



THE D G E

DEBATING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

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Concern among American policymakers over the proliferation and potential use of so-called "weapons of mass destruction" (hereafter, WMD) is growing despite the end of the Cold War and a relatively peaceful international scene. To some extent the spread of mega-weapons is being emphasized, maybe even hyped, by advocates for national missile defense — the argument that "states of concern" like North Korea and Iraq are seeking WMD capability for potential use against the United States and our allies is regularly used to justify enormous investments in intercept technologies. But the arguments over WMD are not merely hype, and even hardcore missile defense opponents will often admit the growing seriousness of the global WMD scene.

Ironically, the growing global hegemony of the United States has reactivated WMD threats worldwide. Consider this fact: so-called OECD countries, most of which are locked into negotiated security alliances with the United States, account for eighty percent of the world's economic output. Potential adversaries — Algeria, China, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Russia, and Syria — together produce only five percent of the world's economic output. And America's lead in military technology for the moment dwarfs potential adversaries. Indeed, America's technical sophistication is often cited as having sparked a "revolution in military affairs," where precision-guided planes and rockets promise the power to carry out devastating strikes on opponents without any risk of American casualties. Given

these overwhelming indications of United States "soft" and "hard" power, what are America's ideological opponents to do? To some, investments in relatively inexpensive WMD technologies makes sense. As Stephen Biddle put it in a book chapter on future warfare, expressing a view with which he finally disagrees but admits dominates the strategic landscape, some "say that American supremacy in mechanized warfare will be the end of war, with opponents turning to terrorism, low-intensity conflict, or the use of weapons of mass destruction in the face of such overpowering U. S. strength."

When I mentioned to a colleague, a former debater I bumped into right after the topic was announced, that foreign policy regarding weapons of mass destruction was to be the next annual policy debate topic, she laughed and asked, "when were weapons of mass destruction not the policy topic?" and of course she had a point. For that very reason, our constant immersion in arguments over apocalypse, I do not intend to review in major detail arguments obviously central to the topic but presumably familiar to anyone debating in the past several years. American policy regarding national missile defense will be hotly debated, but it should also be familiar territory for those who have debated the political consequence positions (and who hasn't?) — thus all I propose to cover regarding NMD are some recent developments and their implications. Although less debated recently, debates over the proposed Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty may also be familiar. For these and other topics I intend to simply offer some suggestions regarding the more recent WMD literatures, to offer a basic briefing on the state of the literature.

What follows presumes a fairly conservative reading of the topic wording, not because I intend to endorse a narrow range of cases, but simply because I want this essay to stay reasonably focused. Certainly in some regions, and probably on the national circuit, judges will accept interpretations ranging far beyond those covered here. These might include everything from cleaning up landmines (they might be described as "slow motion weapons of mass destruction"), to cleaning up after uranium bullet use (an issue in the aftermath of American involvement in Kosovo and Kuwait), to ending our sanctions policy against Iraq, to rigging the outcome of the Rumsfeld review of Pentagon policy in one way or another, to stabilizing precarious nation-states

with perhaps tenuous connections to WMD, to implementing global warming policy, to encouraging early monitoring to avert genocide and ethnic extremism. None of what follows goes into any depth on these issues, although there are some very interesting uranium bullet articles by Scott Peterson in the last two years of the Middle East Report. Nor does space permit me to explore the critical literatures here, although I hope to do that more fully in some future essays.

The notes at the end of the essay are not offered as a comprehensive literature review (for one thing, I make no attempt there to list important web resources), but simply to provide additional citations connected to the topics explored here.

The Status of the Major Arms Control Initiatives

Although the end of the Cold War sharply reduced the risk that a superpower would intentionally carry out nuclear strikes against an adversary, nuclear threats remain. This is so for several reasons. Because Russia continues to experience profoundly difficult economic times, the continuing danger lingers that nuclear weapons and materials will be sold or smuggled out of Russia to other nuclear threshold states. And despite the end of official Cold War hostilities, American and Russian missiles remain on high states of alert, which heightens the risk of accidental or miscalculated nuclear launches. In calculating present nuclear dangers, some also point with alarm to the ready ease with which military planners today envision the actual battlefield use of nuclear weapons. Weapons miniaturization makes it possible to contemplate small-scale battlefield deployment.

Despite these catastrophic possibilities, much progress has been made in reducing strategic stockpiles. Almost all tactical nuclear weapons have been put into storage. The major American and Russian production lines for new nuclear systems are mainly shut down. And although START II permits Russia to retain 3,500 deployed warheads, financial constraints make it unlikely Russia will be able to deploy any more than 600 by the year 2010 (the total number of Russian tactical nuclear warheads is falling even faster). Although it may seem a bit counterintuitive, these facts actually strengthen affirmative cases calling for deeper cuts; after all, given cuts, it may be hard to detail the unique risks of cutting some more.

One might think the obvious objection to any of these proposals would be the likely negative reaction of the conservative Bush administration. While fiat makes it possible to force such cuts even in the face of presidential concern, it may come as a surprise to know that George W. Bush has actually proposed deep unilateral American cuts of his own. Within three weeks of his inauguration, Bush ordered a comprehensive review of the nation's nuclear forces which is widely expected to lead to a recommendation to unilaterally reduce nuclear warheads even below the target levels for proposed START III negotiations.

But the picture is muddled, and it is too early to know the president's true commitment to arms control cuts — critics of President Bush were recently alarmed by his appointment of John Bolton to serve as undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, since Bolton has expressed his philosophical opposition to many of the international treaties relating to WMD. It gave no comfort to the friends of arms control to hear his mentor, Senator Jesse Helms, describe Bolton as the "kind of man with whom I would want to stand at Armageddon."

Nuclear Disarmament. The continuing risks of nuclear conflict have re-ignited calls in some quarters for complete nuclear abolition, but since that is not politically likely proposals have recently been offered to sequence deep cuts in nuclear arsenals with the eventual goal of total disarmament somewhere down the road. For example, some call for the dismantlement of tactical (battlefield) nuclear weapons now in storage. The argument is that holding tactical nuclear weapons in reserve for fast deployment in a conventional war is especially dangerous and destabilizing; after all, in the heat of a conventional battle, were satellites to suddenly discover evidence that hundreds of nuclear weapons were being rushed onto the battlefield, field commanders might think they had no choice but to "use or lose" their available nuclear forces.

While some have always defended the possession of a massive retaliatory nuclear force (the bigger the force, the bigger the deterrent), and while some have always argued for total abolition, the difficulty is in designing a stable transition path to zero. All agree that unless carried out carefully, smaller nuclear forces do not necessarily produce a safer world. A nuclear force of 200 missiles may be more risky than one of 2000, since an adversary might be

Containing Nuclear Proliferation

“Nuclear proliferation” is a term which refers to the spread of nuclear weapons worldwide. Some authors distinguish between “horizontal proliferation,” which refers to the spread of nuclear technology to new countries, and “vertical proliferation,” which refers to increases in nuclear stockpiles within a given country. Both forms of proliferation are technically outlawed by the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (the NPT), which was indefinitely extended in 1995.

The NPT regime has achieved some success, despite the spread of nuclear weapons in the last quarter century to Israel, India, Pakistan, and South Africa — even those nations felt the need to proliferate in secret, presumably to avoid the international sanctions which would have followed public deployments. As a Brookings report recently noted, the 1990’s saw further progress, as Iraq, North Korea, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus were impelled, induced, or volunteered to forsake nuclear weapons. And today only Cuba, India, Israel, and Pakistan have refused to sign the NPT.

The slow pace of superpower disarmament has always been cited as evidence of hypocrisy by critics of the NPT regime — after all, we demand that other countries foreswear nuclear development even as we pour billions into upgrading our own stockpiles. This criticism reached a fever pitch during the 1995 NPT-extension talks, and to address it the nuclear weapons states made assurances to jumpstart disarmament talks and to refrain from using their nuclear weapons against NPT signatories.

Despite this progress, concerns remain. Reflecting the changing risk environment, in March CIA Director George Tenet created a special unit with 500 analysts and scientists to focus on arms control and non-proliferation issues. The unit was thought necessary because of the way emerging global proliferation threats had spread agency experts too thinly.

Several proposals are designed to further strengthen the international non-proliferation system. These include calls for the United States to disavow the first use of nuclear weapons (an idea long opposed by American military planners, who feel the nuclear threat in needed to deter attack in theaters like Korea where we could be overwhelmed by rapidly deployed ground forces); specific ideas to enhance international inspection systems which

able to preemptively neutralize all of a smaller force, which in turn heightens the rationale for dangerous “use or lose” decision making. And while it is less difficult to imagine deep cuts in a world of only two nuclear powers, it is much more complicated to implement them in a multi-nuclear world (for example, why should Russia agree with the U.S. to cut its missiles to 200 when that would bring it into parity with China, a possible adversary?). A recent Brookings Institution program brought together international arms control experts to devise a plan that sidesteps these dangers, and in 1999 they published a major proposal for deep nuclear cuts (cite listed below in full, edited by Feiveson).

Another difficulty in implementing cuts centers on the finances of national security. Russia is broke, and cannot sustain massive conventional forces. Some in Russia’s military leadership argue that Russia must therefore become more, not less, dependent on nuclear weapons — although nuclear bombs require technical sophistication and modernization is very expensive (a fact which explains the Russian interest in arms control despite a reluctance to get rid of them altogether), they are cheaper to deploy than hundreds of thousands of soldiers. These admittedly unusual incentive systems will complicate talks designed to scale back nuclear deployments.

Missile De-Alerting. Many thousands of American and Russian nuclear ballistic missiles are on high alert, which is to say they are ready to launch simply on warning of an incoming attack. Even when START II is fully implemented, the U.S. will still possess the power to launch more than 1,600 warheads within minutes of first warning, and Russia several hundred. More unnerving, the current strategies for deployment require commanders to make retaliation decisions within three or four minutes of when the first launch indications are received, in part because so many targets are considered time sensitive. Critics of this force posture are concerned that having missiles on such a hair trigger only heightens the risk of accidental war (where, for example, a nervous field commander misinterprets radar signals and fires off his weapons, mistakenly thinking he is under attack).

Bruce Blair of the Brookings Institution has long advocated taking missiles off high alert status, and is the most articulate advocate of “de-alerting.” De-alerting measures would involve mechanical changes designed to stretch out to several hours or

days the time needed to launch weapons in the active arsenal. Blair argues, among other things, that de-alerting would reduce accidental war risks, since military planners could have confidence missiles were not being launched when radar signals imply otherwise, since the scenario of an itchy trigger finger going off in a lonely silo would have been made much less likely. He has noted that under current alert postures, the nuclear superpowers are able to launch roughly 5,000 nuclear weapons within only twenty minutes, many of which are aimed at major population centers.

The case for nuclear de-alerting appears to grow stronger with each passing year. Britain de-alerted its small missile force in 1998. The Russian command-and-control system is widely thought to be in a state of fast deterioration, making miscalculation more likely the longer we wait. And recently the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, seemed to endorse de-alerting. New de-alerting measures would resume progress made early in the 1990’s, when, for example, the United States took 450 Minuteman II missiles off alert by taking out launch keys and installing pins that physically block motor ignition (strategic bombers were also taken off alert, their bombs taken off the planes and put into storage).

Opponents of de-alerting turn the logic of miscalculation around. They argue that the strategic picture would only escalate if a president put missiles back on alert in a crisis, the likely response to a situation of heightened nervousness.

STARTing Over. The process of negotiating cuts in the American and Russian arsenals culminated in the January 1993 signing of the START II treaty by Presidents Bush and Yeltsin. The American Senate ratified START II in January 1996, but it was only recently that the Russian Duma did the same. START II requires a nearly two-thirds reductions in overall force levels, including a warhead cut to 3,500 and a sea-based warhead limit of 1,750. At a March 1997 summit, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin began talks on a potential START III treaty, and agreed that by December 31, 2007, a total ceiling of 2,000-2,500 weapons would be implemented for each country. Although transparency talks were then in limbo, Clinton and Yeltsin also agreed that START III would implement transparency measures. They also agreed to extend the time limits on START II implementation. A growing literature recommends active resumption of the START III process.

have been discredited by their withdrawal from Iraq; and the enhancement of confidence building measures designed to make weapons development more transparent (and thus less alarming to regional adversaries).

Reducing the Threat of Ballistic Missile Proliferation. Roughly twenty-five nations now have the technology to launch short-range theater ballistic missiles against American troops deployed within a 300-kilometer range, though only five are adversaries of the United States (North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Libya). The Soviet Union sold Scud missiles to all five countries, although most of Iraq's were destroyed during the Gulf War. Some also point with concern to China's ability to launch short range rockets aimed at Taiwan. North Korea has apparently extended the range on its Scud missiles to 600 kilometers, and is at work on a 1000-km missile that could reach Japan.

How substantial a threat these missiles pose to America is a source of real controversy. In November 1995 a national intelligence estimate found it unlikely that a third-world intercontinental missile threat to the contiguous 48 United States would develop within fifteen years (that is, by 2010). Congressional critics accused the Clinton administration of weakening the study projections to torpedo the case for national missile defense. But a congressionally mandated review panel confirmed the original findings. On the other hand, the congressionally mandated Rumsfeld Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat released a July 1998 report emphasizing the major threat posed by new missile systems. In particular the Rumsfeld Commission argued that North Korea or Iran could deploy threatening systems able to reach the United States in as quickly as five years from a decision to proceed. The intelligence community reacted by reiterating support for its earlier "little threat" finding, but President Bush explicitly applauded Rumsfeld's work when he named Rumsfeld to be Secretary of Defense.

Several international treaties exist to slow the spread of missile technology, although it seems clear that both Russia and China are flaunting regime constraints in order to produce export revenue. Some therefore propose that American foreign policy more explicitly center on enforcement of the Missile Technology Control Regime. Others emphasize the necessity of bilateral (country-to-country) negotiations aimed at

halting missile development, such as the talks presently underway with North Korea.

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Ratification. In 1996, work was completed on an international treaty which would outlaw all future nuclear weapons tests (previous treaties had outlawed all but limited underground testing). President Clinton signed the treaty on behalf of the United States, as did representatives from all the other nuclear powers and most of the other nations of the world. But the treaty is not yet in force (a specified but not yet reached number of nations must ratify it before it becomes active), and the Bush Administration is unlikely to seek its ratification by the United States Congress, although Bush intends to continue the current U.S. testing moratorium. Advocates of a test ban believe it is an essential component of a program to slow weapons proliferation (the logic is, if you can't even test your bomb you're unlikely to have enough confidence to deploy or use it).

The India/Pakistan nuclear tests in 1998 dispelled any sense of complacency on the issue by making the risks of nuclear war in Asia suddenly easy to imagine. And some have argued that given these risks, President Bush should reconsider his likely opposition to CTBT ratification. Perhaps Colin Powell's earlier support for the CTBT will sway the President and bring him on board.

National Missile Defense. The major conservative proposal for dealing with emerging proliferation threats has, since originally proposed by Ronald Reagan in the 1980's, been to build a national missile defense system. Work on such a program continued through the 1990's, with research support from President Clinton, and George W. Bush is committed to deploy an NMD system at the earliest available opportunity. For now, the nation remains committed to the Clinton 3 + 3 framework. The idea was to prepare a thin defense system which could then be deployed within three years if a go-ahead decision was reached. President Clinton put off this critical threshold decision late last fall, but testing and development continues. The 3 + 3 plan defended by President Clinton called for the eventual deployment of about twenty very high speed ground-based interceptors in Alaska or North Dakota, a number that could prospectively jump to a hundred or more over time. While a single-site system might work to intercept a distant launch, only multiple

interceptor sites could handle the short flight times of missiles launched from submarines right off our shores, but of course the more sites are constructed the more flagrant is the arms control treaty violation.

Despite its apparent lack of enthusiasm for a continental defense system, the Clinton Administration enthusiastically endorsed and strongly supported development work on so-called "theater defenses." These include proposals to upgrade the Patriot intercept systems used to mixed effect in the Gulf War, systems to upgrade the Aegis air defense systems currently in use on Navy ships (so it can handle short-range missile attacks), and area defense systems such as THAAD (contemplated for territorial defense in the Asian Pacific; THAAD stands for Theater High Altitude Area Defense) and the Navy Theater Wide initiative (for use at sea). Although THAAD has received a great deal of support, it has so far failed miserably in testing.

The principle argument for missile defenses, one long championed by Donald Rumsfeld, now Secretary of Defense, is that we need defenses to counter likely missile deployments underway in states of concern like Iran, North Korea, and Iraq. Although a country like Iran might only be able to launch a handful of missiles, the potential devastation would nevertheless be substantial, and for NMD advocates, worth considerable investments in intercept technology. Opponents of NMD find missile proliferation risks exaggerated, argue that the threat of massive retaliation is more than sufficient to deter a country like Iraq from attacking us, and point out that defenses are easily and inexpensively circumvented by smuggled suitcase bombs and terrorist attacks. Or, were a hostile nation truly committed to attacking the mainland United States or one of our allies, they might choose to deploy weapons of mass destruction (including chemical and biological agents) on cruise missiles, which are by all accounts virtually impossible to shoot down (they fly very close to the ground, use a very low flight trajectory which makes them hard to detect and track, can change course in-flight, and if launched within a couple hundred miles of the target would be almost impossible to intercept in time).

The likelihood of NMD deployment is opposed by many of our European allies, and has been vigorously opposed by Russia as well, given the potential setback it would represent for the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, a cornerstone of the mod-

ern-day arms control regime. Fifty American Nobel laureates recently warned that NMD would do "grave harm" to essential American security interests. But NMD advocates argue that in their likeliest configuration, defenses will not jeopardize strategic security. Rather, defenses are likely to have limited utility, able mainly to intercept a single rogue missile or accidental launch. Because the United States is unlikely to implement a full-fledged continental defense system able to intercept a massive and full missile attack, pro-NMD advocates see deployment as posing no threat to the fundamental deterrence relationship. Opponents argue against any defensive deployments, since they would enable fast expansion (the literature refers to this as the problem of potential "breakout"), thereby fatally undermining the ABM Treaty and strategic security.

The extent to which such arms control concerns would interfere with the development of theater defenses is less clear, since the U.S. and Russia agreed in September 1997 to a TMD Demarcation Agreement which seems to clear the way for development of both THAAD and Navy Theater Wide. On the other hand, any deployment (theater or continental) is likely to alarm China, since its entire missile force is a small one and easier to neutralize even with a limited defense system.

Some recent developments suggest that international concerns regarding missile defense might be reduced if the technology were internationally developed. Russian President Vladimir Putin recently called for collaboration to produce a limited, Europe-wide missile defense system (although most saw his proposal as less a serious plan than a diplomatic effort to derail American deployment intentions). Boris Yeltsin embraced a global protection system in a United Nations speech given in 1992.

Regional Issues

While plan action may be constrained from taking generally stabilizing action to decrease nuclear use in particular regional theaters (which would arguably only decrease WMD use by effect), our debates will certainly be informed by occurrences in the world's hotspots. Even now, in a period of relative international calm, hotspots erupt with regularity. To take just one example, in mid-March Richard Holbrooke, former President Clinton's ambassador to the United Nations, was quoted as saying that Iraq's

resurgence and the collapse of the Arab-Israeli peace talks could merge into one "gigantic fireball," "the most serious threat to peace since the Cuban missile crisis." At the same time, some of the most intractable nuclear issues concern American foreign policy toward the other nuclear powers (including Russia, China, India, and Pakistan) and their neighbors. Some of the areas posing grave diplomatic challenges include:

Russia and the former Soviet Republics. Although the dangers of nuclear material diversion are well understood in Moscow, cooperative efforts between the United States and Russia to dismantle nuclear systems have slowed as tensions in the bilateral relationship have increased. Nonetheless substantial progress has been made in the safety and dismantlement area. Tactical warheads, which were once spread over several hundred sites, are now consolidated into about eighty. Significant government to government support, authorized by the U.S. Cooperative Threat Reduction (Nunn-Lugar) program, includes an initiative that converts weapons-grade uranium into a blended lower enrichment fuel suitable for use in U.S. nuclear power plants.

Part of the reason efforts in the Nunn-Lugar area have stalled related to a Clinton initiative, proposed in late 1994, that would have committed both sides to a very rigorous "transparency" regime, where detailed information on nuclear stockpiles and fuel would be shared. A joint U.S.-Russian working group established to negotiate the deal broke down when Russia cut off the talks in November 1995. Efforts to resuscitate these transparency efforts are widely discussed in the literature. More recently, President Bush's Office of Management and Budget called for a \$200 million cut in Clinton-level funding for dismantlement; the announcement produced such public opposition that National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice ordered an interagency review. And former Senator Howard Baker, just named U.S. ambassador to Japan, co-chairs a bipartisan commission that reviewed Russian aid programs and recommended a \$30 billion funding increase over the next ten years.

The START I treaty was signed in July 1991 and limits the United States and Russia to 1,600 strategic delivery systems each and caps total warheads at 6,000; in May 1992 the so-called Lisbon Protocol committed Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to eliminate strategic weapons within their borders given the breakup of the Soviet Union. Still, major affirmative

work will center this year on proposals to reinvigorate deeper disarmament.

All of this occurs within the context of growing tension between President Putin of Russia and the American Administration, which appears to have downgraded Russia as a priority area of emphasis, especially in the aftermath of the Robert Hanssen spy scandal. In the meantime, Putin appears to be energetically promoting Russia's agenda worldwide — in addition to promoting a European missile defense proposal, Putin is also seeking a higher visibility presence in Middle Eastern affairs (he will soon meet with Egyptian President Mubarak and is leading the opposition against UN-sanctions on Iraq), and is negotiating closer ties to Japan. At this point, although the Bush Administration has not yet settled on our next ambassador to Russia, there are signs President Putin may be prepared to deal. Among them was his recent firing of Igor Sergeev as his defense minister; Sergeev had lobbied for a continued massive Russian nuclear force, and his dismissal was seen as evidence that Putin may be ready to resume serious arms reductions talks with the West.

China/Taiwan. The diplomatic tension between the United States and China arising from the recent spy plane crash and emergency landing is longstanding, and was only accentuated by recent developments. As China gains ascendant power in the international system by virtue of its huge population and explosive economic growth rates, its leadership is plainly interested in matching economic growth with military power. China recently announced its intention to increase defense spending by twenty percent in a single year, a major jump. While Chinese missiles are not on high alert (most are de-alerted and as of two years ago China only had twenty capable of reaching the United States), nuclear tests carried out from 1994-1996 may enable a force transition to smaller, more accurate counterforce weapons.

Compared to Russia and the United States, China has relatively few nuclear weapons, but observers do not expect that situation to stay constant, especially if the United States deploys a missile defense system (Chinese planners might respond to NMD by accelerating nuclear deployments, to assure a continuing ability to overwhelm low-level defenses). China is also concerned over American efforts to integrate Taiwan into a theater defense system. Indeed, the situation in the South China sea

and in the Taiwan Straits is widely seen as perilous. The Chinese leadership has bluntly warned the Bush Administration not to send new Aegis technology to Taiwan, which the PRC views as a renegade breakaway republic.

India/Pakistan. The round of Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests conducted in May 1998 highlighted again the nuclear risks emanating from the South Asian subcontinent, which are thought especially difficult given a history of mutual animosity and flashpoint geographical proximity. But the subcontinental issues transcend potential conflicts between India and Pakistan. For example, India has just announced a large increase in its own defense spending, both to deal with Pakistan but also to keep up with China, with whom it fought a major border war in the 1960's. There may be a role for the American President to play in mediating conflict over the apparently explosive Kashmir province, although President Clinton declined the opportunity to play such a role.

North Korea. Beyond concerns centered on North Korea's nuclear ambitions, which have been reduced by Kim Jong Il's decision to drastically scale back nuclear development, North Korea is now the center of international attention because of its sales of missile technology to Iran, Pakistan, and Syria, and maybe others. At the urging of the European Union, President Putin of Russia recently met with the North Koreans to urge them to renounce missile development and sales, although he apparently met with little immediate success. Meanwhile, President Bush announced his skepticism about missile talks with North Korea, based he said on concerns about agreement verification; whether talks will actually be suspended is an issue under review (Bush's announcement came after a meeting with the South Korean President, who favors more negotiation).

The evidence seems pretty clear that North Korea continues to abide by the so-called Agreed Framework, negotiated in 1994 to stop their nuclear program. So far North Korea has kept its pledge (made in 1999) not to test missiles while still negotiating the issue with Washington. Some argue for a comprehensive deal, the outlines of which were offered to President Clinton by Kim Jong Il: North Korea was ready to agree to give up all missiles with a range exceeding 300 miles and stop missile exports in exchange for a \$1 billion commitment from the U.S. for fuel and food assistance.

Chemical and Biological Weapons

Because the United States has signed and ratified both the Chemical Weapons and Biological Weapons Conventions, which denies us the option of using chemical or biological agents even as a deterrence tactic, some argue for linking nuclear reprisals to CBW deterrence. In fact, many Pentagon planners believe it was only the threat of nuclear retaliation that prevented Saddam Hussein from using biological agents against Israel and the Desert Storm coalition ten years ago. There is controversy on this historical point: it is true that the Iraqi foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, told a UN official that Iraq refrained from using CBW because of feared American nuclear retaliation, but the UN official believed the statement was self-serving (since it reinforced Iraq's status as a victim of American coercion).

Opponents of such a linkage have argued that chemical and biological weapons cannot be accurately considered weapons of mass destruction, or their potential equated with nuclear devastation. Among other facts, one might note that it is very difficult, perhaps impossible to defend against nuclear detonations, whereas defenses against chemical attack are effective and a regular part of battlefield training. The kinds of biological agents necessary to inflict truly horrific casualties are not yet known to be in any nation's arsenal. Despite a January Pentagon report warning of the vulnerability of American agricultural assets to germ weapons, chemical and biological agents still do leave a country's infrastructure (roads, water supply, hospitals, electricity) intact, making recovery easier to accomplish than in the aftermath of nuclear devastation. In fact, a Henry Stimson Center research report released last October argued the threat of chemical and germ weapons had been much exaggerated, and even recommended existing programs in emergency preparedness training be canceled.

Other proposals to deal with emerging chemical and biological weapons risks have been advanced. Since CBW production and use violates international law, some recommend the United Nations commit to a sanctions strategy that might include military action to destroy production and storage sites. And a strategy of explicit deterrence could be carried out conventionally: if a nation threatens chemical or biological weapons use, massive conventional attacks could cripple the relevant military infrastructure. A February meeting of scientists in

San Francisco discussed other proposals, including the development of new gene-based techniques to detect biological attacks, and formation of international rules to enable the prosecution of terrorists using bioweapons. And a bipartisan commission headed by former Senators Warren Rudman and Gary Hart proposed the creation of a Cabinet-level agency to coordinate national policy regarding potential terrorist threats.

Conclusion

As this summary makes clear, the range of important issues raised by the WMD topic is truly vast, and obviously it will be important for negative teams to develop thoughtful negative strategies against potential affirmative proposals. We are likely to see a resurgence of procedural generic arguments, including counterplans to consult with Russia, China, Europe and Japan, and this season may see the return of some radical change counterplan proposals, including global disarmament and world government. But I suspect before too long the major counterplan ground will center more fully on detailed plan-inclusive alternatives that force debate onto narrower issues of strategic interest. In the event that building national missile defense proves a popular affirmative, for example (something I consider unlikely), a counterplan designed to implement deep nuclear cuts would be a powerful negative argument given the trade-off seen by experts between defense development and offensive cuts. A counterplan arsenal including consultation might be productively supplemented by counterplans to use proposed affirmative unilateral cutbacks as leverage; that is, if the plan has the United States unilaterally cutback some deployment, a good counterplan strategy might be to use the plan as a bargaining chip designed to get Russia or China to make cuts of its own (bargaining chips and unilateral concessions are mutually exclusive, and the counterplan gets the net benefit of leveraging global support for the plan).

Perhaps debates on this year's high school resolution will mirror how college debates evolved this past year, when the topic centered on increasing development assistance to countries in the greater horn of Africa. By the end of the season, especially at the major national tournaments (CEDA and NDT), the political disadvantages had dwindled in importance (as much for practical reasons as anything — it was hard to find a good Bush scenario), sur-

passed by carefully developed plan-inclusive or agent counterplans, detailed case debates, and fully elaborated critical positions. Such strategies, used by almost all of the top national college teams at year's end, place incredible pressure on the affirmative to defend very detailed advantage claims, and induce smart affirmatives to find "offense" on every page of their flow. But the resulting debates were specific and intense, all without endless debates over Bush Political Capital or Popularity — I wish for you the same!

For Additional Information

Some potential resources are listed here by major area; this list includes all the material referenced in producing this essay:

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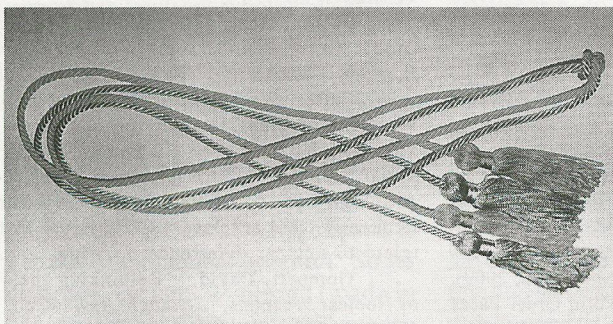
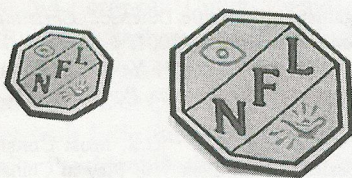
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