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ABSTRACT

To survive into the future, the United States must learn to recognize that its Soviet adversary has much to gain from a mutual and graduated process of de-escalation and conflict reduction. While this country must continue to ensure the survivability of its strategic triad, it is altogether clear that this objective can be satisfied without moving toward a capacity for expanded counterforce strike, expanded theater nuclear force deployments, and generally expanded preparations for nuclear war fighting. Indeed, such moves would have a deleterious effect on U.S. security since they would actually undermine the system of mutual deterrence. If it is to achieve real power, the United States must first come to grips with a sober awareness of the limits of violence and the requirements of coexistence. In "The Trojan Women," Euripides attributes the suffering of one people to the hatred of another. His wisdom suggests that enormous dangers lie latent in the continuing effort by the Reagan administration to cast USSR-U.S. rivalry in the form of a war between the sons of light and the sons of darkness. Unless this effort is quickly reversed, the United States will suffer the fate of folly brought on by the search for security in military might. (RM)

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Myths and Realities: US Nuclear Strategy

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About the Author

Louis René Beres, professor of political science at Purdue University, has authored many books and articles dealing with issues of nuclear strategy and world order. His most recent books are *Apocalypse: Nuclear Catastrophe in World Politics* and *Mimicking Sisyphus: America's Countervailing Nuclear Strategy*.

Professor Beres was born in Zürich, Switzerland, and earned his Ph.D. at Princeton University in 1971. As a husband and father, he draws hope from a motto on the Great Seal of the United States, a phrase of Virgil's, *novus ordo seclorum*, a new age beginning. He firmly believes that, if applied to US nuclear strategy, this motto could counter our present course towards extinction with a reaffirmation of life.

Myths and Realities: US Nuclear Strategy

The little god of earth remains the same
queer sprite
As on the first day, or in primal light.
His life would be less difficult, poor thing,
Without your gift of heavenly glimmering;
He calls it Reason, using light celestial
Just to outdo the beasts in being bestial.

Goethe, *Faust*

Humankind's inclination to war and collective disintegration is not new nor is its passion for adapting intellect to the invention and manufacture of the necessary engines of destruction. Small wonder, then, that Goethe's Mephistopheles complains that since "men drown in evils . . . I find it boring to torment them."

Goethe, of course, is telling us that our species moves inexorably toward *unreason* on its own account. There is no need for satanic intervention. Humankind can be counted upon to ensure the triumph of oblivion on its own.

These observations have a special meaning in modern world politics. Dominated by the implements of megadeath, states have transformed man into a feeble speck surrounded by unfathomable depths of silence. During the next few years (or perhaps only months) humankind must decide whether it wishes to survive as a species or whether, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea, it will be erased.

In reaching this decision a very special responsibility must be confronted by the United States. Although the Reagan administration is currently embarked upon talks to reduce strategic and intermediate-range nuclear weapons, the basic plan of US nuclear strategy remains unaffected. Exceeding the requirements of minimum deterrence, this plan goes beyond the legitimate objective of survivable and penetration-capable strategic forces to accelerated preparations for fighting a protracted nuclear war. While Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger announced recently that the United States does not believe that it can "win" such a war, he insisted that we take steps to ensure that our nuclear forces can "prevail."

These policies endorse a provocative counterforce syndrome that actually makes nuclear war much more likely. Coupled with the administration's refusal to reject the right to first use of nuclear weapons (a rejection that would parallel the recent Soviet declaration before the UN General Assembly's Second Special Session on Disarmament) and with its corollary disregard for a genuine nuclear freeze, such policies make arms control impossible. Indeed, since all of the administration's planned nuclear force expansions and "improvements" will add nothing to our invulnerability/penetration capability requirements, they will inevitably have the effect of undermining this country's deterrence posture. This is the case because these measures will heighten Soviet incentives to strike first.

Nuclear strategy is a game that sane people may play, but not — as the Reagan administration suggests — with frivolity and without understanding. Accepting such euphemisms as "crisis relocation," "limited nuclear war," "protracted nuclear war," "collateral damage," "countervalue" and "counterforce" strategies, and "enhanced radiation warfare," the administration has erected an anesthetized universe in which myths can no longer be distinguished from realities. By advancing its arguments with immense clamor and with inexplicable disregard for what is known, it has provided new legitimacy for the Orwellian logic of our time — the logic of "doublethink." According to Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, the concept of deterrence is really quite simple:

> . . . to make the cost of nuclear war much higher than any possible benefit. If the Soviets know in advance that a nuclear attack on the United States would bring swift nuclear retaliation, they would never attack in the first place. They would be "deterred" from ever beginning a nuclear war.[1]

Yet, if this *is* the idea of deterrence, why is there any need for a US countervailing nuclear strategy (one geared to the targeting of Soviet strategic weapons and control centers)? If it is presumed that the Soviets would not strike first as long as they could expect an overwhelmingly damaging reprisal, why must we go beyond the maintenance of a fully-survivable and penetration-capable second-strike force? If we are indeed unconcerned with winning a nuclear war, why must we go far beyond the requirements of minimum deterrence "to demonstrate that our strategic forces *could* [Weinberger's

emphasis] survive Soviet strikes over an *extended* [my emphasis] period?"[2]

Before we can pass beyond the untenable position sustained by strategic myths, the Reagan administration must learn to recognize the futility of its current nuclear plans. If it is to be of any real merit, strategic thinking must be informed by the requirements of lucidity and by the basic tenets of empirical science. It cannot be a new form of medieval scholasticism in which recommendations are made that bear no relation to available facts.

There is a well-known passage in Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* in which the scholastics are compared to spiders, weaving webs out of their own heads without any consideration of what is actually going on in the world. So it is with the strategic mythmakers of the Reagan administration. Although their webs are sometimes admirable for the fineness of the thread and for the workmanship, they are diaphanous and without any substance.

The dangers that lie latent in this modern form of thinking pertain not only to the reasonableness of strategy but also to the consequences of failure. Current US nuclear strategy ignores the rules of preventive eschatology because it fails to make a qualitative distinction between nuclear war and other forms of warfare. In fact, since the stockpiled nuclear weapons that exist today can kill all life in a way that would make impossible any further reproduction of living cells, the consequences of a nuclear war might include nothing short of omnicide. Killing not only life, but life-giving death, nuclear war would destroy not only all of nature but even the natural relation of death to life.[3]

Humankind has now brought all life within the lethal interstices of a sinister technology. Trapped in this ambit of what Philippe Aries, in *The Hour of our Death*, calls "dirty" or "obscene" or "invisible" death, we are commanded to accept the possibility of a remorseless judgment — a judgment in which death would take place without rebirth. Although we have always feared extinction with insignificance, the perversion of human ingenuity through nuclear war would represent the final triumph of meaninglessness.

Yet, this is also a promising time in our national political life. Although we stand perilously close to the edge of a terrible abyss, there now exists widespread understanding of our

predicament. Avoiding nuclear war, until recently only a marginal tic of consciousness, is now a gigantic, irreversible gesture. Today, as growing legions reject a self-defeating nuclear strategy, there is new hope that we might yet endure.

But such endurance is by no means automatic. Before we can continue as a nation and as a species, we need to cultivate a particular understanding of the dangers that lie ahead. This must be accomplished without allowing the apocalypse to become just another occasion for self-congratulation. Living at a moment when almost anyone can offer a Spenglerian theory of imminent decline, we must not become too proud of our pessimism. Rather than elevate our melancholy to the status of a metaphysic, we must convert the apprehensions of our time into a relentless search for life.

There is a story by Jorge Luis Borges in which a condemned man, having noticed that expectations never coincide with reality, unceasingly imagines the circumstances of his own death. Since they have thus become expectations, he reasons, they can never become reality. So it must be with nuclear war. Recognizing that fear and reality go together naturally, we must begin to place ourselves firmly within the arena of mortality. Only then can we begin to take the first feeble but critical steps back toward hope.

To start, we need to understand that nuclear weapons can have no military purpose other than deterrence. Counterforce is not a gainful strategy and can never be reconciled with the requirements of rational decision making. Ironic as it may seem, the only relatively sane strategy for nuclear weapons is mutual assured destruction (MAD). In the words of Messrs. Bundy, Kennan, McNamara, and Smith, it is time "to recognize that in the age of massive thermonuclear overkill it no longer makes sense — if it ever did — to hold these [nuclear] weapons for any other purpose than the prevention of their use."[4]

The situation suggests that US nuclear strategy may be entering a phase of unwitting self-parody. At a time when authoritative medical and scientific analyses point to the conclusion that a nuclear war could never be tolerated, the Reagan administration counsels a policy based on preparations to prevail in such a war. At a time when the Soviet Union reiterates its continuing rejection of the idea of limited nuclear war, US leaders codify a nuclear targeting policy that accepts such an idea as axiomatic. At a time when the need for collabora-

tive de-escalation of the nuclear arms race must override all other considerations, the administration makes plans to adopt a selective nuclear strategy for damage limitation and to deploy new strategic weapons with hard-target kill capacity, a new generation of intermediate-range nuclear missiles that would threaten the Soviet homeland, and the neutron bomb.

If these plans were not problematic enough, the president intends to go ahead with the MX in a fashion that would have no bearing on the alleged problem of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) vulnerability. Taken together with planned programs for ballistic missile defense (BMD), civil defense (including relocation of urban populations),[5] C³I (Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence) improvements, antisatellite (ASAT) weapons, and the intermittent resurrection of linkage diplomacy (tying nuclear arms control to Soviet good behavior in other areas of interaction), the MX decision is bound to make the Soviets increasingly fearful of a US first-strike. Naturally, this means that the Reagan nuclear strategy *contributes* to the prospect of Soviet preemption.

The decision to proceed with MX is all the more disturbing because the case for ICBM vulnerability has been greatly exaggerated. Although it is almost certainly true that a fixed silo and missile, placed under attack from an accurate weapon of very high yield, will be vulnerable, the practical problems of developing a targeting plan that would assure such vulnerability among more than 1000 such ICBMs are overwhelming. These problems include probabilities of destruction of the attacking weapons, compounded by probabilities of self-destruction, compounded by probabilities of fratricide, timing, and targeting difficulties.

Moreover, since US solid-fuel propelled Minutemen ICBMs can be launched against the Soviet Union well within the 30 minute flight time of Soviet missiles, Soviet weapons launched against US ICBMs might find only empty silos. Even if it could be assumed that the Soviet Union were able to get on the very high side of a damage-expectancy curve against US ICBMs, their first-strike — in order to be rational — would also have to have a high degree of assurance against US submarines and bombers. That kind of capability, of course, is unavailable in the foreseeable future at the very least.

Purposeful thought on nuclear strategy must be regarded not as a quest for certainty, but as a disciplined adventure in the process of correct reasoning. Under the direction of Presi-

dent Reagan and the strategic mythmakers, however, the United States has been thinking against itself. In spite of the coming of outwardly tragic events, our leaders proceed without courage and without despair.

Before this situation can be reversed, our leaders will need to act decisively on behalf of *life*. Understood in terms of current policy imperatives, this means that the administration's commitment to arms control can not take place amidst a continuing US force revitalization. By arming for arms control, we assure only oblivion.[6]

II

The United States now labors for security by founding its nuclear strategy upon a set of erroneous assumptions. Of these, none is more dangerous than the idea of limited nuclear war. Significantly, the Soviets have never shared our view of controlled nuclear conflict — an asymmetry in strategic doctrine that could give rise to very dangerous US moves. The only prudent course for the United States is to assume that any onset of a nuclear exchange must be avoided lest it become total.[7]

Moreover, while US nuclear strategy is premised on the plausibility of limited nuclear war, it also assumes that the Soviet Union is preparing to fight and win a nuclear war. Clearly, these two central assumptions of US nuclear strategy contradict each other.

It is also ironic that the unreasonableness of limited nuclear war has been articulated not only by major Soviet military planners, but also by the Reagan administration's principal Soviet expert on the National Security Council. In the fashion of Soviet General Mikhail A. Milshtein and General-Major R. Simonyan, Richard Pipes has derided the idea of a limited nuclear war. "In the Soviet view," wrote Pipes in his now famous *Commentary* piece, "a nuclear war would be total . . . Limited nuclear war . . . and all the other refinements of US strategic doctrine find no place in its Soviet counterpart . . ."[8]

Most curiously of all, perhaps, the credibility of the case against limited nuclear war was underscored recently by a five-day war game played by US command authorities. Code-named Ivy League, this game — which took place in March 1982 — represented the first time in 25 years that US command structures and communications systems that would be

used in a nuclear war were given a complete exercise. The exercise began with assumptions of rising international tension and with both the Soviet Union and the United States mobilizing for war. After Soviet attacks on US forces overseas, war was declared, a US ship was sunk in the North Atlantic, and US troops overseas were attacked by troops using chemical warfare. The president then ordered a low level nuclear retaliation and the war escalated to uncontrolled dimensions. After a 5,000-megaton missile attack on the United States, the game ended with the killing of the president (as a result of the blast) and with his successors completing the job of worldwide obliteration.

Curiously, nothing in our current nuclear strategy suggests a rational relationship between nuclear war and politics. Why, exactly, are the Soviets believed to be getting ready to fight and win a nuclear war with the United States? What conceivable post-war prospect can be associated with alleged Soviet plans for a first-strike against the United States? Why should the Soviets be expected to disregard Karl von Clausewitz's principle that war should always be conducted with a view to sustaining the overriding political object?

In fact, there is no evidence that the Soviet Union is preparing to fight and win a nuclear war if, by this assessment, we mean readiness for a Soviet first-strike. Rather, all of the evidence suggests that the Soviet Union, in *response* to any use of nuclear weapons by the United States, would employ the full range of its nuclear options — that is, it would not engage in the kind of limited nuclear war envisioned by current US strategic policy. Indeed, Soviet spokesmen seem to repeatedly reflect the understanding that any nuclear war would be intolerable and that there could be no purpose to try to fight and win such a war.

Speaking before the 26th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party on February 23, 1981, Leonid Brezhnev said. "To try and outstrip each other in the arms race, or to expect to win a nuclear war, is dangerous madness."

In a speech at a Kremlin rally on November 6, 1981, Marshal Dmitri F. Ustinov, Minister of Defense, stated: "Western politicians and strategists stubbornly push the thesis that Soviet military doctrine allegedly assumes the possibility of an 'initial disarming strike,' of survival, and even of victory, in a nuclear war. All this is a deliberate lie."

And in an address at a Soviet-US seminar in Washington on January 12, 1982, Nikolai N. Inozemtsev, Director of the Soviet Institute of World Economy and International Relations, observed. "Political and military doctrines have been changed. This has been reflected in our internal life There is new determination to seek sharp reductions."

US second-strike counterforce strategy is based upon the assumption that a Soviet first-strike would be limited. This is the case because if the Soviet first-strike were unlimited, this country's retaliation would hit only empty silos. Yet, as we have already noted, there is absolutely no reason why the Soviets would ever choose to launch a limited first-strike against the United States. It follows that our current search for increasing hard-target kill capabilities may be geared to achieving a first-strike capability against the Soviets.

The administration argues, of course, that the Soviets have a refiring and reconstitution capability with their missiles and that even an unlimited first-strike would take place in several successive stages. Hence, US counterforce-targeted warheads, used in retaliation, would not necessarily hit only empty silos. They would also hit silos that might otherwise spawn weapons to enlarge the damage of the Soviet first-strike.

Yet, this argument is oriented entirely to issues of nuclear war *fighting*. Accepting the prospect of a nuclear war, it concerns itself (in conjunction with plans for multilayer BMD, air defense, and civil defense) exclusively with *intra-war* damage limitation and the associated dynamics of escalation dominance (the capacity to prevail during a nuclear war at any level of violence).

There would be very little of the United States left to protect after the first round of Soviet attacks had been absorbed (the United States does not even target Soviet sea-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs).) And current strategy makes such attacks more likely in the first place by undermining stable deterrence. Looked at in cost-benefit terms, therefore, it is clear that the alleged damage-limitation benefits that would accrue to the United States from its strategy and tactics during a nuclear war are greatly outweighed by that strategy's deterrence-undermining costs.

Current US nuclear force improvements stem from a presumed need to prevail in a protracted nuclear war with the Soviet Union. Although Secretary of Defense Weinberger

appears to have moved away from the "victory is possible" position with his speech at the US Army War College on June 3, 1982, the elements of this speech stand in marked contrast to his defense guidance document. It follows that the newly fashionable emphasis on US nuclear capabilities that can "prevail" reflects no more than a semantic departure from earlier references to "victory." The language has changed, the policy has not.

Why should this policy be correct? There is, after all, no reason to suppose that the Soviets can be deterred effectively only by the prospect of "losing" a nuclear war. Even if there were such a reason, the Soviets (given their ideas about the implausibility of limited nuclear war) already calculate on the basis of total nuclear effort on both sides. The only probable consequence of the administration's provocative redefinition of deterrence is heightened Soviet uncertainty — an uncertainty that quite naturally increases the likelihood of Soviet preemption.

President Reagan and the strategic mythmakers must not be confused with the usual exponents of *Realpolitik*. While they certainly share some basic assumptions about the proper course of statesmanship, traditional *Realpolitikers* have at least understood the essential differences between violence and power, differences that are now being effaced by advocates of advantage in a nuclear war. In the traditional view, foreign policy must always aim at improving the relative power position of the state so that it may wage *successful* war. This view, while falling short of a more enlightened world order perspective, clearly distinguishes power from a resort to force that would destroy the vital interests of the state.

These observations notwithstanding, the illusions of strategic myth are already enshrined in this country's codified policy for civil defense, especially those plans that call for the "temporary relocation" of people from "high-risk" areas to safer "host" areas during periods when nuclear war seems imminent. In spite of the fact that the reasonableness of relocation has been dismissed by virtually all sectors of the scientific and medical communities, crisis relocation planning (CRP) now receives the full support of the Reagan administration. By its plan to spend $4.2 billion over the next seven years on CRP, the Federal Emergency Managment Agency (FEMA) intends to double the number of citizens who could survive a nuclear war. Since FEMA estimates that about 40 percent of

the population could survive such a war in the absence of relocation (an extraordinarily problematic estimate), this means that CRP is designed to bring the survival rate to 80 percent.

The idea of crisis relocation dates back to the 1950s, and was endorsed by the Carter administration in 1978. Until the present, however, FEMA received only small budget increases for the evacuation program. Spurred by the awareness that the Soviet Union is believed to spend $2 billion annually on civil defense and that it is constructing a plan to protect 110,000 key government officials in hardened blast shelters, FEMA now seeks to do its part to close a different sort of "window of vulnerability."

Regrettably, US plans for CRP are based more on monkey-see-monkey-do logic than upon a well-reasoned assessment of risks and benefits. In this connection, an obviously flawed assumption of evacuation plans is the idea that the United States would have several days to evacuate its high risk areas during a period of rising international tensions. Curiously, this assumption contradicts another primary premise of current nuclear strategy — that we need to improve our nuclear strategy such that it can provide protection from a Soviet *surprise* attack.

Another flawed assumption underlying CRP is that a government-directed civilian evacuation in the face of nuclear war would not degenerate into chaos. Notwithstanding its highly-detailed instructions for the secure transport of currency, credit cards, and sanitary napkins (and its corollary prohibition of firearms, narcotics, and alcohol in the relocation areas) our government can hardly expect that a mass exodus from cities to reception areas could take place calmly and expeditiously. Indeed, with its view that relocation might be undertaken without producing crippling strains upon all social support systems in the United States, our leaders have brought public policy planning into the realm of pure satire.

Yet another flawed assumption of CRP is that relocated populations would survive. Even if evacuation could be accomplished without widespread confusion and panic, there is no reason to believe that host areas would be relatively free of radioactivity. Moreover, in the absence of normally-functioning health care delivery systems, people with chronic illnesses would be especially vulnerable while fractures, burns, and lacerations would go untreated. Coupled with greatly heightened incidence of both disease and psychological trauma,

medical problems would be aggravated by the overwhelming number of rotting corpses. All of these medical problems are underscored by the antecedent strategic facts that: (1) evacuation would itself be a provocative act, perhaps even occasioning the very attack whose consequences it is designed to mitigate; and (2) evacuation plans provide false reassurance to the American people, encouraging the very processes of denial that make nuclear war increasingly likely.

III

The motto for the Enlightenment, *sapere aude!*, dare to know!, suggested by Immanuel Kant acquires a special meaning in the late twentieth century study of nuclear war. Just as repression of the fear of death by individuals can occasion activities that impair the forces of self-preservation, so can we impair our prospects for preventing nuclear war by insulating ourselves from reasonable fears of collective disintegration. Can we succeed? I think we can! Having taken civilization seriously, an enlarged body of conscious individuals already stands before the purveyors of strategic myth, countering their illusory appraisals and prescriptions with informed understanding.

These individuals include a number of high-ranking military officers with extensive awareness of what is involved. Writing recently in *The New York Times Magazine*, Admiral Noel Gayler (Ret.), former director of the National Security Agency, offered the following observation:

> What many Americans do not understand is that there is no sensible military use for any of the three categories of nuclear weapons — strategic (of intercontinental range), or theater (capable of reaching targets within one's theater of military operations) or tactical (designed, like atomic cannon, for battlefield use). I say this as a military man, a former commander in chief of all United States forces in the Pacific, an aviator and a mariner, soldier and intelligence officer of 46 years' experience.[9]

Of course, heightened consciousness is only the first step to preventing what the physicians now call "the final epidemic."[10] Now that such consciousness has been generated, it is up to us to encourage the establishment of a new nuclear regime — one based upon such immediate measures as a return to minimum deterrence, a policy of no-first-use of nucle-

ar weapons, a comprehensive test ban, and additional nuclear-weapon-free zones. These measures should be founded upon an *immediate* bilateral freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of new nuclear weapons.

Minimum Deterrence

The superpowers must retreat from their expanding acceptance of counterforce principles and return to the relative sanity of strategies based on minimum deterrence. Each side has such an ability right now, and each can best assure its continuance by entering into a nuclear freeze. Of course, the freeze must be followed up with substantial reductions of present arsenals. In this connection, it is essential that the already-negotiated provisions for controlling nuclear weapons remain in place and that progress in the strategic arms reduction talks be rapid and far-reaching.

Moreover, the processes involved in the control of intermediate-range nuclear weapons begun in Geneva should be incorporated into the wider strategic arms reduction talks (START) framework, since there can be no reasonable purpose in reaching agreement on one set of systems without the other. This is the case because it would be purposeless to attempt to negotiate limits on Soviet medium- and intermediate-range missiles if the Soviets were free to deploy as many ICBMs as they wish and target them against Western Europe. From the Soviet point of view, there would be little reason to agree on control of intermediate-range weapons without a coincident sense of the strategic missiles that can be brought within Soviet range. For the Soviets, the largely conceptual distinctions between intermediate and strategic nuclear weapons are substantially less important than the common capacity of these weapons to strike within Soviet territory.

The prospects for success in these interdependent arms control negotiations are also tied very closely to the Reagan administration's plans to protect the MX. Should the administration proceed to deploy a ballistic missile defense system for such protection (a deployment that would contradict the best available scientific information on the subject, which is that it would not work), the Soviets would almost certainly undertake a parallel deployment. This, in turn, would generate a mutual search for new counterforce missile capabilities, thereby heating up the arms race and removing any lingering hopes for arms control.

The decision to provide BMD of US missile silos would also lead to a renunciation of the Antiballistic Missile Treaty. Since Article VI of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) obligates the superpowers to move expeditiously toward arms control and disarmament, such renunciation — together with the failure of START and intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) talks — would be widely interpreted as a US violation of the NPT. It follows that US deployment of BMD would not only increase tensions between the superpowers, it would also fatally undermine the worldwide nonproliferation regime.

Such a blow to the nonproliferation regime would be especially problematic because current US policy on controlling the spread of nuclear weapons already fails to indicate support for Article VI of the NPT. While President Reagan's formal announcement of July 16, 1981, described nonproliferation as "a fundamental national security and foreign policy objective," it contained no specified linkage between vertical and horizontal arms control. In view of the bargain between nuclear weapons states and nonnuclear weapons states inherent in Article VI, this suggests that the latter will not continue in their restricted condition indefinitely. This conclusion is supported by the results of the latest NPT Review Conference, which ended in September 1980 after developing countries accused the superpowers of failing to reduce their strategic arsenals.

The failure of the START and IRBM control process that would stem from a decision to deploy BMD would also impair the prospects of controlling ASAT weapons systems. Without a START agreement, ASAT competition would continue, thereby increasing tensions and first-strike fears. Since destruction of certain satellite capabilities would leave the victim state blind, the resultant space weapons race would produce new temptations for each side to preempt.

Regrettably, the START negotiations began in Geneva shortly after the Reagan administration announced that it had already abandoned the search for an ASAT agreement. In spite of the president's expressed concern at Eureka College on May 9, 1982, for the "growing instability of the nuclear balance," it is apparent that he disassociates this concern from the proliferation of ASAT weapons. Thus, in early June 1982, acting on orders from the president, Secretary of Defense Weinberger directed the US Air Force to prepare to deploy ASAT weapons within five years. Taken together with Mr. Weinberger's adop-

tion of a formal strategy of protracted nuclear war with the Soviet Union, this directive reveals the continuing lack of commitment to basic principles of nuclear arms control.

No-First-Use

As suggested recently by Messrs. Bundy, McNamara, Kennan, and Smith, the United States and its allies must move quickly toward a definite policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons.[11] Historically, this country's interest in maintaining a first-use (as distinguished from first-strike) option stems from US fears of conventional force inferiority. Faced with growing Soviet military strength, the United States has clung to the idea that credible deterrence requires the ability to respond to conventional aggression with nuclear forces *in extremis*.

In actual practice, the distinctions between the first-use of nuclear weapons and a nuclear first-strike are apt to prove meaningless. Once a US adversary had committed an act of aggression, the United States would surely characterize any intended nuclear response as a first-use rather than as a first-strike. Since the decision that an act of aggression had taken place would necessarily be made by the United States, it follows that certain acts that are judged to be aggressive by the United States might warrant a US nuclear reprisal.

When it is considered together with the consequences of this country's conventional force inferiority, the US policy of first-use is unsettling to the Soviet Union since it is a policy that (1) allows for rapid escalation to nuclear conflict; (2) permits the possibility of disguising a first-strike as a first-use, and (3) combines with a counterforce targeting doctrine.

The US policy of first-use, therefore, offers incentives to the Soviet Union to undertake a preemptive nuclear strike against the United States. These incentives are offered without providing the United States with any deterrent benefits, since any US nuclear retaliation (including enhanced radiation weapons or intermediate-range nuclear weapons) would almost certainly elicit a Soviet nuclear response.

It follows that the United States would gain a great deal of security by taking steps to parallel the June 1982 Soviet renunciation of the first-use option and to give teeth to such a renunciation by abandoning production of the neutron bomb, discontinuing NATO plans for the modernization of intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Western Europe, and redeploying theater nuclear forces away from frontiers. These steps

must be accompanied by efforts to strengthen US and allied conventional forces relative to the Soviet Union in order to preserve a sufficiently high nuclear threshold. For its part, the Soviet Union must agree to parallel steps imposing far-reaching curbs on its own theater nuclear weapons delivery capability and on Warsaw Pact ground manpower and tank forces.

These requirements suggest yet another close tie between ongoing arms control talks, namely the negotiations currently underway in Geneva and Vienna concerning control of intermediate-range European nuclear forces and mutual balanced force reductions (MBFR). The Geneva IRBM talks, of course, flow from President Reagan's November 18, 1981, offer to cancel deployments of the Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) if the Soviet Union would eliminate its SS-20, SS-4, and SS-5 missiles. The Vienna talks (MBFR) between NATO and the Warsaw Pact have been going on since 1973 and are concerned with the reduction and limitation of conventional forces in Central Europe and with associated confidence-building and verification measures.

The progress of theater nuclear reductions is very much dependent on what is accomplished at MBFR. This is the case because NATO's commitment to nuclear defense stems from fear of the Warsaw Pact's numerically superior conventional forces. A great deal is therefore at stake in Vienna and the ongoing Soviet reaction to President Reagan's June 10, 1982, initiative will need to be watched closely. This initiative, announced in Bonn, seeks common collective ceilings in the reductions area (the Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg in the West, and East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia in the East) of about 700,000 ground forces and about 900,000 ground and air forces. The NATO initiative also includes measures to encourage cooperation and to verify compliance.

Should there be substantial success in producing equalization of conventional forces (a process that would require cuts in ground forces in Central Europe of about 260,000 by the Warsaw Pact and about 90,000 by NATO to achieve the proposed common ceilings), the US/NATO side could be expected to diminish its longstanding commitment to theater nuclear forces and to the associated policy of first-use. The key to reducing the nuclear threat in Europe lies in the antecedent realization of approximate parity in conventional forces between the two alliances. In this connection, however, there would be

little purpose in being overly preoccupied with the idea of balance in European nuclear forces as an interim objective toward total denuclearization since such an idea would have nothing to do with the probability of nuclear weapons use by either side.

Comprehensive Test Ban

Only a comprehensive test ban (CTB) can substantially inhibit further nuclear weapon innovations. Moreover, a comprehensive test ban could implement and assist in the verification of a complete nuclear arms freeze.

Sadly, President Reagan announced, in July 1982, that his administration will not resume CTB negotiations with the Soviet Union. Although the trilateral test-ban talks, suspended by President Carter in 1980, had ended on an optimistic note, President Reagan clearly feels compelled to subordinate the requirements of arms control to his program for revitalizing the US nuclear deterrent. Seeking to go ahead with tests on such weapons as the new Pershing II cruise missile (which exploded on its first test flight just as the president suspended CTB talks), the administration has now thrown out 19 years of bipartisan US support for a CTB treaty. Moreover, since the preambular paragraphs of the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty pledge the parties to continue negotiations toward a CTB, it has also violated a basic norm of international law.

This move speaks volumes about the administration's sincerity concerning arms control negotiations in general. Since the signing in 1963 by US, British, and Soviet negotiators of the Partial Test Ban Treaty, every US president, regardless of party, has actively sought a follow-up agreement that would also halt underground nuclear testing. By failing to support such an agreement, the Reagan administration has undermined not only the vertical balance of power, but also the restraints on horizontal proliferation. Unless it reverses itself on this issue promptly, we may witness the total collapse of the nonproliferation regime by 1985 (on the occasion of the Third NPT Review Conference).

It must also be understood, at this time, that a CTB would meet even the most stringent tests of verifiability. Addressing this issue as seismologists who have been concerned for many years with the detection of underground explosions, Lynn R. Sykes and Jack F. Evernden conclude in a recent issue of *Scientific American* that networks of seismic instruments could

monitor a total test ban with high reliability. According to the authors:

> We are certain that the state of knowledge of seismology and the techniques for monitoring seismic waves are sufficient to ensure that a feasible seismic network could soon detect a clandestine underground testing program involving explosions as small as one kiloton. In short, the technical capabilities needed to police a comprehensive test ban down to explosions of very small size unquestionably exist; the issues to be resolved are political.[12]

Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones

The superpowers must supplement their other de-escalatory initiatives with steps toward wider arrangements for nuclear-weapon-free zones. As expressed by the General Assembly resolution of December 11, 1975, (3472 B: XXX) "nuclear-weapon free-zones constitute one of the most effective means for preventing the proliferation, both horizontal and vertical, of nuclear weapons and for contributing to the elimination of the danger of nuclear holocaust."

The Soviet Union has recently shown a promising interest in enlarging the scope of the nuclear-weapon-free zone idea. On June 27, 1981, then President Brezhnev offered Nordic nations a guarantee against Soviet nuclear attack in exchange for their creation of a Northern European nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Even more recently, on August 13, 1981, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Director Eugene Rostow announced that the United States has begun to seek an accord to keep the Middle East free of nuclear weapons. Although he indicated that no specific plan has yet been offered, the idea will be to pattern it after the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which pertains to Latin America and which entered into force on April 22, 1968.

Together with other nonproliferation efforts, nuclear-weapon-free zones warrant serious attention by the Reagan administration. While Soviet support for these zones in certain regions seems aimed largely at reducing the US nuclear presence, there is no reason to believe that such reductions would bestow military or political advantage to the Soviets. Indeed, in view of what has already been revealed about the danger and unreliability of theater nuclear deterrence, the overall security effect of such US reductions would almost certainly be advantageous for this country.

Conclusion

To survive into the future, the United States must learn to recognize that its Soviet adversary has much to gain from a mutual and graduated process of de-escalation and conflict reduction. While this country must continue to ensure the survivability of its strategic triad, it is altogether clear that this objective can be satisfied without moving toward a capacity for expanded counterforce strikes, expanded theater nuclear force deployments, and generally expanded preparations for nuclear war fighting. Indeed, as has already been demonstrated, such moves would have a deleterious effect on US security since they would actually undermine the system of mutual deterrence.

Happily, the foundations for genuine security from nuclear war are already in place. In the United States, the antinuclear movement is now of considerable size and influence. Even before the start of the UN's Second Special Session on Disarmament, a *New York Times*/CBS news poll in Spring 1982 found that 72 percent of the people of this country favor a nuclear freeze.

The freeze is an idea whose time has come. In a world where existing superpower arsenals of nuclear weapons are clearly adequate to the requirements of assured destruction, the continuation of the arms race can produce only instability. Rather than codify a condition of inferiority for the United States, a freeze would set the stage for success of associated arms control efforts, reduce the rationale for countervailing strategies of deterrence, and greatly reduce the threat of horizontal proliferation.

Moreover, a freeze would be particularly susceptible to verification. This is the case because a freeze would mean a stop to all activities in any weapons program. Whereas other attempts at arms control require monitoring a particular ceiling, verification of a freeze would require detection of any missile or aircraft. Indeed, viewed in cost/benefit terms, it is clear that the prospective security benefits that would accrue to the United States from a freeze would outweigh the costs even if some Soviet cheating were to take place. This is the case because such cheating would necessarily be on a very minor scale while the overall effect of the freeze would be to initiate de-escalatory processes and restore minimum deterrence. In the words of William E. Colby, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA):

The purpose of verification is not the accumulation of legal evidence for a court of law. It is to protect our nation against Soviet forces and weaponry. If we protect our nation against the threat of another generation of Soviet nuclear weapons through a freeze, we would be substantially ahead even if the Soviets were to successfully cheat in a minute and marginal program. Any program which offered the prospect of a strategic advantage to the Soviets by definition would have to be of a size and consequent visibility that we could identify it long before it became a direct threat and take defensive action against it . . .[13]

The same point was made recently by Herbert Scoville, former deputy director of CIA for science and technology:

Insofar as the freeze is concerned, I believe that on the whole it is verifiable and the gains from stopping the arms race more than offset the risks for some violation. It is always important to avoid having people insist on 100% verification. The degree of reliability should be scaled to the security risk.[14]

But the time for action is not unlimited. Unless there is Soviet-US agreement on a freeze very soon, the development of new nuclear weapons will make verification more and more difficult. Should this happen, the momentum of the nuclear arms race will really be out of control, and the last remaining hopes for human survival as a species will have been erased. To avoid such a state of affairs, the superpowers need only agree to act in their own best interests, enter into an appropriate treaty, and make use of the already extant Standing Consultative Commission on compliance with arms control treaties.

Why then, does the Reagan administration reject the freeze? Is it because of a certain wooden-headedness that opposes any hint of reason with preconceived fixed notions? Or is it because the president and the strategic mythmakers display a literal incapacity to think about such esoteric issues, an incapacity that defines them as forerunners of new systems of prelogical thought or even as fools or madmen? As we learn from Michel Foucault's history of insanity in the age of reason, *Madness and Civilization*, ". . . learning becomes madness through the very excess of false learning."

In my judgment, none of these answers is correct. Although

the strategic world of the Reagan administration is a primeval world, one dominated by a vast conceptual emptiness and by a petrified worldview, its rejection of the freeze flows directly from its revised definition of deterrence. The freeze is objectionable to the administration not because it would create the conditions under which the US would be unable to devastate the Soviet Union after absorbing a first-strike attack (it clearly would not create such conditions) but because it would preclude the prospect of dominating escalatory processes during a nuclear war. In short, the freeze is rejected because it would interfere with the capacity to wage nuclear war "rationally."

Violence is not power. Sometimes they are opposites; the less power, the greater the inclination to violence. Understood in terms of the current nuclear arms race, it is time for our national leaders to understand that the prospects for protracted survival may vary inversely with the prospects for waging a protracted nuclear war.

If it is to achieve real power, the United States must first come to grips with a sober awareness of the limits of violence and the requirements of coexistence. In *The Trojan Women*, Euripides attributes the suffering of one people to the hatred of another. His wisdom suggests that enormous dangers lie latent in the continuing effort by the Reagan administration to cast Soviet-US rivalry in the form of a war between the sons of light and the sons of darkness. Unless this effort is quickly and completely reversed, the United States (and probably the rest of the world as well) will suffer the fate of folly brought on by the search for security in military might — a fate affirmed again and again by the Israelite prophets and by Herodotus in his description of the scheme for the defense of Babylon. Unless we learn to understand that humankind's search for enduring security in arms has produced only evermore limitless varieties of misfortune, the fate of the earth will surely be that of Babylon.

Notes

1 See Secretary of Defense Weinberger's letter of August 23, 1982, sent to 30 US and 40 foreign publications, reprinted in Theodore Draper's, "Dear Mr. Weinberger An Open Reply to an Open Letter," *The New York Review of Books*, Vol XXIX, No 17, November 4, 1982, p 27

2 *Ibid* Although the present administration's concept of deterrence is uniquely provocative, it does not represent a dramatic and revolutionary shift from the thinking of prior administrations Rather, it represents the latest refinement of counterforce planning, a process underway for at least 20 years and one that was underscored especially by Presidential Directive 59, signed by President Carter on July 25, 1980.

3 See John Somerville, "Philosophy of Peace Today Preventive Eschatology," Wallach Award Essay 1981, *Peace Research*, Vol 12, No 2, April 1980, p 63

4 See McGeorge Bundy, George F Kennan, Robert S McNamara, and Gerard Smith, "Nuclear Weapons and the Atlantic Alliance," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 60, No 4, Spring 1982, p 768

5 For a recent account of "the relocation option" by the author, see Louis René Beres, "Civil Defense as Tragicomedy On the Road from Apocalypse," *Worldview*, Vol 25, No 5, May 1982, pp 5-6 See also his testimony on "FEMA Oversight Will US Nuclear Attack Evacuation Plans Work?" *Hearing Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations*, House of Representatives, 97th Congress, Second Session, April 22, 1982 (pp 359-370 of the *Hearing Record*)

6 This conclusion is supported by several recent empirical studies that indicate a strong relationship between the level of risk that statesmen are willing to accept and the consequent likelihood of war See, for example, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *The War Trap* (New Haven Yale University Press, 1981), and Russell J Leng, "Reagan and *Realpolitik* Conflict Bargaining and the Historical Record," paper presented to the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 4, 1982

7 On this point, see Bundy, Kennan, McNamara, and Smith, "Nuclear Weapons and the Atlantic Alliance," *op cit*, p 757

8 See Richard Pipes, "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War," *Commentary*, Vol 64, No 1, July 1977, p 30

9 See Noel Gayler, "How to Break the Momentum of the Nuclear Arms Race," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 25, 1982, p 48

10 See Ruth Adams and Susan Cullen, eds, *The Final Epidemic Physicians and Scientists on Nuclear War* (Chicago Education Foundation for Nuclear Science, 1981)

11 See "Nuclear Weapons and the Atlantic Alliance," *op cit*

12 See Lynn R Sykes and Jack F Evernden, "The Verification of a Comprehensive Test Ban," *Scientific American*, Vol 247, No 4, October 1982, p 47

13 Statement by Colby on May 13, 1982, reprinted in "Nuclear Freeze A Necessary First Step," *The Defense Monitor*, Center for Defense Information, Vol XI, No 7, 1982, p 4

14 Cited by David Keppel, "Cheating on the Freeze — Not the Issue," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol 38, No 9, November 1982, p 60.

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Occasional Paper 32 provides an insightful analysis of current US strategic policy. Professor Beres argues that the present US position, based on such "myths" as fighting a limited nuclear war, actually decreases the deterrent effect of our nuclear arsenal and increases the likelihood of a preemptive Soviet attack.

Dr. Beres calls for a new nuclear regime based on such measures as a return to minimum deterrence, a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons, a comprehensive test ban, and additional nuclear-weapon-free zones. These measures should be founded upon an immediate bilateral freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons.

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