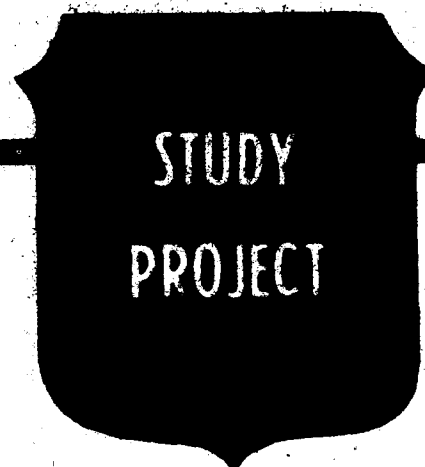


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HOW HAVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS AFFECTED THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL RICHARD D. GADDIE
United States Air Force

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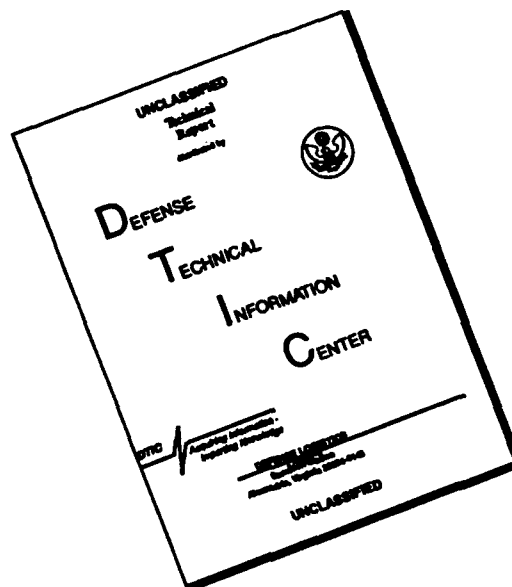
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HOW HAVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS AFFECTED THE RELATIONSHIP
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by

Lieutenant Colonel Richard D. Gaddie
United States Air Force

Doctor Donald M. Snow
Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013

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ABSTRACT

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As mankind enters the final decade of the 20th century, it faces a world of unprecedented political and military change. Events in Central Europe and in the Soviet Union over the past two years have been truly remarkable and have forced the United States to reevaluate its nation's security strategy. Some feel the potential for a war with the Soviets has diminished. Others feel that the Soviets' capability is the same now as it has been in the past. How can the United States take advantage of the new relationship with the Soviet Union? If the US strategy needs to be changed, the historical perspective of the US-USSR relationship becomes extremely important. Nuclear weapons have been a significant part of the super power relationship since 1945. In fact many feel the Soviets are in a super power status now only as a result of their military and its huge nuclear arsenal. The following analysis describes how nuclear weapons became a part of the United States' national security strategy and how that policy affected the US-USSR relationship. The analysis starts with the end of World War II. It traces important events and confrontations between the two nations, pointing out the significant implications made by nuclear weapons. The conclusion presents this question, "Has the Soviet military threat changed and if so, how should the United States change its strategic forces to take advantage of the new relationship developing between the two super powers, both politically and economically?"

INTRODUCTION

How have nuclear weapons influenced the United States' foreign policy toward the Soviet Union? Can weapons of mass destruction be used to deter Soviet aggression in the future?

As Dr. Donald Snow has reminded me and others, "It is always easier to predict the past than the future..." Some scholars have accurately predicted what actually happened in the past, but can not always ascertain the reason an event took place. So, let me begin by trying to predict the past as best I can. There has never been a nuclear war. There has not been a global war after the first two nuclear bombs were dropped on Japan in 1945, although the United States has been involved in three major conflicts and approximately 210 other lesser ones. Are we to believe nuclear weapons have made the difference in how the United States has dealt with other nations and specifically the Soviet Union? Have nuclear weapons kept the superpowers from waging war and will nuclear weapons continue as they have in the past to deter wars in a new world order? Would any nation ever use the nuclear weapon to achieve a national objective? Can we answer these questions from looking at history?

John Mearsheimer argues that we can look at history and predict the future. In fact he states "We are likely to regret the passing of the Cold War. ...the prospect of major crisis, even wars, in Europe is likely to increase dramatically now that the Cold War is receding into history." Mearsheimer rests his conclusion on the assertion that "...the distribution and character

of military power among (nation) states are the root causes of war and peace." ¹ With the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, the diminished Soviet threat, a potential disarmament free-fall, defense budget cuts, base closures, and weapon system cancellations, it has become nearly impossible to make sense out of what is going on. Are we still safe and secure, or will our security be at greater risk in the future? Since President Bush has stated that our new enemies are instability and unpredictability, there is a clear need to consider these new threats, much as we did communism. ²

If their predictions are correct, then the one national objective, that of containment, toward which the United States has been striving for over forty years, has brought the world back to an unstable condition. Possibly we have taken a big step backwards, because the world was unstable after World War II when the nuclear weapon was first incorporated in the military arsenal. Another issue must be raised; is the nuclear weapon a military weapon and should it therefore be looked at in a military context only? After all, nuclear weapons will only be used during a war and according to Carl von Clausewitz "...war is an instrument of policy..." ³ national policy. But nevertheless, if a nuclear weapon is a military weapon used for military means, "How will nuclear weapons affect our future relationship with the Soviet Union."

I will look at the historic threat to the United States from the Soviet Union because the USSR is the only nation in the world

with the military capability to destroy the United States. I will concentrate mainly on the military threat because politically and economically the Soviet Union is not powerful enough to harm the US by themselves. I will also show how the United States has chosen to combat the threat. Second, I will try to reevaluate the threat after the Cold War. Lastly, I will try to determine a strategy for the United States to pursue in the future, both near and far term.

SECTION ONE

In order to understand the threat to US security, I should delineate the events that lead to the formulation of both the US and USSR foreign and military policy.

After the bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, President Truman viewed the nuclear bomb as a weapon of terror, not a traditional part of the military arsenal. He felt that the weapon had to be treated differently than rifles, cannons, and ordinary firearms. Truman's initial impulse was to seek an agreement to internationalize the control of atomic weapons through the Baruch Plan in the United Nations, rather than to plan for their potential use against the Soviet Union. Therefore, the early war planning that took place within the Pentagon was devoid of civilian political guidance because none was forthcoming. ⁴

Several conditions changed President Truman's attitude toward the utility of atomic weapons. The obvious factor was the largest military force in the world shared half of Europe. According to Soviet sources, the Soviet military numbered 11,365,000 troops in May of 1945. ⁵ And who could blame the USSR government for maintaining such a large army. After all, the Soviets thought all along that the Western Allies' desire during the war was to let Nazi Germany and the USSR physically destroy each other so the West could pick up the pieces after the war. This idea was stated by the head of the most powerful nation in the world, Harry S. Truman,

then the senator from Missouri. ⁶ Stalin obviously remembered this after the war and therefore refused to demobilize in 1945. It is estimated the Soviets retained a large combined force made up of two and one half to four million ground troops and tactical support aircraft in place in occupied Germany and elsewhere in Europe. ⁷ As a country the USSR lost twenty million people, both military and civilians, and a third of its industrial capacity in the four years of World War II. As a result there was a feeling that a catastrophe must not occur again. ⁸ The maintaining of a large military force should not surprise anyone. The Soviet society since 1928 used large permanent armies. It is traditional for Russians to depend on quantity to provide solutions for military problems. ⁹

Another factor affecting Truman's attitude was anti-communist sentiments both in the United States and around the world. Sentiments were very high in the United States and Great Britain. Containment of communism became the postwar American foreign and defense policy, a concept basically formulated by George F. Kennan. The idea was to draw a line dividing communist and noncommunist countries. When the Soviet Union tried to expand into a noncommunist country, it would be resisted with force if required. ¹⁰

Three related policies supported containment; the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). ¹¹ The Truman Doctrine responded to civil war in Greece and to communist pressures in Turkey. The Truman Doctrine provided the precedent for both economic and military

assistance programs under the pretense of anticommunism. The Marshall Plan provided economic aid to produce strong European Governments to help ward off any ideas the Soviets might have to make the entire European continent communist. The third part of the containment policy was the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In 1947, 12 countries pledged to commit to mutual defense, that is, if one was attacked, it would be as if all countries were attacked.¹² These three actions contributed to our policy of containment which made up the United States' foreign policy. There is a reaction to every action and looking from the Soviets' point of view, these same actions appeared threatening to the Soviet Union because the military might of 12 nations bonded together posed a threat to mother Russia. Therefore, the USSR maintained a large ground force and created a buffer zone which later became the WARSAW Pact.¹³

The post-World War II era saw the emergence of two military super powers. To properly manage the United States' national security, in view of an increasing Soviet threat, President Truman and other lawmakers felt the need to change the civilian organization which oversaw the military. They also felt the need for new organizations to help solve more complex international problems, specifically in the national security arena. Therefore, approximately 18 months after World War II, the National Security Act of 1947 created an updated and permanent peacetime defense establishment.¹⁴ It created the Department of Defense which included all of the armed services under one cabinet level official

who is now known as the Secretary of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Council, and an independent Air Force which at that time had the only capability to deliver the atom bomb.

The first direct Soviet confrontation that involved the US and USSR militarily and tested the United States' foreign policy and strategic objectives was the Berlin Blockade in 1948. On 24 June, the Soviets closed all ground access to Berlin. In response, President Truman immediately ordered an airlift of supplies into the beleaguered city. On 27 June, Strategic Air Command was placed on alert. However it must be noted that the majority of the aircraft were not capable of accommodating nuclear weapons nor was there an advance plan for the potential use of the weapons. 15

The Berlin Crisis forced the United States government to recognize that the use of nuclear weapons would quickly become necessary in the event of a Soviet attack on Western Europe. All of Europe was still weak after the war. Of course the United States' action after the war was to demobilize as soon as possible.

With the forces out of balance, the major burden of any war effort would fall on the United States and specifically Strategic Air Command and its newly appointed commander, General Curtis E. LeMay. General LeMay, a World War II veteran bomber commander in both the European and Pacific theaters, instructed his war planners to concentrate on industry located in urban areas so if the specific target was missed, a bonus would be derived from the use of the nuclear weapon. General LeMay strongly believed any war

should be taken to a nation's population centers to destroy the enemy's ability to wage war.

Later, as more people began to equate nuclear weapons with national security, they began investigating the suitability of using the mass destruction bombs to deter aggression. One common perspective on nuclear strategy equated nuclear deterrence with the threat of indiscriminate destruction of cities and with them civilian populations. This view, that war is best deterred by threats to destroy a significant portion of the adversary's population and industry, is called the doctrine of "Assured Destruction." The belief that stable deterrence is best maintained when both the United States and the Soviet Union have such a strategy is called the doctrine of "Mutual Assured Destruction" or MAD. However, MAD did not exclude military targets. US strategy also wanted to hold Soviet military resources at risk because it was the military that made the Soviet Union a superpower. ¹⁶

Finally, in September of 1948, the National Security Council approved a document that stated the "National Military Establishment must be ready to utilize promptly and effectively all appropriate means available, including atomic weapons, in the interests of national security and must plan accordingly." ¹⁷ This was the first admission that the nuclear bomb was a weapon system solely for military purpose. Furthermore, NSC-30 explicitly stated the sole authority to employ nuclear weapons would be the President and only the President. Later it was clarified that the President's successor could make the decision if the President was

incapacitated.

In December 1948, while the Berlin airlift was still underway, a SAC emergency war plan was formally approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff calling for "the strategic air offensive" to be implemented "on a first-priority basis" in the event of hostilities. The plan made "the major Soviet urban industrial concentrations the highest priority target system." Atomic attacks on seventy Soviet cities were planned to take place over an initial thirty-day period producing an estimated 6.7 million casualties. "Destruction of this system," the JCS evaluation of the war plan concluded, "should so cripple the Soviet industrial and control centers as to reduce drastically the offensive and defensive power of their armed forces." Yet, in case this initial air offensive did not end the war, SAC planned a prolonged atomic and conventional bombing campaign against petroleum refining targets in the USSR and Eastern Europe, as well as the Soviet hydroelectric systems and inland transportation system. ¹⁸

Between the summers of 1949 and 1950 the Soviets exploded their first atomic device. This event shaped US nuclear strategy for the rest of the decade. The Truman Administration was forced to expand the US atomic stockpile and was convinced by its proponents to pursue the hydrogen bomb. The Soviet's nuclear capability forced a major shift in US targeting policy: the requirement for a prompt counter-military mission against Soviet atomic weapons. Of course, as the Soviet's capability grew, the vulnerability of US nuclear forces to a surprise attack became a

serious problem. Escalation of nuclear weapons began for the purpose of maintaining a retaliatory force.

In February of 1950, a JCS report concluded that the time was approaching when both the US and the USSR would possess capabilities for inflicting devastating atomic attacks on each other. Were war to break out when this period was reached, a tremendous military advantage would be gained by the power that struck first and succeeded in carrying through an effective first strike. ¹⁹

This again brought another issue to the forefront. Should the United States preempt and destroy the Soviet's nuclear capability? The answer was definitely no. NSC-68 stated it was important that the US employ military force only if the necessity for its use was clear and compelling and commends itself to the overwhelming majority of our people. The US cannot therefore engage in war except as a reaction to aggression of so clear and compelling a nature as to bring the overwhelming majority of our people to accept the use of military force. ²⁰

Furthermore, it goes without saying that the idea of preventive war, in the sense of a military attack not provoked by a military attack upon us or our allies, was generally unacceptable to the American people. ²¹

The second major USSR/US conflict came when the North Koreans crossed the county's South Korean border in 1950. Since the North Koreans were communist, the Korean Conflict became an extension of our foreign policy of containment. Why didn't the US/United

Nations use nuclear weapons during this war? According to Bernard Brodie, there were five reasons the weapons were not used during the Korean conflict. First, the stockpile was limited and earmarked for the imminent major war in Europe. The second reason was the senior military officers believed that nuclear weapons should only be used for strategic targets and Korea had very few. Third, the United Nations, and especially Great Britain, were against the use of the atom bomb for any reason. Fourth, the USSR tested its first nuclear device in the fall of 1949 and the US administration did not want a possible Soviet nuclear exchange. Fifth and finally, there was talk of racial overtones i.e., using weapons of mass destructions against Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese, but not the Germans. ²²

However, in February 1953, newly elected President Dwight D. Eisenhower presented an ultimatum to the North Koreans and promised that a new offensive would resume including the use of nuclear weapons. ²³ The risk of losing every thing was too much for both the North Koreans and the Chinese, so negotiators at Panmunjom agreed to end the war. It is very clear President Eisenhower was prepared to use nuclear weapons to end the war. He and his Secretary of State relied on massive weapons and the principle of massive retaliation as "the" US defense policy during his two term presidency. It was called the "New Look" and was predicated on the proposition that the United States could reduce the size of its conventional military forces by relying on nuclear weapons in the event of war. The Eisenhower administration felt that nuclear

weapons were cheap, and as long as they deterred war, they were useful. However, he did not believe in escalation. During a press conference, President Eisenhower stated when asked if it was vital to stay ahead in long range bomber production, he answered, "No. I say it is vital that we get what we need. That does not necessarily mean more than somebody else does. There comes a time, particularly in these days, when the destructiveness of weapons is so great, as to be beyond human imagination, when enough is certainly plenty." ²⁴

There were 250 atom bombs in 1950. By 1953 the US fielded approximately 1,000 atomic and thermonuclear weapons and by the end of the decade the number grew to 18,000 weapons. ²⁵ As a consequence, when the two superpowers came close to any direct confrontation in which military force might be used, they became enormously cautious. Both governments knew that with direct confrontation, escalation was always possible. With the number of nuclear weapons that existed on each side, governments placed entire societies at risk- even those of non-combatant nations. This was never so true as during the crisis over Soviet missiles in Cuba.

The Soviet-American confrontation during the Cuban Missile Crisis became a powerful impetus to observe some unwritten rules of prudence and to work out some written rules of the game to promote peaceful coexistence. The sense of danger that both sides experienced helped them realize the imperative to avoid similar or greater risks in their bipolar competition, to cooperate to insure

mutual security. As president Kennedy said later, "the experience led both not to see a distorted and desperate view of the other side, not to see conflict as inevitable, accommodation as impossible and communication nothing more than threats." ²⁶

Twenty-five years after the crisis in the Caribbean, the renowned American strategist Thomas Schelling remarked, "I firmly believe that the Cuban missile crisis was the best thing to happen to us since the Second World War. It helped to avoid further confrontation with the Soviets." ²⁷

During another war of containment, the use of nuclear weapons to end the Vietnam war was not compatible with our objectives. The goal was to protect South Vietnam's right to self government, not to destroy North Vietnam. Therefore the weapons were not used.

The evolution of US nuclear doctrine is based on the classical Roman adage, Qui desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum- "If you want peace, prepare for war." ²⁸ Our foreign policy with the Soviet Union was a reaction to an action from the USSR. (There are three points of view; the US reacted to the Soviets, the Soviets reacted to the US and its allies, or the actions of both the US and the USSR had absolutely no relation to one another. Probably it was a combination of all three.)

The period after World War II left the once great international powers, France, Germany and Great Britain, exhausted economically, politically, and morally. The United States and the Soviet Union emerged as global powers. Fortunately for Americans and the democratic societies of the world, the United States was

clearly stronger. The American economy was actually strengthened by the war and had a monopoly on the atomic weapon until 1950. It appeared to Western governments that the Soviet Union supported insurgencies in Greece, the Iranian province of Azerbaijan, and placed a lot of pressure on Turkey, to spread communism. The forming of the Warsaw Pact in 1956 also posed a threat to Western nations but it is difficult to determine whether this was caused by the rearming of West Germany or had been planned since the creation of NATO. Nevertheless, the only military force in the world powerful enough to challenge the US was the Soviet Union.

The United States has not only placed a lot of effort developing nuclear weapons, but detailed planning on how to employ the weapons to ensure US national objectives. We must now question will these actions now change due to the end of the Cold War?

SECTION TWO

Bernard Brodie, in 1946, propelled the idea of nuclear deterrence on the political scene. He was one of the first to see that it was just a matter of time until another military power possessed nuclear weapons and therefore made the following statement:

Thus the first and most vital step in any American security program for the age of atomic bombs is to take measures to guarantee to ourselves in case of attack the possibility of retaliation in kind. The writer in making that statement is not for the moment concerned about who will win the next war in which atomic bombs are used. Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose. ²⁹

This set the stage for what was to develop between the United States and the Soviet Union.

After World War II, an adversarial relationship evolved between the United States and the Soviet Union. A bipolar world or Cold War was formed and lasted until the condemnation of communism in Eastern Europe and the elimination of the Berlin Wall, as the Soviets sat idly by.

During the Cold War the USSR and the US managed, with few exceptions, to avoid direct military confrontation. In 1948 the Soviet Union blocked western road access to Berlin, and the US responded with an airlift. During the Cuban crisis, the United States instituted a naval blockade to prevent Soviet ships from reaching Cuba. Later at the beginning of detente era, mines which

were planted by the US in Haiphong harbor hit some Soviet ships. More than one early warning system has been tested with intrusive probes. Planes have been shot down and ships have been fired at or captured. But these potential crisis did not escalate because neither side was willing to risk nuclear war.

As the growth of Soviet strategic forces undermined the credibility of massive retaliation, the Kennedy administration replaced it with one of flexible response. The new approach emphasized the graduated use of military force and defined, in theory, nuclear weapons as the means of last resort in a military conflict.

In time this strategy was overtaken by the concept of mutual deterrence, as it was recognized that each side could inflict unacceptable damage in a second strike. This concept soon evolved into the somewhat sardonic formula of "Mutual Assured Destruction" (MAD). The MAD concept explicitly acknowledged linkage of the USSR and the US in national security. In addition, the MAD concept was based on the capabilities of both sides to deter a nuclear attack. Without the capability to destroy each other, there would not be the Mutual Assured Destruction philosophy.

The MAD concept was enunciated by Robert McNamara when he was the Secretary of Defense. In the mid-1960s. he stated,

The fact is then that neither the Soviet Union nor the United States can attack each other without being destroyed in retaliation; nor can either of us attain a first strike capability in the foreseeable future... Further, both the Soviet Union and the United States possess an actual and credible second strike capability against one another and it is precisely this mutual capability that provides us both with the strongest possible motive to avoid a nuclear war.

The Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, felt that nuclear weapons had a very small part in the decisions which were made during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He stated later,

American nuclear superiority was not in our view a critical factor in the resolution of the Cuban missile crisis, for the fundamental and controlling reason that nuclear war, already in 1962, would have been an unexampled catastrophe for both sides; the balance of terror so eloquently described by Winston Churchill seven years earlier was in full operation. Not one of us ever reviewed the nuclear balance for comfort in those hard weeks. The Cuban missile crisis illustrates not the significance but the insignificance of nuclear superiority in the face of the crucial role of rapidly available conventional strength. 31

This statement brings up an interesting point. Can the mere fact that nuclear weapons are so terrible and so destructive mean the United States would never use them? Is there utility in pointing the nuclear tipped weapons at anyone fully knowing that if nuclear war does start, that war would severely damage the world we live in? Can we conclude that nuclear weapons are used to deter the use of other nuclear weapons and conventional forces are used to deter aggression or to deal with nonnuclear threats. 32

It is important that each of the great powers has exercised self-restraint and restrained its allies and clients from inflicting a defeat on the allies and clients of the other. But the situation is changing. Increasingly, regional conflicts take place without significant involvement of the great powers. The rule of seeking to restrain allies may soon lose its efficacy. In effect, the great powers' influence over dominant regional actors is declining. The more importance the great powers place on these

regional conflicts, the more powerful the regional actors will feel, believing they can play one power against the other. 33

Newly united in a shared belief in democracy, Europe left behind the hostility of the Cold War and embarked on what it hopes will be an era of peace and prosperity. Twenty-one countries that included the United States, Soviet Union, Canada, and all of Europe with exception of isolationist Albania met November 19, 1990 in Paris, France to sign the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) agreement. The agreement was designed to establish a stable balance of forces at a lower level. Additionally, the agreement eliminated disparities that undermined stability and security and eliminated the capability to launch a surprise attack in Central Europe. All 21 countries signed the treaty limiting conventional forces and equipment in Central Europe. The summit was compared to the 1815 Congress of Vienna that drew the map of 19th century Europe. This is probably the most significant international event since 1945, the year that World War II ended, leaving the entire continent devastated and millions dead. The Iron Curtain division soon added to the destruction, splitting the continent in half. For the next forty years, the communist East and the capitalist West locked in a struggle to defend their ideals. By signing the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe agreements, the two military alliances that armed Europe to the teeth for forty years pledged a non-aggression pact.

With the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, the diminished Soviet threat, a potential disarmament free-fall, defense budget

cuts, base closures, and weapon system cancellations, it has become nearly impossible to make sense out of what is going on. Is the United States still safe and secure, or will its security be at greater risk in the future? Since President Bush has stated that our new enemies are instability and unpredictability, we need to consider these new threats, much as we did communism. ³⁴

One fact remains, the Soviet Union remains a competitor of the United States for world influence. The only way the USSR can continue to be a competitor of the United States and remain a superpower is through its military might. Because of this, the Soviet government is not going to reduce its military forces in the near term; it would go against its nature. According to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, Soviet military spending is higher now than when Mr. Gorbachev came to power. ³⁵ This increase in spending will allow the Soviets to continue to modernize its strategic nuclear arsenal which will result in a force that is more capable while the United States is reducing not only its military budget but its forward presence in Europe. The Soviet's military equipment continues to have the capability to threaten the United States. ³⁶ Secondly, the Soviet Union will have the greatest military potential of any nation on the Eurasian continent retaining around three million men and countless weapons with thousands of nuclear warheads. Third and finally, the Soviets continue to provide roughly \$15 billion in support of client states, Cuba, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Ethiopia. ³⁷ The United States must guard against the enduring Soviet global

threat. Some people believe the communist threat will end only when all of its power bases have collapsed. 33

SECTION THREE

So far this discussion has centered mostly on the military aspects of nuclear weapons and how they have affected United States relations with the Soviet Union. However, it is impossible to separate the military aspects of nuclear weapons from the political considerations. When whole communities go to war, the reason always lies in some political situation, and the occasion is always due to a political objective. War, therefore, is an act of policy.³⁹ Since the utility of nuclear weapons affects large segments of society, there is no way to separate the two. Policy will permeate all military operations and therefore society, and in so far as their violent nature will admit, it will have a continuous influence on all decisions for their use.

So in this case, war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means. The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.⁴⁰

Following Clausewitz, it is necessary to distinguish between three things, three broad objectives, which between them cover everything: the armed forces, the country, and the enemy's will.⁴¹

During total war, the fighting forces must be destroyed or at the very least, placed at risk of being destroyed. Whenever we use the phrase "destruction of the enemy's forces" this alone is what

we mean. The country must be occupied; otherwise the enemy could raise fresh military forces. ⁴² After World War II, both Germany and Japan were occupied not only to control the military aspects but to protect them from outside threats. They were extremely vulnerable because all the infrastructure was destroyed.

Although Clausewitz could not have envisioned nuclear weapons, he wrote about the military use of maximum force when he presented the maximum use of force in the preparation of war. Kind-hearted people might think there is some ingenious way to disarm or defeat an enemy without too much bloodshed, and might imagine this is the true goal of the art of war. War is a dangerous business. Mistakes which come from kindness are the very worst. The maximum use of force is compatible with the simultaneous use of intellect. If one side uses force without compunction, undeterred by bloodshed it involves, while the other side refrains, the first will gain the upper hand. The battle will escalate to extremes, the only limiting factors being the limits of men and equipment. To introduce the principle of moderation into the theory of war itself would always lead to logical absurdity. ⁴³ Therefore, the use of mass destruction weapons and military force is nothing new as far as war and combat is concerned and does have a place in military strategy.

Steven Kull, a clinical psychologist with the political sophistication of an arms policy analyst, investigates the major issues that have dominated American nuclear decision-making over the past two decades. The major question he asked among others,

"Why is there great concern about maintaining numerical superiority (or at least equality) in nuclear arms relative to the Soviet Union?" "

The answers given to Dr. Kull by various US government officials were not simple nor consistent but did center around the term perception. The officials felt that an aggressor must perceive that a nuclear attack on the United States would meet with such destruction of their own country that they would never try such an attack. This equates to deterrence. The big question becomes, what constitutes deterrence, e.g. how many weapons of mass destruction does it take to convince one country not to attack another? One difficulty in evaluating this situation is the uncertainties of perception in someone else's mind. No one knows exactly what or how many weapons are necessary for deterrence because there is no experience to draw on. Moreover, deterrence of conventional war or political expansion demands capability and credibility greater than is needed to deter a strike against one's homeland. Thus, much of what passes for nuclear knowledge rests upon hypothetical argument, abstractions based on assumptions about rational actors or the other nation's unknown intentions, and simple intuitions. The ambiguous structure of nuclear knowledge makes it difficult for new information to alter prior beliefs. Furthermore, this combination leaves much room for spurious knowledge, false learning, and occasional forgetting as coalitions shift in domestic politics. The uncertainties of deterrence also block transitions from simple to more complex learning. And

because of differences in political and military cultures, divergent prior beliefs tend to lead each country to learn different lessons from new information. 45

There is one simple concrete fact. The only practical use for weapons of mass destruction is deterrence. We can see this by looking at this example. Suppose Iraq used a nuclear weapon on Kuwait during their assault August 2, 1990. They would have destroyed the very objective they were after because all of the wealth and resources would have been destroyed in the rubble.

Another issue of deterrence is the more mass destruction weapons there are in the world, the less likely any rational person will use the weapons for fear of retaliation and causing the end of civilization as we know it.

How many weapons are enough to persuade any aggressor to not attack the United States or one of its allies? No one has the answer to that question either. So what should the US position be? Maintain its nuclear arsenal or reduce the number of weapons and how many weapons should it reduce to? No one has the answer to that question. Is the United States taking a risk reducing weapons? Yes, the US is taking a risk because no one has determined how many weapons will deter the Soviet Union or Iraq or Iran or any other country with political differences from attacking another.

One school of thought is deterrence only works in a bipolar world. Therefore, in a multipolar world, nuclear deterrence will not keep a country from invading another. If this is true, nuclear

weapons will not have any utility in the future because we appear to be evolving into a world with many equal players. Of course there is also the perception of linkage and what countries would be under the nuclear umbrella of an ally, but what event would it take for the use of mass destruction weapons? Again, is the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait important enough for anyone to use nuclear weapons?

"Strategic forces must provide certainty of U.S. retaliation against what an aggressor most values under all scenarios. This is the essence of deterrence." ⁴⁶ General LeMay changed his mind and stated just before his death that our long dependence on the threat of nuclear weapons as an equalizer to superior conventional forces would appear to be at an end. Nuclear weapons are still essential, given the arsenals of the USSR and lesser powers, but conventional forces of our longtime Cold War adversary no longer seem as menacing, and nuclear weapons do not fit the kinds of scenario now being scripted. ⁴⁷

So what is the bottom line concerning nuclear weapons and the Soviets? First, the Soviet Union cannot achieve strategic superiority over the United States. In this context superiority can be defined in two ways; the ability to strike first and limit American retaliation to acceptable losses, or the ability to achieve so great a strategic preponderance as to undermine the credibility of the extended American deterrence and to hamper the decisiveness of American leaders in an international crisis.

Second, the strategic parity between the superpowers has

become fragile. The United States might achieve a strong lead in the arms race, particularly as it expands into space, where the West enjoys a decisive technological advantage.

Third, if the arms race continues at the present pace the Soviets will have to increase their absolute expenditures. An expanded arms race would require even greater expenditures. Increasingly, the race will focus on high-technology advances in nuclear weapons delivery systems, and high-technology consumes scarce, valuable human and material resources for both the Soviets and the United States; a race neither can afford.

The Soviets look at the situation a little differently. These three conclusions have strongly shaped Gorbachev's thinking in national security. First, nuclear sufficiency recognizes that nuclear buildup beyond the level of mutual assured destruction is meaningless. A far lower level of nuclear weapons would reduce psychological tensions, diminish the danger of an accidental nuclear strike, and increase the security of the superpowers and the world. Second, common security acknowledges that Soviet military security is threatened when the United States feels insecure. Therefore, in considering a military buildup, the Soviets must take into account the probable effects on American defense policy, specifically the danger of a costly arms race that will not increase either side's security. Lastly, the Soviet's view of America's nuclear deterrence is nothing more than mere blackmail. Specifically, they have dismissed the idea that the United States must be prepared for a Soviet nuclear attack against

itself or its European allies. The Soviets say this would never happen therefore there is no reason for the US to have a large defense to retaliate against a forthcoming attack.

Gorbachev also sees deterrence differently than the United States. He accepts the psychological nature of the concept and focuses his objections on the two consequences of deterrence. First, the internal logic of deterrence produces a never ending nuclear arms race, because neither side can be certain it has enough strategic weapons to render a nuclear attack prohibitive. Second, the internal logic of deterrence requires both sides to integrate nuclear forces into their armed forces and to undertake contingency planning for nuclear war. If nuclear forces are to deter, each side must believe that any attack would meet a nuclear response.

It ought to go without saying that a strategy whose political aims far exceed the military resources available for their implementation is a standing invitation to disaster. In this regard, our nation's continuing and often casual accumulation of military obligations around the world unattended by the appropriate increases in military means to fulfill those obligations ought to be of profound concern. The causes of Germany's defeat in both World War I and II were both caused by their leadership's inability to form strategy equal to their industrial and military capabilities. If there is one lesson to be drawn from Germany's military fate in this century, it is that operational competence, while indispensable to victory, is no substitute for a sound and

coherent strategy. 43

Does the United States need a new military strategy? Has the Soviet threat changed? Is the Soviet Union different today than it was 10, 20, 30, or 40 years ago? Are they reducing their scope of modernizing their nuclear forces even though they have an estimated 25,000 warheads? Is the USSR less a threat to Europe and the world? Do the Soviets still covet the oil rich Persian Gulf enough to risk aggression in that area? 49

SECTION FOUR

Herman Wouk wrote: "The beginning of the end of war lies in remembrance." Fortunately for him, he only had to write historic novels versus predict the future. We can learn from history to keep from making the same mistakes, but the past doesn't always provide all the answers.

I have to agree with President Bush's assessment that the world is more unstable today than anytime in US history. Central Europe, while out from under communism and the Warsaw Pact, is disjointed. There is economic chaos, no infrastructure, no work ethic, and their only hope is to get help from Western Europe or the United States. NATO can't and won't protect the central European countries and furthermore Central Europe can't protect themselves from the military giant in the East, the Soviet Union.

When the United States looks at the East, the USSR appears just as powerful and militant as anytime in this century, almost one hundred years. The Soviets have befriended the West and even offered to reduce their awesome conventional forces by signing the Conventional Forces in Europe agreement. But, alas, it appears they have reneged on reducing men and equipment. Instead, they have sent the forces that were stationed in Central Europe to the northern and southern flanks of NATO, equipment they said they would destroy. So it seems that the USSR retains the same strength, minus the Warsaw Pact, as it has always had. Reducing

nuclear weapons is obviously in Soviet interests due to their superior conventional numbers. But after reductions where does that leave the West? It leaves the West at a disadvantage which makes them depend on nuclear weapons which is the same strategy that was used in the post World War II era. So we go back to the post World War II era and the same questions.

Even though we should look at history, we must take a balanced approach to formulating future defense policy. The entire senior United States defense establishment has stated on multiple occasions that the United States' future armed forces will have a leaner look. The big question is, will the US retain the forces needed to deter Soviet behavior since it appears they haven't changed their capability, only their intent? We know that intentions can change virtually overnight. Look how fast the Berlin Wall came tumbling down. Can the USSR reverse their intentions just as quickly? Then if capability multiplied by intent equals threat, and intent can change overnight, it stands to reason that the threat can also change very rapidly.

This situation brings me back to the hedge the US has been using for the past forty-five years to guard against the threat of nuclear war. The nuclear weapon is a good military weapon with political drawbacks. From a military point of view, there isn't a weapon in the world's arsenal that can be more effective against a large industrial complex or a large mass of troops. However, the nuclear weapon is a weapon of mass destruction and as such is placed in the same category as chemical and biological weapons.

Additionally, all three have large collateral damage drawbacks and civilian casualties are very important considerations. Therefore, all NBC weapons (nuclear, biological, and chemical) have a "do not use except as a last resort" connotation. They are weapons that the United States will not use unless the continental United States is in extreme danger.

As President Eisenhower stated, nuclear weapons are much cheaper than a large conventional force but as I have presented, nuclear weapons have not prevented large wars, as the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War, nor the Persian Gulf Crisis have shown. But nuclear weapons have apparently prevented war between the nuclear super powers in the world, the Soviet Union and the United States. On the other hand, there isn't any proof that the elimination of all nuclear weapons will improve the Soviet-American relationship nor the world situation. Arms control may help but total elimination of nuclear weapons must wait the development of a different political relationship and I'm not convinced a new world order will be any improvement to what the Cold War has provided. Since nuclear weapons can always be reinvented, abolition of nuclear weapons might actually raise the risks of war and as long as there are nuclear weapons in the hands of an aggressor, the risk of nuclear war is even higher. The aggressor may believe the risk may be worth the rewards with no one to retaliate.

Therefore I see no alternative but to continue the same policy that we have maintained for the past forty-five years, remaining

flexible to any new development that may arise from the world and especially the Soviets. This places a tremendous burden on the entire military community and especially US intelligence collecting organizations. Intelligence must be a hedge to determine a change in Soviet intent and capability. If we do not keep up with all events, and specifically military capabilities of the USSR and other large military forces, we will not be able to achieve national objectives, that is to protect this nation, its people, and their vital interests around the world.

For these reasons, US strategy and its use of nuclear weapons will be just as important in the future relationship with the Soviets as they have been during the Cold War. Now is the time, since the nation has achieved its goals and peace is at hand, that a strategy becomes more important than it ever did before. It would seem irresponsible for a government to confuse a temporary condition of external peace with a permanent state. Therefore, the United States needs to maintain strategic nuclear forces to assure the future security of this nation.

ENDNOTES

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