised some twenty nuclear warheads and twenty missiles,

kept on “de-alert” status, with the missiles stored in, and protected by, deep caves, not in position ready to fire with the warheads on them. This small force could not be assured of penetrating the proposed new US national missile defenses, and therefore China is planning to build a larger force which will be able to do so. India is likely to want to keep pace with China, and Pakistan will want to keep pace with India.

The United States missile defense program has also made Russia reluctant to ratify the START II treaty. Yet the United States is leaning hard on Russia to accept the program (and related weakening of the ABM treaty), offering to help Russia build its own light national missile defense, and even to assist in putting multiple warheads on a new missile now under development in Russia (contravening the terms of START II). Such moves would, of course, greatly exacerbate the incentives for China to complete its planned build-up of long-range nuclear weapons.

As Schell points out, when the Cold War ended, the United States made a decision to retain thousands of nuclear weapons, even though the original purpose of their existence had vanished. With the deployment of missile defenses, the United States will not only close the door to the abolition of nuclear weapons within the next several decades, but also spur the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and, more specifically, the dramatic build up of now-small nuclear arsenals. The Clinton administration has taken the lead to move in this direction, and, not surprisingly, the policy has overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress.

The problem for nuclear arms control is that the end of the Cold War, combined with the decline in popular concern about nuclear weapons and the lack of leadership by the Clinton administration, seems to have brought out the worst in United States thinking on foreign policy. Instead of heading for demilitarization, internationalization, power-sharing—that is, efforts to give the United Na-

tions the role in security matters that it was originally designed to have (with substantial US support)—the United States political leadership and the public have chosen military superiority as their preferred new instruments. In fact, arms control efforts were long intended in part as a means of dampening this vein in US thinking, which has now become dominant.

Windows of Hope

Beyond the gloomy present, there are some windows of hope on the horizon, which may help shift the general drift of US foreign policy in coming years, and revive arms control:

1. *Early tests of the national missile defense system have failed.* Clinton has scheduled a “go/no go” decision on production for July 2000, and the poor test results create an opportunity for a “no go” choice, which would at least delay the program.

2. *A five-year review conference of the Nonproliferation Treaty will take place in May 2000.* The non-nuclear parties to this treaty have been increasingly unified in pressing for progress in nuclear arms reductions on the part of the United States and Russia. The review conference may bring more pressure to bear on Clinton to make the “no go” choice.

3. *The member countries of the European Union have been moving toward developing a unified defense policy.* They may also oppose the US moves toward sacrificing arms control on the altar of missile defense.

4. *United States and Russian presidential elections in 2000 may lead to some new opportunities for arms control.* Vladimir Putin, while not an arms control enthusiast, may bring greater stability and control to the Russian government than it had under Boris Yeltsin. He may work harder for steps that might encourage Western economic investment. In the United States, a victory for Vice-President Gore would offer a major new opening, because as a senator in the 1980s, Gore was a leader in nuclear arms control efforts and gave them a high priority.

5. *There may be a resurgence of the popular grassroots antinuclear movement.*

This could develop either in support of a Gore presidency or in reaction to an anti-arms control Republican president. Concern about the rejection of the CTBT, nuclear proliferation in South Asia, and likely effects of missile defense deployment are all likely to fuel such a renewal.

If there were a convergence of several favorable developments, what goals should we set for nuclear arms reductions in the new unipolar, or multi-polar, world? Unlike Rogov, I believe that the long-standing agenda remains relevant and helpful. We need to achieve Russian ratification of START II and initial implementation of that treaty, which should be superseded as rapidly as possible by a START III treaty that makes much deeper cuts in strategic nuclear weapons. The United States should abandon its national missile defense program, and reaffirm its commitment to the ABM Treaty. The US Senate should pass the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, with which we are already complying. The United States and Russia should jointly develop a plan for the reduction and eventual elimination of stockpiles of fissile material. China should be persuaded to drop its new submarine project; and some means should be found to reform the Nonproliferation Treaty regime and bring India, Pakistan, and Israel on board—if necessary, as nuclear states.

With half a chance, nuclear arms control could actually play a more momentous role than it did in the past: It could revitalize step-by-step global progress toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. The worry now is that unless there is a turn for the better soon, things could get very much worse. The deployment in this country and in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East of long- and short-range anti-missile defenses developed by the United States, and the new nuclear arms race among China, India, and Pakistan could spur even more dangerous proliferation of both nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In comparison to that horrific future, the twentieth century might look in retrospect like a relatively peaceful world. ■