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WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION:
HOW WILL THEY IMPACT U.S. DETERRENCE
IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER?**

BY

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ARMS CONTROLS AND PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION: HOW WILL THEY IMPACT U.S. DETERRENCE IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER?

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In the absence of a superpower balance, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) are rapidly proliferating. As U.S. defense resources shrink, options to address the new WMD threat are also shrinking. These dynamics are changing the role of Arms Control (AC) and U.S. deterrent strategy. This paper analyzes the relationship between proliferation of WMD, AC, and the status of U.S. deterrent forces in the new world order. It argues that motives to proliferate are too strong to be overcome by AC, but that AC can play a positive role in improving U. S. and International security. Further it argues that regardless of its efficacy that AC is unavoidable; and that U.S force structure decisions are driven by our perception of the threat, not AC agreements or actions.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world is transitioning to a new world order. In the old bipolar world, a balance of power was maintained between democratic and communist blocks as undeveloped third world client states aligned with either block and as the superpowers escalated military capabilities to assure parity.¹ It now appears that cooperation between major powers has become a puissant force for peace, and conflict between them is unlikely.² At the same time the regionalization of conflicts, the rapid proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), and the rise of terrorist and transnational threats has changed the nature and intensity of the international security risk. It is not at all clear what military, political, and economic strategies will now work best to re-establish and maintain order in the bipolar vacuum, nor should the risk of this process be minimized.

Adjustments to the National Security Strategy (NSS) to address these major shifts of threat and power, are hampered by unprecedented dynamics affecting U.S. fiscal policy. Thirty years of growing entitlement programs and interest on the national debt that has supported them have squeezed defense spending to one new all time low after another.³ Defense funding now does not include the resources necessary to maintain, replace, and modernize a drastically reduced force structure. Short of a major conflict or crisis, political realities that preclude a tax increase or a major change to reduce entitlement programs guarantee continued pressure on U.S. defense spending. This fiscal austerity may also impact foreign aid historically paid to U.S. allies to assure their military strength and their contributions to U.S. security. The question may no longer be how to pay for the defense we need, but what kind of security can we afford.

These forces are also affecting the role of Arms Control (AC) in the nation's security strategy. With real reductions in conventional and nuclear forces and a more cooperative world environment,

the economic and political pressures to begin "a golden age" of AC are increasing. No longer simply another consideration to be satisfied while the nation bought whatever defense it thought it needed, AC is now being touted as a primary strategy to deal with the nation's greatest security concern: proliferating WMD.⁴ Global leaders now view AC, not as an option, but as a necessity. This paper reviews the proliferation of WMD to determine how AC and U. S. deterrent forces are changing in response to new security realities of a drastically different world. It attempts to answer three critical questions: How has the new world order affected AC? Can AC be used as a positive force for improving international security by reducing the threat from WMD? How might AC and the proliferation of WMD affect U.S. deterrent force structure? First, we should review the concept of AC.

What is Arms Control?

"In the absence of a well-crafted, authoritative, and effective national grand and military strategies, arms control is a mystery tour."⁶

Arms Control Objectives:

Confusion over AC has a great deal to do with confusion over its objectives. From its inception, AC strategy has been designed to reduce the likelihood of violence, to limit the intensity and boundaries of violence, and to reduce the economic and political costs of violence.⁶ Short of total disarmament, these objectives conflict with each other. In his definitive writings on AC, Hedley Bull claims "the chief objective of arms control is international security," and then goes on to ask "how far is it the proper object of arms control to promote a stable balance of power?"⁷ Whatever costs less or portends the least violent effects may not in fact lower the likelihood of violence, contribute to stability, or balance power. A nation's AC strategy must then be judged against its potential to make that state more or less secure. For the world's only superpower, the need to consider whether the

world itself is more or less secure makes this judgement much more complex. How is power balanced in a uni-polar world?

Disarmament vs Arms Control:

AC is more than just disarmament. AC includes all actions, unilateral and otherwise, which improve international security by limiting the adverse effects of the worlds' arsenal. Arms reductions which enhance this security would be considered AC, while reductions which increase the likelihood of violence would not. "Ideal" AC, the total elimination of a class of weapons, in theory lowers or eliminates the consequences of instability but would require "concentration of military power in a universal authority" to enforce it.⁸ Even if attainable in a world of sovereign states, "ideal" AC likely would not reduce the consequences of violence. Even primitive arms can produce severe consequences. We always face the danger that banished or more horrible weapons may be reintroduced. Perhaps the most logical objective for "disarmers" is to disarm to the lowest practicable level.⁹ This in fact seems to be the concept adopted by all U.S. administrations over the past 10 years.

In a uni-polar world, the U.S. to some extent is the " universal authority" not only for AC but also for offsetting power imbalances in many regions. There may then be a conflict with on-going U.S. voluntary disarmament and U.S. ability to enforce or encourage the disarmament of others.

Deterrence and Stalemate:

"It should be pointed out that the possession of such a capability is one thing; the will to use it another; and the will to exploit it for political purposes, without using it, is yet a third."¹⁰

AC theorists recognize the more horrific the capability for violence, the less likely a weapon will

be used against an adversary with a similar capability.¹¹ Deterrence then may in fact add stability. Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), resulting from Soviet and U.S. possession of annihilating quantities of nuclear weapons while both lacked a sure defense against them, had more to do with providing 30 years of relative peace than the weapons parity that disarmers or arms racers may have previously subscribed to.¹² Today the role of deterrence is much less clear when WMD threats are posed from a multitude of regional or independent actors.

A "stalemate", nuclear or otherwise, does not require the possibility of absolute destruction; one can be achieved by possessing a smaller or less qualitative force. Risk for potential adversaries merely must be increased to cancel out any perceived military advantage. This dynamic, which is the underpinning of our current national military strategy, creates the opportunity to reduce the cost of defense.¹³ This same dynamic motivates lesser nations to develop WMD programs when they can not match a rival state's conventional or WMD capability, or their political power.

Politics of AC:

"One of the ironies of AC is that it is made possible by improved relations rather than being the precursor to such improvements."¹⁴ Many have used this fact to point out the futility of AC, noting its failure to meet any of the objectives it has set for itself. These same theorists warn that AC initiatives are not just ineffective but harmful. The inability to predict the future and the potential of an adversary to cheat can add to instability, limit future response options, and place participants at a severe and unexpected disadvantage.¹⁵

These concerns over adverse effects seem somewhat misplaced in a world where WMD proliferation is incredibly wide spread. When everyone possess the capability for mass destruction, a

little cheating may make little difference - especially if potential cheaters have been identified in advance. Likewise when destructive capabilities are very potent, acquisition of more or higher quality weapons may not provide significantly more deterrence.

To anticipate possible future roles for AC, we must understand how it affects political leaders. Regardless of its utility, there seems to be a "mad momentum of arms control."¹⁶ All leaders, regardless of their politics, have dealt with the heavy burden of mass destruction by voicing support for AC.¹⁷ No nation is exempt from the "emotional attachment to the hoped-for-benefit"¹⁸ of AC. Hence nations may stay actively involved in negotiations without any clear picture of their objectives, merely to satisfy a constituency nervous about their perceived vulnerability. In a democracy such uncertainties can create pressure to reduce weapons holdings or take other steps irrationally. Because AC is unavoidable, the challenge then is to take full advantage of the positive potential and limit the negative dynamics of AC.

Although nothing has changed in the basic principles of AC, these principles must now be applied to a radically different world order. Those responsible for the AC balancing process must now, more than ever, be able to understand and articulate AC issues. They must anticipate how AC can be integrated to enhance, at best, a "fixed cost" U.S. security structure.

What are the new realities which affect security?

Although the U.S. is predominant militarily, economically and politically the importance of regional and independent actors is growing. U.S. power is not absolute. For the U.S. to act decisively it needs the acquiescence or support of a multitude of world players to include Russia, China, NATO partners, Middle East partners, Japan, and others. International organizations, such as the UN, are becoming

more important in legitimizing actions ,especially military actions, affecting others. This globalization is making it harder for sovereign states to independently solve their own problems. Rapid expansion of technology, growing transnational threats, widening economic gaps between the market democracies and troubled states, and the ubiquitous proliferation of WMD compound the complexity of the transition to a new world order, while expanding the consequences of failing to attain it.¹⁹

In its National Military Strategy (MNS), the Clinton administration noted the following prominent threats to the U.S., its allies, and its friends:

- Attempts by regional powers hostile to U.S. interests to gain hegemony over their regions through aggression or intimidation.
- Internal conflicts among ethnic, national, religious, or rival groups that threaten innocent lives, force mass migration, and undermine stability and international order.
- Threats by potential adversaries to acquire or use weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery.
- Threats to democracy and reform in the former Soviet Union, Central Eastern Europe, and elsewhere. Subversion and lawlessness that undermine friendly governments.
- Terrorism.
- Threats to U.S. prosperity and competitiveness.
- Global environmental deterioration.
- The illegal drug trade.²⁰

The following facts specify the threat posed by the proliferation of WMD. Gathered from unclassified government and public documents and organized according to WMD category, these tables provide information on the lethality, availability, and ability to produce WMD.

THE NUCLEAR THREAT:

Some 20 nations now possess nuclear capabilities.²¹

By the year 2010 there will be enough fissile material to make 100,000 primitive nuclear bombs.²²

By mid 1995 there were at least four and likely as many as seven cases of nuclear smuggling in quantities up to 4.5 kilograms from post Soviet states alone.²³

Demand for nuclear weapons in the Persian Gulf and Northeast Asia is increasing.²⁴

It is now generally accepted that primitive fission bombs can be developed without testing.²⁵

Thousands of Soviet block nuclear scientists and technicians are now unemployed.

Although there is no capability now for a missile strike against the U.S. by non-ICBM states, accuracy and range for delivery systems available are improving.²⁶

A Japanese cult has already shopped for a nuclear bomb.²⁷ There is growing concern that organized crime may get involved in the traffic of nuclear material.

The U.S. and Russia have in excess of 17,000 warheads, 2,270 of these are in the Newly Independent States (NIS) of Belarus(18),Kazakhstan (660), and Ukraine (1,592).²⁸

THE CHEMICAL THREAT:

More than 24 nations have Chemical Weapons (CW) capability.²⁹

CW potential for mass death: one quart of nerve agent contains one million lethal doses.³⁰

CW have been used in Iran-Iraq War and earlier conflicts, as well as by terrorists in the Tokyo subway.³¹

CW can be produced in dual-use facilities relatively inexpensively.³²

Everyday chemicals or commercial products can be used to manufacture chemical agents-- ball point ink, fertilizers, ceramics, and others.³³

Unlike BW, CW agents are persistent and do not dissipate rapidly, facilitating weaponization.

THE BIOLOGICAL THREAT:

Up to 12 states have biological weapons (BW) capability.³⁴

There are in excess of 60 known BW agents.³⁵

Genetic engineering may overcome delivery limitations (i.e. persistence) and defy vaccines and

antibodies.³⁶

Agents can be rapidly produced in large quantities using commercially available equipment and supplies.³⁷

Potential for mass-death is overwhelming: 10 grams of anthrax spores can kill as many people as a ton of nerve gas, 100 KG could kill up to 3,000,000.³⁸

Wind born dissemination can be accomplished by commercial means; detection is difficult.³⁹

THE MISSILE THREAT:

25 nations possess or are developing NBC weapons programs; 15 to 20 nations possess some ballistic-missile capability.⁴⁰

Missile producers include China, Egypt, France, India, Israel, N. Korea, S. Korea, Russia, and the U.S.⁴¹

Developing world countries such as Israel (Jerico II) and Saudi Arabia (purchased from China) now possess extended range missiles (i.e. 1,500 KM or greater); India is working to develop extended capability.⁴²

Countries with missile ranges above 300 KM include India and Pakistan, the Koreas and Iraq.⁴³ Missile accuracy for developing countries is problematic, so conventional warheads militarily are ineffective. This problem encourages use of NBC options⁴⁴

Even in this unstable and threatening environment, there is a sense that international security has improved and is improving. U.S. optimism for the future is reflected in the shrinking of conventional and nuclear forces, an increased willingness to take unilateral AC actions, and further reductions to the defense budget⁴⁵.

How strong are the motives for proliferation? "A case in point"

Historically developing powers have followed the example set by the West and the superpowers. Since all conflicts in the past 40 years have essentially taken place in the developing world, its security has been defined primarily in military terms. The balance of power then has been maintained as emerging nations aligned with one of the superpowers to ensure a steady flow of weapons or in some cases by a superpower commitment to deter potential aggression against the emerging state. Mirroring

the west, many developing countries have linked the viability of their sovereignty to their ability to obtain or build advanced weapons . Constant adversaries such as Israel and the Arab states, Pakistan and India, and China and the Soviet Union have proved that these weapons not only assured sovereignty but in fact deterred aggression. Besides these assurances, ownership of advanced weapons is viewed, again following the example of the developed nations, as a way to obtain political clout.⁴⁶

Two significant U.S. victories-- disintegration of the Soviet Union to win the Cold War and victory in the Gulf War-- have drastically shifted the geo-political context of proliferation. This shift has effected the entire world, but its primary impact has been in the strategic center of gravity running from Israel through India, where its effects are most apparent.

For the Middle East "the new international environment with its emphasis on democratization and transition to market-based economies, provides groups such as radical Islamic movements with added justification to oppose what they regard as oppressive pro-Western regimes in the Islamic world."⁴⁷ Conflicts more and more center around attempts by religious and ethnic groups to gain influence or dominance. As state security interests are internalized, conventional military forces are less effective in deterring regional competitors. One strategic thinker has recently observed that "in most Middle Eastern states, the inability to provide security by means of conventional weapons" already "imperils them to the logic of relying of WMDs."⁴⁸

Beyond such regional conflicts, some observers see the beginning of a new polarity that pits the protectors of Christianity and Western values against Islam and the developing world. Perceived Western affronts include the isolation of Soviet Islamic states after the collapse and numerous instances of political double standards, especially in the area of AC. China is chastised for selling arms

to Iran, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan and Syria, while the West continues its arms sales to Taiwan, Israel and other allies. "Muslim Pakistan is singled out for stringent sanction while the nuclear capabilities of India and Israel are winked at by Washington."⁴⁹ Further, Egypt has been embarrassed by the failure of its campaign to get Israel to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which was permanently extended in May 1995.⁵⁰

From a capabilities standpoint, some Middle Eastern states believed the only lesson learned from the "Gulf War and the devastation of Iraq is that had Iraq already developed nuclear weapons capability that the United States would not have been in the position to decimate the Iraq military with impunity."⁵¹ Iran's desire to obtain nuclear weapons may be more driven by a desire to keep the U.S. out of the Gulf rather than a need to offset Iraqi strength. Other WMD capabilities are valued as the only alternative to historically ineffective conventional forces, which have proven to be too expensive to build and maintain. A further motive for proliferation is Israel's sole regional nuclear status, which is particularly grating in light of the power-security balance provided by the nuclear stalemate between Pakistan and India.

The need for WMD is inextricably linked to a state's perceived risk and a desire to act in their own interest. Although Americans feel they live in a much more secure environment, others, particularly in the Middle East, may view recent changes as a clear validation of their need for WMD. For states not aligned with the U.S. the fall of the Soviet Union has vastly increased risk and required them to provide for their own security. Short of removing all sources of conflict, an impossible task, proliferation is likely to continue. Even if a lasting Israeli-Arab peace were to be obtained and Israel were denuclearized, other conflicts in the region could be expected to drive WMD demand. An even-handed approach to the political process, to include AC, could improve transparency, reduce the

levels or variety of weapons, create opportunities for improved relations, and reduce the likelihood of actual WMD use. It is unlikely, however, that WMD will soon be removed from the region.

Chinese, Russian and Newly Independent States' motives for retaining WMD, though different, may be just as strong as those now existing in the Middle East. Given such strong motives to retain WMD, can AC make a difference? If AC indeed increases regional security, and if states agreeing to AC rightly perceive this increased security, then arms control can make a positive difference.

Can AC really increase security?

Verification:

"Verification is a means to an end, not an end in itself; its purpose is to make arms control possible with safety rather than block progress in the realm."⁶²

In the bipolar world, progress in AC was often stopped or facilitated by opposing parties views on the possibility to cheat.⁵³ This was so even though U.S. intelligence and treaty compliance procedures proved to be extremely reliable in following and predicting Soviet nuclear actions, to include noncompliance.⁵⁴ The National Technical Means (NTM) and other intelligence were so reliable that in some cases support of on-site inspection regimes were not thought to be in the national interest, because information gained from on-site inspections would not offset the loss of "national secrets."⁵⁶

In the past NTM and other intelligence did not provide the same level of surety for monitoring Chemical (CW) and Biological (BW) weapons. Verification of compliance through a strengthened Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) or implementation of more stringent controls on CW was, however, not a high priority. The U.S. and Soviets felt that use of these weapons was unlikely due to

offsetting BW and CW, as well as nuclear capabilities; that any meaningful verification would be too intrusive, not only for defense but also for business; and that even these intrusive procedures would not preclude cheating.

Past AC agreements sought to reduce weapons to the lowest level possible while maintaining or improving the signatories relative advantage. Although the NPT and other AC regime's presumed objectives were to slow proliferation of WMD to the rest of the world, especially to non-aligned states, they really were designed to maintain the U.S.-Soviet balance of power.

In the "new world order" AC objectives must be much different. With the fragmentation of state interests and the emergence of terrorist and criminal threats, it is impracticable to use AC as a means of balancing power or even providing relative advantage to opposing states.

Lessons learned from the Gulf War make it clear that any state intent on developing WMD can do it, even while they are under the scrutiny of AC treaties and other nations' intensified intelligence monitoring.⁵⁶ Although nuclear export and verification procedures under the NPT have been intensified, more intrusive nuclear verification regimes can be implemented, and detection devices are becoming much more effective;⁵⁷ we cannot have absolute assurance that weapons are not proliferating.

CW and BW verification procedures are far less effective than nuclear procedures. A specialist from the ACDA noted because of the dual-use nature of BW/CW and the constraints which will be placed on the "intrusiveness of negotiated-compliance-monitoring regimes, it is very unlikely that international inspectors would ever discover 'smoking gun' evidence of a violation.⁶⁸ BW and CW

verification procedures now being considered as an update to the BWC and to be established under the CWC are very intrusive; they conflict with business' need to protect proprietary information.⁵⁹ Despite these concerns, business has supported intrusive inspections required by the proposed CWC, viewing them as a "public relations asset."⁶⁰ Business representatives acknowledge that BWC inspections are just as intrusive. Yet even these procedures will fall far short of assuring compliance, and some nations will not agree to them.

In the "new world order," AC should focus on information gathering and consensus- building, perhaps more than on non-compliance. The appropriate objective of verification would be to establish intent which would be judged by a state's openness, especially their willingness to host inspection teams. A second objective might be to gather and share information to supplement the current dearth of HUMINT assets.⁶¹ If absolute compliance is the hurdle that must be crossed before AC is to move forward, then it will not move forward. Then the opportunity to build consensus, gather and share information, and reduce risk will be lost.

Technology Denial:

Denial of technology has slowed, but not stopped, proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons. Opportunities for the future do not look much brighter. In the nuclear arena "for the next ten years or so, most states of proliferation concern can use 'old' technology to develop nuclear weapons more efficiently than they can exploit new technologies."⁶² Missile proliferation will continue despite some restraints resulting from the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and political pressure from the U.S. and others.⁶³ As we have seen, transfers of BW and CW technology has more to do with the transfer of proprietary information, although some chemical precursor monitoring has had some effect in the past. The most vexing technology control issue, especially with the

fragmentation of the Soviet states, is the transfer of trained people who "are clearly the most important ingredient to any program of high-technology military development."⁶⁴

A major balancing factor in designing the control of technology is the us-and-them have- and-have-not dynamics of the process. Controls can backfire. Failed agreements can alienate, isolate, and enrage potential proliferators, thereby intensifying their desire to proliferate. Besides the politics of this issue, there is a moral obligation to ensure the denial process does not hold back the developing world and impede their economic growth. If technology controls are to be useful at all, they must be widely supported and narrowly focused; they must require full disclosure and transparency; and they must be applied in an even-handed fashion which incorporates denial and access processes to encourage compliance.⁶⁵ Thus, attempts to control technology may have little effect in the long run on proliferation of WMD.

One final option is direct removal of a state's WMD technological infrastructure. Not considered by most as AC, this capability is nonetheless noted in the Administration's nonproliferation strategy.⁶⁶ Clearly direct removal should be used only in the most extreme of circumstances. If used by the U.S., direct removal most certainly will be judged in the "court of world opinion."⁶⁷ If not widely supported, it could trigger disastrous diplomatic and, possibly, military consequences.

Determining the benefits of denial in fact requires balancing the political, economic and military dynamics of the world community. In the final analysis, a removal decisions will have more to do with evaluating hostile intent than limiting the destructive capability of a particular technology. Perhaps transparency and cooperation are the most appropriate AC goals for a new world order.

How does AC affect the current National Military Strategy?

As noted in the NSS, AC should complement the NMS by enhancing predictability of force size, reducing fear of aggression, and contributing to a more stable and calculable balance of power. Particularly interesting is the stated NSS goal for AC to: "reduce the size of national defense industry establishments and thus permit the growth of more vital, nonmilitary industries."⁶⁸

Along with the hoped for benefits of AC, the current NMS continues the conventional and nuclear draw-down started by the Reagan and Bush administrations. Espousing the intent to work toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the Administration is advocating and working toward nuclear disarmament while continuing "to maintain nuclear forces of sufficient size and capability to hold at risk a broad range of assets valued by" potential adversaries.⁶⁹ The draw-downs recommended by the Bottom-Up Review (BUR) have almost been attained, so the Administration is keying on the smaller role for nuclear forces called for by the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) while it works to counter the proliferation of WMD. Besides AC measures, these counter-proliferation efforts include improved detection of BW and CW agents, development of capabilities to defeat hard underground targets, development and deployment of passive defense capabilities, improved intelligence capabilities, and development of missile defense capabilities.⁷⁰ At the same time the Administration is struggling to find resources to maintain, refit, and modernize the conventional force.

Demonstrating his support of the Non-Proliferation Treaty's (NPT) goal for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the President has suspended all nuclear testing pending formal approval of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). This treaty appears to have broad international support; it will permanently ban testing. The final status of the U.S. nuclear force is indeed in doubt: the Administration's NPR suggests that reduction below START II levels, now set to around 3,500 warheads for each side, may be re-negotiated lower. The review further indicates lower levels may be

implemented unilaterally.⁷¹

How much deterrence is enough?

Certainly there are extremes of opinion on what is considered to be an adequate nuclear deterrence. The arguments are, of course, largely subjective; they cannot be defended by any replicative model. Some would argue that reductions that have occurred thus far have been driven by the need to modernize and streamline the force, not by AC. Thus these reductions have had no real impact on capability.⁷² The most ardent nuclear advocates call for continued nuclear testing and a halt to START reductions. They claim nuclear weapons should not be reduced further "in order to deter rogue states from attacking the U.S, its forces or its allies with WMD."⁷³ Clearly, if the source of attack is known, the U.S. will have, even with drastically reduced forces, the nuclear and conventional means to strike back. In a world of independent actors and terrorists, the issue then may not be what to attack with, but whom to attack?

Even with a declared U.S. policy not to use nuclear weapons in retaliation against non-nuclear states, Iraq refrained from using chemical or biological weapons during the Gulf War. Clearly in this case deterrence had some effect. It is not at all clear to what level strategic and tactical nuclear deterrence can drop. However, in deciding to act or not act aggressors will not key on U.S. and Russian parity. They will rather assess the will and capability of the U.S. to respond asymmetrically--conventionally or otherwise. So long as U.S. resolve is unquestioned further nuclear reductions, even if the Russians are lagging behind on attaining agreed-upon reductions of warheads and systems, may not be irrational or irresponsible.

Likewise the Gulf War was a good test of the qualitative dominance of U.S. conventional forces.

Given U.S. technological dominance, the size of the conventional force has more to do with the number and location of Major Regional Conflicts (MRC) the U.S. believes it must be prepared to fight than any kind of force parity. Draw-downs of the force and constrained resources are making it hard to meet the current national strategy for fighting two MRCs. Some argue that fighting two MRCs, at least in the short run, is not a strategic necessity. Most military analysts feel the qualitative advantage of conventional forces should remain our preeminent consideration. There is, however, a real possibility the Russians do not now anticipate meeting their Conventional Forces Europe (CFE) targeted treaty reductions and are re-establishing their dominance over Newly Independent States (NIS).⁷⁴ Further U.S. conventional force reductions would indicate little concern for such a threat from emerging Russia or elsewhere. Such reductions would indicate a narrowing view of where and in what circumstances, conventional forces might be used to protect vital U.S. interests, now primarily focused on the Middle East and its oil.

In fact, the U.S. -- at least in the short term-- may not be facing serious threats to its national security. This is especially true when we acknowledge the limited value a larger arsenal would have in deterring attacks by terrorist and other independent actors. This rising security threat requires more information, HUMINT and otherwise, not more weapons to improve security. In the long term, however, Russia, China, or others could emerge as hostile threats. The impacts of such threats are not as clear. If this occurs, the issue will not be AC limitations or treaties. The issue will be how to rebuild a defense infrastructure which has been reduced in line with the collective perception of a reduced threat.

Conclusion:

In the final analysis, several key points emerge from this analysis of the relations between

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, arms control, and the status of U.S. deterrent forces. First, WMDs will be with us well into the future. As long as independent states have reason to be concerned about their security or sovereignty the motives to possess, if not in fact use, WMDs is simply too compelling. Few Americans who switched places with a Pakistani or Israeli would argue for the total elimination of WMD in their state before longstanding and stable security structures had been established in their region. If AC treaties are not an absolute assurance of safety (and they can not be), these state's only logical alternative to self-armament is to depend on the deterrent umbrella of an ever more fiscally constrained U.S.- a poor choice for all involved.

Second, regardless of its efficacy, AC will also be with us as long as the global society feels threatened by the use of force and leaders feel they must take action to reassure their constituencies. Even though AC progress does not lead but follows general reductions in threat resulting from improved regional or global relations, it does provide several benefits. AC provides a means to preclude backsliding, i.e. noncompliance, where progress has been made by documenting or bench-marking those situations wherein security has improved and security consensus has been established. With the very real need of some states to retain WMD and a joint desire to improve security, the primary benefit attainable from AC is transparency not disarmament. The key to security is a certain evaluation of intent, not a reduction in a particular type of weapon. This need to gather and share information, and to form cooperative groups to apply pressure and support actions is now even more critical given the rise of terrorist threats and rogue states.

Third, the size and composition of U.S. forces has little to do with AC. Deterrent structure is driven by perceived threat and the availability of resources. No treaty has withstood the need to counter a real conflict or to respond to a high degree of perceived threat. Although we need to

maintain a technological edge, to improve our forces' survivability in a WMD environment, and to enhance intelligence gathering methods, the current threat is not sufficient to justify increased nuclear or conventional force structure. Without the need for additional structure, it is difficult to maintain a defense infrastructure. Although we cannot neglect this critical problem, it is a product of reduced threat, not of AC.

ENDNOTES

1. Institute for National Strategic Studies, Strategic Assessment 1995: U.S. Security Challenges in Transition (Washington: National Defense University, 1995), 1, 2.

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